

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 250th 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 14th 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 250th 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.

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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.

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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

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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-viewer-ship-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.

NXT – July 6, 2016: Use Them While You Can

NXT

Date: July 6, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

We're picking up where last week's show left off with the tag team division getting the focus. Last week saw American Alpha saying they deserve a title shot so tonight it's Alpha vs. the Revival in a 2/3 falls match. These teams have some of the best chemistry you'll see in a long time so this has a lot of potential. Let's get to it.

Quick video on Alpha vs. Revival.

Opening sequence.

Bayley vs. Alexa Bliss

The fans are already into their songs as Bayley gets in an elbow to the back. Apparently Bliss isn't a music lover though as she catapults Bayley throat first into the bottom rope. Bliss stays on the throat with a clothesline and more choking. She skates on Bayley's back for a bit but Bayley just stands up and buckle bombs her to take over. Some running elbows and knees in the corner get two on Alexa but she pops up with one heck of a right hand and we take a break.

Back with Bliss telling the referee that Bayley is fine before being pulled throat first into the middle rope. The psycho eyes leg sweep set up Bliss' knees to the ribs but Bayley breaks up Twisted Bliss. A super Bayley to Belly is blocked but Alexa's sunset bomb only gets two, meaning it's time for Bliss to freak out. I don't know why as she's more than holding her own and giving Bayley a good match. Bayley goes to the middle rope but gets her legs pulled out to send her head into the buckle. Not that it matters as Bayley to Belly puts Bliss away at 11:54.

Rating: B-. Bliss has gotten a lot better in the ring in recent weeks and she's actually closed the gap between herself and the top names in the division. Her offense looked a lot better this week and she even had Bayley in some trouble at times. I'm curious to see where this new Bayley road to redemption goes though as it would seem that she's ready for the main roster but this could lead to another big title shot. Unless Asuka beats her again, which would be a bit of a surprise.

Post match Bayley says she's still getting up but couldn't stand seeing Nia Jax getting her title shot at the last Takeover.

Video on TM61.

Blake and Murphy vs. Hype Bros

The announcers agree with me that these Blake and Murphy reunions are just getting sad at this point. They argue over a tag ten seconds in but RHYNO comes out and Gores Blake for the DQ at 54 seconds.

Rhyno gores everyone not named Murphy (who got out of the way) and poses

a lot.

Long video on Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Finn Balor with people talking about how huge of a match this is because both of them are such important names to NXT and wrestling around the world.

Alpha says the longer their match goes, the better they get.

Samoa Joe is back next week.

Rhyno has no comment.

Tag Team Titles: American Alpha vs. Revival

Revival is defending and this is 2/3 falls. Dash and Chad get things going and Dawson has to pull his partner away from an ankle lock in the first thirty seconds. It's off to Dawson vs. Jordan with the latter spinning around Scott like he's not even there. Dawson takes a swing at Gable and everything breaks down for a bit with Alpha easily cleaning house as we take a break.

Back with the champs working on Jordan's leg with a knee to the hamstring and the leg being wrapped around the post. Gable gets lured in and Wilder gets in a few cheap shots on Jordan. I love old school tactics like that and they still work to this day. Jordan kicks away at the back to get out of a leg lock and the hot tag brings in Gable to take over with clotheslines and an exploder suplex for two on Dawson. Chad runs the ropes but Dash low bridges him to the floor for a nasty crash and we take another break.

Back with Dawson keeping Chad in trouble on the mat before he atomic drops Dash into a legdrop for two. The crowd loses some points with someone shouting "You can do it! You can do it all night long!" but Dawson makes it a bit better by sliding over to break up a hot tag to Jordan. Dawson's strong spinebuster gets two and the fans keep begging with Chad to make the tag.

Gable grabs a sunset flip but Dash doesn't let him get the tag again, which draws in Jordan so the champs can double team Chad in the corner. Again, classic old school tactics and they still work. The Trash

Compactor gets two but Chad sends the champs into each other and crawls through the legs for the hot tag to Jordan. Of all the things Alpha excels at, the hot tag to Jordan is the best thing they do as he just goes nuts with right hands and suplexes for everyone.

Everything breaks down and Gable suplexes Dawson, setting up double ankle locks with Dash tapping for the first fall at 23:22. Dawson immediately tries a top rope sunset flip but Jordan drops down into a cradle for two. Scott's DDT gets the same on Jordan and he grabs an inverted Figure Four to make Jason tap at 24:30. Dawson is smart enough to go for the same hold again but Jordan slips out and tags Gable back in for some near falls of his own. A blind tag brings in Jordan but the champs break up Grand Amplitude.

The Shatter Machine is broken up and Jordan's sunset flip gets two on Dawson. Scott kicks off the ankle lock and gets the inverted Figure Four again, only to have Gable dive off the top for the save. The double tag brings in Gable and Dawson who slug it out on the apron with Chad trying the German suplex until Dash makes the save, setting up the Shatter Machine on the apron for the third fall at 28:14.

Rating: A. This was a nice one two punch as the first fall was the long form tag formula stuff but it took the third fall to have the drama. That's part of the problem with these matches: the match isn't ending in the first fall so it's a little bit harder for the fans to get into the near falls.

It's still the best tag team chemistry anyone has had in years and I'm actually surprised that Alpha wound up losing the big blowoff match. It frees them up for one more match against the Authors of Pain before they head to the main roster for good and thankfully this was a fun one to wrap up their title picture time. Awesome TV main event here and that's all you could expect it to be.

Overall Rating: A. Great match tonight, set up another huge match for next week, have a good Bayley match to start it off and Rhyno is back. That's how you use fifty five minutes of wrestling TV and there are still so many more stories they have going on at the same time that weren't

even covered tonight. They've turned on the jets again and are making the most out of this talent before it heads up to the main roster, which is all they can really do at this point. It's another great show with the tag division leading the way again.

Results

Bayley b. Alexa Bliss – Bayley to Belly

Blake and Murphy b. Hype Bros via DQ when Rhyno interfered

Revival b. American Alpha – Shatter Machine to Gable

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Monday Nitro – February 12, 2001: Not This Again

Monday Nitro #277

Date: February 12, 2001

Location: Mississippi Coast Coliseum, Biloxi, Mississippi

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Scott Hudson

It's the go home show for SuperBrawl and it's probably not a good sign that they're in Mississippi for the second week in a row. We're set for the pay per view and the card isn't exactly thrilling but you can see how we got there for the most part, which is a lot better than some of the shenanigans we've put up with from WCW over the years. Let's get to it.

Rick Steiner vs. Dustin Rhodes

This is joined in progress as the show opens and I'm assuming the title isn't on the line. The Cat has allowed Dustin to wrestle here and it's very strange to see him in a singlet. Flair comes out and says this isn't happening. Ric threatens to have security take him out but it seems to be an excuse to have Steiner jump him from behind. I don't think you can really call this a match and the "action" wasn't even a minute long.

Dustin is told to leave because he'll never work here again. Ric gets in the ring with Rick, Animal and Sanders to brag about how much power he has. Cue the Cat for the same argument these two have every single week. Apparently Dustin is reinstated (Was he ever instated in the first place?) but Flair makes Cat vs. Lance Storm for the Commissionership right now with Sanders as guest referee. Thank goodness he has a referee shirt under his suit.

Before the match we go to a break and come back with Chavo Guerrero Jr. yelling at Flair about the El Nino stuff last week. Ric promises that he'll get revenge before SuperBrawl.

The Cat vs. Lance Storm

Cat kicks him down to start and does a little dance before uppercutting Sanders for fun. He loads up the dancing elbow but Sanders decks him instead, only to have Cat DDT them both at the same time. An elbow drop gets two with Cat making Sanders slap the mat but he's not the Rock so an elbow doesn't work. The Feliner drops Storm and Cat tries to steal the referee shirt, allowing Storm to hit the superkick and put on the Mapleleaf for the quick non-submission because that's the only screwy thing in this match.

The Magnificent Seven comes down to celebrate and they all get together

to beat on Cat. Before anything can happen though, Nash pops up on screen to say he wouldn't do that. Ric says he has all the bases covered but Nash isn't so sure. The camera pans back to show a beaten up David Flair with tape on his mouth. Wait we're doing the Flair father/son thing again?

Since he's in charge tonight, Nash wants Storm vs. Cat for the commissionership at SuperBrawl. Flair agrees, so Nash wants Dustin Rhodes vs. Rick Steiner for Dustin's job tonight, and if Dustin wins then Nash gets a World Title shot against Scott Steiner tonight. The threat of a left hand to David forces Ric to make the matches and he promises to smooth this over with Scott.

During the break, Ric sends Sanders to find Dustin.

Totally Buff offer O'Haire and Palumbo spots on the team so the Magnificent Seven (thereby making it nine) so they can have all the gold.

Sanders finds Dustin but he's not interested in saving David's skin.

Dustin: "Now go on, git! GIT!"

Lash Leroux vs. Yang

The winner is in the #1 contenders match at SuperBrawl. Yang's kicks confuse Lash to start so it's time for the Crane Kick to knock Lash around even more. Lash is sent into the corner for another running kick to send him outside but Yang holds off on the dive. The second attempt takes Lash down though, followed by a moonsault to floor Lash again. Back in and Lash powerslams him for two, only to miss a frog splash.

A quick ankle scissors puts Lash on the floor but he comes right back in with a slingshot clothesline (looked good too) for two. Lash drives in a knee lift and you can see how dark the top of the arena really is. Yang comes back with a tornado DDT but can't cover. Instead it's Lash up first with a pumphandle into a sitout powerbomb for two more. Whiplash gets the same so Yang runs to the top for a moonsault press and a near fall of his own. A Regal Roll sets up Yang Time (which mostly hits Lash's head) to give Yang the pin and the spot on the pay per view.

Rating: B-. Lash was in over his head here but he was able to hang in there well enough to make this work. Above all else though, this got an unthinkable nine minutes, giving it a chance to actually go somewhere. Yang winning was the right call though it's getting more and more obvious that we're heading towards the Dragons vs. 3 Count again in that six way on Sunday because that's where they belong, likely opening the show again as well.

Sanders tells Ric that he's negotiating with Dustin but that's not what the boss wants to hear.

Dustin agrees to the match tonight if he gets a title shot against Rick on Sunday if he wins.

Shawn Stasiak says he's going to prove he carried Palumbo to the titles.

Diamond Dallas Page gives Cat a pep talk.

Ric has Animal hold Sanders up by the throat until Sanders says it's taken care of. Dustin's demand isn't mentioned.

Video on the Steiner Brothers reuniting.

Dustin Rhodes vs. Rick Steiner

Non-title. It's a slugout to start and Tony is SHOCKED that Rick was dropped with a flying clothesline. Like, how could a former US Champion do damage to Rick Steiner? The Steiner Line gets two on Dustin which is a lot more realistic of course. They head outside with Rick being sent into the barricade but he doesn't have time to sell. Back in and Rick slaps on a reverse chinlock before ripping at Dustin's face and ripping open his nose.

We hit a chinlock because Rick is already spent after so much effort. Even that looks lazy but it still manages to get two armdrops, only to have Rick blast him with a Steiner Line for two. Back up and Dustin accidentally headbutts the referee, meaning there's no one to count the cover off Dustin's bulldog. Cue Animal to knock Dustin into a belly to belly but here's Shane Douglas to hit Rick with his cast. Dustin grabs a DDT for the pin and the title shot.

Rating: D-. Rick Steiner is just so bad and it's getting harder and harder to watch him every single week. Dustin was Dustin Rhodes instead of the interesting character he was capable of being but that doesn't make for anything interesting. Shane Douglas becoming a face isn't the most interesting idea either, which is likely why we're seeing it happen.

Post match Rick and Animal break Shane's good arm with Dustin's save attempt failing.

Scott Steiner isn't happy with what Ric has done and says he's doing things his way.

Billy Kidman vs. Elix Skipper

This should be good and it's another qualifying match for Sunday's six way. Kidman dropkicks him into the corner as we get a graphic saying SuperBrawl is in six days. I've always liked that as WWE would have you believe that the pay per views are on Monday when Cole says the show is in two or three weeks on Raw.

Skipper takes over to start and stomps a bit as the fans chant USA. Kidman's cross body misses completely as Skipper pulls out the Matrix move for a sweet counter. Skipper heads up top and gets powerbombed back down for two and both guys are a bit gassed. A reverse suplex gets two for Kidman and he reverses the Overdrive (Play of the Day) into the Kid Crusher for the quick pin.

Rating: C+. As usual the cruiserweights are putting on the best matches of the night and for a change they're actually getting a bit of time. Unfortunately it doesn't matter if this doesn't lead anywhere because it's the same cruiserweight stuff we've seen for years with no one actually being elevated. That's one of so many of WCW's problems over the years and this is no exception.

Hugh Morrus is told he gets the Wall at SuperBrawl so he issues a challenge for a tag match on Thunder: Morrus/Mysterio vs. Wall/Chavo. I know it's not much but that's a simple, logical story and a match that makes sense.

Scott Steiner beats up a backstage worker for not knowing where Nash is.

Ric is on the phone with his wife and promising to find David.

Video on Kanyon and Diamond Dallas Page.

Shawn Stasiak vs. Chuck Palumbo

It's a bad idea to have Palumbo be the one that is going to be carrying the match. Stasiak is knocked to the floor to start and a fall away slam gets two for Chuck back inside. A not great looking gutwrench slam gets two for Stasiak and Palumbo gets the same off a small package. Stasiak bulldogs Palumbo onto his leg (another botch as Stasiak isn't great in the ring) sets up a neckbreaker for two.

We hit the choking for a few seconds as the announcers speculate about where David Flair might be held hostage. Stasiak charges into a boot and gets caught in an Alabama Slam for two more. Chuck tunes up the jungle but gets caught and turned into an awful looking rollup with the referee not being sure if he should count or not. Clearly that was going to be the ending as Stasiak grabs a quick rollup and hooks the trunks for the pin.

Rating: D. This right here summed up the issue with the Natural Born Thrillers in a nutshell: they were generic wrestlers and not very good in the ring. Neither guy here did anything special to make them stand out and they were both just guys in trunks. It also doesn't help that neither has anything resembling a character or a personality and it shows more and more every time. Oh and there were several botches here because they weren't much to see in the ring either.

Post match Stasiak says that proves he carried Palumbo.

Here's Diamond Dallas Page in a Sopranos shirt with something to say. He's ready for Jeff Jarrett at SuperBrawl but he has to talk about Kanyon. Page isn't happy with Kanyon stealing all of his stuff so it's time for Kanyon to learn that no one steals nothing (his words) from DDP. He's ready for Kanyon anywhere, anytime. Instead here's Jeff Jarrett to say he's ready for Sunday. Page wants to fight right now but first he has

to fight off a sneaking Kanyon. The distraction lets Jeff come in with a guitar shot and the Stroke to leave Page laying.

WCW World Title: Scott Steiner vs. Kevin Nash

In case you just couldn't wait to pay for it on Sunday. Nash is challenging and brings David Flair out with him for a right hand to the face. Ric comes out to get his son but Nash powerbombs David first. They start fast with Nash sending him into the turnbuckle before the bell rings. A clothesline gets two and unfortunately Scott puts together the fact that Nash is getting a shot in Nashville.

We cut to the back to see Ric sending the troops out despite promising that there would be no interference. Steiner posts Nash to take over and it's time to choke and shout a lot. Cue the two factions to fight on the way to the ring as things stay even. A side slam gets two for Nash and there go the straps but Ric comes in for the DQ.

Rating: D-. No surprise here as they kept promising no interference and you always go with what they promise not to happen. I've never gotten the idea of having a match on Monday and then asking people to pay for it on Sunday, especially when it's the same match we're going to be seeing with no changes whatsoever. They could still change something on Thunder, or knowing WCW, they'll change it at the pay per view and blame the fans for being annoyed.

Ric takes the Jackknife but Steiner destroys Nash's knee with a pipe to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. The cruiserweights tried tonight and almost pulled off the minor miracle of saving this show. However, there's only so much you can do when you're up against this much bad. The David Flair stuff isn't interesting as he and Ric have turned on each other so many times over the years that it's hard to care about. Page vs. Kanyon is good, partially due to Page's natural charisma and ability to make anything seem somewhat interesting. Other than that though, this is another show where you can see a lot of the holes that need filling in a hurry.

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New Column: Who's The Boss

Today we're looking at a quirky 1980s sitcom starring Tony Danza as a former Major League Baseball player who becomes a housekeeper.

And a little bit about who should be running the new Raw and Smackdown.

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