

Clash of Champions 2016: Champions Clashing At A Champion's Level

Clash of Champions 2016

Date: September 25, 2016

Location: Bankers Life Fieldhouse, Indianapolis, Indiana

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

It's the first Raw only pay per view and things are starting to get interesting around here. Tonight's main event is Seth Rollins challenging Kevin Owens for the WWE Universal Championship but the big question is what role HHH will play in the whole thing. Other than that we have Roman Reigns challenging Rusev for the US Title and New Day defending the Raw Tag Team Titles against Anderson and Gallows. Let's get to it.

Pre-Show: Alicia Fox vs. Nia Jax

Rematch from Raw when Jax mauled Alicia in a no contest. Fox runs right at her with a dropkick but gets rammed hard into the buckle for her efforts. Something like a half nelson chinlock keeps Fox in trouble and her kicks to the head have no effect. Back up and Nia misses a charge in the corner, allowing Fox to get in a few dropkicks to little avail. A high crossbody sets up the scissors kick for two and that's probably it for Alicia. Nia runs her over and hits her Samoan drop for the pin at 4:56.

Rating: D+. That's exactly what this should have been as Fox gave her just a little more challenge than usual but there was little doubt about what was going to happen here. Nia should be one of the next challengers to the Women's Title and it would be cool to see her against some of the top stars in the division soon. Alicia was fine here and looked as good as she always does.

The opening video focuses completely on the titles and what it means to be champion. It's exactly what you would expect here and nothing out of

the box whatsoever.

Raw Tag Team Titles: New Day vs. Anderson and Gallows

New Day is defending but first they have to talk about two guys trying to split them from their titles like Brangelina. Of course, Anderson and Gallows are the kind of guys who give out raisins at Halloween and wear tube socks with flip flops. Anderson and Gallows start fast by taking out Big E. on the floor and Liger Bombing Kofi for a close two in the first thirty seconds. Even Woods takes a beating on the floor and has Francesca II thrown at his feet.

Kofi can't get a sunset flip so he dropkicks Gallows instead and makes the diving tag off to Big E. The Warrior Splash crushes Anderson but he knees Big E. in the face to block the spear through the ropes. Gallows comes in off another tag and the Boot of Doom gets two with Kofi having to dive in for a save. It's back to Kofi, who dives right into a spinebuster for two more.

Anderson and Gallows are a step ahead of them here and it's working really well. A chokeslam plants Kofi but he gets out of the Magic Killer. Big E. tags himself back in and it's Trouble in Paradise into the Big Ending but Gallows pulls Big E. out at the last second. Kofi dives onto Gallows and Woods gets in a Francesca shot, setting up the Midnight Hour to retain the titles at 6:38.

Rating: B+. Where in the world have they been hiding this? They rocked this one throughout and it's one of the fastest paced opening matches I've seen in a very long time. That win should give New Day Demolition's record (which they would get in the middle of December) and that's going to be a big deal. I'm not sure who challenges them next, unless they go with the Sheamus/Cesaro nightmare I've been thinking of for a few weeks now. I loved this though and it was giving me flashbacks to Damien Sandow vs. John Cena: not the most technically classic stuff but I was WAY into the near falls.

WWE Network ad, including Hulk Hogan.

We recap the Cruiserweight Title match which doesn't have much of a

story. TJ Perkins won the title in the Cruiserweight Classic and Brian Kendrick won a four way on Monday to get the shot.

Perkins says he's nervous but knows what it takes to get here. Kendrick knows the same thing but TJ is confident he's keeping his title. WHY WAS THIS NOT ON RAW????

Cruiserweight Title: TJ Perkins vs. Brian Kendrick

Kendrick is challenging. Perkins comes out to a video game style theme as we hear about Kendrick driving Perkins to wrestling lessons because TJ didn't have a driver's license yet. They trade waistlock takedowns to start and Kendrick slows it down with a headlock. The threat of a kneebar sends Kendrick bailing to the ropes and the floor.

TJ goes after the veteran and gets caught in a veteran move as Kendrick ties him up in the ring skirt. Back in and TJ grabs a Muta Lock but Kendrick drops him throat first across the top rope to start in on the neck. Kendrick stretches on the neck and kicks at the head, only to have TJ come back with a double chickenwing into an atomic drop.

Three Amigos look to set up something on top but Kendrick breaks it up. That's fine with TJ as he dives off the top with a hurricanrana to take Brian from the apron to the floor. Back in again and the Captain's Hook is countered into the kneebar but Brian gets out and grabs Sliced Bread #2. Perkins pops back up and hits a modified enziguri to set up the kneebar to retain at 10:32.

Rating: C+. Who is TJ Perkins, who is Brian Kendrick and why should I care? Neither guy has a character, neither guy is overly interesting and I only saw one of them on Raw. What was supposed to be interesting here and who was I even supposed to cheer for? They've got a LONG way to go with this match and letting them have a pretty standard match on pay per view with no story isn't going to get them anywhere.

Post match Perkins gets interview time but Kendrick comes in for a handshake, which turns into a headbutt to the champ.

Cesaro is ready for the final match in the best of seven series. Aren't

we all.

We look back at matches 1-6.

Sheamus vs. Cesaro

It's the final match in the best of seven series and the winner gets a championship opportunity, whatever that's going to mean. Sheamus starts fast with some right hands but gets uppercut off the apron. The uppercut train makes things worse for Sheamus so he goes for the bad shoulder to take over. A top rope clothesline gets two on Cesaro but he stops a charging Sheamus by raising a boot.

Cesaro's DDT gets two and he actually follows it up with a 619 of all things. Well that's fresh. Three straight Irish Curses get two for Sheamus and we hit the Cloverleaf. The Brogue Kick is countered into the Swing which sets up the Sharpshooter to make Sheamus scream. Unfortunately it doesn't make him tap (meaning the feud would be over) so Cesaro kicks him out to the floor instead.

There's a suicide dive and both guys are down with Cesaro **LANDING ON HIS HEAD**. He's all shaken up (understandably so) but the Brogue Kick still only gets two. The Neutralizer gets the same so they do the big slugout with Cesaro getting the better of it, only to have Sheamus pull himself to the top.

Cesaro is right there with a dropkick and they head to the top with Cesaro falling off but catching a diving Sheamus with an uppercut. White Noise on the floor has Cesaro in even more trouble but he posts Sheamus and sends him over the barricade. Both guys are stunned and somehow this isn't a countout yet. Cesaro's arm is banged up and the match is a no contest at 16:49.

Rating: B. I WAS KIDDING ABOUT THIS THING CONTINUING!!! Geez man why can't they follow my good ideas? It was entertaining stuff for a power brawl but sweet goodness I stopped caring at least a month ago. We've seen them do this stuff so many times that it just isn't fun to watch anymore. Good match but REALLY tired story.

Sheamus has to be carried to the back as Cesaro wants to keep fighting.

Charlotte laughs at Bayley for thinking she belongs here when Bayley can't even beat Sasha.

Sami Zayn vs. Chris Jericho

Not much of a story to this one other than Sami wanting to fight Jericho, who is Owens' friend. Sami gets going a bit too fast with a right hand in the corner but gets punched in the face for his efforts. They head outside with Sami hitting the moonsault off the barricade but the referee accidentally blocks Sami from getting back in, allowing Jericho to get in the springboard dropkick.

Another quick beating on the floor sets up a chinlock on Sami but he fights up and hits his big flip dive to the floor. Back in and a Michinoku Driver gets two for Sami, only to have Jericho score with a step up enziguri. The Lionsault hits knees so Sami sends him outside for the diving DDT. Sami misses a Helluva Kick though and has to counter the Walls into a small package. The Blue Thunder Bomb gets another near fall so Jericho grabs a Codebreaker for the quick pin at 15:19.

Rating: B-. How in the world did that go fifteen minutes? Maybe I'm still trying to get over Cesaro and Sheamus continuing but this was hard to get into. Jericho winning the first match is fine as Sami is much better when he's fighting from behind so I'm hoping this doesn't wrap up immediately.

Stephanie McMahon and Mick Foley give Owens a pep talk. Owens is going to do what matters tonight: try to impress HHH. Oh and show that Rollins is the mistake instead of the man.

We recap the Women's Title match with Charlotte defending against Bayley and Sasha Banks. Charlotte injured Sasha and took the title at Summerslam but Bayley debuted and pinned the champ. A triple threat #1 contenders match was inconclusive so here's another triple threat for the title.

Raw Women's Title: Charlotte vs. Sasha Banks vs. Bayley

Charlotte, with Dana Brooke in her corner, is defending and Sasha takes her straight to the floor to take over. Back in and the challengers knock

Charlotte outside so it's time for a big standoff. Charlotte gets inside again and is chopped right back down, allowing Sasha to tie her in the Tree of Woe.

Some running knees to the chest have Charlotte in trouble but Bayley takes her down and drops the running knee on Charlotte's chest. Dana finally does something by pulling Bayley to the floor with Charlotte and Sasha quickly following. A hard shot to Sasha's face has Charlotte in control but Sasha comes back with a headscissors and forearms. Bayley comes back in with a crossbody and running shoulders/knees in the corner. A miss sets up Sasha's knees to both of them in the corner with Bayley getting the worst of it.

Sasha gets all serious with the forearms but takes too much time going after Dana, allowing Charlotte to hit an STO of all things. Some near falls are exchanged and all three are down despite only Charlotte taking a big shot in the form of a Bayley to Belly. Charlotte gets double teamed for a bit but is still able to slam both of them down. A great looking double moonsault gets two on each and Natural Selection has Bayley in trouble.

Banks makes the save with the Bank Statement but Dana makes the save, leaving Bayley to grab a rollup for two more. Bayley has to break up another Bank Statement on Charlotte so Sasha puts her in the same hold. This time it's Charlotte with the save and she throws Sasha into the barricade to make it worse. Back in and Charlotte kicks Bayley into Sasha, setting up a big boot to retain the title at 15:32.

Rating: B+. They're nailing the wrestling tonight and the women have another awesome match because they just can. This was all kinds of fun with Charlotte looking great (especially with that moonsault), Sasha being her usual tough self and Bayley looking more than capable of hanging with either of them. If you give these women the chance to do something special, they're going to knock it out of the park one day.

Kickoff show recap.

We recap Roman Reigns vs. Rusev. Reigns started going after US Champion Rusev and even ruined his wedding celebration by shoving Lana into a

cake. Now normally that would be a heel act but it's Roman Reigns so we'll go with it. The match was scheduled to take place last month but Reigns attacked Rusev before the match. Again: acts of a hero.

US Title: Rusev vs. Roman Reigns

Rusev is defending. They strike it out to start with Rusev being knocked out to the floor. Back in and Rusev gets two off a spinwheel kick as the fans go with LET'S GO RUSEV/RUSEV SUCKS. That's certainly a new one. Now they switch over to the same thing for Reigns which fits a bit better. Some kicks to the ribs have Reigns in trouble but he comes back with clotheslines like any good face would. I mean, Reigns isn't a good face but that's what they do.

Reigns goes shoulder first into the post and the fans chant for CM Punk. Oh come on. We're seven minutes in. There's no way Punk can last that long. Back in and Rusev grabs a waistlock so we get a DELETE chant. A Samoan drop puts Rusev on the floor and Reigns hammers away but realizes this has to be back inside.

Rusev kicks him in the head for two but Reigns comes right back with a Superman Punch. The spear hits so Lana pulls the referee out and gets ejected as a result. Reigns gets in some apron kicks but gets caught in the Accolade. As you might expect, Reigns powers out and hits the spear to win the title at 17:11.

Rating: C+. As usual this was good but I have no reason to cheer Roman after any of this. Reigns is still a jerk and a horrible face in the vein of Diesel (who, also like Reigns, was screwed up by poor booking). He's fine in between the bells but the setup is always lousy and I have no reason to cheer for him because he barely has a character.

Rollins tells Stephanie and Mick that he's going to prove them wrong.

We recap the main event. Owens won the vacant Universal Title and Rollins was granted a rematch by Mick Foley. The real story here though is which of these two can impress HHH as Owens wants to prove him right but Rollins wants to prove him wrong. In other words: the wrestlers are here for the sake of impressing the bosses because that's how WWE works.

Raw World Title: Seth Rollins vs. Kevin Owens

Rollins is challenging and has to go after Owens as he heads to the floor early on. The champ is dropped in a heap so Rollins throws him back inside for some chops in the corner. A Blockbuster gets two but it's too early for the Pedigree or the springboard knee. The champ gets smart by kicking Rollins in the knee and hitting a great looking spike DDT. Some kicks to the back get two more and Owens stays on the knee.

A big backdrop over the top sends Rollins down hard onto the knee and Owens follows with a Cactus Elbow. We hit the chinlock and Owens promises to make Rollins fade to black. Owens: "FADE TO BLACK! GET IT???" After some shouting about being the foundation, Owens gets turned inside out with a clothesline. A quick backbreaker gets two for Seth and it's time for the Spanish announce table.

That's for later apparently as Rollins takes him back inside for a Pedigree attempt, only to have Kevin superkick him in the leg. Rollins hits the jumping knee to the head but gets superkicked again. Seth gets in an enziguri before going down though and both guys are stunned. The springboard knee is countered into the pumphandle backbreaker for two on Seth so Owens goes up.

A super gutbuster (ala Dean Malenko) sets up a quick frog splash for two more and both guys are down. Owens takes it back to the floor and sets up the other table. A quick SUCK IT to the referee and another to Rollins sets up a missed backsplash. Back in and Seth gets in a frog splash of his own for a near fall of his own.

Rollins throws in his own SUCK IT and the Pedigree gets two with Chris Jericho coming out to put Owens' foot on the ropes. A chase scene gives us the obvious ref bump and of course Rollins gets the Pedigree a few seconds later. Jericho interferes again but gets sent outside, allowing Seth to hit a suicide dive. Owens takes one as well but here's another referee as Owens hits the Pop Up Powerbomb to retain at 25:09.

Rating: B. They really couldn't have HHH come out there so the feud could actually go somewhere? Owens winning is the right call as it's too early for him to lose yet (you know, aside from losing to Reigns on Monday) and

Rollins can claim a screwjob to keep the feud going. By feud of course I mean with HHH and Stephanie, who are the top villains on the show. Still.

Jericho: "WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS!"

Overall Rating: A-. I had a great time here and there wasn't a single bad match on the show. Unfortunately, as they ALWAYS DO, Raw went on too long and started to kill some of the mood. That would be the part that wasn't killed by Sheamus vs. Cesaro continuing for reasons far beyond the mental capabilities of normal humans. It's a really good show but trim off a match or so (and redo the Cruiserweight stuff from the start) and it's a much better show.

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Middle Kingdom Wrestling – September 18, 2016 (Season 2 Finale): A Different Kind of

Upgrade

Middle Kingdom Wrestling

Date: September 18, 2016

Location: CWE Gym, Dongguan, China

Commentator: Eddie Strong

It's the season finale with MKW Champion Dalton Bragg defending against the huge King Michael. This has been a rather different season as there hasn't been much of a focus aside from the stuff over the title near the beginning. I'm still liking it well enough though and there's a story to get us here, which is the most important thing. Let's get to it.

M.A. vs. King of Man

This is a bonus match and a Kung Fu Showcase. No story or anything here and I don't know who either of them are but that's standard around here. They trade kicks and strikes to start of course with King (there probably shouldn't be two Kings on the same show) getting the better of it until he gets thrown off the top. I don't remember that in the full two Kung Fu movies I've seen.

A nice looking headscissors sends M.A. flying and a Vader Bomb elbow gets one. M.A. comes back with some running clotheslines in the corner as Strong (dang it I miss Ferguson) tells us that M.A. is the heel. See, that's something so easy that a simple statement clears up. King gets caught in a hard chokeslam for two but he comes right back with a basement dropkick for two of his own.

We hit a dragon sleeper on M.A. as Strong tells us about the horrible weather in China at the moment. A missed moonsault from King sends both guys outside and M.A. hits a Triad Kick (Mafia Kick) for two. M.A. gets a bit more creative with a chokeslam spinebuster for yet another two, only to have King throw him down and hit a spinning top rope splash for the pin.

Rating: C+. I'm not sure where the Kung Fu part came in but this was another nice match with some time to make it work. Of course it's not

exactly up to par with most stuff you'll see but it was still an entertaining match with one guy as the heel and the other as the face. A story would have been nice but at least we had something entertaining for the first half of the show.

Quick recap of King Michael vs. Dalton Bragg. Michael attacked Bragg earlier in the season and a match was made. Simple, yet effective.

Middle Kingdom Wrestling Title: Dalton Bragg vs. King Michael

Bragg is defending and this is anything goes. This is kind of an odd visual as Michael is huge and Bragg is a stick but he's still taller than Michael. I also don't buy for a second that Michael is 500lbs as he looks closer to 350. You can gimmick the weights but there's a limit. Bragg gets shouldered down and splashed for two so it's time for weapons.

Michael sets up a piece of wood over some boxes but has to shrug off some clotheslines before easily blocking a suplex. Instead it's a chokebomb to put Bragg....onto the wood, which just kind of flew to the side instead of breaking. A World's Strongest Slam sets up some kendo stick shots but Bragg takes it away and pounds on Michael.

We hear about Bragg's deathmatch background (which was mentioned in season one) as Michael takes it outside where some of his cronies get in a few shots to Bragg's back. Another table is set up but Dalton gets in a few more kicks to stagger Michael in front of the table....for a very, VERY long time.....until a jumping kick knocks Michael onto the table (again, not through it) to retain the title.

Rating: C. This is a tricky one as the story was there but there's only so much you can do when Michael is a one dimensional monster and Bragg MIGHT weigh 140lbs if you put a half dozen bricks in his pockets. The match was watchable enough but I really could have gone with another segment between them or some promos about why these two wanted to fight.

Post match the Slam comes out for a staredown. Bragg punches him in the jaw and a really bad looking slugout wraps things up.

We get a graphic for an upcoming wrestling festival featuring the MKW

roster and some other wrestlers, including the Powers of Pain. Well that's a bit of an upgrade.

Overall Rating: C+. For a stand alone show, this was fun enough but not so much as a season finale. For the last show we'll be seeing from these guys for months, your longest match probably shouldn't be between two newcomers without much of a story. That's where MKW starts to fall apart for me: they rarely have more than one or two stories going on at a time and that gives a show like this a hard time. It's still an easy sit through and that's important.

Overall season two was....odd. They set up the title match to start things off but then it was a few one off matches before we got to the six man (which is still confusing) and the season finale. It was cool to see the international talent but they all feel out of left field and therefore like filler instead of something out of MKW. I still liked it (partially due to the length of the shows and some better details in the stories we had) but it would have been nice to have some better character development and a reason to care about these people. I'm not sure I'd call it an upgrade but it's definitely different.

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Monday Night Raw – April 29, 2002: It's Nitro

Monday Night Raw

Date: April 29, 2002

Location: HSBC Arena, Buffalo, New York

Attendance: 8,500

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

The question at this point is how bad can things get. The wrestling has been horrible but the stories have been some of the worst of all time with uninspired main eventers who look like they're about to collapse from old age. Maybe things can start to pick up soon because it can't get much worse. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Tonight: Hulk Hogan vs. William Regal. That's one of those matches you never expect to see as Hogan almost never worked against anyone other than a main eventer.

Intercontinental Title: Eddie Guerrero vs. Jeff Hardy

Eddie is defending and we hear about Lita breaking her neck in three places on the set of Dark Angel, which would keep her out of the ring for over a year. They start fast with Jeff grabbing an armdrag and his swinging sleeper drop for two. A quick trip to the floor lets the champ get his head together and it's time to chop away in the corner. Eddie's belly to back suplex looks to set up the slingshot hilo but Jeff is too annoyed at losing his bandana and rolls away.

Jeff scores with a superplex and starts hammering away in the corner. It's too early for the Swanton though and Jeff gets crotched. JR: "That can't feel good unless you're wearing a couple of cups." I think he means it makes it hurt less but JR often gets lost in his own talking. The Whisper in the Wind takes the referee down by mistake, allowing Eddie to get in a belt shot. The Frog Splash retains the title.

Rating: C+. Pretty good here but you could see that Jeff's head wasn't in it at this point. He was just doing his normal stuff and going through the motions while Eddie was doing whatever he could to keep the match together. The early days of his singles run weren't great but when Jeff's head was on straight, you can't deny that the talent was there.

Recap of Austin vs. Flair and Big Show joining the NWO.

Austin arrives and asks where that lying no good SOB is. Production worker: "Mr. McMahon isn't here tonight." Austin: "I don't mean that one!"

Here's Austin in the ring to call out Flair. Austin starts drinking immediately and says he has a story for us. After some Beverly Hillbillies discussion to start the WHAT chants, Austin goes through the same stuff we just saw a video on a few minutes earlier. The WHAT chants keep going until Austin says he wants Big Show but calls Flair out right now.

Flair comes to the stage and says he had nothing to do with what happened last week (which gets a mini recap because we need to fill in time). Ric apologizes and says Big Show is in India tonight so we'll get Austin/Bradshaw vs. Scott Hall/X-Pac with Flair as guest referee. The fans get where this is going immediately and seem interested, which is understandable as the promo was good but this is still leading to Austin/Bradshaw vs. the NWO. Austin promises violence if Flair tries anything.

That's where this whole story falls apart: for reasons that aren't clear, Austin is teaming up with Bradshaw to fight a bunch of washed up guys who are basically only there because WWE doesn't want to admit that they were stupid hires. Of all the people on the roster, they picked Austin to fill this role? The company is DYING for star power right now and they're using the biggest star of all time in this role? Is it any wonder why Austin was miserable around this time? It doesn't fit and I don't think anyone bought it in any form.

Booker T. is getting ready for his match when Goldust comes in. They won't be teaming together tonight and Goldust feels like the loneliest

person since Macaulay Culkin in Home Alone. Goldust puts the blonde wig on Booker for luck. Booker: "If Big Bird and Spider-Man ever got busy, you would be the illegitimate lesbian." I have no idea what that means but the delivery was more than funny enough to make it work.

Booker T. vs. Rob Van Dam

Booker starts with some chops to the chest but gets kicked down for two. A quick powerbomb puts Rob in more trouble and it's off to a chinlock. Van Dam fights up and hits Rolling Thunder but here's Goldust to watch. Goldust gets on the apron for no reason other than to get us to the finish, meaning a collision with Booker. The Five Star gives Rob the easy pin.

Rating: C. This was as good as you would expect Booker T. vs. Rob Van Dam to be in about three minutes. See, that's the thing: maybe they should let these two perfectly talented wrestlers go like, seven or eight minutes? Have we gotten a reason that can't happen yet? Or maybe let one of them fight with/against Austin to make the main event a bit more interesting? Nah, let's let them do three minute matches which do nothing for anyone.

Bradshaw says Big Show attacked him last week. Well duh.

Jazz is doing push-ups when Molly Holly comes up to ask if she's crazy. Apparently Jazz is challenging Bubba Ray Dudley for the Hardcore Title. Jazz just walks away.

Planet Stasiak is ready for Brock Lesnar. His axis is a bit out of whack and Brock has a tattoo on his back but it pales in comparison to Planet Stasiak.

Brock Lesnar vs. Shawn Stasiak

Stasiak goes right after him to start and is promptly splattered with a spinebuster. Brock posts him a few times and an overhead belly to belly makes it even worse. The F5 and helicopter bomb put Shawn away in a hurry.

Flair asks Debra to put in the good word with Austin, earning himself a

slap. I forgot how worthless Debra was around this time.

Undertaker interrupts Sgt. Slaughter's phone call and wants him to deliver a message to Hulk Hogan: a call out is imminent. Didn't we just do this SAME EXACT THING about forty five minutes ago?

NWO vs. Steve Austin/Bradshaw

Flair is guest referee. Bradshaw gets chopped in the corner to start so he comes right back with chops of his own. It's off to Austin vs. Hall for the WHAT stomps and a clothesline for two. A hard whip sends X-Pac into the corner and it's back to Bradshaw as this match is already dying just a few minutes in. X-Pac dropkicks the knee out and it's time to start in on the leg.

Something like a powerbomb makes Bradshaw remember to sell the knee as the announcers debate how hard it is to be a referee. Austin gets the hot tag and the pop is so weak that I don't even notice him coming in. That was STEVE AUSTIN getting such a weak pop. Everything breaks down and there's the Stunner to X-Pac for the pin. X-Pac's foot was on the ropes and Flair missed it again.

Rating: D-. This was sad. Like, actually sad. Somehow this feud has made the fans uninterested in seeing Steve Austin come into a match and clean house. If there is a single reason to have Austin wasted in this feud and not facing, I don't know, HULK HOGAN FOR THE TITLE IN AN ACTUAL DREAM MATCH, I've yet to hear it. Yeah I know about both of them wanting to protect their legacies but either could be bought for a big enough check.

The NWO complains to Flair, who didn't see the foot on the ropes again.

Here's Undertaker to call Hogan out. He remembers Hogan's first run (Wasn't that the one with Showdown At Shea?) and the fans cheering for him over and over. None of that matters though because he beat Hogan back in the day. Now, if you listen to Hogan on the Self Destruction of the Ultimate Warrior DVD, that's the biggest sin in wrestling. You know, because you're supposed to think Hogan won or something.

Undertaker takes credit for Hogan leaving the first time because Hogan

was scared. Now he's so scared that Undertaker will beat him again and it's probably going to cost him the title to Chris Jericho on Smackdown. The crowd is just dying for this stuff and it's getting worse with every word. Hogan comes out and doesn't say anything as Undertaker keeps talking. Probably as bored as all of us are, Hogan punches Undertaker out to the floor to end this.

Hardcore Title: Jazz vs. Bubba Ray Dudley

Bubba is defending and, in case you actually need this made clear, only his title is on the line. Before the match, Bubba basically says "yeah I'll beat her up because that's what I do to women." Jazz is the heel in this if that wasn't clear. Bubba puts her on the top rope and blows her a kiss. Then it's time for dancing together, followed by Bubba dancing alone.

Jazz gets caught up in the fake test of strength so she kicks him low. Some weapon shots to the head have Bubba in trouble so he bites her below the belt. Bubba puts a trashcan over her head and does the Flip Flop and Fly, complete with the crotch thrusts. It's table time but here's Steven Richards with a guitar to knock Bubba out and steal the title.

Rating: F. So to recap: we had a bunch of dancing, a low blow, more dancing and then Steven Richards. So now we're supposed to be all impressed with Jazz because we don't need to actually give her a personality when we can have her kick men low. This was one of the dumbest things I've seen in a long time (or maybe since two segments ago) and you have to imagine these things are going to keep happening over and over.

Richards and Jazz run off together. JR can't believe this could happen because he doesn't remember it happening five times this month alone. After a break, Jazz and Richards escape in a car.

Regal is watching Hulk Hogan Rock N Wrestling (I knew I liked him) and is surrounded by a bunch of Hogan merchandise. He really doesn't understand this because it makes everyone look like a pillock. People should be praising him because he's someone with class. He's someone who speaks the Queen's English. He's someone who doesn't end every sentence with the

word BROTHER. "Gets on my bloody nerves." Regal promises to use the power of the punch tonight.

Bradshaw and Austin are drinking beer when Flair comes in. The Texans still aren't convinced Flair is honest so next week it's the NWO vs. the three of them. WHY DOES THIS HAVE TO KEEP GOING???

European Title: Goldust vs. Spike Dudley

Spike is defending. Goldust beats the champ into the corner to start and loads up Shattered Dreams. It's fairly clear that he's waiting around on something but nothing happens, so instead it's time for more right hands. Another attempt at Shattered Dreams brings out Booker T. to attack, allowing the Dudley Dog to retain the title. Again: let this match go five minutes and maybe we can cut off some of the horrible stuff earlier in the show.

Hulk Hogan vs. William Regal

Non-title. Actually hang on because Regal would like to offer Hogan some tea. Hogan has a sip and spits it into Regal's face to start the beating. Cue Undertaker as the match is thrown out before it starts.

Undertaker very slowly beats on Hogan who just lays around. Hogan is busted open as this just keeps going because Hogan couldn't beat Regal up for a few minutes to cut down on some of this time. A chokeslam finally wraps this up to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. Bring HHH back....please. He might be a longer winded talker than most of the people here but at least you might be able to get an entertaining match out of him every now and then. I still can't wrap my head around the fact that Austin is stuck in this AWFUL NWO story with freaking Bradshaw of all people because they need someone to put in there. I guess Booker T., Rob Van Dam, Eddie Guerrero, Rob Van Dam, Bubba Ray Dudley, Spike Dudley and William Regal are busy.

The first hour was much better with one of the longest matches on the show (less than seven minutes) between Hardy and Guerrero and Booker vs. Van Dam for all of three minutes but the focus shifted to the veterans

and their stories to cripple the show for good. There are watchable elements on the show but they're completely bogged down by the old guys who won't go away. In other words, it's Nitro.

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Smackdown – September 27, 2016: NXT Style(s)

Smackdown

Date: September 27, 2016

Location: Quicken Loans Arena, Cleveland, Ohio

Commentators: John Bradshaw Layfield, Mauro Ranallo, David Otunga

It's a big night for Smackdown as we have a rare World Title match on free TV with AJ Styles defending against Dean Ambrose. We're less than two weeks away from No Mercy and it should be interesting to see where things go as we get ready for the triple threat and whatever else is announced before the show. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's Randy Orton to open the show. He's heard about Bray Wyatt talking about fear but thinks it's because Bray is scared himself. Bray comes on screen to talk about Hansel and Gretel. Bray has left his own trail of breadcrumbs that will lead Randy through the prison of his own mind. He holds up an hourglass and sings He's Got The Whole World In His Hands. Orton leaves to go after Bray.

Dean Ambrose says he's ready to fight AJ Styles tonight.

Usos/Ascension vs. American Alpha/Heath Slater/Rhyno

Alpha works on Jimmy's arm to start before a double monkey flip sends this Usos flying. Jey tries to go after Gable but gets pulled down into an armbar over the ropes. Jimmy offers a distraction and Jey chop blocks Gable again to take us to a break. Back with Gable still in trouble and Konor getting two. Gable tries to break free for the tag but everything breaks down and everyone not named Slater is knocked off the apron.

The hot tag brings in Heath for a big reaction, followed by some knees and a leg lariat to the bad guys. A neckbreaker gets two on Jey with Konor diving in for the save. Jordan Cactus Clotheslines Viktor to the floor but the Usos make a blind tag, allowing Jimmy to kick Heath in the face. The jumping kick to the back of the knee sets up a Tequila Sunrise to make Heath tap at 10:00.

Rating: C. This was a fine way to set up the title match without having the champs lose in a regular tag match. I can't imagine anything other than the Usos taking the belts at No Mercy and that's all it should be. Slater and Rhyno have reached heights they have no right to be near so it's hard to call them anything other than a success. Another few weeks as champions would be fine but you have to take the belts off them and let us get to the Usos vs. Alpha for the real feud.

John Cena will be at ringside to scout the main event.

Miz has a Lebron James poster covered with one of his own.

Orton goes to what looks like the boiler room and sees an arrow left by Bray. For some reason he turns it around and goes the other way. When the

camera pans back, the arrow has been turned around again and Erick Rowan is standing there in his mask.

Back from a break with Bray saying Orton might find out the meaning of the abyss tonight. The hourglass is almost out of sand.

Carmella/Natalya vs. Nikki Bella/Naomi

Naomi and Carmella get things going with the latter dangling instead of fighting. That earns her a quick spank and now it's Naomi's turn to moon walk. It's off to Nikki, who scares Carmella to the floor for a breather. Back with Naomi in trouble on the floor and Natalya putting on a chinlock. Carmella gets in a Bronco Buster, followed by Natalya's basement dropkick (which missed) for two. It was enough of a miss that the tag brings in Nikki a few seconds later and it's time for the showdown with Carmella (which seems to happen every week). Natalya offers a distraction though and Carmella gets the rollup pin on Nikki at 10:05.

Rating: D+. This small division is working at the moment, mainly because they've split it up into two distinct stories. Unfortunately one of those is about how we're all supposed to love Nikki Bella, who still isn't all that interesting. Carmella is fine for a first victim for Nikki but hopefully it doesn't lead to yet another Nikki title reign.

Orton finds a message saying there's one way out. He opens a closet to find a cardboard cutout of himself with the eyes missing. Another message on another door asks Predator or Prey reveals....Rowan a few feet away but Orton doesn't open the door wide enough to see him. Good thing there was a camera waiting there right then.

Here are Miz and Maryse for his homecoming celebration. Maryse introduces a video package on Miz's career, including Real World clips, his time as a Tag Team and US Champion, his World Title win (still the only possible call) and capped off by the promo on Bryan from Talking Smack. Miz talks about the Cleveland Cavaliers winning the NBA Title and wonders why his celebration isn't as big. Mr. and Mrs. Miz are in the front row, as are Dolph Ziggler's parents.

Cue Ziggler because of course it's still Ziggler to go after Miz. Ziggler

doesn't like Miz talking about his parents and goes to leave almost immediately but Miz laughs at Ziggler for failing again. Dolph brings up Miz cheating, which Miz interprets as yet another excuse. Miz says Ziggler has nothing left to offer for another shot and leaves but Ziggler calls for Mike to come back. All Ziggler has left is his career so he'll put that on the line. Miz agrees and the match is made for No Mercy. Uh....yay. Like really, yay.

Bray says when one door closes, another opens but he's watching Randy wander around like a mouse in a maze.

Becky Lynch comes out for a match but Alexa Bliss attacks her from behind and takes off her belt.

Curt Hawkins says gravity has to obey his laws. He's making a big announcement next week.

Bray wants to know where Orton is. As in any horror movie, he's right behind Bray and beats the heck out of him. Wyatt runs off so Orton puts on the sheep mask for a little singing. I think the video breaks up as the voice starts distorting and it turns into Bray. It's not clear if that was intentional.

AJ Styles recaps his rise to the championship and says he'll still have the title after tonight.

Smackdown World Title: Dean Ambrose vs. AJ Styles

Ambrose is defending and Cena is on commentary. Dean chops away in the corner as JBL asks if Cena really is a part timer or still a full time performer. Cena says nothing as Ambrose takes AJ onto the announcers' table for some right hands to the head. Back from a break with Ambrose hitting a running clothesline to put both guys down. A backbreaker gets two on the champ and we hit a cloverleaf.

Styles gets to the ropes so Dean gets in a suicide dive because every match needs a suicide dive. Back with AJ cranking on a Calf Crusher until Dean grabs his head to slam it onto the mat for the break. They slug it out until Dean gets two off a double chickenwing facebuster for two of

his own.

AJ's torture rack powerbomb gets two more and a Pele puts Dean down again. He misses the springboard 450 though as Dean rolls away (it would have missed by a mile anyway) and they head outside where AJ hits Cena in the face. The distraction makes the referee miss a rollup, meaning Dean goes outside to hit Cena as well. The distraction lets AJ grab a rollup with tights for the pin to retain at 21:17.

Rating: B. Another good match here and they did a good job of setting up the triple threat. It's fairly certain that Cena isn't getting the title this soon and since there's almost no one around to face Dean, AJ retaining makes the most sense. That's not a bad thing though and the build has been strong, which is the best thing you can ask for in this sort of feud.

Cena AA's both guys to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. This was a very NXT style show and that's the best thing you can say about wrestling these days. The Orton vs. Wyatt stuff was an interesting idea to tie things together, though the ending wasn't all that great. Rowan wasn't a factor and Orton just finds Wyatt to beat him up? That's it? Other than that though this was all about setting up a big match to end the show and move us closer to the pay per view in a few weeks. Just a fun wrestling show here, as Smackdown often is.

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Lucha Underground – September 28, 2016: I'll Settle For The Small Stuff

Lucha Underground

Date: September 28, 2016

Location: Lucha Underground Temple, Boyle Heights, California

Commentators: Vampiro, Matt Striker

This season is still off to a rocky start as we're still waiting for the big stories to really take off. There are a bunch of minor stories going on but nothing is really picking up and making me want to stick around and watch a lot of this stuff. Then again, the Lucha Underground tradition is to make things look horrible and then turn it around in a hurry. Let's get to it.

The opening video looks at Rey Mysterio Jr./Dragon Azteca Jr./Chavo Guerrero Jr., the Worldwide Underground, the cops investigating Dario Cueto and Vampiro getting in Prince Puma's head.

Dario comes in to see Sexy Star and suggests that she's going to lose the Gift of the Gods Title soon. It won't be tonight though as she's teaming up with the Trios Champions against the Worldwide Underground. Cueto leaves and Johnny Mundo comes in to officially introduce himself to Star. You would think they would have met somewhere in there. He promises to take the title from her but she squeezes his hand.

Siniestro De La Muerte vs. Prince Puma

They run the ropes to start and flip over each other until a snap hurricanrana puts Muerte down. Vampiro seems VERY pleased with the more aggressive Puma, who grabs something like a suplex but kneels down and bends Muerte's leg over his head. Puma tries to run a bit too much though

and gets caught in a reverse powerbomb out of the corner. A big spinning kick to the face drops Muerte again but here's Mil Muertes to distract Puma. That isn't a DQ for some reason so Puma hits a modified Michinoku Driver and a Flatliner (with a look at Muertes) for the pin at 4:51.

Rating: C. This was a good showing for the new Puma as he almost had to evolve to stay relevant in the rapidly changing Lucha Underground. It's also cool to see the promotion use somewhat big names as jobbers as Muerte hadn't been around in a while but still has enough credentials that beating him means something.

Muertes goes after Puma but Catrina drags him away.

Cortez Castro goes in to see Dario, who gets up and hugs him. Dario is going to do everything he can to bring Cisco's killer to justice. You can hear Melissa Santos introducing Castro for his match so he leaves the office as Dario sneers.

Cortez Castro vs. Pentagon Dark

Castro clearly isn't ready and didn't know he was having a match. Cortez elbows him in the mask to start but gets kicked down almost immediately. The package piledriver gives Dark the win at 1:11.

Post match, Pentagon breaks Castro's arm and says he wants to do the same to Azteca or Guerrero.

Worldwide Underground vs. Drago/Aerostar/Fenix/Sexy Star

The women start things off and run the ropes a bit before Star's hurricanrana sends Taya over for a tag. Evans comes in for a bunch of flips (literally, and with the announcers mocking him for them) before handing it off to Black. That's fine with Drago, who legsweeps Black a few times before the good guys start speeding things up. Mundo cuts that off almost immediately with a superkick to Fenix. You can't have one superkick in a row though so Fenix superkicks Mundo right back down, followed by a Helluva Kick.

Instead Fenix drops Star into a legdrop for two but it's time to start the quadruple teaming in the bad corner. Taya hits some running knees in

the corner and Star is busted open. Mundo hits Star by mistake though and the hot tag brings in Drago to speed things up again. Everything breaks down and they trade strikes before it's time for Fenix to hit the dives. Star sends Taya outside (where Taya seems to injure her ankle or leg) but gets superkicked by Johnny, sending her into a backslide for the pin at 8:52.

Rating: B-. This is more like it with the fast paced people flying all over the place and looking awesome like Lucha Underground is supposed to do. Mundo is likely going to wind up as the big bad of the show, which in a way is more interesting than having some supernatural character for a change. These tag matches are one of the things Lucha Underground does best and it worked well here too.

Catrina and Muertes aren't pleased with Muerte's latest loss. His punishment: CATRINA SUCKS OUT HIS SOUL, which she blows into Mil. She wants him to do the same thing to Puma. Stand there while she spits a soul at him?

Dragon Azteca Jr. vs. Chavo Guerrero Jr.

Mysterio is guest referee. Feeling out process to start until Chavo shoulders him down for a headlock. A springboard into a rollup gets two for Dragon and he grabs an armbar of his own. They head outside with Striker saying this is like a professional team playing a college team. I'm assuming he means Chavo is the pro team, assuming that means he's older, slower, and less popular.

Azteca gets posted on the floor and clotheslined back inside for two before it's back to the chinlock. A half crab is broken up thanks to a rope grab but Chavo shoves Rey down for breaking the hold. The distraction lets Dragon grab a rollup out of the electric chair for the quick pin at 7:15.

Rating: C. As is so often the case around here this season, this was really just there. Chavo really isn't that interesting and his just average matches aren't going to cut it around here. Then again that's probably why he's a heel. Going somewhere with Azteca and Mysterio would help a lot but that's not seeming likely right now.

Black Lotus is praying (I think?) at a shrine (Maybe?) to her parents (In theory?) and promises to have her Triad avenge them against Pentagon Dark.

Overall Rating: C+. The wrestling helped here but the same problem persists: what's the point of this show right now? Dario is of course the top villain but there's no real advancement with most of his stuff. The wheel deciding challengers for Matanza doesn't really help either as it's just him beating up people that we know he can beat up without much effort. Other than that there's the Worldwide Underground which isn't exactly top level stuff after we've had Matanza and Muertes around. This show was better but they need to actually do something soon.

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Wrestling Wars Podcast

Episode 48

Clash of Champions, Raw, HAHA TNA and our first Mailbag segment.

<http://mightynorcal.podbean.com/e/wwp-48-an-utterly-loaded-epi>

[sode-featuring-cotc-and-raw-thoughts-smackdown-mailbag-questions-and-maybeour-second-to-last-tnalol-segment/](#)

Remember to send in your questions for this week's show! We already answered some of the questions on this show and we'll be doing it every week going forward.

Smackdown – May 2, 2002: The Expiration Date For Nostalgia

Smackdown

Date: May 2, 2002

Location: Mellon Arena, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Attendance: 10,000

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

We've got a big match scheduled for tonight as WWF World Champion Hulk Hogan is defending against Chris Jericho. I'm sure we'll get an explanation for why Smackdown can have a #1 contender when it's been established that the shows trade possession of that status. Maybe Jericho can carry Hogan to passable tonight too but I wouldn't bet on either. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Undertaker costing HHH the title shot last week and busting Hogan open on Raw the next week.

Opening sequence.

Tag Team Titles: Rikishi/Hurricane vs. Billy and Chuck

Rikishi and Hurricane, who have no previous association, are challenging. Billy slugs away at Rikishi's head to start. You would think a veteran

would know better than that but Billy has never been the brightest guy. Hurricane sunset flips Chuck for two as Tazz tries to figure out a connection between the challengers. Well at least he's trying to do something. The champs take over on Hurricane until a DDT gets him out of trouble. Rikishi comes in to clean house but Rico comes in to kick Hurricane down and give Chuck the retaining pin.

Rating: D. The only good thing here was starting the show with a match. You would think they could come up with some better teams than "here are two guys with no connection at all" but that's how the division is likely to work for a good while because they didn't think this Brand Split all the way through.

Hurricane chokeslams Rico to blow off some steam and Rikishi adds a Stinkface.

Lance Storm and Val Venis are in the back when Kurt Angle comes in. Kurt says neither of them have done anything on Smackdown so he offers them the chance to model his real shirt. Venis says no but Storm seems interested. He does however point out that there might be some risks involved. Angle isn't worried about fans chanting YOU SUCK. I mean, this is Angle's town. They would never chant YOU SUCK at him. Angle makes fun of Mario Lemieux and that's about it.

Here are Angle and Storm for the shirt reveal, mere minutes after he showed it to the camera. Angle defends Storm despite his bad case of being Canadian and reads off all the accomplishments on the back of the shirt. See, it's only available in XXL or larger because he's done so many things. That explains why the thing is so baggy on Storm.

Here's Edge to interrupt of course, complete with Venis in the YOU SUCK shirt. You know, shouldn't that say I SUCK? It doesn't fit for the chants but it makes sense on the shirt. Angle another match with Edge at Judgment Day but Storm whispers a suggestion to Angle, who thinks we should make it a hair vs. hair match. Edge agrees as the stipulations are getting fast tracked around here. Angle isn't sure about putting his own hair up but Val suggest giving him a YOU SUCK if you want to see the match. That's enough for Kurt to agree and Edge promises to make him red,

white and bald.

Earlier today, Randy Orton was working out when Stacy Keibler came up to hit on him some more. This seems to annoy him, which should probably make him a heel.

Hardcore Holly vs. Randy Orton

Rematch from last week. Orton's headlock doesn't get him anywhere so Holly goes with the hard chops that he uses on rookies. The Oklahoma roll only gets two on Holly this week and it's time for more chops. Orton gets in a high crossbody for two and that's enough to make Holly hit him low for the DQ.

Rating: D. Nothing to see here and I'm sure we'll get to see more nothing in a week or so when Orton can get another clean win because the first one didn't matter. There's some value in having Orton get a first win here but having the two of them feud for a few weeks isn't going to go anywhere as it's still Hardcore Holly.

Holly gives him an Alabama Slam on the stage to keep this going.

Faarooq tries to give Mark Henry some of the money he's won betting on Mark's strength in the last few weeks. D-Von comes in to say that money can go in his donation box. Henry says no so D-Von threatens violence.

Vince talks about wanting to kiss Stacy's belly button (seriously) when Chris Jericho interrupts. After Vince freaks out over the interruption (fair), Jericho talks his way into making tonight a No DQ match and getting everyone barred from ringside. Jericho has a seat but Vince throws him out so Stacy can get some more attention. Vince to Stacy: "What do you say we get busy?" This is another one of those segments designed to do nothing more than set up stuff for later.

Tributes to Wahoo McDaniel and Lou Thesz. That makes me feel better after they didn't even mention Thesz's passing on Monday.

Lance Storm/Kurt Angle vs. Edge/Big Valbowski

Angle slugs Edge into the corner to start so it's off to Val for an elbow

to Kurt's jaw. Amazingly enough, Val can't keep up with Angle and gets beaten down in the bad corner. Storm comes in and gets slammed down, setting up something like an Octopus Hold on the mat. The fast tagging continues and it's right back to Angle suplexing Edge to take over.

Storm rips at Edge's hair, which isn't often a body part that's worked over. Edge powerslams Storm out of the air and it's Val getting the hot tag to clean house. Everything breaks down and Angle starts throwing suplexes until Edge spears him down. Val's Money Shot is broken up as Angle runs the corner for the superplex and Storm superkicks Val into a rollup for the pin.

Rating: B. Now THIS is how you keep a feud going while also giving someone else some ring time. Bringing in two talented guys with nothing else to do is a great way to keep Edge and Angle's story going without having them burn through matches. The match was really good too, which helps set Smackdown apart from Raw. There's your tagline: The wrestling doesn't suck!

Here's Jericho for a talk to hype up the main event. Jericho proclaims himself the king of the world because he beat HHH last week and is about to beat Hollywood Has-Been to become champion a-gain. Tonight Jericho is going to drive a stake through the heart of Hulkamania, as so many others have tried over the years.

This brings out HHH, who is out here AGAINST VINCE'S ORDERS. If HHH touches Jericho, his career is over. Well you know what that means. Jericho goes into a rant about how HHH can't do anything to him and gets right in HHH's face to talk about it. This is the cool HHH though so he just smiles. HHH knows something Jericho doesn't: he won't win the title tonight. That's quite the bombshell Trips.

Mark Henry/Faarooq vs. Christian/Test

Henry clotheslines the Canadians down to start and gorilla presses Christian onto Faarooq's knee. The bad guys start beating on Faarooq as D-Von comes through the crowd for a collection. Henry gets annoyed and throws the money into the crowd. That leads to a chase and Christian hits the reverse DDT for the pin on Faarooq. Too much time was spent on D-Von

to rate it but this was the match you would expect here.

Cruiserweight Title: Tajiri vs. Billy Kidman

Kidman is challenging in the same match we've been watching for over a month now. Tajiri starts in on the leg and Kidman is in very early trouble. An enziguri gives Kidman a breather and we actually get a Kidman chant. The Tajiri handspring is broken up by a dropkick to the back because it takes so long to set up. Kidman stays on him by breaking up the Tarantula but Tajiri shoves Torrie into the path of a charging Kidman, setting up the Buzzsaw Kick to retain the title.

Rating: C. If there's a point to this feud, I've yet to see it. These two are just going back and forth with nothing really changing and a match not even lasting four minutes isn't going to make it any better. This isn't a division and the matches aren't exciting enough to make me want to see them again. In other words, it's the same problems we're seeing today.

Vince and Stacy are putting their clothes back on (her makeup is still perfect of course) when Vince tells her to send HHH in. That's quite the followup. After a break, Vince tells HHH that he has to stay out of the main event. That's the third time we've established that tonight but at least we got to see Vince after fun time with Stacy.

WWF World Title: Hulk Hogan vs. Chris Jericho

Jericho is challenging and gets shoved down to set up some posing to start. They're going to be much better off if Hogan stands in the middle of the ring and does as little as possible here. Jericho gets in a shoulder and steals the bandana because there's no shame in Canada.

Hogan pops up and fires down right hands in the corner until Jericho gets in a low blow. The fans get behind Hogan (though not enough to actually watch the shows) and he sends Jericho outside for a breather. Jericho gets in a few shots and comes off the top with an ax handle as an "I'm With Meltzer" sign can be seen.

Back in and Hogan scores with right hands but misses the big.....elbow? The

announcers are as confused as I am and there's the Lionsault but HHH comes out for a distraction. HHH sits in on commentary because Jericho doesn't think to cover Hogan in the minute and a half he's watched HHH slowly walk around. As soon as you see HHH on the ramp, why not cover Hogan because HHH can't run down there in time?

Hogan Hulks Up but the legdrop is countered into the Walls. Amazingly enough, a Boston crab isn't enough to make Hogan give up. Jericho pops Hogan in the back with a chair as HHH suggests that Undertaker is here. On cue, Undertaker's music kicks on but no one comes out. It serves its purpose though as the distraction lets Hogan grab a rollup to retain.

Rating: D. They can't get the title off of Hogan fast enough at this point. The problem with nostalgia acts is simple: people like them in small doses and Hogan's was over a long time ago. It's one thing to have him do his old schtick at Wrestlemania in front of 65,000 people but there's nothing special about something like this. If he could still have perfectly watchable matches like Flair at this point it would be one thing, but Hogan is standing there while everyone else does the work because he's too old and broken down.

Overall Rating: D+. The main difference between Raw and Smackdown is this show has something to look forward to. At least on here they're setting up some fresh stuff (Edge getting a big push with the Angle feud, Orton looking to have potential) and you get at least one good match with some time every week. Over on Raw you get good talking from Flair and Austin but at some point that has to lead to a good match. I'll take the good matches leading to something unknown over the good talking leading to a bad match any day and that's what you get with Smackdown over Raw at the moment.

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Smackdown – April 25, 2002: Help Is On The Way

Smackdown

Date: April 25, 2002

Location: Peoria Civic Center, Peoria, Illinois

Attendance: 8,350

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

We're in a new era now as HHH is a full time Smackdown wrestler, which I'm sure will last for at least a few weeks. After all you can't expect the biggest star in the company to be on the B show for very long. Other than that we're going to get more of the Hulk Hogan nostalgia tour, which wasn't the most interesting thing in the world earlier this week. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's Hogan for his big talk, but only after a long ovation. I guess the nostalgic stuff does indeed play in Peoria. Hogan isn't sure if he could have beaten HHH without Undertaker interfering so maybe tonight HHH should get his rematch. Cole: "What a first class champion!" Here's HHH and Cole also names him a first class champion. Is that their buzzword of the week?

HHH talks about Hogan earning his respect and a handshake at Backlash (Cole: "What a moment that was." No Cole, it wasn't.) but tonight he's

earned it again by offering that rematch. The fans chant for Hogan and HHH FINALLY gets to the point: when he wins that title that he loves, will Hogan be man enough to shake his hand? Instead here's Vince to cut them both off (thank goodness) and say that he's the co-owner of the WWE so he makes the matches.

Vince polls the fans on Hogan vs. HHH but says no because HHH is a criminal who doesn't deserve a rematch. Fair enough and it's nice to see one of those arrests actually be brought up for once. Instead, Hogan can defend the title next week against the winner of tonight's main event: HHH vs. Chris Jericho. Makes sense: you want to torture HHH so put him in a #1 contenders match against the guy he always beats. Oh and if the bosses can make #1 contenders matches all the time, what was the point in having Undertaker vs. Austin at Backlash? I'm over thinking this one aren't I?

Rico critiques Chuck's massage technique when Tajiri comes in. Japanese stereotypes ensue and Rico doesn't think much of Torrie's look. The solution is a bandana but Tajiri steals it instead. This screams "stuff that only makes Vince laugh".

Maven/Al Snow/Billy Kidman vs. Billy and Chuck/Tajiri

For the sake of clarity, I'll only refer to Billy Gunn as Billy. Kidman and Chuck start things off with a belly to belly sending Kidman flying. It's off to Maven, who eats a hard clothesline from Billy but Snow comes in to save his student. Tajiri stops to yell at Torrie, leaving Kidman to tornado DDT Billy for no cover. To throw away whatever we had going here, Maven and Snow rip off Billy and Chuck's trunks, sending them running up the aisle. Torrie pulls Rico's down, leaving Kidman to counter Tajiri's powerbomb. The shooting star press puts Tajiri away.

Rating: D. I was starting to dig this one and then it went flying out the window with more "comedy". Are we really still on Maven/Snow vs. Billy and Chuck after they lost their nothing pay per view title match? Torrie finally turning on Tajiri will be fun enough and it's going to make her even more popular than she already was. Tajiri on the other hand has already gotten pinned four days after winning the title back to set the

Brand Split record.

Kurt Angle calls a security guard fat and brags about his new t-shirt reveal later tonight. The shirt is going to list all of his accomplishments so the smallest size available is XXL. If the security guard plays his cards right, he might get one at half price. I could watch this Angle for days.

Stacy Keibler massages Vince's temples until he's interrupted by some newcomer. Vince: "Oh that's right. You're uh, you're Randy Orton." The boss leaves and Stacy likes the black sweatshirt and basketball shorts look. After admiring his hands (I don't get it either), she offers to critique his holds by putting his hands on her hips. Vince comes back in and she claims he stripped for no reason. That earns him a match with Hardcore Holly.

This week's power challenge: Mark Henry bending a frying pan. That goes fine so Test pulls out a steel rod. Why does he have a steel rod you ask? Well doesn't every Canadian carry a steel rod? That's bent as well so Christian, the guy who introduced the frying pan, jumps Henry like a moron.

Randy Orton vs. Hardcore Holly

It's so strange to see Orton only having about six tattoos. They hit the mat for some chain wrestling to start until Orton gets a quick near fall off something like a bulldog. Holly isn't about to get beaten up by a rookie though and gets in the kick to the very low abdomen. We get some shots to the chest in the vein of Sheamus' forearms until Orton comes back with a dropkick. Orton's high crossbody sets up an Oklahoma roll for the surprise pin. Nothing to the match, other than the debut of one of the biggest stars of all time.

Angle talks to a photographer about how big his shirt reveal is going to be but Edge is seen replacing it. For some reason the photographer is told to get the shirt in the ring.

Here's Angle for the reveal, though he has to wait on the YOU SUCK WHAT chants. After insulting the town a bit, Angle explains the concept of

having his accomplishments listed on the back of his shirt. I'm hoping the fans in the arena didn't see that segment earlier or they're going to be bored and do something stupid like chant WHAT to everything Angle says.

Before we get the reveal, here's Edge to interrupt. Edge congratulates him on winning at Backlash and wants to see the new shirt. Every the knucklehead, Angle buys into it and the shirt is revealed. I'll give you one guess what two words are printed on it and Angle's reaction when he sees it.

Recap of HHH invading Raw and attacking Undertaker.

Mark Henry vs. Christian

Christian comes in and is thrown over the top with one arm. Back in and Henry runs him over, followed by a headbutt for two. A low blow gets Christian out of a claw hold but Henry grabs a bearhug for the win. This one note character stuff is why Henry never went anywhere for years and this run isn't changing anything.

Jericho is ready to win tonight because he wants to beat HHH once and for all. See, he only lost at Wrestlemania because of a high fever.

Rikishi/Edge vs. Kurt Angle/Albert

It's two feuds in one but my goodness those are two odd sounding teams. They pair off with Edge and Angle fighting in the ring to start. Angle throws him over with a belly to belly and brings in Albert for all of five seconds before it's back to Kurt. Rikishi gets to clean house off the hot tag because you pick RIKISHI for that spot over Edge. A running seated senton crushes Albert with Kurt making the save. An Angle Slam takes Rikishi down but Edge spears Angle before he can cover. The Baldo Bomb puts Rikishi away as Edge stomps on Angle outside.

Rating: D+. If you can find a way around the time issues, the better move here would have been to do two singles matches instead of a tag. We already did the double feud tag match earlier tonight and when you consider we already had two message segments, it doesn't exactly make

Smackdown look like the most creative show in the world.

D-Von takes up another collection but someone steals the money. That earns him a horrible beating, which is supposed to make D-Von look evil but what would you do if some goon tried to steal your money? Especially if you're a wrestler and he's a plant.

Angle yells at the security guard, who is now wearing a YOU SUCK shirt.

Chris Jericho vs. HHH

Winner gets a title shot next week. Jericho bails to the floor to start but the chase goes to HHH, who sends Jericho shoulder first into the post twice in a row. A spinwheel kick has HHH in trouble and but a sleeper is just boring. HHH comes back with a shot to the face and does the falling low blow headbutt. With both guys down we cut to the back to see Undertaker coming into Vince's office.

Back with Jericho hitting the Breakdown (Skull Crushing Finale) for two as Cole freaks out over Undertaker showing up. Then again, it would be more amazing for Cole not to freak out over something. A neckbreaker and spinebuster give HHH two but Jericho gets the same off a missile dropkick.

The Pedigree is countered into a backslide for two more and we get the usual Walls/rope grab combo. Jericho grabs a chair (because that's worked so well for him) and gets DDT'd for two. Cue Undertaker for a distraction though and Jericho grabs a rollup with trunks for the pin and the title shot.

Rating: B. It's so nice to have a long match that doesn't involve Austin and/or the NWO. On top of that, Jericho actually beat HHH in a match that means something. Just by setting that up you prevent these matches from feeling like a waste of time until you get to the only possible ending.

Undertaker and Jericho beat on HHH until Hogan makes the save and punches Undertaker into the crowd to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. The main event helped this show a lot but there was too much bad in the first hour and forty minutes for the main event to

save it. They really need to elevate someone new to the main event already because HHH and Jericho are the best possible combination and that's going to get old quickly. The rest of the card is in trouble too but that's really more boring than bad, which can be even worse.

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Monday Night Raw – October 3, 2016: One Of Those Shows... Maybe?

Monday Night Raw

Date: October 3, 2016

Location: Staples Center, Los Angeles, California

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

We've got a packed show tonight with two big matches. First up Cruiserweight Champion TJ Perkins has the first title defense on Raw as he puts the title on the line against Brian Kendrick in a Clash of Champions rematch. In the bigger title match, we have Sasha Banks challenging Charlotte for the Raw Women's Title in her first one on one

rematch. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's Roman Reigns to open the show and MY GOODNESS they're booing him out of the building. WWE is asking for this one as Reigns just isn't the kind of person who can go out there and talk full time. He goes into the guy line but here's Lana to interrupt. Fans: "THANK YOU LANA!" With the accent slipping, Lana rips into Reigns for everything he's done in recent weeks but Reigns just tells her to bring her husband out here if he wants that rematch.

Rusev comes out and the brawl is on again with the Bulgarian getting the better of it and knocking Reigns into the crowd. Rusev takes the belt and starts to walk up the ramp but Reigns sneaks up from behind him with a Superman Punch. Reigns grabs the mic and says they can have the rematch but it's going to be inside the Cell.

We recap Brian Kendrick vs. TJ Perkins, which is over Kendrick thinking he deserves the title more than TJ. Perkins had talked about being homeless while pursuing his dream (Sidebar: allegedly this got Perkins heat because other wrestlers have done the same thing. Uh, are any of them Cruiserweight Champion and wrestling on Raw? No? Then shut up with your jealous complaining.) but Kendrick has worked harder and longer. Perkins beat him at Clash of Champions and tonight is a rematch because...well because no one knows anyone other than these two.

TJ Perkins vs. Brian Kendrick

Non-title (Wasn't this announced as a title match last week?) and both guys are basically the hometown boys. A dropkick puts Kendrick on the floor to start and a slingshot dropkick makes it even worse. Back in and Brian boots him in the face before putting Perkins hand inside the clamp that attaches the turnbuckle to the post.

We take a break and come back with TJ hitting his double chicken wing into the gutbuster but the kneebar sends Kendrick to the ropes. A quick Sliced Bread #2 gets two on TJ and there's the Captain's Hook but Perkins rolls Kendrick up for two. The slingshot dropkick looks to set up the

fireman's carry enziguri, only to have Kendrick rake the eyes. Another Captain's Hook gives Kendrick the title at 9:00.

Rating: C. Well ok. Perkins wins the whole tournament and is basically unbeatable but a single rake to the eyes is enough to beat him in less than ten minutes? The best thing here though is having a clear heel and a clear face so we can actually have a story. At the end of the day though, this is likely setting up a third match at the pay per view, despite neither match really warranting a third one.

Earlier today, Seth Rollins sat down with Michael Cole to say he's been medically cleared. Rollins talks about gaining enemies due to being HHH's friend. He and Kevin Owens are both hard workers but HHH handed Owens the title. No one handed the title to Rollins at Wrestlemania XXXI (which we're still talking about) and Owens is going to be another piece in HHH's big plans. Rollins is going to get the title back no matter what Owens or Chris Jericho have to say about it.

Braun Strowman vs. Chase Silver

Before the match, Silver says he's in Hollywood because dreams come true here. Strowman runs him over and shouts that this is the best WWE can offer. A running shoulder sends Silver flying into the corner and the powerslam (Cole: "Hi ho Silver, away) is enough for the pin at 1:45.

Post match Strowman says WWE is wasting his talents on these weak fools week in and week out. If he doesn't get better competition next week, there might not be a next week. Good, as they need to advance this story and character at some point.

Bayley comes up to Sasha Banks and congratulates her for being in the main event of Raw. Sasha knows Charlotte is great but she's destined to be champion.

Here are Kevin Owens and Chris Jericho to respond to Rollins' comments earlier. Owens asks Jericho what he's done to deserve a rematch because the truth is that Seth lost at Clash of Champions. Rollins has been complaining about the referee but he's only got himself to blame.

After laughing at the fans for chanting STUPID IDIOTS (because it makes them stupid idiots), Owens suggests that Jericho should be the guest referee. Jericho suggests that he get a title shot of his own but of course he means the two of them getting the Raw Tag Team Titles. Owens isn't sure about it because that's a bit too much work for him so Jericho suggests a Universal Title shot. Owens: "Yeah! Let's do it! Let's go after New Day!"

Cue New Day to say they're the best friends in WWE. That earns them a spot on Jericho's list but Big E. cuts him off to say they'll have to have a champion's huddle. This excludes Jericho so BIG E. MAKES THE LIST. Woods laughs and you know where that lands him. Owens yells at New Day for feeding kids questionable cereal and says they jumped the shark about seven months ago. Woods: "Look at yourself. When is the last time you jumped over anything?" Owens: "PUT WOODS ON THE LIST AGAIN!" A match seems to be made for later.

Sheamus and Cesaro arrived earlier and threw each other's bags out of the car.

Sami Zayn vs. Titus O'Neil

Titus says this is the debut of the Titus Brand. Some forearm to the back have Sami in trouble and a bearhug makes it even worse. Sami comes right back with a clothesline, the exploder suplex in the corner and the Helluva Kick for the pin at 2:48.

Sheamus and Cesaro argue over whose fault it was that they were late. Mick Foley comes in and says they're doing this to become as amazing of a team as they can. The arguing continues.

Anderson and Gallows vs. Golden Truth

Oh yeah Golden Truth is still a thing. Earlier today, Anderson and Gallows blamed New Day for ruining the tag team division. Truth and Anderson start things off and it's time for dancing and gyrating. Goldust comes in for a neckbreaker but it's quickly off to Gallows with a boot to the face and a chinlock. Back up and the hot tag brings in Truth for the house cleaning, including an ax kick to Anderson. Everything breaks down

and the Magic Killer puts Truth away at 3:22.

Rating: D. If this was supposed to start building Anderson and Gallows back up, it might have been a good idea to not have them get beaten up for so much of the match. Having Golden Truth out there as jobbers is fine but it's still not exactly thrilling stuff outside of the top of the division. Of course by division I mean the three or four teams running around at the moment.

Jericho and Owens are on the way to the ring when they run into Ashton Kutcher and Danny Masterson. The List is discussed with Masterson reading off a few items: people who don't appreciate a good scarf and superstars who lose to Fandango at Wrestlemania. Owens goes off to get ready and the celebrities say they'll be at ringside for the match against New Day. Jericho threatens to give them.....hang on as he goes off camera to the left and comes back in on the other side to say they'll get IT.

Jericho is the perfect example of why natural charisma is so much more important than writing. The stuff he's doing is so stupid but he knows how to time things so well that there's almost nothing he can't get over. If any rookie came up with this same material, odds are they would be fired. Jericho has such natural presence though that it works like little else on the show. You can't teach that and it's one of the most important things in wrestling.

Enzo Amore and Big Cass are in the ring with three breast cancer survivors for the annual Susan G. Komen segment. The three women are given replica WWE Title belts.

Chris Jericho/Kevin Owens vs. New Day

Non-title. Masterson and Kutcher are on commentary as Owens runs Woods over to start. Owens makes sure to jump over Xavier in the kind of funny bit that most people just don't think to do. Woods gets taken into the corner for the double teaming as Kutcher talks about their new show. It's off to Big E. to face Owens for some hip swiveling.

Graves says Saxton would be the Fez (character on That 70s Show, on which Masterson and Kutcher starred) of the commentary table, which sounds like

a good insult, assuming you find dating Mila Kunis' character to be a bad thing. Big E. gets beaten down even more as the announcers discuss middle names and scarves.

Back from a break with Owens and Big E. colliding off a double clothesline. Woods comes in and gets chinlocked before it's back to Jericho for a running clothesline in the corner. A superplex is broken up and Woods gets two off a high crossbody. Owens breaks up a hot tag attempt and gets two off a DDT.

Cue Seth Rollins to the stage for a distraction though and Woods gets in an enziguri. The hot tag brings in Big E. to clean house (and swivel the hips of course) but Owens superkicks him down. Big E. and Owens go to the floor and Jericho gets the Liontamer on Woods, only to have Rollins offer a distraction. A quick Midnight Hour puts Jericho away at 16:25.

Rating: C-. This was much longer than it needed to be and served little more purpose than to have Kutcher and Masterson there to plug their new show. It's a really bad sign that this is what the World Champion is being used for: a second hour tag match with little to gain other than helping set up a Netflix show. Well done WWE. It's good to see what you think of what should be your flagship star. Masterson and Kutcher were both fine and seemed to be having a lot of fun, which is much better than you're going to get out of most guest stars.

Rollins gives Jericho a Pedigree to really get under Owens' skin.

We look back at the opening sequence.

Charlotte says she's the only reasons Sasha is in the main event and she'll rise to the occasion as she always does.

Video on Rich Swann.

Stephanie McMahon comes up to yell at Rollins because he's just as replaceable as anyone else. Rollins says getting rid of him was the second worst decision HHH has ever made. The worst: marrying Stephanie. Seth promises to burn Raw to the ground and take Owens and Jericho with him.

Rich Swann vs. Tony Nese

Nese says Swann has a dance with the best athlete in the division. Swann tries to dance early on but gets taken down with hard forearms. A bodyscissors and chinlock don't get Nese very far as Rich pops up with some dropkicks. That's about it for Swann though as Nese stun guns him into a sitout pumphandle powerslam for the pin at 4:13.

Rating: C-. Yeah fine. I'm assuming they're building Nese up as the next challenger (for Perkins, whose match earlier apparently wasn't for the title, which WWE didn't exactly go out of their way to make clear last week) which is better than nothing. This division still has a long way to go though and this didn't do it many favors.

Mil Mascaras video as WWE is celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month for the second month in a row.

We see a bunch of pictures of Emma in swimsuits. Coming soon: the transformation of Emma into Emmalina. I've heard of worse.

Cesaro/Sheamus vs. Raul White/Mark Carradine

White and Cesaro start things off with Raul being sent into the corner for alternating shots to the ribs from both guys. White's partner comes in and walks into an Irish Curse. Sheamus loads up the Cloverleaf but Cesaro jumps over him for a DDT onto White. The Brogue Kick is good for the pin on at 1:55.

Long recap of Charlotte vs. Sasha, going all the way back to the BFF's days in NXT. They've both been fighting to prove themselves as the best in the world and have traded the title over the last few months.

Charlotte and Dana Brooke are on the way to the ring when they run into Bayley. Charlotte laughs at Bayley for thinking she could be in this place someday but says she has to leave so she can go main event the show. Dana laughs at Bayley too.

Raw Women's Title: Sasha Banks vs. Charlotte

Charlotte is defending and we get Big Match Intros. Sasha kicks her

outside and hits a suicide dive, setting up a break less than thirty seconds in. Back with Charlotte in control and working on the back with a backbreaker (makes sense) and a hard shove into the corner. Sasha blocks the big boot and gets two off the double knees. The champ is sent outside but is still able to drop Sasha's back onto the apron.

Sasha tries to go up top but gets knocked onto the ropes for a nasty crash. Charlotte's superplex is shoved off and double knees from the top get two. It's too early for the Bank Statement though so Charlotte sends her outside, setting up a CORKSCREW MOONSAULT TO THE FLOOR! I mean it made almost no contact but it looked awesome. Natural Selection gets two back inside and Charlotte is frustrated. A headscissors sets up the Bank Statement and Charlotte taps in a hurry to give Sasha the title at 14:17.

Rating: B. Good match but they felt out of sync at the end. That missed moonsault didn't help things and the ending felt like it was out of nowhere. Sasha winning makes the most sense and, dare I say, sets up a rematch inside the Cell? They'll have a rematch one way or another and it needs a little something more than just a regular match.

A long celebration ends the show.

Overall Rating: C. There wasn't anything horrible about the show (meaning Stephanie was only in one segment) but I barely remember most of this show. It's like the main event started and I couldn't think of anything that happened in the previous two hours and forty five minutes. The show was just there for the most part as they've actually got time to set up the next pay per view for a change. Not a bad show but really just there, which is often worse.

Results

Brian Kendrick b. TJ Perkins – Captain's Hook

Braun Strowman b. Chase Silver – Powerslam

Sami Zayn b. Titus O'Neil – Helluva Kick

Anderson and Gallows b. Golden Truth – Magic Killer to R-Truth

New Day b. Kevin Owens/Chris Jericho – Midnight Hour to Jericho

Tony Nese b. Rich Swann – Sitout pumphandle powerslam

Cesaro/Sheamus b. Raul White/Mark Carradine – Brogue Kick to Carradine

Sasha Banks b. Charlotte – Bank Statement

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Bound For Glory 2016: And That's That

Bound For Glory 2016

Date: October 2, 2016

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: D'Angelo Dinero, Josh Matthews

It's the big night for TNA and the question looming is more about the future than anything else going on tonight. As for this show though, we have Ethan Carter III challenging Lashley for the TNA World Title, the crowning of the first TNA Grand Champion and the Great War between Decay and the Hardys for the TNA World Tag Team Titles. Let's get to it.

We open with Matt Hardy and his son Maxell playing the piano. Matt stops to read a story, which serves as our opening recap for all of the matches.

The announcers welcome us to the show.

X-Division Title: Trevor Lee vs. DJZ

DJZ is defending and this is a bonus match because the TOTALLY IMPORTANT X-DIVISION didn't have time to get a match announced on TV. Lee gets taken down with a wristlock and we get a breather on the floor. Back in and a dropkick makes things even worse for Lee but he gets in an uppercut to take over. A running kick to the face has DJZ in even more trouble but it leaves him on the floor to frustrate Lee a bit more.

The champ is thrown back in and grabs a flapjack, followed by a top rope hurricanrana to make it even worse. They trade dives with Lee getting the better of it but DJZ reverses a German suplex into a reverse hurricanrana. The ZDT is countered with the double stomp but DJZ reverses a suplex into a Canadian Destroyer of all things. Now the ZDT connects to retain the title at 11:08.

Rating: B. See, this is what's so frustrating about the X-Division: if TNA will actually give them the time, they can have a fast paced match like this one. However, no one is going to be able to entertain on a regular basis when they're getting three minutes with no reason for these people to be fighting. Just give them a chance and they can do their job. That and don't have a main eventer steal the title for the sake of a World Title storyline that cuts the legs off whatever the division has built up for months.

Drew Galloway says he's out for a long time and he's very mad at TNA for making decisions for him. He goes into a rant about Billy Corgan not being allowed to tell him not to go on because Corgan would perform if he was told not to. Drew also slips in that Corgan is trying to buy the company.

Bound For Gold

This is a gauntlet match with the winner getting a future World Title shot, albeit with a one week warning. It's a Royal Rumble to start until we get down to two people when it becomes a regular match. Jesse Godderz is in at #1 and Rockstar Spud is in at #2. Godderz dominates to start and after a minute and a half, Braxton Sutter is in at #3.

Spud's double clothesline has no effect but he fights off an elimination until Eli Drake is in at #4. Drake throws Sutter out and the fans do his YEAH catchphrase to mess with Eli's head. Robbie E. is in at #5 and the BroMans start cleaning house, only to have Robbie try to throw Jesse out. Jesse doesn't take kindly to this and it's Baron Dax in at #6.

No one is thrown out and it's Grado in at #7, only to have Drake throw him out in two seconds. The BroMans double team Drake and Basile Baraka is in at #8. The eliminations start speeding up as Baraka, Dax and Robbie are eliminated in very short order. Tyrus is in at #9 and the monster starts cleaning house. Spud tries to hug him, earning himself a quick elimination. Spud: "WHY?????"

Mahabali Shera completes the field at #10, giving us a final group of Shera, Tyrus, Godderz and Drake. Tyrus slams into Shera and throws him out to get us down to three. Drake is sent over the top but hangs on by his ankles, leaving Tyrus to give Godderz a World's Strongest Slam. A few dropkicks stagger Tyrus but Drake sneaks back in for the double elimination at 15:08.

Rating: D+. It was boring but this was WAY better than last year's version. Last year this took up nearly twenty five minutes and was won by Tyrus. This year took up nearly ten minutes less and was won by ANYONE but Tyrus, making it better by definition. Drake winning is by far the right call and I'd love to see him move up to the main event. He's one of the most consistently entertaining people on the roster.

Celebrity chef Robert Irvine is here to watch Gail Kim be inducted into the Hall of Fame. Maria and Mike Bennett come in to say tonight is about them.

We recap Mike Bennett vs. Moose, which is an old standard with Bennett bringing Moose in and then taking him for granted. Moose isn't going to

take orders and is ready to fight for himself tonight.

Mike Bennett vs. Moose

For some reason Moose gets a full special entrance as a football team in full pads comes out to shout that it's game time. Bennett hammers away to no avail to start, allowing Moose to dropkick him off the top. Mike slides back in for a running flip dive but Moose throws him ribs first into the post. The monster's knee is sent into the steps though and Mike stomps away to take over.

Moose fights up again and hits some running clotheslines, followed by a very hard clothesline. Mike comes back with a tornado DDT and a piledriver for two. Even more clotheslines have Bennett reeling but he catches a top rope clothesline in a cutter. That goes nowhere as Moose grabs the chokebomb and hits a discus lariat for the pin at 10:10.

Rating: C-. This was just there and Moose uses WAY too many clotheslines but it was entertaining enough. The problem is they never sold me on the personal animosity. It felt like they pulled the plug in a hurry for the sake of setting up a Bound For Glory match even if it wasn't time yet. The match was watchable (overuse of clotheslines aside) but it never got beyond ok.

Aron Rex has had to change his gameplan for Eddie Edwards. They were trained by the same man and Rex is here to prove he's a champion.

Grand Championship: Aron Rex vs. Eddie Edwards

For the inaugural title and the rounds are now five minutes long instead of three. Feeling out process to start with neither being able to go anywhere in the first two minutes. Eddie snaps off a hurricanrana but gets caught in the Russian legsweep. Rex is sent outside for a big flip dive and both guys are down. A few more shots have Eddie in control and round one ends.

Eddie wins the first round so Rex is much more aggressive to start the second round. Some hard chops have Eddie in trouble and Rex starts in on the knee. Rex grabs an Indian Deathlock and THE LIGHTS GO OUT. Not as in

an angle but as in the lights just stopped working. Fans: "PAY THE LIGHT BILL!" They come back on as Rex puts on a modified Sharpshooter for a few moments. Some knees to the back get two and the round ends.

Rex wins the second round (which he dominated) but Eddie starts round three with a knee to the face for two. The fans want Davey as Eddie misses something off the top and tweaks his knee. We hit two minutes to go as Rex is sat on top but he throws Eddie back down. The Revelator misses and Eddie gets in a Shining Wizard but can't cover as the match ends at 16:28.

Rating: C+. First and foremost, if they just have to keep this round system going, they have to stick with the five minute rounds. You just can't get anything going in three minutes and the extra time here did them a lot of good. They didn't have a choice here with the replacement and while it would have been better to have Galloway, Edwards was as good as you were going to get on short notice.

They keep fighting as we go to a judges' decision with....Rex winning via a split decision, which was spoiled by the scorecard before the announcement. They shake hands and Rex says Eddie can have a rematch anytime you want. Rex says they made history tonight and stay tuned for the second part.

It's time for the Hall of Fame induction with special guests Christy Hemme, Taryn Terrell (pregnant but in a dress that hides it very well) and Awesome Kong, who looks like she's lost about 50lbs. They all say some nice words for Gail until Dixie Carter comes out (getting booed out of the building in the process) for the long introduction.

Gail comes to the ring and introduces a video tribute, with Al Snow, Billy Corgan and Jade doing most of the talking. Gail reads a quick speech and thanks everyone for helping her get here, including a lot of WWE women and everyone backstage. This was nice and it's hard to make fun of something rather classy.

We recap Decay vs. the Hardys in the Great War. Decay took the titles earlier in the year and the Hardys invited them to North Carolina for Final Deletion II. This is a match with unclear rules with the titles on

the line.

Tag Team Titles: Hardys vs. Decay

Decay is defending. Reby Hardy, in a very long red dress, plays her family to the ring on a live piano. The women are in the ring as well to start and there are weapons around the ring. It's a wild brawl to start of course and Reby is misted early on, meaning she has to go to the back. Steve clotheslines Matt and says he wants to break his back. Matt saves himself from a suplex but Rosemary throws in a trashcan.

Abyss and Jeff are nowhere to be seen as Rosemary comes in with a Van Terminator of all things to give Steve two on the floor. Back in the ring, Abyss staples Jeff in the forehead. Josh: "Somebody is teeing off on somebody on the other side of the Impact Zone." Thanks for that information Josh. Matt and Abyss fight to the back with Abyss punching out a referee. Steve and Jeff join them with Decay in control. Jeff tries to reach a bucket labeled "Lake of Reincarnation" but Steve hits him with a music stand.

Back to Matt and Abyss, who fight over by a Universal Studios sign before Steve pours the bucket over Jeff....who has disappeared. There's no commentary as Jeff (presumably) throws pumpkins at Steve. We see Jeff, who is now some kind of steampunk pimp with a southern accent, and says he's Jeff's friend. Matt and Abyss fight in front of a car as Rosemary returns to slap Jeff, earning herself a pumpkin over the head as Jeff shouts like the Joker. Steve takes Jeff down and tells Rosemary to go help Abyss, who is throwing Matt against a truck.

Some "fan" appears and offers to fight Abyss because he's on Team Delete. That's fine with Rosemary who takes him out with one shot. Back to Jeff, who pulls out an umbrella and turns into Willow. Abyss has Janice but Matt throws fire from his hands to set it on fire. "Janice you look so hot." Someone steals a truck with Abyss and Matt fighting in the back but it's cut off by Vanguard 1, who chases Rosemary off. More shouting ensues and we cut back to the Impact Zone where Willow brings Steve back inside. Willow grabs a ladder as commentary comes back because it's no longer pre-taped.

Matt and Abyss stagger back inside as well with Abyss suplexing Matt on the ramp. Jeff (no longer Willow) crawls back out from under the ring and baseball slides a table into Steve. The Twist of Fate and Swanton get two on Abyss, who brings out the barbed wire board. Matt takes over and adds in the thumbtacks, followed by a Side Effect onto various sharp objects.

A middle rope elbow sandwiches Abyss between two barbed wire boards for two. The women come back with Reby putting Rosemary through a table. Steve takes Abyss' place and gets a Twist of Fate with a chair around his neck. Matt sets up two tables and a ladder before stopping to tell Jeff to indulge in his addiction. Jeff Swantons through Steve for the pin and the titles at 22:45.

Rating: C. I have no idea what to think of this but I'll take the Monster's Ball part over the Final Deletion part any day. This stuff just isn't for me and I really don't know what to say about most of it. The insanity is really creative and you can tell Matt and Jeff have put a lot of thought into the characters but it's just not my kind of stuff. It's entertaining but I'd rather watch regular wrestling than whatever this was.

We recap Lethal Lockdown with Lashley picking the main event stipulations.

Lashley is tired of people like EC3 being placed in front of him. Tonight is about teaching a lesson.

Knockouts Title: Maria Kanellis-Bennett vs. Gail Kim

Maria is defending but says she can't wrestle because her hand is still broken. Allie says she has good news: the doctor said she's cleared to wrestle. Maria: "You are so stupid!" The bell rings anyway and Maria clotheslines Gail on the floor. They head inside with Maria slamming Gail head first onto the mat to set up a chinlock.

Gail fights up so Mike Bennett throws in the brace for a shot to the head. That's only good for two and Allie is caught with the brace, earning her more yelling from Maria. Gail picks the brace off and throws it away before starting with the real beating. The Figure Four around the

post has Maria screaming and Eat Defeat (after a double middle finger to Maria) gives Gail the title back at 5:18.

Rating: D. Well this was about as boring as they could have gone but that's TNA and Gail Kim in a nutshell. Gail just wins the title back because that's what she does and all the stuff with Sienna, Laurel and even Allie means nothing at this point. Allie will probably go somewhere soon but this really, really didn't do anything for me.

Bennett goes into a tirade against the fans for trying to screw his family over so it's time to shut this show down. The lights go out (on purpose this time) and here are the debuting Cody (no longer Rhodes/Runnels) and Brandi (who can be called Rhodes). Maria starts yelling at Cody so Brandi gets in her face, earning Maria a knee to the head. The brawl is on with Cody hitting the Beautiful Disaster. This wasn't much and felt really thrown together.

Quick recap of Carter vs. Lashley. Carter is the latest person to come after the title and Lashley has promised to treat him like everyone who has come before.

TNA World Title: Ethan Carter III vs. Lashley

No Holds Barred with Lashley defending. Lashley spears Ethan during the Big Match Intros and then allows JB to finish his introduction. Why don't more people do that? Carter says ring the bell anyway but Lashley runs him over with a clothesline. Some clotheslines from Ethan put Lashley on the floor but the champ shrugs off everything Ethan throws at him.

A quick Dominator has Carter in more trouble and Lashley throws him onto the ramp. Back in and Carter throws him with a t-bone suplex, followed by an elbow to the jaw for two. Carter hammers away but gets speared again to cut him in half. Lashley gets the title but walks into a snap German suplex for two before rolling out to the floor. A TK3 on the steps knocks Lashley silly but they're still outside.

Back in and the third spear gets two on Carter before Lashley just unloads on him with a chair. A Rock Bottom into a side choke has Carter in trouble but he grabs the referee's leg to keep the match going. Ethan

fights up and rolls some German suplexes, setting up the 1%er for two. A super 1%er is broken up and a middle rope spear pins Carter at 16:12.

Rating: C+. If that's their biggest match of the year, they're in big trouble. The match was fine but this could have been on any given episode of Impact instead of main eventing the biggest show of the year. Lashley winning is acceptable enough but who in the world is supposed to challenge him now? Moose? Good enough match here but really anti-climactic and the no holds barred thing didn't matter at all.

And...that's it. No big debut, no special announcement, nothing out of the ordinary. Lashley just poses and the show ends.

Overall Rating: C. Of all the things TNA could have done, this was probably the worst option. They did NOTHING special here, unless you count the X-Division Title getting a standard match with more than ten minutes for once. The wrestling was really just a bit longer than what you would see on a regular Impact and that's not saying much. I didn't hate the show but it was just there.

Nothing really stands out (Final Deletion stuff has been done already) and the ending just happened. Why are people so worried about what happens to this company? The show was fine but absolutely nothing beyond that and that's not good on your biggest night of the year. As usual, TNA does just enough to scrape by and that's (partially) why they're in the shape they're in: they do little more than exist with nothing outside of Matt's insanity doing anything fresh. This was disappointing and I'm really not surprised by that, which is a major problem.

Results

DJZ b. Trevor Lee – DJZ

Eli Drake won Bound For Gold last eliminating Tyrus and Jesse Godderz

Moose b. Mike Bennett – Discus lariat

Aron Rex b. Eddie Edwards via split decision

Hardys b. Decay – Swanton Bomb through a table

Gail Kim b. Maria Kanellis-Bennett – Eat Defeat

Lashley b. Ethan Carter III – Middle rope spear

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