

Impact Wrestling – August 4, 2016: Less Hardy, More Happy

Impact Wrestling

Date: August 4, 2016

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Josh Matthews, D'Angelo Dinero

This should be interesting as the taping schedule changes has reared its head again. Bound For Glory 2016 was originally scheduled for early September but since WWE has added a show on the same night, Bound For Glory has been moved forward a month. As a result, tonight's Bound For Glory Playoff final is going to set up a two month build towards the pay per view. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the Bound For Glory Playoff.

Last week Drew Galloway was livid at Ethan Carter III and would say what he's going to do to him but this video would be used as evidence.

Mike Bennett and Ethan are in the ring for a face to face chat before their match tonight. Bennett brings up Ethan hiding behind his aunt but Ethan says Mike isn't fighting Aunt D. tonight. Mike didn't need Ethan to come out there with a kendo stick last week because he could beat Galloway on his own.

The two of them are here to do this forever and Mike has already beaten the unbeatable and he knows he can do it again. No matter what Ethan can do, he'll always be second best because Bennett is just flat out better. Bennett says he's ready no matter what and here's Moose for some intimidation. The beating is on and Carter is planted with a Sky High. Carter and Bennett just have mad chemistry together.

Eli Drake is ready to make James Storm cry in his beer.

We get another clip of Rosemary going insane and trying to get Bram to go to the barn.

King of the Mountain Title: Eli Drake vs. James Storm

Storm is challenging and has to give up beer, his music and basically his entire gimmick if he loses. In other words, Storm will be deleted, finally. It's a brawl in the aisle to start with Drake taking him into the ring for a neckbreaker. A legdrop with Storm's neck on the middle rope keeps him in trouble but James comes back with a spinebuster for two.

Drake continues to show off though by jumping to the top rope for a superplex, followed by a quick powerslam for two more. Dang I like this guy more and more every time I see him. Drake brings in the title belt but gets caught in the Eye of the Storm. Drake loads up the beer but it goes into the referee's eyes, allowing Eli to hit James with the belt for two. Neither finisher can hit so Drake tries a springboard, only to dive into the Last Call to give Storm the title at 6:49.

Rating: C+. I really wouldn't have expected to see Eli Drake do two Shelton Benjamin spots in a single match but the guy keeps surprising me. Storm almost had to win the title here as you don't want to mess with a popular gimmick like his, especially at this point in his career. Good match here and I hope Drake is back soon.

Post match Lashley comes out as Storm celebrates. After a break, Lashley is in the ring with James to say they have the only singles titles in this company because they're the best in the world. Storm likes the look of that TNA World Title because he had it five years ago. Lashley is a former NCAA Heavyweight Champion so Storm can probably beat him in about thirty seconds.

A challenge is issued and Storm says Lashley will hurt his hands from punching James' face so many times. Lashley gives him a chance to hand over the title now so the beating doesn't end Storm's career but James is willing to fight at some point in the future. Dang it they're going to have Lashley all the titles. I've never been a fan of that story and it's been done too often in recent years.

Maria gives Gail Kim a match with Allie as part of her path to a Knockouts Title match.

Bram and Rosemary are in the barn with Rosemary getting very close to him.

Gail Kim vs. Allie

Allie looks terrified. Actually hang on as Maria comes out make it a handicap match.

Gail Kim vs. Allie/Sienna

Sienna takes her down and chokes with a boot before bringing Allie in, much to her own terror. It's quickly back to Sienna for a wheelbarrow suplex but Allie can't even handle a slam. Sienna is smart enough to drag Allie to the corner for a tag but Gail knocks Allie to the floor and starts his comeback. Allie comes back in for a distraction and Gail gets caught in the AK47 for two. Sienna hits the Silencer on Allie by mistake and Gail grabs a quick pin on Allie at 5:45.

Rating: D+. You could see the ending coming as soon as they announced Sienna but that's not the worst thing in the world. On the other hand though, Gail being the challenger for the title at Bound For Glory is closer to being one of the worst things TNA could do for the belt right now. It's just been done so many times now and the fact that she's going into the Hall of Fame doesn't make it any better. Gail isn't interesting as a regular character, a veteran, or anything really for that matter. She's certainly talented but that doesn't make her interested.

Matt Hardy accuses Jeff Hardy of getting hurt and costing them the Tag Team Titles. True actually. Tonight, Matt is going to tell a story so Jeff can learn what to do next.

Next week: Lashley vs. Storm, winner take all.

Here's Reby to introduce Matt, meaning it's time for more loud screechy voices, a new found TNA trademark. Matt has Jeff come out so Reby can shout OBSOLETE over and over. We hear about the history of the Hardy Boyz with Jeff being described as a spot monkey. They won the TNA Tag Team Titles but Jeff got injured and betrayed his brother. That took money out of Matt's pocket so it's time to win the Tag Team Titles back for Matt's

financial benefit. Oh and Jeff isn't allowed to jump off the top rope.

Jeff Hardy/Matt Hardy vs. JT Dunn/Chuck Taylor

Matt is staying on the floor to make this a handicap match. Taylor is a big name from the independents, primarily in Chikara. Dunn starts for the team but gets caught with a slingshot dropkick in the corner. The fans chant for Jeff as Matt keeps running his mouth on a mic about how Brother Nero is an obsolete mule.

Taylor comes in with an elbow drop and a seated abdominal stretch as Matt pulls a fan over the barricade and bites him to draw some blood. Jeff makes his comeback but JT blocks the Twist of Fate. Matt: "YOU BETTER NOT LOSE YOU DELETED OBSOLETE MULE!" Matt gets in the ring to block the Swanton but Jeff jumps over Matt anyway, only to take a Twist of Fate. With Jeff down, Matt tags himself in and pins Dunn at 6:24.

Rating: D. Hey, did you know that Matt is all wacky and insane and broken? I didn't know if TNA had hammered it into your head enough yet so I thought I'd point it out again. It's pretty clear that we're heading for Jeff's big win at Bound For Glory, even if it means stretching this feud out WAY beyond its expiration date.

Grado/Mahabali Shera vs. Tribunal/Al Snow

Yes again. Apparently Grado couldn't hire Grado again because he spent all his money on Pokeballs. The numbers game has the bad guys in control to start with Grado's clothesline having little effect. Snow takes Grado down as we get into a more standard match. We get some trash talk from the veteran to draw Shera in, causing the referee to miss Grado's small package on Snow. The hot tag brings in Shera and he shrugs off the numbers advantage. Stereo powerslams plant the Tribunal and a Sky High ends Snow at 6:01.

Rating: D+. Again, this was a moderately interesting idea that TNA has no idea how to wrap up so they just keep going until it's driven into the ground. The Tribunal could have been a nice midcard tag team but now they're losing to goons like Shera and Grado long after this feud should have wrapped up.

Rosemary is still crazy. Bram tries to leave the barn but Rosemary holds him in place. He says everyone has had their heart broken and she needs to get over it. Rosemary starts screaming and Decay comes in to knock Bram out. Bram is thrown into the trunk of a car and Decay drives off, laughing maniacally along the way.

Video on EC3.

Bennett is ready for Carter.

Carter is ready for Bennett and says Mike can bring the whole wilderness to face him.

Tyrus is ready to fix your problems.

Bound For Glory Playoff Final: Mike Bennett vs. Ethan Carter III

No Moose in Bennett's corner and Carter is coming in with bad ribs. Carter runs him over with a shoulder to start and works on the wristlock. A gorilla press drop looks to set up a splash but there's no rocket fuel in the spaceship and Carter hits knees. Back from a break with Bennett in control and putting on an abdominal stretch. A spinebuster gets two on Carter but he grabs a rollup for the same. They slug it out with Bennett grabbing some rolling German suplexes, only to have Carter grab a sitout powerbomb for two.

Maria gets on the apron for a failed distraction so both guys head up top with a super cutter getting two on Ethan. More yelling earns Maria an ejection and the distraction means the 1%er only gets two. Cue Moose but Eddie Edwards takes him out, leaving Bennett to hit the MIP for two of his own. Both finishers are countered again until the 1%er hits again to give Ethan the title shot at 17:25.

Rating: B. These two just work together and this was another good match between them. Carter going to Bound For Glory is pretty much their only option, even though Carter vs. Lashley isn't the most interesting main event in the world. That being said, I'm not sure what Bennett does unless they add he and Galloway to the title match.

Overall Rating: C+. This show was mostly good save for the first half of

the second hour. There's stuff on this show that works so well but at the other end of the spectrum their bad parts are just so dull. Bound For Glory looks good on top though it's not entirely clear what they're going with yet. Again: as long as the Hardys don't main event, I'm perfectly fine with how most of the show is going. This week's show was much better than recent weeks and I think a lot of it has to do with Matt and Jeff not dominating the first half hour. Amazing how that works no?

Results

James Storm b. Eli Drake – Last Call

Gail Kim b. Sienna/Allie – Gail pinned Allie after a Silencer from Sienna

Matt Hardy/Jeff Hardy b. JT Dunn/Chuck Taylor – Swanton Bomb to Dunn

Grado/Mahabali Shera b. Tribunal/Al Snow – Sky High to Snow

Ethan Carter III b. Mike Bennett – 1%er

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Monday Night Raw – November 27, 1995: Be Thankful That It's Over

Monday Night Raw

Date: November 27, 1995

Location: Richmond Coliseum, Richmond, Virginia

Attendance: 4,500

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Jerry Lawler

Things have certainly changed a lot in a week as Shawn Michaels is now on the shelf with a head injury and Diesel is suddenly awesome as a much more realistic character. Tonight is more of a lighter show though as Undertaker is trying to get back the golden chain that Kama melted the urn into because that's still a thing. Let's get to it.

We open with a somber look back at Shawn's injury.

Opening sequence.

Rad Radford vs. Ahmed Johnson

Radford (Louis Spicolli) hammers away to start and gets dropped with an elbow to the jaw. We cut to Bob Backlund walking around the crowd campaigning for President (thank goodness this wasn't during the Trump campaign) as the guys head outside with Radford sending Ahmed into the apron. Back in and a scissors kick drops Rad and a spinebuster sets up the Pearl River Plunge to end this quick.

Lawler goes to talk to Ahmed and makes some lame you're stupid jokes before Dean Douglas comes down to say the road to superstardom takes place in his classroom. Ahmed wants to go right now but nothing happens.

We get an update on Shawn, who was attacked by a bunch of thugs back in October, leaving him with a severe concussion. Things got even worse at Survivor Series when his head was banged up even more, setting up last week's enziguri to really put him out.

Aja Kong/Tomoko Watanabe vs. Alundra Blayze/Kyoko Inoue

0.....k. Blayze is Women's Champion and Kong is a monster who beat Blayze at Survivor Series. It's a brawl to start and they actually CUT OFF THE MERCHANDISE PLUG. It's Kong vs. Inoue to start with Aja running her over in the corner and hitting a splash for no cover. Instead it's off to Watanabe who is quickly caught in a surfboard. Blayze comes in and is quickly ignored to talk about an online chat with Mr. Perfect. The fast tags continue as Kong suplexes Inoue for two as we take a break.

Back with Watanabe superplexing Inoue for two but Kong breaks up Blayze's German suplex. Instead a missile dropkick puts Kong down but a second attempt misses, only to have Kong miss a middle rope splash. Kong blocks a powerbomb attempt so Vince starts talking about, for reasons I don't want to know, Kong being an advocate of safe sex, though unlike Princess Diana, she won't be on a Norwegian condom commercial. Lawler: "What are you talking about McMahon?" Kong backfists Inoue for the pin.

Rating: C. This didn't go anywhere and was really just everyone bouncing around Kong. For some reason this never went anywhere as Kong would have one more match and then never be seen again. It was a cool change of pace but that doesn't mean it's something I'd want to see every week.

We recap Diesel destroying Bret and the referees on Sunday and his comments the next night.

Here's Brother Love of all people to interview Bret Hart. This feels so totally out of place that I don't know where to start but at least it gets Bret back on TV. Love talks about Diesel and of course won't let Bret get in a word (Brother Love trademark). He brings up Undertaker, who he brought into the WWF (which feels like forever ago at this point) and Owen Hart as potential challengers but won't let Bret respond. Bret finally grabs the mic and says he's ready for Bulldog until Bob Backlund runs out to put him in the crossface chickenwing. Love and that piano music just do not need to be here and it shows badly.

Hunter Hearst Helmsley vs. John Crystal

The announcers talk about Bret being attacked as Helmsley finishes with

the Pedigree in just over a minute.

Owen Hart has put out an open contract for a match at In Your House.

Kama vs. Undertaker

And never mind as Kama is on crutches so we need a replacement.

Sir Mo vs. Undertaker

Undertaker still has his big gray mask on. Ring announcer: "Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, THE UNDERTAKER!" For those of you unfamiliar with Mo, just picture the most worthless person called a wrestler this side of Eva Marie. Mo sends him outside to start so Undertaker grabs DiBiase by the throat, only to have Kama come over and save his boss. Vince thinks he sees Mabel coming down as we take a break. Back with Undertaker sitting up as there's no Mabel in sight. Undertaker gets all ticked off and stares at DiBiase, which sends Ted and Kama bailing to the back. The chokeslam ends Mo with ease.

Rating: D-. Mo sucks and I don't know what else there is to say here. This was a pretty lame bait and switch, especially when Kama never actually had his big blowoff with Undertaker. Kama would leave the company soon after this with the Royal Rumble being his last major appearance for over a year.

Post match Undertaker gets the chain back but Mabel and Yokozuna come out to steal it right back. Can we please get to Wrestlemania so Mankind can debut and make this interesting?

A preview of next week's show wraps it up.

Overall Rating: D+. They really can't string two good shows together these days. Last week was great and this week featured a total of nothing interesting, save for a decent women's match that meant absolutely nothing. They hadn't figured out the formula yet and it was showing badly. Nitro kicking into mega high gear would do wonders for Raw but we're a long way off from that.

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Monday Night Raw – November 20, 1995: The Best One So Far

Monday Night Raw

Date: November 20, 1995

Location: Richmond Coliseum, Richmond, Virginia

Attendance: 4,500

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Jerry Lawler

It's the night after Survivor Series and the big story is Bret Hart ending Diesel's year long reign as WWF World Champion. That means it's time to get ready for the Royal Rumble in about two months but first we have to get through a major angle tonight. I'm sure you've seen this one before and it set up a lot going forward. Let's get to it.

We open with a stills package on last night's main event.

Opening sequence.

We look back at 1-2-3 Kid joining the Corporation last week, which resulted in Sid helping Kid win a Survivor Series match last night. Kid also cost Razor the Wild Card match.

Hakushi vs. 1-2-3 Kid

We get a phone call from Razor which is the forerunner to guest commentary. Kid grabs a headlock to give us a slow start as Razor calls the Kid small change. A dropkick puts Kid down and we hit the armbar as we hear about Barry Horowitz Americanizing Hakushi. Here's Marty Jannetty for a failed run-in due to losing the Survivor Series match last night.

We take a break and come back with Kid grabbing a very modified cravate and kicking Hakushi in the head. A top rope splash gets two on Hakushi but he comes back with a cross body for a near fall of his own. Kid is knocked outside with a great looking kick to the head but DiBiase shoves Hakushi off the top, setting up a spinwheel kick to the head for the pin.

Rating: C+. These two always had good matches against each other and you really shouldn't expect anything else given who was in there. The Kid was getting a strong push here and is so arrogant that it's easy to hate him. Throw in DiBiase to do the talking and everything should work fine.

Post match DiBiase brags about his new investment but here's Jannetty to try again. This time he just gets powerbombed on the floor by an invading Sid. Serves him right for messing with a good match.

Slam Jam time with Dok Hendrix freaking out over Survivor Series. The main event of the next pay per view is Bret defending his newly won title against British Bulldog. That means we get clips of Summerslam 1992 and comments from Bulldog saying he'll win. On top of that we'll be having a hog pen match with HHH vs. Henry Godwinn just because.

Diesel arrives.

Skip vs. Savio Vega

Savio hammers away to start and catapults Skip into the buckle. Skip comes back but here's a surly Diesel to shove him down for what should be a DQ but just ends the match without a bell because the WWF is stupid sometimes.

Diesel thought about apologizing for beating down Bret after the match last night. For the first time in a year he slept like a baby and woke up

with a smile on his face. A year ago he won the title and was turned into a marketing campaign by the bosses at Titan Tower. Diesel only cares about his family and friends ("That includes you Shawn Michaels.") anymore. He'll still slap hands but they better have a black glove on them. Diesel walks to the back and gets a quick hug from Shawn as Diesel is officially a tweener. As is so often the case, Diesel can bring the goods on the mic and the fun stuff is coming with him.

Shawn Michaels vs. Owen Hart

Owen doesn't even get an entrance. Shawn grabs a hurricanrana and hammers away to start, only to be sent to the floor for a baseball slide. Back in and it's a backbreaker into a chinlock as it's time for a break. We come back with Owen dropping a leg for two and getting the same off a superplex. Shawn starts the comeback with the usual but Owen is smart enough to stay in the corner to avoid Sweet Chin Music. An enziguri drops Shawn but it's too early for the Sharpshooter. Instead a clothesline puts Owen on the floor with Shawn skinning the cat....and collapsing, drawing a no contest.

Rating: B. These two always worked well together but the match here was really just a backdrop for the major angle. This took Shawn off TV until the Royal Rumble and set up his huge comeback match to start his main event push in 1996. The angle worked really well here and there's a reason this is remembered so strongly.

The fans get very quiet as we go to a break. Back with medical staff checking on Shawn and Vince in the ring as they give Shawn oxygen. We actually take a second break and come back with Pat Patterson asking if Shawn can hear him. Shawn's eyes are open and the fans are all looking terrified. Even Owen is shaken up as we wrap things up.

Overall Rating: A-. This is one of the better episodes the show has ever had and possibly the best ever at this point. The Diesel promo changed a lot as he was almost instantly the top heel in the company, Shawn's angle at the end is great and Bret is still waiting to make his return as the giant slaying hero. Things would get bad in 1996 but we're looking at some awesome stuff for the next few weeks.

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Monday Night Raw – November 13, 1995: One Of Those Stupid Calls

Monday Night Raw

Date: November 13, 1995

Location: Keystone Arena, Brandon, Manitoba, Canada

Attendance: 2,000

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Jerry Lawler

This is the go home show for Survivor Series and the card really isn't the most interesting in the world. Bret vs. Diesel should be fun as always but the Survivor Series matches aren't looking great. It's just such a bad time for the company and there really isn't much of a way around that. Let's get to it.

We open with a look at the 1-2-3 Kid and Razor Ramon getting into a bunch of fights over the weekend. Therefore, Kid will still be guest referee for Razor vs. Sid later tonight but it will now be a non-title match.

Opening sequence.

Hunter Hearst Helmsley vs. Henry O. Godwinn

Henry is sent outside so Helmsley can spray his perfume. Godwinn grabs his slop bucket and slops himself, which sends Helmsley running away to end the "match".

We go to Dok Hendrix for Slam Jam (meaning the Control Center) with a talk about the Wild Card match where no one trusts each other.

Video on Shawn Michaels, who has been having head issues but he's not quite done yet.

Ahmed Johnson vs. Jake Steele

This is Ahmed's Raw debut. Steele has a good look but makes the mistake of punching Johnson in the face. We get a quick statement from Shawn Michaels about being happy to team with Ahmed at Survivor Series. A spinebuster sets up the Pearl River Plunge for the quick pin.

Post match Ahmed says something about snapping off a piece of a G on Sunday and you can see Vince wondering how he screwed this one up.

We get a sitdown interview between Diesel and Bret Hart to hype up Sunday. Diesel thinks he's the best right now while Bret thinks he never should have lost the title in the first place. When they had their match at the Royal Rumble it ended in a DQ and Bret never had a rematch. Bret thinks he was the best challenger Diesel ever had though Diesel seems to think it was Shawn.

For some reason Bret thinks technical wrestlers aren't getting enough title shots but Diesel points out that he's defended against Shawn and the Hart brothers. Both guys talk about their strengths as this is clearly just being dragged out to fill time. Bret thinks Diesel is walking around with his title and this FINALLY ends after nearly ten minutes.

And now, Vince McMahon and Jerry Lawler have a Karate Fighters match with Lawler cheating to win.

King Mabel vs. Roy Raymond

The bell rings and we go to comments from Undertaker, who is in shadows to hide whatever his crushed face looks like. Mabel stomps away in the corner and throws Roy around with a suplex. Raymond's dropkick has almost no effect and the squash is capped off with a belly to belly to give Mabel the pin.

We look back at the 1-2-3 Kid and Razor having issues over the weekend.

Razor Ramon vs. Sid

Non-title but ignore the belt being held in the air before the bell rings. 1-2-3 Kid is guest referee and the fans still love him because this was taped before the heel turn. Sid has Ted DiBiase in his corner as part of the Million Dollar Corporation. A slugout goes to Razor but he eats a big boot to the jaw. We hit a headscissors of all things but Sid nips up (!) and grabs a chokeslam.

That means it's time for a bunch of stomps instead of a cover, followed by some forearms to the back with Sid yelling at his own forearms. Razor comes back with a failed Razor's Edge attempt as he's backdropped to the floor, as is the case way too often. Now it's Dean Douglas (Razor's partner in the Wild Card match) coming out and we take a break.

Back with Dean stomping on Razor so Sid can drop him face first onto the apron. We hit one of the lamest chinlocks I've ever seen (and I've seen Scott Steiner put on a reverse chinlock) but Razor gets underneath for an electric chair drop. Back up and Sid charges into a boot, setting up the middle rope bulldog for two. Razor gets Sid up for the Razor's Edge but Kid pulls him down to set up the powerbomb with a count so fast I couldn't even look at the video quickly enough.

Rating: D. Oh man Sid was falling apart at this point. They really had too much stuff going on here with Douglas just not needing to be involved. The Kid ending was as forecast as you could have asked it to be, assuming you weren't in the arena. I really don't get the idea of having this be a title change for the live crowd (of course it wouldn't stand) while saying it was non-title in post production.

So yeah, Kid is Corporation now.

Razor tries to kill Dean to end the show.

Overall Rating: F. Total mess and waste of a show here as they were obviously out of content and trying to fill in the time with whatever they could before getting to the pay per view. The show was nothing short of a disaster though with bad wrestling, squashes and basically talking about three of Sunday's six matches. Horrible show here and unfortunately that's far too common in this era.

Here's Survivor Series if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2015/11/03/survivor-series-count-up-1995-wild-card/>

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Monday Night Raw – November 6, 1995: Bret vs. Dental Hygiene

Monday Night Raw

Date: November 6, 1995

Location: Keystone Arena, Brandon, Manitoba, Canada

Attendance: 2,000

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Dok Hendrix

We've jumped ahead again and now it's time to get ready for the mostly forgettable Survivor Series 1995. The company is still running on Diesel Power as he's held the title for nearly a year at this point but has a re-energized Bret Hart breathing down his neck and gunning for the belt. Let's get to it.

We open with a clip of Ahmed Johnson slamming the nearly 600lb Yokozuna last week to make him a much bigger deal than he already was.

Opening sequence, featuring most of the roster in a fight on the roof of a very tall building. It's certainly different.

Marty Jannetty vs. British Bulldog

Bulldog has Jim Cornette with him and this is due to Bulldog mocking Marty last week. Jannetty starts fast and smacks Bulldog in the face to set up a wristlock. It's off to an armbar so we go to a chat with Cornette's lawyer, who says Bulldog will get a shot at the winner of Bret vs. Diesel at Survivor Series. Bulldog comes back with the delayed vertical suplex and it's time for the chinlock. Back up and Bulldog turns him inside out with a clothesline to send us to a break.

We come back with Bulldog slapping on another chinlock before sending him outside. Bulldog grabs a fourth chinlock in less than ten minutes to kill even more time. Thankfully it doesn't last long as Marty misses a charge...to set up the fifth chinlock. Marty comes back again with a middle rope flipping cutter of all things (cool move too) and a DDT for two. Not that it matters as Bulldog hits the powerslam for the pin.

Rating: D-. Five chinlocks in a match that only ran about ten minutes. I don't think I even need to go on at this point. Marty was actually the better of the two here as he seemed like he was trying but what are you supposed to do when you have someone who is clearly just there because he has to be?

A fake Bill Clinton will be at Survivor Series.

Bulldog is ready for his title shot.

Barry Horowitz and Hakushi talk strategy.

We look at Bam Bam Bigelow challenging the newcomer Goldust, which would happen at the pay per view.

Henry Godwinn vs. Terry Richards

Henry is finally face though no one cares yet. Richards on the other hand is better known as Rhyno. Some forearm to the back don't have much effect as Henry throws him to the ground and rips at his face. The Slop Drop is good for the easy pin. Just a squash.

Cue HHH to jump Henry from behind and give him a Pedigree on the floor. With some white gloves on, HHH even pours the bucket of slop over Henry's head.

It's off to the Survivor Series control center with Undertaker promising to bury King Mabel and company and Diesel loving the rules of his match with Bret (No DQ/No Countout).

Kama vs. Tony Roy

Kama is part of the Million Dollar Team. Since this is just another squash, we get a phone call from Shawn Michaels to talk about his upcoming Wild Card Survivor Series match where the teams were "random". Kama throws the jobber around like he's nothing at all before finishing with a big right hand.

Rating: D. Kama was supposed to be this MMA style fighter but that's not exactly what you can expect from the future Godfather. His punching and kicking were fine at the time but when you look back at it with a modern perspective of MMA etc., the whole thing looks more like a joke than anything else.

Jerry Lawler/Isaac Yankem vs. Hakushi/Bret Hart

The good guys have Barry Horowitz in their corner for reasons that aren't important enough to explain. Bret and Yankem get things going with the

future Kane pounding away in the corner and grabbing an early bearhug. It's quickly off to Hakushi for the handspring elbow in the corner as I think I'd like to see a full Hakushi vs. Yankem match. Back to Bret to work on the arm as we're waiting on Lawler to come in and take his beating. A sunset flip gets two on Isaac but he clotheslines Hakushi in the back of the head to take over.

Hakushi goes back first into the post and it's finally off to the mulleted Lawler for two piledrivers. There's no cover though as it's off to Isaac for a whip into the corner as we take a break. Back with Isaac grabbing a Boston crab with Bret making the save. Jerry dives into a right hand to the throat and the hot tag brings in Bret. House is quickly cleaned and Bret gets the Sharpshooter on Yankem. Barry steals a chair away from Lawler but gets caught for the DQ despite not touching anyone.

Rating: C. Stupid ending aside, this was actually a nice tag match. Hakushi was one heck of a worker who just needed someone to do the talking for him. The idea of him hammering away on a big man like Isaac and trying to chop down a giant is rather intriguing but he wouldn't be around much longer.

A preview for next week's Raw, a commercial and another preview of next week's Raw end the show.

Overall Rating: D. This was your standard horrible Monday Night Raw of its era as you could see the company really needing to get away from Diesel and get on to something fresh. The wrestling here was just above a disaster with that Bulldog vs. Jannetty match being a huge waste of time. They're very lucky Nitro was starting to catch some steam at this point as they needed something to challenge them.

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Summerslam Count-Up – 1999: Start The Game

Summerslam 1999

Date: August 22, 1999

Location: Target Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Attendance: 17,130

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

This is the end of the summer for an interesting year in the WWF. The main event is the now mega heel HHH and the returning Mankind challenging Austin for the world title, but there's another main attraction: Minnesota Governor and former wrestler Jesse Ventura is the guest referee for the second time in the history of this event. 1999 is a year remembered for a lot of flash and little substance but hopefully that doesn't hold true here. Let's get to it.

The opening video talks about various guest referees over the years, including Mike Tyson and both McMahons. Jesse Ventura talks about how he'll be the law in the ring and doesn't care what happens.

Jesse lectures Chyna and HHH about not cheating. Chyna is allowed to be out there but the pinfall has to be in the ring and it has to be legal.

The recently debuted Chris Jericho yells at Jericholic Howard Finkel for being late.

Intercontinental Title/European Title: Jeff Jarrett vs. D'Lo Brown

Brown holds both titles coming in and Jarrett's manager Debra is in a bikini with a coat over it. Jeff sends her to the back to make sure the fans completely hate him. In the back, Debra offers to escort Brown to the ring to get back at Jarrett. Jeff jumps D'Lo to start but the champion comes back with a powerslam for one. Another powerslam gets two and Jeff can't bail to the floor for a breather. A leapfrog is countered into a short powerbomb for two but Jeff comes back with a sleeper.

Brown is sent to the floor and a baseball slide sends him into the barricade. Ross gets in one of his eye roll worthy lines by saying Brown wasn't safe on that one. I love JR but when he gets bad it's hard not to cringe. A clothesline puts Jarrett over the barricade and Brown pounds away. This is basic stuff so far but not bad at all. Back in and Jarrett gets in some shots to take over as the fans are behind the champion.

Jarrett hits a tornado DDT on the arm and wraps it around the post. The fans are more interested in the recently named Puppies. Jarrett misses a running crotch attack and gets caught in a running Liger Bomb for no cover. A tilt-a-whirl powerslam gets two and a quick legdrop gets two. Brown misses a modified Swanton but here's Debra on the apron. Jeff gets the guitar but here's Brown's training partner Mark Henry to destroy the guitar over D'Lo's head to give Jarrett the titles. Debra of course rejoins Jeff eight minutes after leaving him.

Rating: C+. Nice opener here but the scent of Russo is strong in this one. Debra turned twice within a span of ten minutes in addition to interference and a run-in during a match for two titles at once. These two could clearly have a good match on their own but we had to bog it down with extra stuff anyway. That's Russo 101: yeah it can make things interesting, but at other times it gets in the way of good wrestling.

Edge and Christian are ready for Tag Team Turmoil (a tag team gauntlet match) tonight. They outgrew Gangrel and are ready for his new team: the Hardys.

Tag Team Turmoil

As mentioned, Edge and Christian start against the Hardys which is a layup for a good start. The Canadians are good guys here and we have six

teams involved with the winners getting a tag title shot tomorrow on Raw. Naturally it's a brawl to start until we get down to Edge vs. Matt. A DDT puts the Hardy down and it's off to Christian for a double hiptoss for two. Christian BADLY misses a spinwheel kick but it's Gangrel interfering to give the Hardys control.

The Hardys take their shirts off to almost no reaction so you know they're evil here. Jeff hits a slingshot springboard moonsault for two followed by Poetry in Motion to crush Christian in the corner. Matt takes forever to cover and brings in Jeff for a senton (not yet the Swanton) Bomb for two.

Edge makes the save and allows Christian to hit a double reverse DDT to set up the hot tag. Everything breaks down and it's Edge and Jeff running the barricades to set up a spear in midair. Christian dives onto them both followed by Matt mostly missing a moonsault to take everyone else out. Back in and Edge pulls Matt off the top, setting up a top rope elbow to give Christian the pin.

The third team in is Mideon/Viscera and the big man is starting with Christian. Viscera hits a quick Samoan drop for no cover and it's off to Mideon for a double elbow drop. A knee drop gets two but Christian avoids a middle rope elbow. Off to Edge who speeds things up but gets drilled by a spinwheel kick (again it barely connected but it's more excusable with Viscera). Edge avoids a charging big man and a double shoulder puts Viscera outside. Mideon is speared down for the pin.

Droz/Prince Albert (Tensai) are the fourth team and it's Albert quickly throwing Edge into the corner. JR gets on Jerry for not knowing anything about Albert but Lawler makes a great point: "Look at him and you know everything you need to know." Albert gets two off a neckbreaker as the announcers argue whether football careers matter in wrestling (Hint: most of the time they don't). Christian chop blocks Albert and the Downward Spiral sends Edge and Christian to the next match.

The Acolytes are here before the three count and it's Bradshaw working over Edge to start. Edge comes back with a swinging neckbreaker and a missile dropkick as JR is whiny because Lawler pointed out how stupid the

football stats were. Bradshaw powerbombs Edge out of the corner for two and it's off to Faarooq. ANOTHER spinwheel kick barely connects (the production staff isn't on their game tonight) but Bradshaw gets a tag before Christian does.

A belly to back suplex gets two for Bradshaw and it's back to Faarooq for more basic power offense. We hit the chinlock for a bit before the Faarooq spinebuster sets up an arrogant cover for two. Edge gets up for a DDT and it's a double tag to Christian and Bradshaw. Everything breaks down and Christian gets two off a tornado DDT. Edge drops Christian onto Bradshaw as the Hollys come out before the pin. The distraction lets Bradshaw kill Christian with the Clothesline to get us down to the final two teams.

Faarooq hits a quick Dominator on Crash but Hardcore makes the save. The cousins get in an argument over who gets to fight Faarooq but it's the Acolytes getting to beat up Hardcore. It's back to Crash who has no effect on Faarooq so the announcers bicker some more to entertain us. Hardcore finally gets the tag and dropkicks Faarooq, triggering a brawl between the cousins. Faarooq hits a quick spinebuster on Hardcore for the pin and the title shot.

Rating: C-. This match had the same issues that almost all gauntlet matches have: if these teams can get wins this fast, why don't they do it all the time? The matches are just quick segments instead of actual matches with the longest being a slightly longer version of a TV match. However there was hope on the horizon as Edge and Christian and the Hardys would have a rematch with ladders in two months. Also, a team is coming from Dudleyville in about two weeks. The magic approaches.

The Hollys fight again.

Big Show and Undertaker arrive.

Al Snow grooms his dog Pepper and warns him of Boss Man singing Ethel Merman songs. Good advice actually.

Road Dogg comes out to watch the next match. He wants a shot at the Hardcore Title tomorrow night but here's the brand new Chris Jericho to

interrupt him. He's on a raised platform in front of the crowd and this is his PPV debut. Jericho is disappointed in this whole show. He can't believe it but Raw is Snore has been topped by Summersham. The people here have been conned into paying for it and now they look like fools.

Jericho rips on the roster and says the worst is standing in the ring right now. No one cares about Roadie and his spelling. If Dogg wants to be impressive, spell lugubrious. He makes fun of Dogg's clothes and haircut and says DX sure sucks. Road Dogg tells him to shut up and Jericho is SHOCKED. Dogg's mama cares about him but he's not sure if he should do the catchphrase because Jericho might take him up on it.

Hardcore Title: Al Snow vs. Big Boss Man

Boss Man is defending and Dogg is doing commentary. Before the match Snow leaves Pepper in a small kennel in the back. Snow: "You know Head came to the ring with me." Snow is waiting on Boss Man on the set and hits a high cross body to get us going. Dogg gets up and is going to be a roving reporter. Snow hits Man with a chair and they go to the back almost immediately.

Boss Man comes back with right hands and breaks a chalkboard over Snow's head. Pepper's case goes upside Snow's head but Snow hits him with the board. Boss Man steals a crutch to blast Snow in the back before sending him into the Pepsi machine. Snow avoids the falling machine and throws Boss Man into the side of an SUV. They open a garage door and head outside before going across the street to a bar.

They're fighting in front of the door and a superkick gets two for Snow. Snow is thrown through the patio furniture for two and we head inside. A shot with the Yellow Pages puts Snow down but he gets up to hit on some chick. Snow hits him with a magazine rack and they slug it out with broomsticks.

We hit the restroom for the required "comedy" spot with Boss Man taking soap in the eye. A beer to Boss Man's face slows him down and Snow chokes him with a chain. Snow moonsaults him through a table but Boss Man is up first. They head into the pool hall and Boss Man hits Dogg with a drink. Roadie comes back with a nightstick shot to give Snow the title in an

abrupt ending.

Rating: C. This is one of the more famous hardcore matches and it's pretty harmless goofy fun. The division was at its peak here but the 24/7 Rule was coming to make it a total parody. It was less than eight minutes so it's hard to really complain about this one. Yeah it's bad but it's completely harmless for the most part.

Snow runs back across the street to check on Pepper but has to beat up Stevie Richards and Blue Meanie for some reason.

Jesse warns Mankind about using chairs and how it won't be allowed, but Mankind would rather talk about Geraldine Ferraro's electability.

Women's Title: Ivory vs. Tori

Ivory is defending and Tori is just horrible for the most part. Ivory painted the word sl** on Tori a few weeks ago to set this up. Tori charges in and hits a powerslam for two and it's time for a breather. The crowd is already dead for this and a back elbow gets two for the champion. Tori hits a pair of suplexes and some lame kicks for two. Ivory is loudly calling spots to keep Tori from screwing everything up. The fans chant TAKE IT OFF as Ivory hooks a big swing. Tori comes back with a horrible spear and a middle rope cross body for two. They horribly botch a sunset flip so they do it again with Ivory sitting on Tori for the pin.

Rating: F+. Tori looked good in a bra and tight pants and that's about it. Seriously, she was TERRIBLE and makes the modern Divas look like ring generals. Ivory was trying out there but she was hardly a miracle worker. Trish would debut soon but wouldn't get good for about four more years.

Post match Ivory tries to take Tori's top off but Luna Vachon makes the save, becoming the heel of the segment.

Rock verbally massacres Michael Cole by insulting his tie and implying Cole is a bit coome ci coom ca. Not that it matters as Rock is going to destroy Billy Gunn tonight. This was a bad time for Rock as he had a bunch of nothing feuds until he got back into the title hunt to close out the year.

Billy Gunn has a surprise under a tarp.

We recap Steve Blackman vs. Ken Shamrock. Blackman is recently back from an injury and they've been beating each other up for weeks. The result is another Lion's Den match with weapons hanging from the cage. JR and King do the narration here for some reason.

Ken Shamrock vs. Steve Blackman

This is in the Lion's Den which is that small cage which is NOT ripping off UFC. Not at all. You win by escape only. Blackman starts with the nunchucks but Shamrock comes back with profanity. Blackman chokes him down but gets caught in an armbar. Ken throws the nunchucks away and rams Blackman into the cage. Shamrock pounds Blackman down and whips him into the cage for a high kick to the head.

Blackman blocks a kendo stick shot and fires off kicks of his own before sending Ken into the cage. An atomic drop puts Shamrock down again and Blackman pounds him in the back with his martial arts sticks. Shamrock gets up and runs the cage wall to ram into Blackman with a kind of elbow to the face. A belly to back suplex puts Blackman down but Ken can't quite follow up.

Back up and Blackman hits a quick DDT but Shamrock snaps off a powerslam. An enziguri puts Ken down and Steve pounds away with a kendo stick. A big shot to the head puts Ken down but he comes back with a wicked belly to belly to take over. Ken hits Blackman in the head (shoulder) with the stick...and that's it. No reason is given but I'd assume a knockout, even though the announcers said you had to leave to win.

Rating: D+. This didn't do anything for me. It was basically a hardcore match in a confined area which isn't the most interesting thing in the world. It's a far cry from last year's version with Owen keeping up with Shamrock every step of the way. Granted this is Steve Blackman, a black hole of charisma instead of one of the best of all time. Nothing to see here but it wasn't horrible.

We see Shane attacking Test earlier today.

Test says this is serious tonight.

Test vs. Shane McMahon

This is a Greenwich street fight with love her or leave her rules. Test is dating Stephanie but Shane doesn't approve. If Test wins, Shane stays out of their lives but if Shane wins then the relationship ends. Test has bad ribs but Shane has no backup due to Test injuring every member of the Mean Street Posse. Scratch that theory actually as they come walking out before the match. Thanks for wasting my time on the video of Test destroying all of them. The Posse has a couch set for them in the front row.

Test takes Shane down to start but Shane hits a quick spear back inside, only to be pounded in the corner. A backdrop puts Shane down as the Posse drinks champagne. Shane is sent HARD into the steps and then into the crowd for a drink to the head. Test catches Shane diving off the barricade and powerslams him down onto the floor. Shane staggers around ringside so Test launches him at the Posse to tip the couch over.

The injured Posse goes after Test and give Shane a mailbox of all things to crack over Test's head. A street sign stuns Test again and there's a framed portrait of the Posse shattered over Test's head. That's only good for two and the fans are getting into this. Shane does a great looking leapfrog and this a jumping back elbow to the face to put Test down. A corkscrew senton (Spiral Tap) of all things misses and Test comes back with right hands.

Another leapfrog is countered into a sweet powerbomb but Rodney of the Posse distracts the referee. Test's big boot hits the referee but he clotheslines Shane to the floor. The street sign puts Shane down again but here's the Posse again to take Test down. They load him onto the announce table so Shane can hit the top rope elbow through Test. For a non-wrestler, Shane can drop a gorgeous elbow.

The referee is back up (why did he need to be bumped? It's a street fight) but Test kicks out at two. The fans are really getting into this. Pete accidentally hits Shane with a sign but Rodney hits Test with his cast. That's only good for two and now the fans are fired up. Patterson

and Brisco run out to take care of the Posse and make it one on one. Shane charges into the post and it's a pumphandle slam followed by the flying elbow to get Shane out of Test and Stephanie's lives.

Rating: B. This took a little bit to get going but the fans got into it at the end. It's a great example of a story carrying a match rather than the wild brawling. This was full of weapon shots and interference, but the story behind the match made people care about it. The people were invested in Test and wanted to see him fight for the woman he loved. That's a classic story and it's going to work every time. Good stuff here.

Stephanie comes out to celebrate post match.

We recap the tag title match. With Vince having been revealed as the Higher Power, Undertaker has been dropped down to an evil tag team with Big Show. They're challenging X-Pac and Kane, who are in the beginning of a nearly year long story. Pac is Kane's first real friend and the other monsters hurt him, so Kane wants revenge.

Tag Titles: Kane/X-Pac vs. Big Show/Undertaker

Kane is in the always awesome inverted attire, meaning it's more black than red. The mash-up of Big Show and Undertaker's themes really doesn't work at all. It's a big brawl to start with Undertaker easily knocking X-Pac to the floor. Kane gets double teamed in the corner but he clotheslines Big Show out to the floor and Pac gets two off a high cross body to Taker. We start with X-Pac against Taker with the big man cranking on the arm. Pac escapes and wisely tags out to give us brother vs. brother.

Taker is knocked to the floor and Pac dives off the apron to take him down. The crotch chop earned X-Pac an elbow to the face and a smile from me. Kane saves him little buddy and take Undertaker down with the top rope clothesline. Taker comes right back with his running DDT but Kane is up almost immediately. Big Show comes in to throw Kane around and drops him with a superkick.

Since this is a battle of the giants it's time for some choking but we're

not to the bearhug yet. A powerslam gets two on Kane and it's back to Undertaker to pound away in the corner. They slug it out and both guys go down with a double clothesline. The hot tag brings in X-Pac who catches Undertaker with a spinwheel kick (actually connects) but Big Show pulls the small man down. Everything breaks down and Pac is crotched against the post. Show slams Pac down and drops a knee to his chest. The size difference is remarkable when you see them next to each other.

There's the bearhug but X-Pac bites his way out of it. A cross between a chokeslam and the Boss Man Slam gets two for Show but Kane breaks up the chokeslam. X-Pac hits Show low and it's off to Kane to clean house. Everything breaks down again and X-Pac sends Taker into the post. There's a Bronco Buster to Big Show but he pops up and chokeslams X-Pac down....for two? Taker is MAD and goes after X-Pac in the corner before ending him with a tombstone for the titles.

Rating: D. This didn't do it for me at all. I couldn't stand X-Pac around this time and this is a great example of why. The whole idea of his character at this point was he wouldn't give up, which led to him beating a lot of guys FAR bigger than him. I don't have much of a problem with X-Pac against smaller guys, but when he's beating people Taker's size it was very annoying. The match was an extended squash.

Jesse gives Austin the same speech.

Billy Gunn vs. The Rock

The loser has to, shall we say, kiss up to the winner. Billy brings a fat chick with him for Rock to kiss if Rock loses. Gunn jumps him to start but Rock comes back with right hands of his own to send Gunn to the floor. They head up the aisle with Billy being sent into a metal barricade. Rock is sent into it as well and clotheslined down as Billy takes over. Rock comes back with a clothesline of his own as they fight by the Lion's Den. This is really dull stuff so far.

They head back to ringside with Gunn sending him into the steps but being rammed face first into the announce table. Rock puts the King's crown on Billy's head for a right hand. Back in and Billy chokes away before getting two off a neckbreaker. Gunn drops an elbow to the chest and gets

two off a bulldog.

A Stinger Splash crushes Rock but he explodes out of the corner with a running clothesline. The floatover DDT takes Gunn down but Rock can't follow up. Rock gets two off a swinging neckbreaker and a Samoan Drop but the Rock Bottom is countered into a Fameasser. The fat woman comes into the ring but Billy goes face first into her. Rock Bottom and People's Elbow ends this a second later.

Rating: D+. What were you expecting here? Like I said, Rock was in a funk at this point and going from lame feud to lame feud with nothing for him to work with. I mean, BILLY GUNN is the best they can do for him at Summerslam? The match wasn't terrible but it was just killing time until the very obvious ending.

We recap the main event. Chyna actually won a #1 contenders triple threat over Undertaker and HHH but HHH went on a power trip, saying it was his shot. Mankind cost HHH a one on one match against Chyna for the shot and then beat Chyna for the title shot himself. HHH attacked Mankind's leg, leading to a fourth #1 contenders match, resulting in a double pin and a threeway tonight.

Jesse comes out first and says he's proud to be a wrestler. Here here!

WWF World Title: Steve Austin vs. Mankind vs. Triple H

Triple H and Austin start fast in the ring but Mankind pulls HHH to the floor and sends him onto the announce table. All three head into the ring with HHH being ping ponged back and forth by right hands from both guys. Mankind offers Austin a handshake but gets punched in the face instead. HHH is knocked to the floor and Mankind misses a charge at Austin to send him to the outside as well.

All three are on the floor now with no one having a clear advantage. Austin clotheslines Mankind down before slugging it out with HHH, allowing Chyna (HHH's manager) to send Mankind into the post. Jesse tries to separate Chyna and Mankind as HHH hits Austin's bad knee with a chair. Ventura asks the crowd if HHH hit Steve with a chair but doesn't do anything about it once they say yes. Mankind is back in now but gets

pounded down in the corner by HHH.

A quick Mandible Claw slows HHH down but Chyna breaks it up by crotching Mankind on the post. That earns her an ejection and a lecture from Ventura. Austin is back up now and pounding away on HHH in the aisle. They fight back to ringside where Austin's bad knee is wrapped around the post. A chop block puts Austin down but Mankind is getting back up again. He breaks up a stomping from HHH to Austin, only so he can stomp Austin instead. Now they stomp Austin together to a loud chorus of boos.

HHH puts on a spinning toe hold but breaks up a cover attempt by Mankind, starting a fight between the two of them. HHH is knocked to the floor but Mankind misses a dive off the apron. Austin's knee is almost wrapped around the post again but Mankind intercept it and brawls with HHH into the crowd. A piledriver on the concrete is broken up and Austin fights HHH again. Everyone heads back inside and there's a low blow from Austin to HHH.

The Stunner takes down Mankind but HHH breaks it up with a chair shot. Ventura yells at HHH about it before HHH knocks Mankind out with the chair as well. HHH covers Mankind but Jesse isn't counting a cover off an illegal move like that. Shane runs in to plead HHH's case but gets Stunned for his efforts. Ventura throws Shane out but HHH and Steve clothesline each other down. Mankind loads up Socko and both guys get a mouthful of it but Austin kicks Mankind low to break it up.

HHH loads up the Pedigree on Mankind but Austin clotheslines HHH down to break it up. Austin punches both of his challengers and hits a Stunner on HHH but Mankind breaks up the count at two. Austin sends Mankind into the post but walks into the Pedigree. Mankind pops back up though and knocks HHH down before hitting the double arm DDT on Austin for the pin and the title in a surprise.

Rating: D+. This wasn't all that great of a match. At the end of the day it was a pretty slow paced brawl and HHH wasn't on this level yet. Still though, it wasn't terrible and Jesse added some good moments to the match. This wouldn't wind up meaning much for reasons I'll get into in a bit. It's a nice moment though.

Post match HHH destroys Austin and his knee with a chair, putting him on the shelf for a month.

Overall Rating: D+. This show is a product of the times and political issues kept it from having the big moment it was looking for. HHH was scheduled to win the title to end the show but Jesse didn't want to raise a heel's hand to end the show. The title change would take place the next night on Raw and HHH would have his first title defense on a new show called Smackdown later this week. The show is totally forgettable though with only the street fight and the main event being notable at all. Not worth seeing but there are worse shows.

Ratings Comparison

Jeff Jarrett vs. D'Lo Brown

Original: B-

Redo: C+

Tag Team Turmoil

Original: B-

Redo: C-

Big Boss Man vs. Al Snow

Original: B

Redo: C

Ivory vs. Tori

Original: F

Redo: F+

Ken Shamrock vs. Steve Blackman

Original: B-

Redo: D+

Shane McMahon vs. Test

Original: B

Redo: B

Unholy Alliance vs. X-Pac/Kane

Original: D+

Redo: D

Billy Gunn vs. The Rock

Original: B-

Redo: D+

HHH vs. Steve Austin vs. Mankind

Original: B+

Redo: D+

Overall Rating

Original: B-

Redo: D+

WOW and I thought 1990 was screwed up.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/08/03/history-of-summerslam-count-up-1999-the-body/>

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Ring of Honor TV – August 3, 2016: The After Before The Middle That Sets Up The Future

Ring of Honor

Date: August 3, 2016

Location: Cabarrus Arena, Concord, North Carolina

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Kevin Kelly

We're two and a half weeks away from Death Before Dishonor and it should be interesting to see how they get around last week's ruling. Last week ROH matchmaker Nigel McGuinness said Adam Cole will NEVER get a World Title shot against Jay Lethal....and then the match was announced on ROH's website last week. They really need to time this stuff better. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of last week's World Title match with Cole and the Young Bucks injuring Kyle O'Reilly. This seems to be setting up Jay Lethal's face turn.

Opening sequence.

Here's Lethal with something to say. What happened to O'Reilly last week just wasn't right and Jay wants to do something about it. Last week Cole took the shot away from O'Reilly and it's time to do something about it. Tonight is supposed to be Young Bucks vs. the Briscoe Brothers, so let's just add Lethal and Cole to make it a six man. Nigel agrees to the match and we have a new main event.

Steve Corino and Kevin Sullivan are in a park with Corino talking about embracing his evil. Sullivan blames Corino for ending the legacy of evil by having a family. I'd still love to hear why Kevin Sullivan is on my TV in 2016.

P-Dogg (former referee Mike Posey) is in the ring with his Getalong Gang to call out Moose.

Moose vs. P-Dogg

The Getalong Gang is thrown away like a group of rappers called the Getalong Gang is going to be, leaving one of them to be powerbombed over the top rope onto the rest. Dogg's microphone shot to the head doesn't work and a buckle bomb followed by two spears give Moose the pin at 1:16.

Post match here are Prince Nana and Donovan Dijak with something to say. Nana says he brought Moose to Ring of Honor and it's been fun to see Moose dominating all these smaller talents. Instead, how about Moose vs. Dijak right now?

Moose vs. Donovan Dijak

Moose jumps him at the bell (which thankfully rings as we come back from a break and not before we go to one) but gets dropkicked out to the floor. Moose swings him into the barricade in one of those very cool power displays, only to charge into a chokeslam onto the apron. Back in and Dijak loads up something on top but Moose pops up with a dropkick to knock him to the floor in a nasty looking crash.

A Sky High gets two for Moose and it's time for the big slugout. Moose gets the better of it thanks to the fist pumps and kicks Dijak in the face. A discus lariat looks to set up the spear but Dijak sends it into

the corner. The chokebreaker gets one on Moose and Dijak is stunned. It's not bad enough that he can't give Moose Feast Your Eyes for the pin at 7:25.

Rating: C. I liked this more than I was expecting to as it was just two big guys beating on each other until one of them couldn't get up anymore. That's all it needed to be and it's a good way for Moose to go out as he heads to TNA. Dijak needs to get away from Nana, who is becoming as valuable as Mr. Fuji or Slick at this point.

Post match Nana tells Dijak to kick Stokely in the head, which will likely write Moose and Stokely off TV.

Addiction says they're awesome.

Colt Cabana gets his World Title rematch next week.

The Cabinet thinks they're going to build a wall around the Young Bucks which the Bucks will pay for with a t-shirt and 8x10 sale. They don't like Moose either.

Young Bucks/Adam Cole vs. Jay Lethal/Briscoe Brothers

Matt Taven is on commentary again. For the sake of sanity, I'll only refer to Jay Lethal as Lethal and Jay Briscoe as Jay. It's a big staredown and brawl to start with Mark (sporting a big haircut) hitting a Blockbuster off the apron to take Nick down. A double superkick saves Cole from a powerbomb over the top and the Bullet Club stands tall. Things settle down to Jay playing face in peril as the Club takes turns on him.

Matt comes in off the top with a double stomp to the shoulder, which is then sent into the turnbuckle. A quick fall away slam (more like an AA) allows the tag off to Mark, meaning it's time for Cole to take a beating of his own. The Froggy Bow is broken up with Mark being shoved off the top and through a table for the big spot of the match. Back from a break with Mark being helped to the back to make this a handicap match, at least for the time being.

Lethal gets caught in a chinlock as the announcers talk about Taven's

sexual voice. A backbreaker and neckbreaker combination plants Lethal but he grabs the Lethal Combination on Nick for a breather. The hot tag brings in Jay for superkicks all around but Cole sends him head first into the mat as we take a break. Back with the Lethal Injection being countered with a double superkick. Jay has some better luck with a double clothesline, setting up the Lethal Injection on Cole. Lethal rolls Nick up for the pin at 13:47.

Rating: C. This was a bit too messy for my tastes and as much as I like seeing the Bullet Club lose, it wasn't the right call to have them lose this match. The last thing you want is to have your heel stable look like they're not capable of beating the teams the top guys, especially when they have a man advantage.

Post match Jay takes a Jay Driller onto a chair, leaving Lethal all alone. A triple superkick knocks him silly and it's time for a haircut. They go almost all the way too as you can see most of Lethal's scalp. Cole holds up the title to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. I like the idea of them focusing on the World Title picture for extended periods of time for a change as it's often not that clear what the top story is in this company. That being said, there's also stuff like the Prince Nana mess and the huge waste of time that is the Kevin Sullivan story. They need to start setting up some more stuff for Death Before Dishonor, though it would be nice if they didn't spoil their stories on their own website.

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New Column: You Might Remember This One – Summerslam Edition

I did this for Wrestlemania and it's worth doing for this show.

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Cruiserweight Classic – August 3, 2016: Daniel Bryan's Man Crush

Cruiserweight Classic

Date: August 3, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Daniel Bryan, Mauro Ranallo

It's the final night of the first round as this tournament has been as well structured as anything WWE has produced in a long time. Tonight we'll have another four matches to complete the field of sixteen for the second round. It should be interesting to see which people get the star treatment this week as you can almost always see who WWE wants to push, meaning they might be a big deal in the upcoming Cruiserweight division. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week's show.

Preview of tonight's matches.

Opening sequence.

Corey Graves looks at the updated brackets.

Rich Swann says he won't take anyone lightly because people have spent years telling him he'll never make it.

Jason Lee of Hong Kong has been wrestling for eight years and wrestles with a kung fu style.

First Round: Rich Swann vs. Jason Lee

America vs. Hong Kong and dancing vs. nunchucks. They run the ropes to start with Swann diving over Lee and catching him with a dropkick for two. The fans are WAY behind Swann and chant ALL NIGHT LONG as he holds an armbar. I hope he does more than that tonight. Lee comes back with some very fast strikes and an enziguri for two. Swann knees him in the head and jumps to the top for a hurricanrana but Lee comes back with a DDT. La Majistral gets two for Jason as Bryan is amazed by Lee's speed. Swann comes right back with a kick to the head and a standing 450 gives him the pin at 3:49.

Rating: C+. Both guys looked good here but you knew they weren't going to give Jason the pin over an NXT guy. Swann is really over with the crowd already and that standing 450 looked cool. I know Lee isn't likely to go anywhere in WWE but it's cool to see people like him get a shot, even if it's a one off like this.

Gurv Sihra, brother of Harv from last week, grew up watching cruiserweight wrestling and he can't wait to represent India.

Noam Dar wants to represent Scotland.

First Round: Noam Dar vs. Gurv Sihra

Scotland vs. India. Dar starts fast with a dropkick to the knee but gets caught in a headlock. Sihra can't get in a backbreaker so Noam starts

back in on the knee and dropkicks him in the side of the head as a bonus. Another dropkick in the corner gets two but Gurv comes back with a spinwheel kick for two, only to miss a top rope elbow due to wasting time on a handheld Bollywood camera (as in the old Hollywood Blonds taunt). Noam uses the crash to grab a kneebar for the tap at 5:23.

Rating: C. I wasn't as interested here but I can always go for something as simple as working on the knee from the start to set up a leg submission at the end. Noam looked a lot better here and Gurv really did look young out there. This wasn't much of a match but again it didn't overstay its welcome, which has been a great thing about this whole tournament.

Fabian Aichner wants to see what it's like to wrestle outside of Italy where there isn't much of a wrestling scene.

Jack Gallagher, in a suit, is a British gentleman.

First Round: Fabian Aichner vs. Jack Gallagher

Italy vs. England. Jack already has more of a character than almost anyone else in this tournament. Gallagher spins out of a wristlock to start and does it again nearly in slow motion, much to Daniel's delight. A very British toehold keeps Aichner in trouble but the much bigger Italian runs him over with a shoulder. Some loud chops set up a slightly botched springboard kick to the chest and we hit a chinlock.

A pinfall reversal sequence results in Gallagher charging into a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker for two. Aichner surprises everyone with a double springboard moonsault for two, only to have Jack come back with a guillotine choke. Gallagher gets lifted into a suplex but powerbombed down and the fans boo the heck out of Aichner for beating on Bryan's new man crush. A great looking running dropkick knocks Fabian silly enough for the pin at 6:47.

Rating: B. Oh yeah this was a lot of fun. Gallagher is like the stereotypical British wrestler you would see in a video game but he's turned up to twelve or so. Bryan was gushing over him and I can't say I really blame him. Aichner was no slouch either and I really hope he gets

another shot somewhere else.

The guys get a THANK YOU BOTH chant. Daniel: "I'm in love."

Video on Johnny Gargano vs. Tommaso Ciampa, who are best friends outside the ring but will fight as hard as they can to advance here.

Gargano and Ciampa both say they'll win.

First Round: Johnny Gargano vs. Tommaso Ciampa

America vs. America here. They take a few seconds before shaking hands and it's Gargano with an armbar to start. A very loud elbow to the jaw knocks Johnny's head around and Tommaso mocks the "Johnny Wrestling" chants. Another hard elbow has Johnny in trouble and we get a C DUB C chant. Tommaso grabs what looks like White Noise but climbs the ropes instead of crashing down, allowing Johnny to slip out and superkick him through the legs.

A powerbomb brings Ciampa down and a suicide dive makes things even worse. Back in and they just kick each other in the head over and over, leaving Gargano looking rather shaken up. They chop it out on the apron and White Noise only gives Tommaso two. Johnny looks completely out of it and Ciampa can't bring himself to knee Gargano in the face.

The distraction lets Johnny get in a superkick but he walks into Project Ciampa (powerbomb into a Backstabber) for two. The stunned look on Ciampa's face is excellent. Some chops rock Johnny and a right hand just makes Ciampa angry. Ciampa loads up his armbar but Johnny counters into a crucifix for the surprise pin at 10:49.

Rating: B+. This was awesome stuff with some excellent selling from Gargano. They did a great job of making the evil Ciampa a little more human as he was afraid to hurt his friend and tag partner, only to get caught in a rollup at the end. These two are going to get a Tag Team Title shot at Takeover: Brooklyn and with a match like this it's easy to see why. Really good stuff here and probably the match of the tournament so far.

Ciampa can't shake hands post match but comes back to hug Johnny.

Here are the updated brackets:

Akira Tozawa

Jack Gallagher

Tajiri

Gran Metalik

Drew Gulak

Zack Sabre Jr.

Noam Dar

Hoho Lun

Brian Kendrick

Tony Nese

Kota Ibushi

Cedric Alexander

TJ Perkins

Johnny Gargano

Lince Dorado

Rich Swann

Overall Rating: A-. I'm digging this show more and more every week and it's cool to see so many different styles involved. Somehow they keep things fresh every week and go through things fast enough that it doesn't get dull. This really does feel like something different and that makes for interesting shows every week. Things are going to get even better now that we have the first round out of the way and that's just cool.

Results

Rich Swann b. Jason Lee – Standing 450

Noam Dar b. Gurv Sihra – Kneebar

Jack Gallagher b. Fabian Aichner – Running corner dropkick

Johnny Gargano b. Tommaso Ciampa – Crucifix

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NXT – August 3, 2016: A Little Old And A Little New

NXT

Date: August 3, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

We're less than three weeks away from Takeover: Back To Brooklyn and a lot of the card seems to be set. Before we get there though, we have two big names back/returning tonight with Hideo Itami making his TV return after nearly a year and a half away and Bobby Roode making his TV debut. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Hideo Itami vs. Sean Maluta

Maluta was in the Cruiserweight Classic so Zack Sabre Jr., Drew Gulak and Tony Nese are in the front row. Hideo shoulders him down to start and kicks Maluta in the back before casually kicking him in the face. Something like a middle rope Codebreaker gives Maluta a near fall and it's off to a bodyscissors. Itami comes right back up with his quick strikes to set up a hesitation dropkick in the corner. The running knee puts Sean away at 3:49.

Rating: C. Itami is the same guy he was back in the day and that's not the most thrilling person in the world. He has all the skills you could need but there's just not the kind of fire that's going to get me interested in seeing him come out. The barrage of strikes feels old hat now as there are so many people who do the same thing and that gets a bit tiresome. Still glad to have him back though as NXT really needs top names at the moment.

We look at the Authors of Pain beating American Alpha in Alpha's last match.

Revival says they're the best team in the world but here's TM61 to say the world is a big place. They've fought the best around the world so how about a title shot. Revival suggests that they go to the back of the line but here are Johnny Gargano and Tommaso Ciampa to say that their ticket says #1. Revival says the teams can figure it out amongst themselves.

Mojo Rawley vs. Chris Atkins

No time to talk as Samoa Joe comes in for the DQ at 23 seconds.

Joe says if Regal doesn't have to ask him who he's facing then he doesn't have to ask Regal when he can disrupt the show. Rawley tries to fight back and gets choked out with ease.

Bayley has been studying Asuka's matches and thinks she's ready. Asuka comes in to say not so fast.

Asuka vs. Aliyah

Bayley is on commentary but Asuka offers her a chair to sit down in the aisle. That's fine with Bayley but she would rather stand actually. Asuka cuts off Aliyah's early offense and nails a running hip attack. Aliyah gets up a boot to stop a charge but dives into a kick to the head for two with Asuka pulling her off the mat. The Asuka Lock ends the destruction at 2:30.

Bayley comes in to break things up and Asuka holds up the title.

We look back at Oney Lorcan beating Tye Dillinger in an upset last month.

Lorcan wasn't sure it was an upset but he knows the competition is going to get stronger. He needs to go back to his roots.

The universe is shifting vignette. It's for Ember Moon, who debuts at Takeover. That would be the recently signed Athena.

Here's Bobby Roode with his rather awesome theme song which keeps saying "GLORIOUS! I WILL DEFEND" in the chorus. Roode says the wait is over because he is NXT. A few months ago he was in Dallas for Wrestlemania weekend and he knew it was the place he needed to be. He was very lucky to be with those fans because they're just as much NXT as anyone else.

Roode is ready to take NXT to that next level but it needs him, just like everyone else here needs him. Now that NXT has found their new superstar, his face will be on billboards and TV campaigns so he can take the company to corporate America and Wall Street. Then this place will be filled with Presidents of Fortune 500 companies instead of people in cargo shorts and overly large shirts. He is a superstar from his watch to his socks because there has never been anyone like him. From now on NXT will be GLORIOUS. This was some combination of Rick Rude and Ric Flair and it was rather awesome.

TM61 vs. Revival

Non-title. Miller cranks on Dawson's wrist to start and a double shoulder gets two early on. Thorn keeps him on the mat with the wristlock but a hair pull gives Dawson some relief. A quick dropkick hits Dawson in the

face and we take a break. Back with Thorn's shoulder being worked over like only an old school tag team can. Dawson hits a dropkick to a downed Thorn for two more.

Dash almost does the dive into two boots but is fast enough to catch himself, only to get kicked into the corner. The hot tag brings in Miller as everything breaks down. A spinebuster gets two on Dawson and it's time for a chase, capped off by Dawson grabbing a DDT on Miller for the pin at 11:16.

Rating: C. I'm liking the Revival more and more every time they're out there while TM61 continues to look like a team that is just kind of there. This was a fairly decisive victory but to be fair it was too early for them to give the Revival much of a fight yet. It's pretty clear that Gargano and Ciampa are the next challengers and they certainly should be after that recent win over the champs.

Post match Revival brags about beating a bunch of teams but here are Gargano and Ciampa to pick up some of the names Revival just dropped. That means teams like the Hollywood Blonds, Kermit the Frog/Miss Piggy and Pikachu/Charizard. Fans: "POKEMON! POKEMON!" Gargano: "Serious question: have you caught them all?" The challenge is issued but Revival goes to leave, triggering the brawl. Wilder is taken down and Gargano counts his own three count to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. The women and the tag division got some major boosts here which they were really needing as neither feud was really on fire heading into Brooklyn. The two big names showing up were a nice way to make the show feel important but it's all about Brooklyn at the moment and we can really get more into those two in the coming weeks. Another good show here as we're firmly getting ready for the big show.

Results

Hideo Itami b. Sean Maluta – Running knee

Mojo Rawley b. Chris Atkins via DQ when Samoa Joe interfered

Asuka b. Aliyah – Asuka Lock

Revival b. TM61 – DDT to Miller

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