

# Monday Night Raw – July 11, 2016: This Close To Interesting

## Monday Night Raw

Date: July 11, 2016

Location: Joe Louis Arena, Detroit, Michigan

Commentators: John Bradshaw Layfield, Michael Cole, Byron Saxton

Things are back to normal this week, or at least as back to normal as they're going to be with just one more Raw after this before the Draft takes place. The only major event announced for tonight is Zack Ryder challenging Rusev for the United States Title after beating Sheamus twice last week. Let's get to it.

First of all, on a personal note, Happy Anniversary Becca. Thanks for an amazing year and I love you.

Opening sequence.

## Battle Royal

Goldust, Darren Young, Apollo Crews, Viktor, Konnor, Bubba Ray Dudley, D-Von Dudley, Dolph Ziggler, Bo Dallas, Simon Gotch, Aiden English, R-Truth, Baron Corbin, Jimmy Uso, Jey Uso, Jack Swagger, Alberto Del Rio, Curtis Axel

Winner gets an Intercontinental Title shot at Battleground so Miz and Maryse are on commentary. English is put out early and he lands near Bob Backlund, who is managing Young. R-Truth puts out Viktor and Bubba (Not D-Von, Cole.) gets rid of Axel. There goes Truth and Konnor follows him out. One Uso tries to eliminate the other but they settle with a double superkick to get rid of D-Von as we go to a break.

Back with Gotch and Jey having been eliminated during the break. Del Rio gets rid of Goldust and Crews eliminates Dallas as the ring is emptying out. Jimmy and Swagger are thrown out so we're down to Crews, Bubba,

Young, Del Rio, Corbin and Ziggler. Crews low bridges Bubba out and Del Rio is the only one left standing. Ziggler drops him with a Fameasser and goes for a cover out of instinct. That's not enough to eliminate him though as Alberto comes back with a tilt-a-whirl gutbuster.

Alberto misses a charge and goes through the ropes, allowing Ziggler to superkick him to the floor which isn't an elimination. Corbin sends Dolph to the apron but can't get him out. Del Rio comes back in and gets backdropped out by Crews to put us down to four. Corbin gets rid of Ziggler but Crews gets rid of himself and Corbin, leaving Young to win the thing at 13:20.

**Rating:** D. You know what, why not? That's certainly a unique way to win the match and it's a nice way to have Young go somewhere after all those vignettes. I would have gone with Crews here but this could have been a lot worse. I mean, at least it's not another battle of Cleveland with Ziggler vs. Miz. It was a pretty standard battle royal though, which is only going to be so entertaining.

Backlund picks Young up to celebrate.

Shane and Stephanie McMahon are talking about why Vince McMahon is going to be here tonight. Maybe it's to give one of them a promotion. Seth Rollins comes in and thinks Vince is here to see about him as the face of the WWE. Rollins has footage for tonight and Shane thinks it should be on the Ambrose Asylum. Stephanie says no because she hates Dean (Have we ever gotten a reason other than he's apparently an embarrassment to the company?) so Seth will get to debut the Rollins Report. Great. EVEN MORE talking.

Quick look at Brock Lesnar winning his return to the UFC on Saturday before he faces Randy Orton at Summerslam. Orton will be on the Highlight Reel at Battleground.

Zack Ryder comes up to challenge Rusev again but Sheamus jumps him from behind. Apparently there's no title match tonight because Ryder will be facing Sheamus next. Three WOO's for false advertising!

Sheamus vs. Zack Ryder

Ryder goes right after him to start and knocks Sheamus to the floor for a dropkick off the apron. Back in and a running boot to the face gets two for Zack as the announcers ignore the match to play fantasy draft. Not that it matters as the Brogue Kick ends Ryder at 2:22. I knew this was coming because this is how WWE works but thanks for YET ANOTHER waste of potential for the sake of a nothing match on Smackdown.

Rusev comes out and beats up Ryder as well while shouting that he accepts Ryder's challenge. Wait, so Ryder is getting the title shot after Sheamus just beat him clean? SERIOUSLY? This is the kind of stuff you suggest in sarcasm because it's the dumbest thing you could possibly do, not what you actually do on Raw.

### Breezango vs. Lucha Dragons

This is due to the Dragons messing up Breeze's vest on the pre-show. Fandango and Cara start things off and it's time for more Draft talk. Cara headscissors him down but gets caught in the wrong corner to put him in trouble. Fandango is sent into the corner as well and the hot tag brings in Kalisto, who almost immediately botches a springboard. A few kicks to Breeze go better and the hurricanrana driver makes it worse. The numbers get the better of him though and Breeze gets in a superkick for the pin on Kalisto at 4:20.

**Rating:** D+. I can't help it but I like Breezango. They're just a goofy little midcard heel team but it's not like there's anything better for either of them to do. If nothing else it means we're getting something out of that Golden Truth story, which went on forever and deserves to actually go somewhere. Also it's not like the Dragons mean anything at this point anyway so them losing doesn't exactly matter.

Here's Seth Rollins for the Rollins Report. Tonight he has something special for us: footage from a special sitdown interview with Roman Reigns. Please tell me this isn't going to be one of those things where he asks questions and Reigns' answers are to completely different questions and edited to sound embarrassing.

We see the footage and it's....one of those things where he asks questions and Reigns' answers are to completely different questions and edited to

sound embarrassing. Basically Reigns "admits" he did it and says he should be out of the triple threat because he's no role model. Oh and he hates Dean being champion.

Back in the arena, Rollins says Ambrose should be out of the triple threat because he deserves his rematch for the title, one on one. Cue Ambrose but Rollins yells at him for being a coward and stealing the title from him at Money in the Bank. Dean says he loves to come out here and have a good time but he's the top man in this industry. He's more than just a joke and a utility player because he's the only one still standing and the king of this company. Dean goes on about Rollins wanting another shot and offers a title shot anywhere any place. Rollins is ready right now but nah, not tonight. He'll see Dean next week.

We get a quick preview of New Day fighting the Wyatt Family at their compound. This DEFINITELY looks like the Final Deletion.

Ambrose vs. Rollins for the title is confirmed for next week.

Kevin Owens vs. ???

Sami Zayn is on commentary but Kevin won't come out until he's gone. Stephanie comes in to say get rid of Sami because she's all about solutions. Sami starts to leave but gets in a fight with Owens on the ramp. No match.

Vince arrives and says he's here to name the Commissioner of Smackdown.

Kevin Owens vs. Cesaro

Time for more Draft talk! I know it's a big deal but could you please talk about the actual match for more than two seconds first? Cesaro gutwrenches him over for two to start before they trade headlocks. A hurricanrana puts Owens down but he makes the ropes to break up the Swing. Owens takes over with a whip into the barricade as the announcers talk about where John Cena will be drafted. Cesaro's suplex doesn't break their focus but Owens knocks him into the barricade as we take a break.

Back with Cesaro fighting out of a chinlock and avoiding the Cannonball in the corner. The Pop Up Powerbomb is blocked and the springboard

spinning uppercut gets two for Cesaro. Another running uppercut on the floor (with Cesaro wearing JBL's hat) but Cesaro gets crotched on top to slow him down. Owens busts out a torture rack neckbreaker for the clean pin at 12:24.

**Rating:** C+. I like the finisher but I could go without Cesaro losing all over again. I mean to be fair he had that awesome run against Miz and came up short, which is his standard operating procedure. It's still working, but at some point you're just wasting a lot of potential and acting like Cesaro isn't being hurt by all the losses.

Post match Owens grabs a headset to brag about how awesome he is until Sami Zayn jumps him from behind. Cesaro swings Owens in a meaningless gesture. Maybe he should, I don't know, be upset about the loss?

The Club thinks John Cena is abandoning Enzo and Big Cass by hosting the ESPYs and not being here tonight. Maybe after the win they could hop on a plane and crash the awards so they can beat up John Cena.

#### Heath Slater vs. Titus O'Neil

We actually get a Slater Gator reference for a name I never thought (or hoped to) I'd hear again. Titus throws him around to start but runs into a raised boot in the corner. That means it's time for a quick Bo-Train, followed by Slater getting two off a DDT. Titus starts powering back and catches a diving Heath in three straight backbreakers. The Clash of the Titus puts Heath away at 3:12.

**Rating:** D. Well that happened and I'm not sure what else there is to say about it. This is another short match that doesn't seem to mean much but maybe that's going to be the norm going forward. Titus winning is fine but I'm not sure where he's going after losing to Rusev so decisively.

Sasha has been waiting to shut Dana Brooke up all weekend now and wants the title after that. Tonight, she gets real.

We look back at the Wyatt Family challenging the New Day to come to their compound last week.

Now we go to the compound, where a bunch of cars turn their lights on and

try to crush New Day as they get out of their truck. The editing makes this look like it's being played in fast motion so it's almost impossible to keep track of. The Wyatts arrive in a car and the brawl is on with New Day being beaten down with a variety of weapons. Woods hides behind a tree until Bray swings an ax at him and rams him into the tree trunk.

Kofi is shoved into some mud until Big E. suplexes Rowan. Strowman (who looks even more frightening with his shirt off) and Big E. hit each other a few times until Bray comes back and drops the unconscious Woods by the car. Kofi and Big E. are beaten down again as the editing gets even faster. Woods gets back up with a trashcan lid for a save but Bray beats everyone down and asks where the power of positivity is now.

New Day is sent into a car which is quickly beaten down but they escaped somewhere in there. Bray is left alone but smiles at New Day, who are freaked out by his laughter. Rowan and Strowman come back but a bunch of people in sheep masks appear, all holding lanterns. That's enough for New Day as they bail, leaving Bray to say follow the buzzards.

Yes it's clearly a takeoff from the Final Deletion and I'm sure I'll hear about how much better TNA's version was, though this was the serious version and exactly the kind of thing that made the Wyatts creepy in the first place. This really is something that has to be seen though as words really don't do it justice. It worked though.

#### Enzo Amore/Big Cass vs. The Club

Enzo and Cass say they want Cena's spot but they're willing to earn it. The Club on the other hand think they can take it by beating Cena up 3-1. AJ tells them to walk away but Enzo says the only place they're walking is into that ring right now. This is joined in progress after a break with Enzo trying to hold Anderson with a headlock. It's quickly off to Gallows who headbutts Enzo back into the corner as the beatdown begins.

Karl comes back in for a headlock but Cass comes in and slams Enzo onto Anderson for two. To be fair Enzo might as well just be a projectile as I don't think he's entirely human. Gallows kicks Enzo in the face and sends him shoulder first into the post as we take a break. Back with Anderson and Gallows taking turns on Enzo. Anderson finally lets Enzo get away for

the hot tag to Cass (Enzo's signature) and a fall away slam sets up the Bada Boom Shakalacka. AJ low bridges Gallows to the floor though and it's a DQ at 10:48.

**Rating:** C. This was just a long beating on Enzo and to be fair that's almost all he's good for in a situation like this one. I like how much they're protecting Cass though as I don't think he's been pinned yet and the Club actually lost here. The match was fine, albeit pretty basic for the most part. It's acceptable though as you don't want to burn the fans out on this match like they did with the Club vs. the Usos.

Post match the beating is almost on but here's Cena, who was in Los Angeles earlier today, for the save. Well at least he's not live via satellite. That earns him a big CENA chant which you really don't hear that often.

#### Dana Brooke vs. Sasha Banks

Sasha shoves her outside to start and things instantly slow down. Back in and Dana talks a lot of trash before kneeing Sasha in the ribs. Banks is sent outside so Charlotte can brag us to a break. Back with Sasha in a chinlock (Charlotte: "Very good Dana.") before stomping away in the corner. The announcers continue to talk about ANYTHING other than this match as Dana grabs another chinlock to keep things slow. Sasha fights out again and hits the double knees in the corner. Dana crotches her on top but Sasha pops right back up and grabs the Bank Statement for the win at 12:00.

**Rating:** C-. This was fine and another win for Sasha as that Natalya feud looks more and more pointless every single week. Dana is getting better in the ring as she's not botching everything she tries but she still is on the main roster far sooner than she probably should have been.

Post match Charlotte says that's not good enough so Sasha has to beat Dana again on Smackdown.

Here are Shane, Stephanie and Vince for the Smackdown Commissioner announcement. Vince thinks they've been doing a fair job but wonders how they could be his kids. Where's the violence and anger? How could they

not have stabbed each other in the back yet? What's up with Stephanie being all passive aggressive and Shane having no ruthless aggression?

The kids are given a chance to convince their dad that they should be in charge of Smackdown and Stephanie goes first. Stephanie goes on a rant about what Shane said on the Mick Foley podcast about how he left when he wasn't congratulated enough. That's nothing compared to what he says behind Vince's back because he's all crazy and needing to be praised.

Shane says he came back in this arena five months ago and he's eternally thankful. He's ready to change everything about Smackdown and shatter the glass ceilings that Vince and Stephanie have set up. We get a quick fan poll with Shane easily winning which Stephanie attributes to crowd manipulation.

Vince doesn't care what the people think but one of them has to run Smackdown. That will be.....Shane, while Stephanie runs Raw. Ah that's better. For a second there I thought they might actually do something interesting. Vince wants them to compete for who gets the keys to the kingdom but they'll both be naming General Managers. Great. MORE power struggles and double bosses for each show.

Vince leaves and Stephanie tells Shane she's going to make him wish he was never born. Shane thinks Stephanie is hiding something and it's fear. It's game on, but Stephanie says she's married to the only game in this business. She slaps him in the face so he kisses her on the cheek, only to have Stephanie slip off the steps as she leaves to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C. I actually liked this show more than I was expecting to as it absolutely flew by. Even though it was just a big preview for the Draft next week (as it should have been), they kept it entertaining enough and set some stuff up going forward, which is all it was supposed to do. Unfortunately the ending really hurt things as it's going to be all about the McMahons even longer, which is really the last thing they needed to go with but that's how WWE works. Anyway, not a good show or anything but it was good enough for a show in a vacuum like everything else is around here at the moment.

Results



Darren Young won a battle royal after Baron Corbin and Apollo Crews eliminated each other

Sheamus b. Zack Ryder – Brogue Kick

Breezango b. Lucha Dragons – Superkick to Kalisto

Kevin Owens b. Cesaro – Torture rack neckbreaker

Enzo Amore/Big Cass b. The Club via DQ when AJ Styles interfered

Sasha Banks b. Dana Brooke – Bank Statement

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book on NXT: The Full Sail Years Volume II at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01FWZZ2UA>

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

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

---

# **SuperBrawl Revenge (SuperBrawl 2001, 2016 Redo): One More Time**

**SuperBrawl Revenge**

Date: February 18, 2001

Location: Nashville Municipal Auditorium, Nashville, Tennessee

Attendance: 4,395

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Scott Hudson

I'm still not sure what the REVENGE subtitle is referring to but it might be due to the fact that we've seen several of these matches on TV in recent weeks. The main event is Kevin Nash challenging Scott Steiner for the World Title in a match we saw just six days ago on Nitro. Let's get to it.

The opening video looks like something out of a serial killer movie with someone cutting out pictures of Ric Flair and cutting words like PSYCHO and GREED out of magazines and newspapers. No idea what it meant but at least it looked cool.

Jamie Knoble vs. Evan Karagias vs. Kaz Hayashi vs. Yang vs. Shannon Moore vs. Shane Helms

Elimination match for the #1 contendership. Helms is a replacement after Animal attacked Kidman so we can have these six opening ANOTHER pay per view. Thankfully there are tags here so it won't be as insane to keep track of. Well at least to start because there's no way the tags last. Jamie and Shannon start things off but Shane comes in with Shannon tossing Jamie into a powerbomb for two.

Even sends 3 Count to the floor with the Dragons hitting stereo Asai Moonsaults (which the camera mostly misses). Back in and the Dragons double team Jamie, followed by Kaz headscissoring him into the middle turnbuckle. Jamie fights back and it's off to Evan to beat on Yang. I know it's not exactly a surprise but it would have been nice to not have a three way tag for a change.

Karagias plants Yang with a full nelson slam and then almost completely misses a springboard dive. Shane tags himself in and goes nuts on Evan before getting spun around into a rollup by Yang. Things are starting to speed up a bit with the Samoan Drop/neckbreaker combination getting two on Yang as Kaz makes the save. Tony says anyone could have made a save and Hudson talks about how anyone should have because he doesn't know the rules of this thing.

The tags start getting much faster until Kaz starts cleaning house, only to have Evan drive him into the corner. Shane pops up with a top rope superplex to drop Kaz, followed by FIVE straight missed top rope moves to put all six down. Hudson: "The first man to his feet has to be the legal man." No Scott, that's not how wrestling works.

Kaz springboards into a kick to Evan's head, only to get kicked into an X Plex from Shane. Evan hits a good looking springboard dive to take out Shane and Yang on the floor. We get the parade of dives with Jamie going last and being the only man standing. Back in and Evan gorilla presses Kaz into a spinebuster for two, followed by a powerbomb/missile dropkick combo but Jamie and Evan fight over who gets to cover. Guys don't listen to Scott Hudson. It just destroys your career. In the melee, Yang grabs an over the back piledriver on Evan for the first elimination.

Jamie slips back in and grabs a tombstone to get rid of Yang to get us down to four. 3 Count's double team doesn't work as Jamie dropkicks Shannon into the barricade, only to have Shannon come back in with a super Bottoms Up for the pin on Noble. So we're down to Shannon, Shane and Kaz with the team looking down at Hayashi. Hudson tries to say there are no teams here because he thinks we might believe him. In a fairly scary looking spot, Shannon backslides Kaz and Shane adds a guillotine legdrop at the same time.

Shane calls for the Vertebreaker but Shannon gives him the Bottoms Up in a quick turn. We get a ref bump on the save (STOP DOING THAT!) so Shane can kick out but Shannon low blows him right back down. Kaz and Shannon double team him for a bit before Kaz throws Moore outside. Shane gets back up and hits the Nightmare on Helm Street to eliminate Shannon and we're down to two. Kaz rolls through a top rope sunset flip and kicks Shane in the face for two, only to get caught in the Vertebreaker to give Shane the title shot.

**Rating:** B. The match was the fun you would expect from these six but it's getting really tiresome to see WCW putting them against each other over and over again. It's cool to see them get some time like this (over seventeen minutes, the longest match on the show) but of course it's the opener and the match is likely to be forgotten in about an hour because

that's where these guys belong.

Earlier today Chavo Guerrero was with Animal and Ric Flair but we can't hear what was said. Chavo was upset though.

Hugh Morrus says General Rection did a lot of good things for the Wall in WCW but then Rection (he's speaking like Rection is a different person) felt Wall's betrayal. Tonight it's Hugh Morrus, who has nothing but hatred in his heart.

Ric gives Scott Steiner an envelope that contains Kevin Nash's future. Scott is very pleased by this.

Commissioner Lance Storm tells Kronik (arriving half an hour into the show) that Clark has to be seen by the company doctor before he can wrestle tonight. The Brian/Bryan's don't seem to mind.

#### Hugh Morrus vs. The Wall

Grudge match following the split of the Misfits in Action. Wall hammers away to start and gets an impressive looking shoulder to knock Morrus outside. Morrus comes back with a hard shot of his own and sends Wall into the steps, which he uses to crush Wall's head up against the post. They get back in after a few minutes on the floor with Hugh dropping a top rope elbow for no cover.

Wall comes back with some big chops, followed by headbutts in the corner. Morrus avoids a top rope legdrop and both guys are down again. A spinebuster plants Morrus and keeps up the string of hard hitting moves. Back up and Wall gets flapjacked so we can have another double breather. They slug it out from their knees, which Hudson describes as not wrestling of any type. Then why exactly am I watching? Morrus gets up first and hits a German suplex to set up No Laughing Matter for the pin.

**Rating:** D. This started off well with them beating on each other with heavy shots that looked like they did a lot of damage but then the ridiculous amount of laying around after big spots got annoying in a hurry. Cut this match down by about two or three minutes and it's actually a fun power brawl but it was clear that they were out there too

long. Wall didn't look as horrible here, which is high praise in his case.

Konnan goes after Animal for what he did to Kidman.

We recap the battle of the Thrillers, which is basically about who has the Tag Team Titles, which set up a rivalry over who were the stars of the team.

### Tag Team Titles: Sean O'Haire/Chuck Palumbo vs. Mark Jindrak/Shawn Stasiak

O'Haire and Palumbo are defending. Before the match, both teams say they're awesome and promise a win. A quick brawl breaks out at the bell before Stasiak clotheslines O'Haire to start. Sean sends Jindrak throat first into the ropes though, allowing Palumbo to get in a dropkick to the face. The champs take over with Palumbo jumping over his partner to land on Mark's ribs before grabbing a sleeper.

Stasiak actually does something right for a change as he distracts Palumbo so Mark can get in a clothesline to take over. A double clothesline into a double nipup into a double elbow drop let the challengers show off a bit, only to have Palumbo hit that insanely hard right hand on Stasiak's jaw. It's not enough for the tag though as Jindrak takes him back into the corner for more stomping.

Mark grabs the chinlock on Palumbo as they're doing the smart thing here by waiting on the hot tag to O'Haire, who is by far the most interesting of these four. Back to Stasiak for an armbar before Jindrak grabs a tilt-a-whirl slam for two. They're certainly giving Stasiak and Jindrak a bunch of offense.

Shawn misses a top rope splash (which would have overshot Palumbo by three feet anyway) and the hot tag finally brings in O'Haire to a moderate pop. That's not bad considering there's no reason to cheer the champs, who never have done anything to turn face. Everything breaks down and Stasiak has to pull his partner away before the Seanton Bomb can launch. Not that it matters as Palumbo Jungle Kicks Shawn down, setting up the Seanton to retain.

**Rating:** B-. Not bad at all here and the clean finish did a lot of good here. Sometimes you just need one side to come off as the better team and that's what happened in this match. O'Haire looks like a star and I'm really surprised he didn't become a bigger deal in wrestling due to his look and athleticism alone. The other three were average at best (Palumbo) and a warm body at worst (Stasiak) with all four of them really needing personalities and/or characters.

Dustin Rhodes blames Ric Flair for keeping him out of WCW. Tonight he's drawing first blood on his team. After that, you will never forget the name of Dustin Rhodes.

#### Cruiserweight Title: Rey Mysterio Jr. vs. Chavo Guerrero Jr.

Chavo is defending after Rey won a gauntlet match earlier in the month. Rey starts fast with a running clothesline as you can see far too many empty seats in the upper deck. The champ sends him to the apron for an attempted sunset bomb which is countered into a hurricanrana to send Chavo flying. Back in and Chavo drapes him ribs first across the top rope.

Going after Rey's ribs has worked for years so there's no reason to not go for it again. Rey gets tied up in the Tree of Woe to work on the knee but Chavo stays on the ribs. Now that's just versatility. It's time for the Gory Special for a bit with Chavo teasing the Gory Bomb (not Gory Buster, no matter how many times the announcers try to refer to it as such). Rey escapes and tries a springboard, only to dive into a dropkick to the ribs. This has been all Chavo as he keeps countering everything Rey throws at him.

There's an STF of all things before Chavo sends him outside. Rey comes up holding his knee which is quickly sent into the steps. Chavo steals a fan's Mysterio mask and puts it on Rey before grabbing a chinlock. Back up and Rey crotches him on the turnbuckle, setting up a hurricanrana as the mask comes off. Chavo takes a breather outside so Rey flip dives over the top to take him out as he FINALLY starts acting like himself. Another springboard goes badly for Rey though as he bangs up his knee, also just like himself.

It's time for a chair because...well I have no idea actually. Rey sends Chavo into the buckle and tries a hurricanrana, which finally sends Chavo outside after two botches. Hudson praises Rey's execution, which Tony says is appropriate since he almost killed Chavo. That was far too close to being amusing. Cut it out Schiavone. Back in and the Bronco Buster hits Guerrero as Rey is way too healthy in a hurry. Rey goes for a chair so Chavo finds another one to crack Rey in the head, setting up the brainbuster to retain the title.

**Rating:** B+. What is with this show tonight? We're almost halfway in and there has been one bad (and not even that bad) match so far. Chavo was basically wrestling himself for most of this match, which you really don't expect out of Rey. To be fair though there's a good chance that Mysterio is injured or at least banged up as he was so often. Chavo on the other hand is looking like the best champion in years and his matches are getting better and better every time.

Commissioner Storm moves up Kronik's match, meaning Clark might not be tested in time.

We recap Dustin Rhodes vs. Rick Steiner, which is basically "Dustin is back and was here ten years ago so therefore he's awesome" and Rick Steiner is here because he has to be.

#### US Title: Rick Steiner vs. Dustin Rhodes

Steiner is defending after Dustin pinned him on Nitro. Dustin starts fast with a DDT and clothesline as we hear about the Rhodes vs. Flair feud. A missed crossbody sends Dustin outside and it's time for the brawling. Rick slowly pounds away and rakes the eyes, making sure he has as little wrestling involved as possible.

We hit the chinlock for a bit before it's off to a half crab. It's off to another chinlock until Dustin gets a jawbreaker (more like a Diamond Cutter) to escape. A clothesline puts Rick down again but he won't sell a faceplant. Dustin's bulldog sends the champ outside but the referee takes a chair away from Rhodes. During the argument, Rick takes the turnbuckle pad off and a hotshot onto the steel retains the title.

**Rating:** D. Rick Steiner sucks and I'm not sure I need to go much further than that. It doesn't help that Dustin is such an uninteresting character with his clotheslines and bulldogs as we wait on the latest chapter in Dusty vs. Ric. This is probably the best example of WCW's biggest problem: old guys hogging spots with no one else ever getting a chance. I'm no fan of his but Shane Douglas has been tossed aside in this whole thing for the sake of Steiner and that's a downgrade at this point. At least Shane can cut a good heel promo.

Post match Rick beats on him even more but Dustin fights back and hits Shattered Dreams.

Ric tells Storm that everyone not on their team needs to be out of the building after their match. Also, Kronik vs. Totally Buff is now a #1 contenders match. Storm says consider it done. This has been your most recent plot advancement.

Diamond Dallas Page gives Cat a pep talk.

#### Totally Buff vs. Kronik

Before the match, Totally Buff has to laugh that Goldberg is gone. After getting through that, Buff says Clark hasn't been medically released so this is a handicap match. Clark comes out but gets blasted in the head by a Buff chair shot to really make this two on one. Bagwell keeps moving to break up a full nelson slam and it's an early double teaming to keep Adams in trouble. A double back elbow gets two and it's off to Luger to stay on the back.

Adams makes a big comeback with some clotheslines and throws Bagwell at Luger. The super Blockbuster is broken up and here's Clark into the ring as....Bryan Clark comes out to the stage. IT'S A SWERVE as the Clark who was laid out earlier (when Kronik's mood lighting was still on) was actually Mike Awesome in disguise. Mike lays out Adams with a German suplex, setting up the Blockbuster for the pin and the title shot at Greed.

**Rating:** D-. When I have to sit and try to figure out how many parts there were to a swerve, it might be a bit too complicated. It also doesn't help



that this is a match we've seen so many times already in recent weeks that all the novelty or interest in it has gone away. Bad on so many levels, not the least of which is Luger getting a title shot at the next pay per view.

The announcers talk about the swerve with Hudson pointing out that Storm must have been in on it, not realizing that Tony JUST SAID THAT. Bobby Heenan used to do that as a gag with Monsoon. Hudson does it because he's not that bright.

Storm ejects Kronik from the building but they beat up security.

### Lance Storm vs. The Cat

Winner is Commissioner, though if Cat wins it doesn't take effect until midnight. Before the match we get a quick fan poll to decide who the people want as commissioner. Storm rides him to the mat to start and slaps him in the back of the head for fun. A spinning kick to the face sends Lance outside but he sends Cat into the barricade. Cat's leg is bent around the ropes to start the build towards the Mapleleaf. Hudson says Cat won't give up that easily because he wants that corner office back.

Storm kicks the leg out to break up a comeback bid but he takes too long going up and gets slammed back down. The leg is wrapped around the post though and Cat is down again. That lasts all of ten seconds before he comes back with his dancing offense, including the elbow drop. There's a kick to the head but cue Mike Sanders, who is quickly taken down by Miss Jones (who is looking great tonight). The Feliner puts Storm away and makes Cat Commissioner again.

**Rating:** D. Thank goodness our six day international crisis is over. This could have been a lot worse but the key thing here was keeping it short. Cat is only going to be able to do so much in the ring, even with a technician like Storm out there doing most of the work for him. This was more of a spectacle, but Storm really should have been out of power longer.

Quick recap of Jeff Jarrett vs. Diamond Dallas Page, which is mainly over

Jarrett having Page arrested (went nowhere) before bringing Page's old enemy Kanyon back to feud with Page again.

Cat is the new Commissioner but Ric has thrown him out of the building.

### Jeff Jarrett vs. Diamond Dallas Page

Not so fast because Jeff brings up Page saying he would fight Kanyon anywhere anytime.

### Diamond Dallas Page vs. Kanyon

Kanyon sneaks in from behind but Page is ready for him with the discus lariat. They head outside with Kanyon going into the barricade a few times. Kanyon sends him in as well though, followed by a Fameasser from the apron onto the steps. Page has some blood on his eye as Kanyon suplexes him from the bottom rope back in for two. Another Fameasser (which Tony calls innovative) gets two more for Kanyon and we hit an innovative chinlock.

Back up and Kanyon uses Page's swinging neckbreaker for two as there is a lot more blood in a hurry. Page fights back with a swinging Rock Bottom, only to eat a sitout Alabama Slam for another near fall. Kanyon hits the Cutter but the referee goes down, allowing Jarrett to come in with the Stroke. A Flatliner puts Page away.

**Rating:** C+. These are two guys who are going to have a good match with almost anyone you put out there and that's what we got here. The Kanyon Cutter should have finished the match but at least the right person won here. Kanyon should have been a big deal but all the heel turns and time off really held him back.

Post match Kanyon introduces Jarrett for the original match.

### Diamond Dallas Page vs. Jeff Jarrett

Tony is saying Page just went "Ten, fifteen, twelve minutes" against Kanyon because just over eight minutes is close enough to twelve or fifteen. They fight into the crowd with Jarrett rocking the staggered Page with right hands. Back to ringside with Page sending him into the

announcers' table, only to be hit in the ribs with a few chair shots. Jeff drops some slow shots to the head but gets caught by the discus lariat. Sleeper, counter sleeper, jumping DDT from Page for a change of pace instead of the belly to back.

Back up and Page keeps slugging away with Jarrett going face first into the buckle over and over. Cue Kanyon, who Tony wants knocked out with a ball bat. Now come on Tony. You know it's the ball bat that sets up the finisher which knocks people out around here. Jeff chairs Page down for two but the guitar hits Kanyon by mistake, setting up the Diamond Cutter for the pin. Hudson: "THAT IS A PERFORMANCE FOR THE HISTORY BOOKS!" For having back to back long TV matches?

**Rating:** C+. Despite a lot of the flack Page gets, he's always going to give you a good match if he's allowed the chance. It probably won't be the best thing in the world but at least you're guaranteed something totally watchable at worst, which is something WCW is severely lacking at this point.

We recap Scott Steiner vs. Kevin Nash. Basically Nash is standing up for WCW but Steiner hit him in the knee with a pipe on Nitro.

Ric Flair comes out for commentary on the main event.

#### WCW World Title: Kevin Nash vs. Scott Steiner

Steiner is defending but before we have the match, let's look at the Sid Vicious injury to show how bad Scott can be to people. Ric has an announcement to make: the loser has to retire, which apparently was the ruling in the envelope. Nash is wheeled out with some good looking nurses and the leg in a cast. It looks like a countout but Nash stands up and we're ready to go. A belt shot to Steiner's head pins him in 12 seconds.

Of course that's not it as Flair says it's 2/3 falls and no DQ. We cut to the back to see Totally Buff lay out Page in the back as Nash beats on Steiner at ringside. Nash slowly hammers away before clotheslining him out to the floor. Midajah offers a distraction so Steiner can hit Nash in the head with a pipe. Flair makes it falls count anywhere so Steiner pins him on the floor for the second fall.

Some brass knuckles shots have Nash in even more trouble as the crowd is groaning as they're far from impressed here. Both guys are bleeding and Steiner keeps hammering away at the cut on Nash's head. The push-ups elbow gets two followed by the t-bone suplex for the same. Another knuckles shot is blocked with Nash hitting a side slam to put both guys down.

Midajah pulls the knuckles away from Nash but Flair sends in a chair so Nash can be knocked out (Tony: "He's dead!"). The Recliner is broken up (with Tony acting like Nash is the new Goldberg as a result) and Nash gets two off a chokeslam with Midajah making the save. The Jackknife connects but Midajah interferes AGAIN, earning herself a side slam. Flair pulls the referee out and punches him in the jaw, allowing Steiner to get in a low blow, knuckles shot, chair shot and the Recliner to retain.

**Rating:** F. Nash isn't exactly the new Goldberg because it didn't take this much to put Goldberg down. You could see what they were going for as soon as Nash pinned him off the belt shot and it was just a bunch of Tony treating Nash like the greatest thing that ever lived for the rest of the match. Nash actually wouldn't wrestle in WCW again so for once they did something right, though I'd be surprised if he wasn't on Nitro tomorrow.

**Overall Rating:** C+. This is a good example of a show where you knew exactly what you were going to get out of each match. Six man cruiserweight elimination? Good stuff. Lance Storm vs. The Cat? Waste of time. Kevin Nash vs. Scott Steiner? Oh please. The big surprise though was how much good stuff there actually was and the show was very nice as a result. I can't imagine anything else they'll have will top this but at least it was nice to have one more easy show to sit through.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book on NXT: The Full Sail Years Volume II at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01FWZZ2UA>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books

at:

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

---

# Thunder – February 14, 2001: An Acceptable Valentine's Day Present

## Thunder

Date: February 14, 2001

Location: Mississippi Coast Coliseum, Biloxi, Mississippi

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Mike Tenay

This show is the equivalent of going to the gas station and buying your significant other transmission fluid for Valentine's Day. It's also the final show before SuperBrawl and believe it or not there's something advertised for this week. Tonight we'll be seeing Hugh Morrus/Rey Mysterio vs. Chavo Guerrero Jr./The Wall as two feuds are combined into one. Let's get to it.

Nitro montage opens things up.

We see an exclusive clip of Kevin Nash being loaded into an ambulance after Nitro went off the air.

Opening sequence.

Commissioner Lance Storm is here in a suit and tells Mike Awesome he'll be wrestling tonight. Scott Steiner comes in and demands a match so he can hurt someone.

Jamie Knoble/Evan Karagias vs. Air Paris/AJ Styles

Well this is a bit more interesting. The winners are in the #1 contenders match on Sunday. AJ drives Noble into the corner to start as Tenay talks about how great he's heard Styles is. Believe it or not, Tenay points out that his finisher, the Shooting Styles Press is in fact named after himself. AJ dropkicks Jamie into the corner as everything breaks down and the newcomers clear the ring.

In a somewhat dangerous move, AJ backdrops Paris over the top onto both guys with Paris slightly banging up his knee. Back in and it's Evan vs. Paris with the rookie grabbing a sitout spinebuster. Styles comes in and gets a cheap shot on Noble but gets decked from behind to change control.

Something like a Trash Compactor gets two on AJ before Jamie grabs a surfboard. Noble can't get a tombstone as AJ grabs a pop up powerbomb for the hot tag off to Paris so everything can break down. Evan hits a great looking springboard plancha to take Styles out, setting up a Doomsday Device on Paris.

Jamie and Evan actually get in a fight over who can cover though, despite both of them moving on if they win. The delay lets Styles get back in but he takes a 450. Paris makes a save and the fans (along with me) are surprised that wasn't the finish. AJ busts out his Shooting Styles Press to the floor (meaning it's not actually a press) but takes out his partner by mistake. Back in and a powerbomb/missile dropkick combo puts Styles away.

**Rating:** B. Now that's how you debut a team. Above all else, Styles and Paris were allowed to control for a long time which helped the match seem like a bigger win for Noble and Karagias. It's also clear that AJ was the better prospect of the team as Paris was more of your run of the mill indy guy who happened to get a shot on TV.

Storm gives Mike Sanders Kwee Wee for later tonight.

Sean O'Haire tells Mark Jindrak to look into his eyes and fear what he sees.

We run down the SuperBrawl card.

## Sean O'Haire vs. Mark Jindrak

At least it's not Stasiak. Jindrak gets annoyed when Sean shoves him around so O'Haire punches him in the face. A running knee makes things even worse and then Sean just drops him out of a suplex. Apparently bored with beating Mark up this badly, Sean just kicks him out to the floor. To keep things going, O'Haire hits the Seanton Bomb from the apron for a nice variation on the move. He takes too long setting up the real one though and Jindrak kicks the rope to break it up.

A super hurricanrana takes Sean down for two as the fans are starting to get into this. Mark sends him to the ropes and...they presumably botch the heck out of something as we go to a shot of the crowd. Sean gets in a DDT to send Mark outside as Stasiak comes out to watch. No man, leave them alone and let them be entertaining for a change. Back in and O'Haire kicks him down to set up the Seanton Bomb for the quick pin.

**Rating:** C+. This was a total one man show from O'Haire as Jindrak, an athletic freak in his own right, just wasn't keeping up with him. Sean should have been a big deal and probably put into singles action in a hurry (picture him as the super face to take down the monster Steiner down the line) but instead he's stuck dealing with the rest of the Thrillers who are just beneath him. Like Stasiak for instance.

Jeff Jarrett and Rick Steiner want a match tonight and Storm smiles.

## Kwee Wee vs. Mike Sanders

Kwee Wee jumps on him for some right hands as we're in Angry Alan mode. A way too early piledriver attempt is countered with a backdrop but Sanders punches the mat by mistake. Instead they head outside with Kwee Wee hurricanranaing him down. A sunset flip off the apron...does nothing because it's on the floor so Kwee Wee throws him back inside but gets caught in a suplex for two. Kwee Wee gets in a suplex of his own and sends Sanders into the corner for some right hands. A Regal Roll gets two but Sanders grabs a rollup and the tights for the pin.

**Rating:** D. And so much for Kwee Wee. To be fair they had to have him lose here before he started getting too popular against their will and that

just couldn't happen. Sanders had almost no offense here and Kwee Wee did all the work but which one is getting the push? Sanders of course, mainly because he wasn't given a dead end gimmick by WCW's amazing braintrust.

Bryan Clark is taken out of the building as he can't wrestle tonight. Brian Adams rants until Totally Buff beats him down. Konnan comes in for the save.

Mike Awesome promises to break the Cat's bones so he can't land on his feet.

#### Mike Awesome vs. The Cat

Awesome starts fast by throwing Cat into the corner and just mauling him with forearms. Cat's comeback is easily shoved away as there's no answer for the power so far. A sleeper of all things slows Cat down until he comes back with....a wristlock? That earns him a low blow for general stupidity and they head outside. Cat tries choking him with a cable but for once the referee actually does his job and breaks it up. How convenient. Mike misses a charge but Cat kicks the post by mistake, again likely due to general stupidity. Back in and a chop block sets up the Awesome Splash for the pin.

**Rating:** D. Miller is just not very good in the ring and it's getting clearer every time he's out there. Now that he's not the Commissioner (which I'm sure he never will be again ever) there's no hiding his uselessness and it was clear that Awesome had to tone it down again so Cat wouldn't get squashed. Well not as squashed that is.

Diamond Dallas Page and Dustin Rhodes are ready for Rick Steiner and Jeff Jarrett tonight. Now that's a main event worth calling your friends about. They might watch it otherwise.

#### Chavo Guerrero Jr./The Wall vs. Rey Mysterio Jr./Hugh Morrus

Combining two feuds into one though Morrus doesn't like either opponent in the first place. Rey and the monster start things off and for some reason, Rey tries a sunset flip. Maybe he's been watching Cat matches to try something that stupid. It goes as badly as you would expect so Morrus



comes in with a drop toehold so Rey can add a legdrop. Morrus powerslams Wall before handing it back off to Rey, who charges into a tilt-a-whirl slam. That's better than you would expect to see from Wall.

Chavo comes in and gets caught in a quick Bronco Buster but comes back with a Gorybuster (wrong Tony) for two. Wall chokes a lot and it's back to Chavo for a chinlock. That goes as far as a chinlock is going to go and Rey gets a breather off a hurricanrana. The hot tag brings in Morrus as everything breaks down with Rey splashing Chavo from Hugh's shoulders. A clothesline looks to set up No Laughing Matter but Chavo makes the save, leaving Rey to springboard into a chokeslam for the pin.

**Rating:** C. Believe it or not the Wall was one of the best parts of this as he played the power role really well. Sometimes you just need a big guy around to throw a smaller person around the ring and that was where Wall excelled. Chavo vs. Rey should be good if Mysterio is ready to go while Wall vs. Morrus....will likely me want to go make a sandwich.

Wall and Chavo beat the losers down post match.

Totally Buff make fun of Latinos before Buff faces Konnan.

Video on Nash vs. Scott Steiner.

### Konnan vs. Buff Bagwell

After some Konnan rambling in what barely resembled English and Buff's dancing, we're ready to go. Buff chokes a lot and yells at the ref a bit before walking into a DDT for two. Back up and Buff forearms him a bit, meaning it's time for more dancing. It's almost like his entire offense is one move and pose. How very Justin Credible of him. A Buff chinlock slows things down even further and here's Lex Luger for some nefarious reason. Konnan makes his comeback with his usual stuff but Luger sneaks in with the forearm to break up the Tequila Sunrise. Buff grabs a Blockbuster for the pin.

**Rating:** D+. Actually not horrible here with Buff working on the neck to set up the neckbreaker but you can only go so far when Buff's offense is almost the same as it was when he debuted ten years ago. There's

something to be said for getting on the crowd's nerves with posing etc. but that's more than half of what Buff does in a match. It's ok to actually wrestle every now and then.

Brian Adams was trying to limp out for the save but couldn't get there in time.

Scott Steiner destroys catering because he wants Nash. Like he'd ever work back to back Thunders.

### Diamond Dallas Page/Dustin Rhodes vs. Rick Steiner/Jeff Jarrett

So just last week's match with Rhodes swapped in for Nash. That might actually be a downgrade for once. Jarrett says this is the world's largest inbred family reunion and tonight is Page's last stop. It's a brawl to start (of course) with all four heading out to the floor. We settle down to Dustin missing a charge at Jarrett and getting beaten down by Steiner.

Page gets the tag and comes in with a top rope clothesline and neckbreaker for two. It's back to Dustin but Jeff knees him in the back so Steiner can get in a belly to belly suplex. The double teaming continues until we get the sleeper/belly to back sequence with Jarrett. Page comes in and cleans house with the clotheslines until Steiner decks him from behind, setting up the Steiner Bulldog. A bonus Stroke is enough to put Page away.

**Rating:** D+. They were smart to keep this one short but the match worked well enough with three good workers and Rick Steiner there to fill in a fourth spot. It's also a good idea to combine two feuds into one match as if nothing else you don't have to hear Mike and Tony talk about these feuds twice. I still don't know what WCW saw in this version of Dustin but I'm sure it's something about being a cowboy.

Post match Scott Steiner comes in with a pipe to go after Page's knee but everyone else comes out for a brawl with security breaking it up until Scott breaks a guard's leg to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C-. This show was actually one of their stronger entries

with a really strong first half hour and bad matches going short enough that they didn't drag the whole thing down. I'm sure the fact that Nash and Flair weren't on the show had nothing to do with it of course. It's not that they're playing their roles well (especially Nash actually) but the story isn't interesting when it leads to Nash getting ANOTHER title shot on Sunday. Anyway better show than usual this week though that's not exactly saying much.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book on NXT: The Full Sail Years Volume II at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01FWZZ2UA>

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

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

---

# Ring of Honor TV – July 6, 2016: Enough

## Ring of Honor

Date: July 6, 2016|

Host: Kevin Kelly

We're at a special show this week with the 250<sup>th</sup> episode, which is going to showcase the best of 2016 so far. This could mean several things, though I have a feeling we'll be seeing a lot of the New Japan wrestlers who have basically dominated the year so far. Unfortunately that means

even more time away from the new stuff ROH is doing but that's a common problem for the promotion. Let's get to it.

#### TV Title: Tomohiro Ishii vs. Bobby Fish

From Global Wars with Ishii defending after taking the title from Roderick Strong, the champion that Fish had been chasing. Fish actually runs the much bigger Ishii over to start but Ishii does the same to send Fish outside for a bit of his time. Back in and Fish fires off some kicks to put Ishii in trouble, which isn't something you see happen to him that often. Ishii wins another slugout though and a headbutt puts Fish down with ease.

Fish makes the mistake of headbutting Ishii and the referee has to check on him as a result. The champ gets knocked off the top but Fish misses a flying headbutt, only to start back in with kicks to the knee. We take a break and come back with Fish hitting an exploder suplex for two but getting headbutted for his efforts. Ishii gets his own near fall with a delayed vertical superplex, followed by a Saito Suplex.

Fish looks mostly dead so Ishii powerbombs him for two more but Bobby grabs a sleeper. I could go for a small vs. big match without the smaller guy jumping on his back with a sleeper. It's just so overdone. Ishii, seemingly annoyed with how lame Fish's strategy was, German suplexes him down.

They head to the apron with Fish back on his feet and slugging it out. As expected, Ishii easily knocks him down but Fish kicks the leg out to put both guys down on the floor. Back in and a hard lariat gets two for the champ but Fish goes back to the sleeper. He fires off some elbows to the head and survives a flip attempt to actually knock Ishii out at 15:30 (original time).

**Rating:** B. The match was a good, hard hitting brawl but Ishii is the definition of a guy that had no business winning the title or being involved in this story whatsoever. Strong vs. Fish had been a well built up story but instead of getting the payoff we had been set up for, Ishii got the belt despite having no connection to either of them. That's becoming too common of a tradition and it's getting old in a hurry. This

match was good but Fish vs. Strong would have been as well and had a strong story to go with it. Which sounds better?

### Briscoe Brothers vs. Hiroshi Tanahashi/Michael Elgin

From the 14<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Show and no real story here other than ROH vs. New Japan in a “dream” match. Jay and Michael get things going with Jay kicking him in the face but getting gorilla pressed to put him right back down. We get the very cool delayed vertical suplex with Mark’s interference not doing a thing to stop Elgin. That’s such insane power.

It’s off to Mark vs. Tanahashi for the air guitar vs. Redneck Kung Fu battle which results in Tanahashi grabbing an armbar. Naturally that means it’s time to talk about Hiroshi’s hair but Jay is tagged in, only to stay on the floor while Mark hits a Blockbuster off the apron to take Elgin out. We get the big showdown (which isn’t treated as big or a showdown) with Jay getting two off an elbow to Tanahashi’s jaw. Mr. Wrestling 3 finally realizes what we saw there but it’s already off to Mark for a Russian legsweep.

The fans chant for Elgin but get a commercial instead. Back with the tag bringing in Elgin for some running strikes to Mark’s chest. Jay has to save his brother from Rolling Germans as everything breaks down. A back elbow/German suplex combo sends Mark flying but Jay breaks up the High Fly Flow.

Mark shouts a lot and flips Mike off the top for two. With Tanahashi down on the floor, the brothers take turns with headbutts until Mark is backdropped over the top. Elgin no sells a boot to the face (he’s from New Japan remember) and clotheslines Jay down for a breather. The hot tag brings in Tanahashi for some dragon screw leg whips but he walks into a neckbreaker.

Froggy Bow gets two before Elgin breaks up the Doomsday Device. In a cool move, Elgin gives Tanahashi a reverse Alabama Slam onto Mark for two more with Jay making the save. Jay is dispatched so it’s a powerbomb into the High Fly Flow for the pin on Mark at 14:50 (original match time).

**Rating:** C+. The match was fine though I’m rarely a fan of these matches

where the only story is one great team against two guys who might team together for a few months. Oh and of course the New Japan team goes over clean. Heaven forbid Tanahashi isn't treated as the biggest star in the history of ever over here.

Clips from the Fight Without Honor to blow off Silas Young vs. Dalton Castle. We see less than a minute of the match which ran over sixteen minutes. To recap: we can see a full TV Title match where a New Japan guy took a spot from an ROH guy for no reason other than "we need ROH vs. New Japan" and then we can see a full meaningless "dream" match where the freshly created New Japan team defeated the undisputed best team in ROH history. The blowoff match to a year long ROH only feud can't even get a minute of TV time though. I've said it many times now but this isn't an ROH show. This is New Japan TV: America.

#### ReDRagon vs. The Kingdom vs. Young Bucks

From ROH TV on January 20. It's Cole/Bennett for the Kingdom here and this is a street fight. The Bucks jump O'Reilly and Fish during the entrances and we're starting fast. The injured Taven gets a double superkick, as does ring announcers Bobby Cruz. ReDRagon gets back in to work on the Bucks, only to have the Kingdom come in again to turn this into a wild brawl that is going to be almost impossible to keep track of.

Bennett punches Fish down and it's Cole setting Matt in a chair in the middle of the ring. A running charge sets up a chinlock and even Kelly has to acknowledge that it's a spot they've seen before. Kyle backdrops Nick on the floor for a thud before diving into a superkick. We take a break and come back with Cole in a shopping cart and being wheeled into a superkick.

The Bucks set up a table at ringside but it's ReDRagon double teaming Matt inside. The Kingdom brings in a ladder (Mr. Wrestling III: "It's amazing what you can find in south Philadelphia") to take out ReDRagon and it's Cole putting the ladder around his neck. That only allows ReDRagon to blast the ladder with chairs before setting the ladder on top of those chairs.

Bennett comes back in to spinebuster Kyle onto the steel but the Bucks

powerbomb him (Bennett) through the ladder. A Swanton onto the ladder sets up More Bang For Your Buck but Cole pulls the referee out at two. Kevin Kelly accidentally eats a superkick and Mr. Wrestling III freaks out while still shouting SUPERKICK in a funny moment.

We take another break and come back with Cole hitting the Canadian Destroyer on Matt but walking into a superkick from Nick. Bennett takes Chasing the Dragon on the floor, leaving O'Reilly and Cole to fight in the aisle. That leaves Fish alone against the Bucks but he stops to spear Bennett through a table on the floor. A double superkick off the apron gives Fish the weakest table bump in history with Nick having to splash him the rest of the way through.

Back in and the Bucks put a party hat on Bennett for a superkick party, only to have Maria hit them both low for a save. This brings out AJ Styles to hit Bennett in the ribs with a chair before laying him out with Bloody Sunday. Maria gets a Meltzer Driver and the Indytaker into the Styles Clash puts Bennett away at 16:45.

**Rating:** B. Totally wild brawl here and a lot of fun at the same time. This wasn't about anything more than carnage and that's all they delivered the entire time. The piledriver to Maria was a good way to write her off TV and the Kingdom goes out in a great performance, especially considering it wasn't their usual combination.

**Overall Rating:** F. The wrestling wasn't the problem here (obviously). The problem is the same thing I covered earlier: this isn't about Ring of Honor anymore. I know the next set of TV tapings doesn't feature the New Japan wrestlers but look at what they consider the best of the first half of 2016: New Japan wrestler, New Japan wrestlers, one minute of ROH only and the New Japan stable.

Also this was somehow their usage of the 250<sup>th</sup> episode. No mention of the history of the show, no classic matches (or even match), nothing but "Hey here's a bunch of New Japan stuff in case you haven't seen enough of it yet." ROH should be better than this by now and it's not like they can't stand on their own feet without New Japan.

I really can't imagine their ratings go up that high when they're there, especially when they're around that often. It's not even a novelty anymore as they're around so much that we just had a highlight show featuring them in every match. Having them around every once in awhile for a set of tapings here and there is fine as they're certainly an attraction but this is WAY too far and has been for a long time.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book on NXT: The Full Sail Years Volume II at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01FWZZ2UA>

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

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

---

# Lucha Underground – July 6, 2016: How Unique

## Lucha Underground

Date: July 6, 2016

Location: Lucha Underground Temple, Boyle Heights, California

Commentators: Vampiro, Matt Striker

We've finally arrived at Ultima Lucha Dos with the first of three weeks of shows. It's hard to say what part of the card we'll get first but one of the good things about this promotion is how well each individual story is built up. This really does feel like a special event and this has the potential to top last year's excellent show. Let's get to it.



The opening recap looks at Dario Cueto announcing the Unique Opportunity Tournament between Cage, Son of Havoc, the Mack and Texano.

### Unique Opportunity Tournament Semifinals; The Mack vs. Cage

We're not ready yet as Dario, in a tuxedo, comes out to say these two started off Ultima Lucha last year. That falls count anywhere match might have been Dario's favorite of the show so let's make this one falls count anywhere as well. Cage dropkicks Mack and hits a standing moonsault for two because he can do moves like that. Mack comes back with some hard shots of his own to knock him outside and Striker is getting way too excited.

A hiptoss sends Mack onto the steps as this starts picking up in a hurry. Mack knocks a trashcan (with trash included for a change) out of Cage's hand and powerslams him down onto it for two. They fight into Dario's office and see Black Lotus (I love that kind of attention to detail. You just do not see it anywhere else.) before Cage steals a framed poster and breaks the glass over Mack's head.

We get even more violent with a powerbomb through an open chair (that always looks sick) for two on Mack as this has almost been all Cage. Mack comes back with a stop sign shot before breaking a guitar over Cage's head (Striker: "The sweet sounds of E minor!") for two of his own.

With Cage down, Mack goes to the back and finds....pinatas. Quick sidebar: does anyone else find the concept of pinatas really disturbing? "Hey kids! Here's your favorite cartoon! Now beat him with a stick and eat whatever falls out of its broken body!" Anyway Mack steals some candy and grabs some beer but the Stunner is broken up. Cage is busted open and it's table time but Mack comes back with a chain shot to the ribs instead.

More beer sets up the Stunner and a horrible Austin impression from Striker. Mack drops a frog splash out of the crowd to put Cage through the table, giving Striker another reason to shout THIS IS ULTIMA LUCHA! That only gets two so Cage finds a well placed cinder block but he slips on the beer, allowing Mack to roll him up for the pin at 10:15.

**Rating:** B. Now that's how you start off a big show. They didn't even bother with the wrestling here and just turned the whole thing into a wild brawl in the time they had. I was getting worried about the finish there as Cage had basically been destroyed and then just grabbed the block but Mack won anyway, even off a screwy finish. These guys have chemistry together and that's always worth an opening match.

#### Unique Opportunity Tournament Semifinals: Son of Havoc vs. Texano

Dario points out the bar outside and makes this a Boyle Heights Bar Fight. They actually wrestle a bit to start with Texano hitting a shoulder but eating an elbow before they head outside after a full minute in the ring. Havoc hits an Asai Moonsault but Texano sends him into the barricade. Texano is thrown through a storage closet door, only to have Havoc go in after him and come out with a fire extinguisher. A shot of vodka lets Texano come back with a bottle shot to the head but it only hits helmet.

Let's throw the bar stools, a chair and a keg in the ring, drawing a WE WANT BEER chant. Texano hits him in the head with the bullrope for two but he gets sent into the keg in the corner. Havoc breaks up a bar stool and hurricanranas Texano onto the pile of wood. Apparently it's cheap wood though as he gets up and hits Havoc low with a chair. Havoc one ups Texano though by sending him through the bar, followed by a bicycle kick onto a pile of broken bottles for the pin at 7:32.

**Rating:** C+. Still good but nowhere near as strong as the opener. Texano is another guy that I like more and more every time I see him and I'd really be interested in seeing him do something with an actual story that doesn't involve Chavo Guerrero. Son of Havoc going solo is interesting as well and it's a good sign that he can have a good match like this on his own.

And now, a word from the guest band.

We run down the rest of the Ultima Lucha card.

#### Unique Opportunity Tournament Finals: The Mack vs. Son of Havoc

The stipulation here: falls count anywhere. Again. Mack knocks him down in the corner to start but misses a ridiculous corkscrew splash. They head outside with Havoc going into the barricade before taking it back inside for a spinning Downward Spiral out of the corner for two. Havoc sends him outside for a big flip dive but the shooting star hits Mack's raised knees. Mack loads up...something in the corner but gets caught by a handspring elbow, setting up the shooting star to give Havoc the pin at 5:32.

**Rating:** C. These matches got weaker as they went along but the problem is starting with the violence and then ending with a mostly clean match. It feels like a downgrade every time (albeit not a steep one) and the matches getting shorter every time didn't help things. Mack came off looking a bit better here though, especially after the polar opposite style in the first match.

Post match, Dario and Black Lotus come in with a briefcase. The offer is \$250,000 in the briefcase or.....a spot in the main event of Ultima Lucha III. Havoc takes the title shot (which of course comes with another briefcase) but Dario says we're not done yet. Since Havoc turned down the money, it's up for grabs against Havoc's third opponent. If Havoc wins he gets the title shot but if he loses, the opponent gets the money. This brings out Famous B. to introduce his new client, who is already famous.

#### Son of Havoc vs. Dr. Wagner Jr.

Wagner is a big deal from Mexico and a former AAA Mega Champion. Wagner starts fast with a Samoan Drop and Havoc is already in big trouble. Havoc ducks a clothesline and hits a springboard crossbody. The shooting star misses though and the Dr. Driver (Michinoku Driver) puts Havoc away at 2:10.

**Overall Rating:** C+. Well that happened. Really, that's the only thing you can say here as the idea debuted and then went away in the span of an hour with Wagner winning the money in his debut that didn't even break two and a half minutes. The opener was worth checking out and the next two matches were fine but it's a completely skippable show because nothing here really meant anything. Still though, it's a good appetizer

for the real three hours and I'm glad they got through the tournament stuff in one night instead of having to drag it out over the duration of the show.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book on NXT: The Full Sail Years Volume II at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01FWZZ2UA>

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

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

---

# Smackdown – July 7, 2016: Pre-Draft Momentum

## **Smackdown**

Date: July 7, 2016

Location: Huntington Center, Toledo, Ohio

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, Jerry Lawler, Byron Saxton

This is a fresh start for a change as Monday was a completely worthless show thanks to the Fourth of July. We're getting closer to Battleground but more importantly we're less than two weeks away from the Draft which resets everything anyway. In other words there's no way of knowing how good this will be so let's get to it.

The Club is conferencing.

Chris Jericho is trying to find his blue scarf.

Sami Zayn is ready to beat Jericho tonight and make him second best.

Seth Rollins arrives and runs into Jey Uso. Some Samoan family insults are made and a match gets the same treatment. I could go for these quick vignettes becoming a regular thing. It worked for Saturday Night's Main Event and it works here too.

Opening sequence.

Here's Dean Ambrose to say he wants to try his hand as a ring announcer because he could be a taller Howard Finkel.

### Jey Uso vs. Seth Rollins

Seth is apparently from a place where he didn't get enough hugs as a child. That's sad. Jey takes over with an early armbar as the fans (or at least the canned versions) are behind the Samoan. Seth gets two off a backbreaker as Dean plugs his new t-shirt and the Seth Rollins ice cream bars but apparently they don't taste very good. A high crossbody gets two on Rollins and there's a suicide dive to take Rollins out again. Dean says that's five minutes (not quite) and asks Seth if it's time to go to a commercial.

Back with Seth hitting his running knee off the apron and throwing on a chinlock. Seth goes to the middle rope but Dean makes an announcement that a 1997 Ford is about to be towed for being in the fire lane. This one doesn't work as well as Seth scores with an enziguri, only to run into a Samoan Drop. The Superfly Splash hits knees though and the Pedigree puts Jey away at 10:25.

**Rating:** C. Dean was amusing enough here and it's better than just having him do guest commentary for the tenth time Rollins has a match. It's also a good sign that the Usos can work as singles wrestlers and do well enough as so many teams can't do anything without their partner around.

Dean: "The winner of the match, the human equivalent of a root canal."

Seth bails at the threat of a fight so Ambrose can't raise his hand.

Dean: "I'll just raise this instead." And he holds up the title.

We look back at Sami and Kevin Owens beating Jericho up two weeks ago.

### Zack Ryder vs. Sheamus

Ryder has a new rock version of his music and it's actually working for me. Sheamus pounds him down with forearms and clotheslines to start, followed by the forearms to the chest. A slam onto the apron makes things even worse but Ryder kicks him in the face and comes back with more forearms. That just earns him an Irish Curse before Sheamus loads up a superplex. Ryder knocks him off and drops the Elbro for the completely clean pin at 2:43. I know Sheamus isn't what he used to be but this is a big drop off. At least Ryder is getting a push though and that's a good thing.

Ryder wants to get his US Title back and issues the challenge to Rusev.

Baron Corbin video.

Rusev accepts the challenge.

### Becky Lynch vs. Natalya

No match as Natalya jumps Becky from behind and puts her in the Sharpshooter. Naturally she tells Becky to tap, which always makes me chuckle.

We recap the Wyatt Family and New Day from Monday.

Xavier Woods is worried about going to the Wyatt Compound because they have no idea what's going to happen there. Woods isn't happy with what his brothers have decided but he'll stand by them. Did the Wyatts send them directions to get there? Otherwise we could be in for a long scavenger hunt.

Here are Enzo and Big Cass to talk about deciding to help John Cena on Raw. That wasn't about them saving Cena or any personal issue with the Club. Monday was about sending a message to the Club to tell them that they can't beat down anyone they want. This brings out the Club with AJ saying they owe the Club an apology for interrupting them as they beat up John Cena.

Anderson thinks they should beat up Enzo and Cass, then hit some golf balls, have some strawberry shortcake and then BEAT UP JOHN CENA. AJ wants to fight Enzo, who says they're not a good original or a good remix. After one round with Sugar Ray Amore, they'll walk out a diabetic.

### AJ Styles vs. Enzo Amore

AJ wrestles him down and smirks a lot, only to have Enzo do the same right back. Enzo sends him outside for a big dive but trips on the top for a big crash onto the floor. Thankfully he gets up and is fine this time with AJ hammering away in the corner. Enzo gets in a dropkick but AJ easily takes him down for a chinlock. Back up and the tornado DDT is countered into a suplex to send Amore crashing into the corner. The big guys get in a fight on the floor as AJ crotches Enzo, setting up the Styles Clash for the pin at 5:37.

**Rating:** C-. This was fine despite the ending not being the biggest surprise in the world. Enzo is fine for a spot like this as he isn't expected to beat almost anyone on his own but he can do such an effective job of talking that he can get back whatever he lost in all of ten seconds. The six man could be a lot of fun.

Apparently Owens stole Jericho's scarf because he wanted to see if he could get one for his wife. Owens had some popcorn earlier and got the thing all greasy so Jericho demands money to have it cleaned. Kevin drops some change into Jericho's hand but Owens makes sure to get the button back. Jericho wants one more quarter but Owens gives him a Jolly Rancher. Oh and he'll be ringside for Jericho vs. Sami later. Jericho thinks it smells like soup. This was a completely face promo from Owens and he was just as good as always.

### The Miz vs. Kalisto

Non-title. This is the result of Kalisto being the one to throw potato salad at Maryse on Monday. Apparently she's allergic so this could have been an international incident. Kalisto starts fast with a top rope corkscrew armdrag to send Miz outside where Maryse prevents a dive. Miz sends him into the steps and we take an early break. Back with Miz working on the back with some forearms before he charges into Kalisto's

raised boots. Miz comes right back with a slingshot powerbomb for two before sidestepping the corkscrew forearm. The Skull Crushing Finale puts Kalisto away at 7:54.

**Rating:** D+. So much for the Kalisto experiment as he's gone from defending the US Title at Wrestlemania to losing a match started over potato salad. He's just the latest victim of the writers throwing a toy out of the crib and it's still pretty sad to see. They had something there but so much for that because it's time to go with....well nothing actually.

Sasha Banks talks about how awesome she is when Charlotte comes in dressed as Banks. Insults are exchanged and Sasha vs. Dana is set for Monday. Charlotte throws down her Sasha gear because it's not her look.

We get Monday's Darren Young/Bob Backlund segment. This has to be close to the last one.

Brock Lesnar's official opponent for Summerslam is.....Randy Orton. Scott Stanford, Booker T., and Corey Graves preview the match a bit from WWE world headquarters.

Golden Truth plugs Sonic with Truth putting the food on top of a ladder to get ready for Money in the Bank. This was no "we got a couple of taters" from Monday.

### Sami Zayn vs. Chris Jericho

Kevin Owens is at ringside and starts ripping on Byron before his music even ends. Owens: "Hi Sami! Hope you have a good match! I hope you break your ankle." Jericho wristlocks him down for a bit until Sami scores with three straight armdrags. They head outside with Sami hitting his barricade moonsault but Jericho punches him in the face and mocks the OLE chants as we take a break.

Back with the Lionsault (Owens: "I taught him how to do that.") connecting for two before we hit the chinlock. Jericho: "WHERE'S THE OLE??" Sami comes back but Jericho bails to the floor, only to take one of those running clotheslines. Back in and Owens talks about wanting to



see Jericho kick Sami in the face, which is exactly what Chris does a second later.

Sami tornado DDTs Jericho to the floor for the big flip dive but Sami goes to take out Owens so Jericho can take over again. The exploder suplex sends Jericho into the corner but the Helluva Kick has to take Owens down. Jericho's Walls attempt is countered into a quick rollup to give Sami the upset pin at 12:12.

**Rating:** B-. This is exactly the kind of match you have Jericho around for. He's been built up for the last few months and now you have a young guy like Sami get a big win that makes him seem important. Owens interfering was a nice touch but the key here was Sami having Jericho beat with the Helluva Kick before having to recover and then win with the rollup. In other words, Sami was the better man and didn't just win off a fluke.

Jericho lays Sami out and Owens comes in for a Pop Up Powerbomb to leave Sami laying as the show ends.

**Overall Rating:** C. There was an energy to this show that has been missing in the last few weeks and that's a good sign going into the Draft. Above all else though they actually had some stuff happen here with the Lesnar announcement and Ryder challenging Rusev for the title. It's the start of making people feel like they need to see Smackdown instead of it just being a show that they'll stop on if they flip over to USA by mistake. There's a long way to go but hopefully this was a first step.

### Results

Seth Rollins b. Jey Uso – Pedigree

Zack Ryder b. Sheamus – Elbro

AJ Styles b. Enzo Amore – Styles Clash

Miz b. Kalisto – Skull Crushing Finale

Sami Zayn b. Chris Jericho – Rollup

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book on NXT: The Full Sail Years Volume II at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01FWZZ2UA>

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

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

---

## **Brock Lesnar's Summerslam Opponent**

Is Randy Orton, officially announced on Smackdown though it was leaked yesterday.

I like this as Orton is someone who could possibly beat him and makes for an intriguing match. If nothing else the RK0 to counter the F5 should be sweet. Above all else though it's fresh, save for Lesnar beating him in five minutes on Smackdown back in 2002.

---

## **Happy Birthday**

To the NW0, born 20 years ago today. I say born because the Bullet Club is still ripping them off to this day.

---

# Impact Officially Moving To Thursdays Starting July 21

<http://411mania.com/wrestling/impact-wrestling-may-be-moving-to-thursday-nights/>

You had to expect this. They hadn't changed nights since last June. If nothing else it gives them yet another excuse for when their numbers go down as they always do.

---

# Impact Wrestling Viewership Way Up

<http://411mania.com/wrestling/tuesdays-impact-wrestling-viewership-sees-big-jump/>

They drew 411,000 (up 88,000) for their highest viewed show on Pop so far.

Well done. Now do it again, only better next time.