

Muhammad Ali Passes Away At 74

I usually don't comment on celebrity deaths but this one has a big wrestling connection. In addition to refereeing the main event of Wrestlemania I, there's the Boxer vs. Wrestler match in 1976 which was kind of a forerunner to MMA. On top of that though there's the showmanship. Yeah he got a lot of it from Gorgeous George, but Ali brought it into the mainstream and made it something special. He was the greatest of all time and his influence will be felt for a long time to come.

Will Ospreay vs. Ricochet

I don't normally do this but I haven't seen a single match get this much talk in years. Back on May 27 at the Best of the Super Juniors Day 6, Will Ospreay and Ricochet (Prince Puma from Lucha Underground) had a match that was described as one of the best high flying matches in a very long time. However, not everyone was so happy with it. Many older wrestlers have said that it wasn't their style because the match feels like a choreographed routine instead of a wrestling match. I've seen clips of this everywhere, including on ESPN, meaning it's probably time I take a look at it. Let's get to it.

Will Ospreay vs. Ricochet

Date: May 27, 2016

Location: Korakuen Hall, Tokyo, Japan

Attendance: 1,505

Ospreay is a British wrestler who I've never actually seen outside of a few TNA matches. At the same time, I've only seen Ricochet as Prince

Puma. Ricochet is one half of the IWGP Junior Heavyweight Tag Team Champions but this is non-title. See, because it's a singles match. The fans are behind Ricochet here and he works on the arm to start. Will spins out ala Owen Hart before grabbing a surfboard which is escaped in a good half second to give us a standoff.

Both guys spin out of headscissors before doing Tajiri handsprings into standing moonsaults for another standoff. Now THAT is the kind of thing that looks fake to me. The stuff earlier was fine but I absolutely cannot buy, under almost any circumstances, that this is supposed to be spontaneous with something like that going on. Ricochet counters a whip into the corner and scores with a 619 but gets dropkicked out of the air to a nice round of applause. I'd think it was Will kicking him for swearing so much but maybe that's just me.

Off to an Octopus Hold on Ricochet (that always looks painful) but he falls into the ropes for the break. Ricochet flips forward into a DDT (cool) and Ospreay falls out to the floor for a springboard corkscrew dive to get the fans back into it. Back in and Ricochet kicks him in the chest a few times, causing Will to call him some very rude names. Ricochet bends him over his back (another Tajiri move) before putting on a hold that looks like he's setting up for a Burning Hammer but kneels while bending Will's leg around his head instead. Yeah it made my jaw hang open too.

There's a jawbreaker to stagger Ricochet and Will handsprings into an enziguri to put both guys down. Another enziguri (well a kick to the pad into Ricochet's head at least) sets up a Phenomenal Forearm (with Will adding in "Pip pip cheerio m*%#@#\$*%#er on the way down). Ricochet bails outside again and eats a handspring moonsault plancha before a springboard sunset bomb gets two for Ospreay back inside.

Ricochet gets in an enzigurit his time and a half nelson suplex gives him two of his own. Both guys moonsault over each other and score with kicks to the head at the same time to give us another breather. The fans think this is awesome which sounds a bit odd at a Japanese show. They fight to the apron (the wrestlers, not the fans) with Ricochet hitting an AA which should knock Will silly but he snaps off a reverse hurricanrana to put

both guys down on the floor instead. Fighting spirit you see.

That earns a double nineteen count and it's time for a big slugout with right hands and European uppercuts but no clear winner. Yet another enziguri staggers Ricochet and sets up what looks to be a Rainmaker. Ricochet ducks (Good. Now I don't have to explain why A FREAKING CLOTHESLINE is still an overrated move.) and grabs a suplex but gets countered into a jawbreaker. A standing C4 gets two for Will and we've reached frustration point.

Ricochet comes right back with a jumping knee to the face and a standing shooting star for a shocking near fall of his own. The 630 misses though and Will grabs a DDT, only to flip forward as a bonus. Somehow that's only good for two as well so Ricochet tells him to bring it. Will is more than willing (see what I....nah that's too easy) to do so and fires off a bunch of kicks to the head, followed by a springboard Diamond Cutter (think the Lethal Injection minus the flip) for the pin at 16:47.

Rating: B+. Yeah this was nowhere near as bad as people were making it out to be though I can see the issues. The overly choreographed stuff is there but it's certainly not the core of the match that I was thinking it was going to be. There are FAR worse examples of that over the years (see Alex Shelley vs. Chris Sabin at Genesis 2009 for instance) and it actually felt like a match where they really did know each other well enough to counter most of their big spots.

Now that being said, there are some major issues here as well with stuff like the limited selling, the ridiculous amount of enziguris, that opening where they clearly worked out every single step (which happened again a few more times to lesser degrees) and too many strikes for my taste. However, it's certainly not the kind of thing that is killing wrestling or whatever it was that was said about this.

I do however get a lot of the criticisms that people have for this kind of wrestling. The old school wrestlers were all brought up with the mindset of being physical and telling a story, which really isn't how this comes off. Yeah it's physical, but there's very little flow to the match other than "I hit a big move and then you hit a big move, then we

swear a lot and kick each other over and over.”.

I’m much more of an old school fan so I’d much rather watch a match being built up over time instead of going from spot to spot. This was certainly entertaining but I’d call it much more not my taste than anything else. I’m not a fan of this style in Ring of Honor or New Japan or anywhere else like that but it’s fun to watch every now and then. It’s very different but killing wrestling is WAY too much of a stretch. I mean, it’s not like this is the Bullet Club or something vile like that.

Maybe it was all the hype this match had over the last week but I kept waiting on the big stuff that was supposed to be all horrible looking and it never came. This was your standard modern cruiserweight style match and it was the standard result for something like this: entertaining though not exactly a high level of quality. That doesn’t mean it’s bad or anything and there is definitely a place for it, though it’s something I would get tired of after a match or two. Fun stuff, but not my thing.

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Smackdown – June 2, 2016:

Hope For The Future

Smackdown

Date: June 2, 2016

Location: BMO Harris Bank Center, Rockford, Illinois

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Mauro Ranallo, Byron Saxton

Things are rapidly changing around here as we have the new Brand Split in less than two months. More importantly for now however is the freshly heel AJ Styles who has set his sights on the returning John Cena, likely setting up a huge showdown at Money in the Bank. This show will likely focus on the build towards the ladder match so let's get to it.

The opening recap focuses on AJ Styles and the Band reuniting on Monday and Styles turning full heel.

Opening sequence.

Here's the New Day to open the show. Woods mentions Smackdown going live on July 19 and then it's time to talk about the Club. Yeah they're big and tough but they'll never be your WWE World Tag Team Champions. This brings out Gallows and Anderson with New Day asking what kind of club they are exactly. Do they meet in a tree house? Do you have to pay dues?

New Day wants a fight but the Club says no. Woods: "They don't want none." Cue AJ to say the WWE belongs to the Club but Kofi doesn't seem to get that. Kofi lists off all their accomplishments and laughs that AJ took ten years to get here. AJ talks about what he did to Cena but gets a NEW DAY ROCKS chant.

Becky Lynch vs. Charlotte

Non-title. Becky sends her into the ropes to start before Charlotte reverses in the corner and grabs a neckbreaker. Dana offers a distraction and Charlotte kicks Becky in the face to put her on the floor as we take an early break. Back with Becky hitting a running forearm in the corner and getting two off the exploder suplex.

Becky misses a knee though and hurts her leg (Did the Flair family find a

lucky charm a long time ago or something? It's uncanny how many in match knee injuries their opponents have.) but it doesn't seem to bother her that much. Instead Becky grabs a triangle choke but gets lifted into a Batista Bomb for two. Charlotte misses the moonsault but lands on her feet anyway, only to have the Figure Eight countered into the Disarm-Her, drawing in Dana for the DQ at 8:45.

Rating: C+. It's nice to have Becky not lose a match for a change though at some point she needs to actually win something of note. I'm assuming they're gearing up for a four way or something like it at Money in the Bank though I can't imagine they'll take the title off Charlotte this soon. Good match here though.

Post match Natalya comes out but Charlotte and Dana get away before they can be put in submissions.

Dean Ambrose and Sami Zayn are having a friendly argument in the back when Kevin Owens and Alberto Del Rio come up with Owens saying Sami is trying to manipulate Ambrose. Owens: "He's Canadian remember? You can't trust him." More trash is talked and Dean wants to fight now instead of waiting for their scheduled tag match later.

Golden Truth vs. Dudley Boyz

Breezango is in the VIP area. The Goldust music hits and the Golden Truth graphics come on but the Dudley Boyz video is still playing. Truth's remix now has the lyrics on screen with a bouncing Goldust head telling you what to say. Also it's apparently "Goldentruth".

Truth drives Bubba into the corner to start and a double suplex puts the big man down. The Dudleyz take over and D-Von's spinning elbow to the jaw gets two. Everything breaks down and Goldust catches D-Von with a spinebuster, only to have Tyler get on the apron for a distraction. Goldust goes to deal with him but gets rolled up by D-Von for the pin at 4:04.

Rating: D. I hate to admit it but I'm digging this story more and more every week. It's a naturally developing story and it's actually entertaining me every time they go out and do something else. I'm not

sure where this ends but it's been FAR more entertaining than it had any right to be the whole way through.

Post match Breezango laughs at Golden Truth. Fandango: "Just like a game of shooty hoops, three strikes and you're out!"

Recap of Baron Corbin vs. Dolph Ziggler.

Corbin is standing outside because he won't grace the fans with his presence after they cheered what happened on Monday. The next time he comes into a WWE arena, it's to end Dolph Ziggler. Or on Raw next week.

Dean Ambrose/Sami Zayn vs. Alberto Del Rio/Kevin Owens

Owens goes after Sami to start before it's quickly off to Del Rio, who is rolled up for two. Dean comes in for a shot to the ribs and it's right back to Sami but he walks into a Backstabber for another two. Owens is happy to come in and pick Sami's bones but quickly hands it back to Del Rio for a kick to the ribs. The fast tags continue as Dean is brought back in to dive on Del Rio as we take a break.

Back with Alberto stomping on Dean's chest in the corner before the heels take Ambrose outside for a beating. Unfortunately it's in front of the announcers' table so Sami flip dives onto both of them. Sami gets pulled off the apron though and the beatdown continues on Dean, only to have him escape the armbreaker. The Dirty Deeds attempt is broken up though and the running enziguri hits Owens instead. Sami gets the tag and scores with the Helluva Kick to put Del Rio away at 9:24.

Rating: B. Nice fast paced tag match here with both teams working well together and doing some things you don't normally get in the tag team formula. I'm not wild on having these tags where the good guys always team with the bad guys leading up to the ladder match but at least it was an entertaining match this week.

Post match Owens grabs a headset and says he's tired of his partners screwing things up. He goes under the ring and finds a ladder so he can climb up and pull down the briefcase, only to have Cesaro run down and hit the spinning uppercut while still wearing his suit. Cesaro climbs the

ladder and pulls down the briefcase instead.

Jack Swagger vs. Rusev

Non-title and Rusev attacks before Jack can get in the ring. Swagger says ring the bell and has the Patriot Lock on about two seconds in. Rusev bails to the floor and eats a hard clothesline but Jack's shoulder is banged up from the attack. Back in and Swagger makes a quick comeback but misses the running Vader Bomb. Instead he clotheslines Rusev again with the shoulder mostly fine. Rusev escapes another Patriot Lock attempt and sends Swagger outside for a whip into the steps. The Accolade is countered into the Patriot Lock but Rusev gets the rope and puts on the Accolade so Jack can pass out at 4:43.

Rating: C. I know it's been a long time since this happened but it's still not something I'm going to get into. They've had the same match over and over and it's really kind of hard to care about when there's no way Swagger is going to do anything noteworthy. Swagger really needs a change and jobbing to Rusev again isn't a good sign.

Rusev won't let go until Titus O'Neil runs out for the save.

Bob Backlund asks Darren Young for a training update. Young says his running has been great so far but Backlund only wants him running in case he misses the bus. Apparently Backlund has stolen Young's car keys and Young can walk to the next town in eight hours. Backlund: "And if you get there any faster, I'll know you ran!" I freaking love these things.

We look at Rollins and Reigns not fighting on Raw.

AJ Styles vs. Kofi Kingston

Kofi flips him away to start but AJ snaps off some armdrags and poses a bit. The announcers speculate that the Club's breakup was staged to set Cena up, which is a better explanation than I would give it. Kofi takes him into the corner for a basement dropkick and that means it's time for a musical interlude. All six guys get in and it's a standoff until we take a break.

Back with Kofi elbowing Styles in the jaw and putting on an armbar.

Styles is sent to the floor and it's a standoff between New Day and the Club, allowing AJ to post Kofi to take over. Woods starts running his mouth and apparently motivates Kofi to get in a jawbreaker, only to have Styles hit that strike rush of his to drop Kingston again. Kofi grabs a monkey flip of all things to put Styles down.

The Boom Drop makes a rare appearance and something like a knee drop to a standing AJ gets two. Styles is sent to the apron and Woods starts playing some trombone, causing AJ to miss the Phenomenal Forearm. The SOS gives Kofi two but the Club and New Day get into it at ringside. Kofi dives over the top to take out Gallows, only to have AJ score with the Pele coming back in. The Styles Clash gives AJ the pin at 13:35.

Rating: B+. For all his goofiness, I think it's often forgotten just how good Kofi can be in the ring. No he's not likely to ever become a World Champion but he's definitely someone who can wrestle a good to very good match against almost anyone. I miss watching Kofi in singles stuff and I'd love to see him as more of the solo act on the team.

Overall Rating: B-. This was a stronger show than usual as it feels like Smackdown is starting to mean something again heading into the Brand Split. There was enough good wrestling here and Club vs. New Day got a strong focus to start what could be an entertaining feud going forward. I liked this show for a change and that's not something I can often say these days.

Results

Becky Lynch b. Charlotte via DQ when Dana Brooke interfered

Dudley Boyz b. Golden Truth – Rollup to Goldust

Sami Zayn/Dean Ambrose b. Kevin Owens/Alberto Del Rio – Helluva Kick to Del Rio

Rusev b. Jack Swagger – Accolade

AJ Styles b. Kofi Kingston – Styles Clash

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New Column: Breaking Up Is Hard To Do

Looking at some of the potential perils of the new Brand Split.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-breaking-up-is-hard-to-do/>

Ring of Honor TV – June 1, 2016: Well Of Course It Is

Ring of Honor

Date: June 1, 2016

Location: Ted Reeve Arena, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Commentators: Kevin Kelly, Nigel McGuinness

Could this finally be the week? Could this finally be the week that we do something other than just recap stuff or show matches from Japan? It would be nice to finally get somewhere with this stuff as it's been going on four months since we saw a Ring of Honor show without the Japanese contingent. Let's get to it.

We open with a clip from the end of Global Wars with Adam Cole joining the Bullet Club and laying waste to various people.

The main event tonight: three New Japan guys vs. the Bullet Club. Of course it is. Well to be fair one of those New Japan guys is Michael Elgin but still, close enough.

Lio Rush vs. ACH

In case one of them isn't enough. ACH and partner Matt Sydal amicably split up at a recent house show. Silas Young sits in on commentary because he's sick of people like ACH playing video games in the back before the show. A dropkick puts Lio down to start as Silas rips on the two of them for trying to be fake wrestlers. Rush sends him to the floor for a flip dive but gets kicked in the head back inside. A snap German suplex gets two on Rush and he runs into a superkick. ACH gets a brainbuster and the Midnight Star pins Rush at 4:10.

Rating: C. Yeah I know it was high flying and exciting but I'm really not a fan of this style. If nothing else you have two guys who wrestle a very similar style, which still makes me wonder why they even hired Rush in the first place. This was better than most ACH matches though so maybe it was Sydal holding them back.

Young comes in and lays both guys out post match.

Clip of the Addiction cheating to beat War Machine for the Tag Team Titles at a recent show.

Here's the Addiction for a chat. Daniels talks about how much better the world feels right now because everything is just a little bit better now that they've got the Tag Team Titles back. He says no one else is worthy of them and since they've never been beaten in a Ring of Honor ring

(Kelly: "SAY WHAT?").....and here are the Motor City Machine Guns to interrupt.

Sabin thinks that since they're already losing their battle with male pattern baldness, how about they lose those titles to the Guns tonight too? Roppangi Vice comes out as well with Trent saying they're the young and cool tag team while the Addiction is getting old. That's too much for Daniels so he says let's do a triple threat right now and if either team can beat them, they get a title shot at Best in the World.

Roppangi Vice vs. Motor City Machine Guns vs. Addiction

Non-title. Sabin and Romero start things off while the Addiction chills on the floor, only to have the champs come in for some cheap shots. Romero clotheslines Kazarian and Daniels down before it's off to Trent for some dancing on the apron before coming in to rake his boot over Kazarian's eyes. The Guns come in and beat on Daniels for a bit with their fast paced (well high speed paced at least) but Kazarian takes Shelley down and we go to a break.

Back with the Addiction still in control on Shelley with a stomping in the corner. Not that it matters as Shelley gets over for the tag to Sabin a few seconds later as things speed up again. Everything breaks down with Trent suplexing Kazarian and kneeing Daniels in the face for two. Strong Zero is broken up and Daniels plants Trent with a Rock Bottom and the BME. That cover is broken up as well as the Guns get in one of their quick sequences capped off by a basement dropkick to Daniels, followed by Skull and Bones for the pin on Daniels at 9:28.

Rating: C+. The right team won here and I like it a lot better than having the champs lose a clean tag match to any team to set up the title match. Vice didn't serve much of a purpose but it was nice to see them there to make this match different from the eventual title match.

Roderick Strong is going to prove how good he is to Jay Briscoe this Sunday in Columbus, Ohio. Strong is still not great on promos but he's WAY better than he was just a few months ago.

The Bullet Club brags about throwing 51 superkicks at the end of Global

Wars and says we're just living in their world.

Nigel announces BJ Whitmer vs. Steve Corino in a Fight Without Honor for Best in the World after Whitmer has stalked Corino's family.

We see Adam Page joining the Bullet Club and helping beat down a bunch of wrestlers at a recent show with the highlight being a Rite of Passage (over the back piledriver) onto a table (as in the table didn't break) to Jay Briscoe. I get the NWO vibe but the group is getting WAY too big, just like the NWO back in the day.

Elite vs. Hiroshi Tanahashi/Michael Elgin/Yoshi Tatsu

Kelly almost laughs off the idea of there being groups within the Bullet Club. Matt Taven is on commentary for no apparent reason. The match begins after a break (thankfully without the bell ringing before the break) with the non-Bullet Club guys (I have no idea who the faces are in this as the Club gets ridiculous pops every time) telling them to suck it. The Club is sent to the floor and it's Elgin flipping over the top to take them down.

The Bucks get double suplexed and Omega gets caught in the air, only to slip into a dragon suplex on Elgin. Tanahashi comes in to clean house but a double superkick breaks up the Cloverleaf. A triple dive takes the New Japan crew down and Tanahashi takes a triple kick to the head. Nick comes in for a bunch of cartwheels as Taven rips on how stupid this concept is, along with how easy it is to make fans cheer them.

Back with Tanahashi ducking a superkick and sending the Bucks into each other for the hot tag off to Elgin. Both Bucks get German suplexed at the same time but Taven accurately points out that they combine to weigh as much as one average wrestler. The Falcon Arrow from the apron gets two on Matt with Omega making the save. Everything breaks down and it's Tatsu getting the tag as house is cleaned. With the referee looking away, Nick sprays Tatsu in the face and it's a triple superkick for two. Omega adds the One Winged Angel for the pin at 10:02.

Rating: B-. It's a fine enough main event if you can handle another Bullet Club match. Elgin continues to be an amazing strong man with

seemingly limitless strength and that's all he needs to be at this point. Tatsu being the Bullet Club Hunter over them injuring him a long time ago makes sense but he could use some wins over them. That can't happen though because BULLET CLUB IS AMAZING.

Overall Rating: C+. What am I even supposed to say here? It's very clear that Ring of Honor is all about the Bullet Club now and I can't imagine Best in the World doesn't end with the screwing up the main event. It's nice to have some regular stuff going again but Ring of Honor becomes New Japan Jr. more and more every single week.

On top of that though, it's really annoying to have the Bullet Club running around like heels but getting the biggest face reactions on the show. For all intents and purposes, they're the top faces on the show despite being heels and that gets old in a hurry. Unfortunately they're going to be here for a very long time because they make a fortune and the fact that they're so upside down with psychology and absorbing half the roster just like the NW0. That group turned out fine though, right?

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Monday Nitro – January 8, 2001 (2016 Redo): How Can You Mess Up Counting Twice?

Monday Nitro #272

Date: January 8, 2001

Location: X-Cel Energy Center, St. Paul, Minnesota

Attendance: 4,500

Commentators: Scott Hudson, Disco Inferno, Tony Schiavone

We're finally back after several weeks off and it's the go home show for Sin. The big question is still who is the mystery man but it seems that something is up as Sid has been put in the title match on Sunday after winning last week on Thunder. Other than that we have the continuing saga of Goldberg and a career jobber masquerading as a guy we're supposed to take seriously facing Totally Buff because Bagwell isn't allowed loose on his own. Let's get to it.

Here's Ric Flair with a bunch of security to open things up. Flair says Sin is going to be the biggest pay per view of the year, which to be fair it will be so far. Of course it's also the worst but that's probably the case for a long time. Like, as long as it takes to get to the next WCW show. Anyway Flair thinks no one likes Sanders as Commissioner so it's time for him to put that job on the line against the Cat.

On top of that, Sid is now in the World Title match at Sin after taking Jarrett's place but Ric isn't sure if Sid or Jarrett should be in the match. This brings out Jarrett, probably to yell at Flair for that statement not making sense. Jarrett says Sid DIDN'T beat him because someone interfering and hitting Sid in the back isn't a DQ for storyline reasons. Flair doesn't buy the idea that Steiner will be cool with Jarrett in the title match so there won't be a three way dance.

Cue Steiner who isn't happy with this ruling. That's fine with Ric, who makes it a four way dance with Steiner defending against Sid, Jarrett and the Mystery Man. Scott says it's really going to be a tag match so Flair

shows us clips of Jarrett lying about being in the contenders tournament and accidentally hitting Steiner with a guitar at Starrcade. Therefore tonight, Steiner is going to face Jarrett for the title. Scott says he's coming for Flair soon.

Goldberg arrives and wants to find Kronik.

Sanders makes Ron Harris vs. the Cat for tonight. Ron has a bit of hair here so they're not identical.

Shane Douglas wants to be in the World Title match so Flair gives him Sid tonight. Shane: "At Sin, US Title and World Title. Never been done." So I guess he's next.

Chavo Guerrero Jr. vs. Shannon Moore

Non-title and Shane Helms is out for commentary. Chavo isn't ready to go yet though as he would rather put the title on the line, meaning that if he loses tonight then Shane is left out of Sin.

Cruiserweight Title: Chavo Guerrero Jr. vs. Shannon Moore

Chavo is defending and gets punched out to the floor to start. Back in and some leg lariats in the corner have Chavo in trouble until he counters one into a backbreaker to take over. We hit a seated abdominal stretch from the champ for a bit before a victory roll gets two for Moore. The champ punches him down again but Moore counters a slam into a small package for two. Off to a chinlock on Shannon for all of ten seconds, followed by a springboard Fameasser for two on the champ. Shannon's sleeper slam is broken up though and Chavo grabs a brainbuster to retain.

Rating: C+. They're doing something interesting here with Chavo playing mind games with Shane but more importantly they have a story. After all that time of the title being worthless and having one weak story after tonight, it's really refreshing to see some time and effort being put into things again.

Shane saves Shannon from a beatdown.

Sanders beats up Kwee Wee for no apparent reason until Big Vito makes the save for even less of a reason.

Flair is with Buff and Luger again for some reason.

Ron Harris vs. The Cat

The Twins are identical again and as you might expect, they beat Cat down to start. Ron slowly works Cat over and sends him into the barricade to avoid having to actually wrestle. Back in and Cat gets in some kicks but takes his sweet time dancing into an elbow. The Twins switch and Miss Jones' protest lets them hit an H Bomb to give Ron the easy pin.

Post break Cat proves how awesome he is by dancing.

Hugh Morrus asks Sid to leave a little bit of Shane for him on Sunday.

Jarrett and Steiner argue. I'm sure this isn't going to be a swerve.

Sanders is making a Minnesota Massacre match with Big Vito and Kwee Wee vs. some randomly selected opponents. The Thrillers just happen to have their gear tonight in case they're the RANDOMLY selected opponents. Anyone who interfered in this match will be subject to every penalty Sanders can find for them.

Luger has gotten Kronik a match against Goldberg and Sarge. If they win tonight, Goldberg is fired. Kronik wants pay but apparently they're doing their job so no pay. Disco: "THEY'RE WRESTLING FOR FREE??"

Billy Kidman vs. Lance Storm

Before the match, Storm challenges the Filthy Animals to a penalty box match, which he's kind enough to quickly explain. Disco ignores the match to complain about Kronik wrestling for free after taking so much money from he and Alex Wright over the last month and a half. Storm shrugs off Kidman's right hands to start and drops him ribs first over the top rope.

Awesome throws in a chair behind the referee's back but Storm opts to wedge it in the corner instead. A Regal Roll gets two for Storm as the USA chants start up. Storm grabs an abdominal stretch for a bit before

getting dropkicked out of the air to start Kidman's comeback. The BK Bomb gets two but Storm scores with a superkick for the same. Storm gets kicked into the chair in the corner for two as Gunns pulls the referee out, triggering the required stable brawl. In the melee, Kidman hits a quick Kid Crusher for the pin.

Rating: C+. Would you expect these two to have a bad match? Storm working on the ribs to set up the eventual Mapleleaf was a good idea but you had to have the stupid brawl on the floor because that hasn't been done to death in WCW lately. Also it's nice to see Kidman getting wins but I'm not wild on Storm taking a pin.

Shane Douglas vs. Sid Vicious

Shane complains about being in this town and jumps Sid as he gets in the ring. They're quickly on the floor with Sid sending him into the barricade and dropping Shane across the announcers' table. Back in and as Disco incorrectly says Shane hasn't had a title since he's been in WCW as Shane pulls out the chain. That's fine with Sid who kicks Shane in the face and drops a leg. A chokeslam drops Douglas though and the powerbomb gives Sid the easy pin.

Rating: D. Well so much for that idea. I'm very glad that the #1 contender for the US Title got squashed six days before his title shot because Sid wouldn't have been the same otherwise. Douglas is just one of those guys who is a career midcarder outside of ECW and he's actually growing on me in that role.

Steiner and Jarrett come out and beat Sid into the crowd after the match.

Flair says Jarrett and Steiner are suspended if they don't try their hardest tonight. On top of that, Jim Duggan is guest referee for the Penalty Box match. Duggan just looks weird with that short hair.

Here's Terry Funk to say he's the king of hardcore wrestling. He's tired of Flair giving him these nobodies like Crowbar in hardcore matches so he wants the cream of the crop. Funk wants Goldberg, Scott Steiner and Diamond Dallas Page in hardcore matches. Cue Crowbar to call Funk an old man but it wasn't supposed to be this way. Funk says he's the man who

started ECW because he's the extreme wrestler in the world today.

Crowbar talks about how he's the representation of everything Funk is afraid of. As he's talking, Daffney plays with sparklers and a Sin logo pops up with its own sound effects. Crowbar keeps being serious and says on Sunday he's going to become the new face of the hardcore revolution. The brawl is on until Meng comes out and puts them both in the Tongan Death Grip. Daffney gets a superkick for her efforts. Meng leaves with the Hardcore Title.

Jimmy Hart DJ challenge.

Someone goes into an office and swaps an envelope from a black suit jacket. That might be the same envelope that Sanders said contained the RANDOM opponents for Vito and Kwee Wee.

Kronik vs. Goldberg/Dwayne Bruce

Bruce has a broken arm. It's a brawl in the aisle to start with Goldberg punching Adams, leaving Clark to dismantle Bruce like the career jobber he is. The announcers basically scream at Kronik to go after Bruce until he thinks settle down to Adams clotheslining Sarge for two. Bruce gets in a quick DDT and Goldberg comes in before being tagged. Yeah he already had one leg in when he was tagged but the referee is fine with all this. Goldberg cleans house as only he can but Totally Buff comes out to beat on Bruce. As this is going on, Goldberg ends Adams with the usual.

Rating: D. As was mentioned, WHY ARE THEY NOT GOING AFTER BRUCE? All you really have to do is distract Goldberg and then beat WCW's answer to the Brooklyn Brawler and Goldberg is gone. Kronik continues to look worthless but I guess they can be credited with trying to fight Goldberg at the same time.

Totally Buff break the cast off Bruce's arm and beat down everyone, including Kronik for some reason.

Here's Sanders to pull the names out of the envelope for the Minnesota Massacre. The first three names drawn are Sanders himself, Chuck Palumbo, Sean O'Haire....and the Insiders.

Diamond Dallas Page vs. Kevin Nash vs. Mike Sanders vs. Chuck Palumbo vs. Sean O'Haire

Officially this is a five way last man standing match so I'm assuming elimination rules. The Thrillers work as a team of course and wrap Nash's leg around the post before punching Page a lot. Disco: "Page is a tremendous competitor. I understand he's been doing yoga." O'Haire and Palumbo superkick each other so Sanders is the only man left but a low blow lets him join the club. Cue the rest of the Thrillers but Kwee Wee, Big Vito (Weren't they guaranteed to be in this?) and Johnny the Bull cut them off. The Insiders hit their finishers on the Thrillers to win, despite it not being a team match and no counting from the referee.

Rating: F. Do you know the rules of this match? It was a five way last man standing match with two winners and no count from the referee while the people who were announced for the match weren't actually involved. Oh and more #1 contenders get beaten down in a glorified handicap match six days before their title shot.

WCW World Title: Scott Steiner vs. Jeff Jarrett

Steiner is defending but says he doesn't care what Ric says because he won't fight his friend. Here's Flair to say the title is on the line or Steiner is stripped of the belt and Jarrett is out of the Sin main event. Jarrett shoves Midajah for some reason to give Steiner even more reason to pummel him severely. Steiner drops him with a gorilla press but Jeff shrugs it off. A clothesline has a bit more effect for the champ and it's time for the elbow drop pushups.

Jeff's perfect dropkick puts Steiner down and a high cross body gets two on the champ. Steiner tilt-a-whirl slams him and ties Jeff in the Tree of Woe for some choking. They head outside with Jeff being sent into the barricade and slammed onto the announcers' table. Back in and Jeff can't get the Stroke as Steiner suplexes him instead. Cue Sid to beat on Steiner though as I guess we have a no contest.

Rating: D+. You know, it actually wasn't out of the question to have them change the title here in a surprise and then give it back to Steiner on Sunday. Jarrett was fine here and Steiner was his normal self, even if

they were just doing all their signature stuff with absolutely nothing out of the ordinary.

Now the Mystery Man comes in to beat on Jeff and a big brawl end the show.

Overall Rating: D. Standard Nitro here with nothing really standing out and WCW managing to screw up something as simple as a last man standing match. I really don't want to see Sin as the card has the potential to be one of the worst in a long time, especially the (likely) unmasking of the Mystery Man. Bad show here but that's really the norm these days.

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NXT – June 1, 2016: Trending Down

NXT

Date: June 1, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

It's one week before Takeover: Revenge/The End and the big stories are

all set. Last week saw the addition of Austin Aries vs. Shinsuke Nakamura in what could be a show stealing classic to go along with the announcement of Nia Jax as the new #1 contender to the Women's Title. Expect a hard sell on the NXT Title match tonight. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's the Revival for an opening chat. They want to become the first two time NXT Tag Team Champions and they're going to hit American Alpha really hard next week. Dawson keeps talking until Tommaso Ciampa and Johnny Gargano interrupt. They want the titles too but Dawson tells them that they're just good hands.

Revival is going to take care of business but Ciampa wants to know if it's going to be like they took care of business in Dallas. That doesn't bother Revival because at least they've won something. They walk away but Gargano and Ciampa want to fight and it's a double dropkick to put Revival on the floor again.

Shinsuke Nakamura thinks Austin Aries will bow down to the king next week.

Tye Dillinger vs. Buddy Murphy

Murphy is alone here but has his first name back. Dillinger works on the arm to start and it's a standoff with Tye flashing tens. It's down to the mat with Dillinger working on the arm even more. Back up and Murphy scores with an elbow to the jaw before cranking on a chinlock. We're told that Revival vs. Gargano/Ciampa will take place tonight before Tye gets in a Thesz press of all things. A superkick sets up ten (of course) punches in the corner followed by an AA onto an exposed knee to give Dillinger the pin at 5:10.

Rating: C-. Dillinger has the gimmick and the in ring ability so hopefully now he's going to get some wins. I'm not sure how Blake and Murphy are going to do as singles guys but they're not the most interesting in the world. Murphy seems to have more to him than Blake but it's clear that Alexa is going to be the big star from the group.

Earlier today Corey Graves sat down with Samoa Joe and Finn Balor. Finn can't believe the loss in Massachusetts happened and his world came crumbling down. It was his job to fight every night as champion though and he was beaten on that night. Joe says he finally got the title shot he deserved after all the hoops NXT made him jump through. Finn thinks that sounds like entitlement but Joe says he was Finn's partner in the Dusty Classic.

Indeed he was but then Joe wasn't willing to give him a title shot (yeah he was) so Balor brings up all the time they've spent together over the years with Joe, including being at his wedding. Joe says he's been successful everywhere but Finn interprets this as Joe thinking he hasn't done anything. Balor says he's coming for the title and a fight almost breaks out right here before we cut away. Good stuff here but this is something NXT is just awesome at every time.

Elias Samson vs. Austin Aries

Aries takes him down by the arm to start and puts his knee on Samson's face while working on an armbar. A dropkick gets two and it's right back to the armbar. Samson fights up and grabs a chinlock, only to get suplexed right back down. Austin sends him outside for a suicide dive before the running dropkick sets up the Last Chancery for the submission at 3:26.

Rating: C. As much as people like to think of Aries as someone with a dangerous submission move, that's the first televised submission win he's had in over three years. Leave it to NXT to set up a big submission hold for him just a week before the biggest match he's had in the company while TNA basically said one win a few years ago was close enough.

Post match Aries says he's going to put the spotlight on himself next week.

Andrade Cien Almas vignette. He'll be at Takeover.

Revival vs. Johnny Gargano/Tommaso Ciampa

Dawson headlocks Gargano to start but takes some fast armdrags before

it's off to Ciampa for a running kick to the head. Dash comes in for a slugout but gets sent to the floor. Ciampa goes after him and eats a hard clothesline as we take a break. Back with Dash working on Ciampa's leg before it's off to Dawson to stay on the injury. That lasts all of ten seconds before Ciampa breaks free and brings in Gargano for a kick to the head. Everything breaks down and it's Gargano and Dawson left in the ring. Dawson takes him up top for a superplex but Gargano locks their legs together on the landing to pin Scott at 10:29.

Rating: B-. I didn't like this as much as I was expecting to but the finish was a really cool surprise as Alpha now has their next challengers assuming they retain the titles next week. Gargano and Ciampa are growing on me after a slow start but it's pretty clear that Revival is on a downward swing now that they've lost the titles.

Post match Revival beats Ciampa down and load up the same move they used to hurt Big Cass' knee. American Alpha runs out for the save just in time.

It's time for the contract signing between Nia Jax and Asuka. Nia says she broke the heart of NXT and now she's going to break Asuka. She isn't scared of the champ and signs. Asuka says Nia talks too much and if she's not scared, she certainly should be. The fight is on and Nia plants her with a powerbomb to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. This was just ok despite being a strong go home show. You really can tell that the writer who helped cause a lot of NXT's success is gone as I can't imagine them setting up a match and then having it take place later in the night. There isn't a lot of energy going into this Takeover and a lot of that is due to it being built around rematches. There's about as much interest as you can have given that but NXT is actually trending down a bit at the moment, which you really don't see that often.

Results

Tye Dillinger b. Buddy Murphy – Fireman's carry backbreaker

Austin Aries b. Elias Samson – Last Chancery

Johnny Gargano/Tommaso Ciampa b. Revival – Small package to Dawson

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Impact Wrestling – May 31, 2016: We Bathe In Matt's Brilliance

Impact Wrestling

Date: May 31, 2016

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: D'Angelo Dinero, Josh Matthews

We're getting closer to Slammiversary and the card is set for the most part. After last week's Hardy centric episode, tonight is about the World Title as Lashley and Drew Galloway get to choose each other's opponents in a Pick Your Poison series. Other than that it should be interesting to see what gets some focus heading into the pay per view. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week's show, mainly focusing on Matt Hardy.

Dixie Carter is putting a mystery man in charge tonight.

Here are Mike Bennett and Maria Kanellis (hokey smoke) to open things up. Mike knows that he's not in charge because he didn't hear from Dixie on AOL Instant Messenger or MySpace so he wants the boss to get out here right now. Of course it's Ethan Carter III and Bennett freezes. Ethan thinks Mike should have the night off tonight and Bennett doesn't seem to mind.

Actually what Ethan meant was a night off from wrestling because Mike will be cleaning the toilets all night. Maria freaks out but Ethan tells her to put a sock in it. Apparently she's gotten on management's nerves so tonight Ethan is reviewing her decisions to see if she's fired. Bennett threatens violence but Ethan throws them out anyway. Now it's time for Lashley, who teases a fight with Ethan but just wants to talk about Pick Your Poison with Drew Galloway. This brings out Galloway as we take a break.

We come back to see Ethan showing Mike the toilets he's in charge of and apparently there's quite the stench.

Back in the arena, Drew introduces Lashley's opponent.

Bram vs. Lashley

Non-title. Bram hammers away to start but Lashley pounds him down and takes it to the floor with Bram being sent into the barricade. Lashley takes too much time messing with his headband though and Bram comes back with a few shots to the face. The Brighter Side of Suffering is broken up so Lashley catches him with a spinebuster. Some clotheslines look to set up the spear but instead Lashley heads outside for a chair and that's a DQ at 6:19.

Rating: D+. This is a match that could have been something interesting but instead it's a champion looking like a second rate loser. Bram is someone who could be an important talent going forward but why go with that when you can push someone else in his place? At least it wasn't a clean pin though.

Post match Lashley spears Bram a few times until Galloway comes out for the save with a chair. Cue Eli Drake with his briefcase and you know

what's going on.

King of the Mountain Title: Bram vs. Eli Drake

Bram is defending and kicks out at two at the bell. They slug it out in the corner until Drake hits a knee to the face and clothesline for the pin and the title at 1:01.

Raquel's latest lesson to the BroMans is to focus, which in this case means watching her walk around the pool in a swimsuit.

Mike Bennett is still cleaning toilets when Earl Hebner walks out of a stall. After a bit of swearing, Bennett is now a referee.

Drake drinks champagne and abuses people backstage.

We go to the Hardy Family Estate where Matt has invited Jeff for the contract signing.

BroMans vs. Tyrus/Rockstar Spud

Bennett is referee and the winners here get a title shot at Slammiversary. Robbie punches Spud to start and it's off to Tyrus without a tag but Bennett says it's fine. Jesse gets beaten down by both villains as the announcers talk about how Tyrus and Spud have nothing to do without Matt Hardy being around. A Raquel distraction lets Jesse come in and beat up Spud, setting up the BroDown. The Adonis Lock makes Spud tap at 4:03.

Rating: D+. I can't imagine they give the BroMans the titles at Slammiversary, even with the good looking manager. Tyrus and Spud being all depressed without Matt around is a really stupid story and doesn't fit Tyrus whatsoever, but that's never been a major issue for TNA so I doubt it's going to change here.

Maria, in a different outfit, is on the phone with Billy Corgan about how Ethan is screwing this place up. Ethan comes up and hangs up the phone. They're about to head to the ring where he'll settle this whole ordeal between Gail and Maria.

Clip of Jeff Hardy driving his motorcycle to Matt's estate.

Ethan is in the ring as Maria, Allie and Sienna come down. The other two (Girl A and Girl B according to Ethan) are asked to leave as Ethan brings Gail Kim down. The result is going to be a match between the two of them at Slammiversary, which is what Gail has wanted from the beginning. As for tonight though, Gail has a partner and since Maria has two women on her team, we'll have a tag match right now.

Gail Kim/Jade vs. Sienna/Allie

Allie screeches a lot as Gail and Sienna slug it out to start. A shot from Allie lets Sienna take over as the screeching continues. Sienna and Allie hit a double slam on Gail for two before it's off to Jade to kick Sienna down. A missile dropkick gets two on Sienna but Allie tags herself in and tries to talk her way out of getting beaten up. That earns her forearms and a kick to the head as Sienna comes back in, only to Eat's Defeat, followed by Jade package piledriving Allie in the face for the pin at 5:17.

Rating: D. Allie's screaming is a big detraction here but this continues the theme of "let's have good looking women on the show." I know the Knockouts are a big deal but tonight has been a lot more about making the women into eye candy, with Allie's short skirt here being a prime example.

We go back to the estate where Matt is playing the piano when Jeff comes in. Matt talks about this place being their genesis and walks away.

Back in the arena, Bennett freaks out on Ethan because he's not a janitor or a referee. Bennett: "And my wife isn't a wrestler." Ethan gives him a match tonight and hopefully his opponent is sober.

James Storm vs. Mike Bennett

Joined in progress with Bennett in street clothes and getting two off a clothesline. We're already off to a chinlock for a bit before Storm makes his comeback with right hands and clotheslines. Storm hits the Eye of the Storm and looks to set up the Last Call but Maria distracts him with a

beer. Somehow this works on a former World Champion and a slap to the face lets Bennett grab a rollup for the pin at 5:55.

Rating: D+. This didn't have time to go anywhere and since there was no real reason for them to be fighting it was a pretty worthless six minutes. It also doesn't help that a former World Champion is easily pinned by a slap and rollup but they had to come up with some way out of this for Bennett.

Post match Ethan says he's coming for Bennett at Slammiversary.

Here's Al Snow to a BORING chant to talk about how he's looking for talent over in England. This brings out Baron Dax and Basile Baraka (Marcus Louis and Sylvester LeFort), now collectively known as the Tribunal. Both of them talk about how they're bringing talent and class back to wrestling. Snow yells about wanting to get rid of weapons unlike Grado, who he beat with a single wrestling move last week.

We see him pinning Grado after a Snow Plow, but here are Grado and Mahabali Shera to show us the full footage, including Snow using a trashcan lid. Snow goes off about how kids these days can doctor footage on any computer. Somehow parents are brought into this and Snow says Shera's mom loves him. The fight is on and Snow hits Grado and Shera with a chair so the beatdown can be on.

Braxton Sutter (Pepper Parks) talks about how most people get their big break earlier but the day he was offered a contract was one of the best days of his life. He doesn't have a story of when he started watching wrestling because it's always been there for him. His goal is to be World Heavyweight Champion and he'll start anywhere. This was a serious speech but had some emotion to it in a nice moment.

We run down the pay per view card.

Back to the Hardy estate where Matt says this must all end where it began. Jeff follows him into a barn where there's a ring set up. Josh says stay tuned to find out if the match was signed. I'm sure that's why they just advertised it on the pay per view rundown.

Lashley comes out to announce Drew's opponent.

Drew Galloway vs. Decay

As in all three members. Drew fights both men at the same time but can't bring himself to punch Rosemary. That allows the numbers game to take over with Drew being sent to the floor for a big beatdown, including a whip head first into the post. Back inside and the guys take turns hitting Drew in the face until Galloway starts his comeback. Rosemary comes in and almost eats the Futureshock. The Claymore is caught in a chokeslam for two so it's Janice time. Cue Lashley to spear Abyss by mistake, allowing Galloway to Claymore and Futureshock Steve for the pin at 6:21.

Rating: D+. So Decay is off TV for weeks and then comes back to get beaten in a handicap match? No it wasn't clean but you couldn't drag out any two heels for this to work? Or have Lashley knock/choke Drew out for the pin? No apparently the best they have is Drew going over all of them at once because that's how TNA thinks.

Enough of the World Title though as it's time to go back to the Hardys. Matt says this must end where it all began, which apparently is the ring in the barn. Jeff goes to get in but Matt rolls outside to a small table. Jeff wants this to end but here's Reby to throw a fake baby at him. Matt hits Jeff with something made of glass and gives him a Side Effect (IN FREAKING SLOW MOTION) through the table. Matt promises that this will end at Slammiversary.

Overall Rating: D. While still not good, this was WAY better than last week as they actually didn't focus on just Matt vs. Jeff. This week it was about all three big stories but unfortunately we now have to sit around and watch Matt praise his own brilliance or whatever it is that he's doing now because no one in TNA will ever tell him no. The rest of the show was more watchable due to more wrestling and less stupid talking but it still was a pretty boring show as TNA runs through what could have been weeks of stories in a night because they don't have the roster to make anything else work.

Results

Bram b. Lashley via DQ when Lashley used a chair

Eli Drake b. Bram – Clothesline

BroMans b. Rockstar Spud/Tyrus – Adonis Lock to Spud

Gail Kim/Jade b. Sienna/Allie – Package piledriver to Allie

Mike Bennett b. James Storm – Rollup

Drew Galloway b. Decay – Futureshock to Steve

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Monday Night Raw – May 30, 2016: The Slow Ride To The Bank

Monday Night Raw

Date: May 30, 2016

Location: Resch Center, Green Bay, Wisconsin

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, John Bradshaw Layfield

It's a big night here as we have the return of John Cena since his injury

late last year. At the same time though we're probably going to hear the first news about the new Brand Split as Raw and Smackdown will become stand alone shows again starting in July. A lot of the details are still up in the air at this point but it should be interesting either way. Let's get to it.

We open with a moment of silence for Memorial Day.

A bunch of wrestlers quote a Ronald Reagan speech on fallen troops.

Opening sequence.

Here's Shane McMahon to open things up but Stephanie comes out to join him before anything can be said. They mention the Brand Split and Smackdown moving to Tuesdays before New Day comes out for a chat. Big E. likes the idea of bringing the power of positivity to Raw and Smackdown ("That's a lot of P's.") but then it turned into paranoia because the rosters might be split up. After making fun of Kofi for being the oldest member of the team (Woods: "You were my favorite wrestler in middle school."), they get to the point: which show will New Day be on?

Stephanie dodges the question and New Day does a dramatic reenactment of Stephanie dodging it like an invisible ball. Woods goes insane and nearly starts crying over the team being split up and Francesca II being in a broken home. There's also no decision yet on who will be running which show so New Day thinks there should be a dance challenge. Stephanie isn't interested but Shane gets into it to a nice reaction. They finally get Stephanie to join in but the Vaudevillains cut her off.

Vaudevillains vs. New Day

Non-title and joined in progress with Cole welcoming us back to Smackdown. English gets stomped down in the corner as JBL tells us that a herd of unicorns is called a glory. We get the Unicorn Stampede but Gotch pulls Kofi's foot to give the villains control. Gotch headlocks Kofi and knocks him to the floor as we take a break after less than four minutes of action. Back with Kofi taking Gotch down and making the hot tag to Big E. for the overhead belly to belly suplexes on English. As this is going on though, Karl Anderson and Luke Gallows run in to attack Kofi for the

DQ at 8:54.

Rating: D+. I liked the ending as Gallows and Anderson were pretty much the only option to go after the titles at this point and would be a good choice for new champions. The Vaudevillains were just there to give Anderson and Gallows a reason to come out, though at least it was a non-title match and not a rematch for no particular reason.

Anderson and Gallows lay out the champions post match.

Post break Anderson and Gallows say they've just put the tag team division on notice because they can do just as much damage without AJ.

We look back at Sheamus attacking Apollo Crews last week.

Crews is doing pushups when Big Show returns to say hello. Apollo says he's ready to fight Sheamus and Show can admire that. Show knows Crews will make it work because Sheamus is scared of the New Era.

Usos vs. Breezango

Golden Truth is on commentary with JBL ripping on them for being a horrible team. Truth: "JBL they do not allow elephants in here." Fandango hammers on Jey to start but Breeze charges into a superkick on the floor. Back inside, Jey crucifixes Fandango for the pin at 1:48.

Golden Truth beats up Breezango.

Here's Roman Reigns for a chat. Reigns talks about how the Shield broke up a long time ago and until someone takes this title from his shoulder, he's still The Guy. This brings out Rollins for a fight but of course he doesn't get in the ring. Instead he grabs the mic and teases talking but throws the mic down and goes towards the ring instead. This happens five or six times before Rollins just leaves. The fans call this boring because they have the attention span of drunken goats and can't go three seconds without being entertained. Rollins sprints down the ramp one more time but stops at the apron again to wrap this up.

Trailer for Warcraft.

Rusev vs. Zack Ryder

Non-title. Rusev knees him in the ribs to start and drops Ryder with a clothesline. Ryder gets the knees up in the corner and drops Rusev with a middle rope dropkick. The Broski Boot connects for two but the Rough Ryder is easily countered and the Accolade makes Ryder tap at 2:31. That's the sixth time Rusev has made Ryder tap on Raw in just over two years and actually the longest Zack has ever lasted.

Rusev calls himself a real American hero but here's Titus O'Neil to interrupt. Titus says this is Memorial Day and drops Rusev to the floor with a single right hand.

The Shining Stars want us to come to Puerto Rico.

We get a video on Charlotte dropping Ric Flair with comments from various people. This aired on Smackdown.

Earlier today, Stephanie yelled at Charlotte for being a spoiled, selfish brat. She yells a bit more and there's no reaction from Charlotte as Stephanie collects her first set of lady balls. To recap, so far the first Women's Champion has been made to tap out to Natalya more than once, played second fiddle to Ric Flair and not been allowed to say a word when Stephanie, yes STEPHANIE MCMAHON, yelled about someone being a spoiled brat who didn't respect her father enough.

Enzo Amore/Big Cass vs. Dudley Boyz

Before the match, Cass lists off various types of cheese that he's putting on the knuckle sandwiches he's about to hand off. Bubba and Cass lock up to start but both Dudleyz are quickly sent to the floor as we take an early break. Back with Enzo in trouble (as expected) and eating an elbow to the jaw for daring to fight out of a neck crank.

Bubba comes in and drops some elbows for two before ripping at Enzo's face. We hit the chinlock from D-Von for a bit before the hot tag brings in Cass. The reverse 3D gets two on him though and Bubba goes up, only to have an Enzo distraction let Cass slam him down. D-Von takes the big boot and the Rocket Launcher gives Enzo the pin at 9:23.

Rating: C-. This was a really basic match though it's cool to see the new guys getting a clean win like this. I'm really not sure where you go with these two but they've looked awesome so far with Cass more than acting as a solid big man and Enzo as a great mouthpiece. There's no point in them fighting the Dudleyz anymore, so I'm sure we'll see them at Money in the Bank.

Sami Zayn, Dean Ambrose and Cesaro discuss their match against Chris Jericho, Kevin Owens and Alberto Del Rio. They're keeping an eye on their opponents but Dean doesn't seem to think much of Canadians. Sami: "You know I'm Canadian right?" Dean: "...Oh. That explains so much."

It's the top of the third hour and here's the returning John Cena. He looks at the mic and gives a speech about Memorial Day and is very glad that he's back home. However, he wants to thank everyone who has paid the ultimate price to keep our liberty safe. As for the business at hand tonight, the question is whether or not Cena still belongs here. That starts up a YES chant in quite the little surprise.

It's a New Era around here with a bunch of new names and new faces and all of them are thinking that Cena's best days are behind them. The name of this new era doesn't matter because Cena isn't going quietly into the night and the face that runs the place is back so the future must go through him.

Cue AJ Styles for something that would have been a dream match ten years ago. The fans are split (JBL: "The WWE Universe is having fun right now!") until AJ says he's been waiting for this for a long time. He's always heard about Cena being the first in and the last out and now AJ wants to be the first man to welcome him back.

Cue Anderson and Gallows to as they're here for a fight. That sounds like a challenge but AJ blasts Cena in the face and the Club is back together. The big beatdown is on and AJ even goes back in three more times to keep beating on him. Even Anderson and Gallows pull him back.

Natalya vs. Dana Brooke

Charlotte is at ringside as this feud is somehow continuing. Natalya hits

her in the corner but gets taken down, allowing Charlotte to yell a lot. Charlotte distracts her to break up the Sharpshooter and the Samoan Driver gives Dana the pin at 1:20.

Post match Becky Lynch runs in for the save.

Dolph Ziggler is ready to show off tonight against Baron Corbin in a technical wrestling match. Dean Malenko was the Man of 1000 Holds and on the WWE Network you can see Chris Jericho list off his 1004 holds. Well Ziggler knows 1005, which he starts to list. As expected, every other one is armbar. This uh, wasn't funny.

Baron Corbin vs. Dolph Ziggler

This is billed as a technical wrestling exhibition and Dolph puts on headgear. And there's a low blow to Baron for the DQ at 33 seconds.

The fans aren't sure how to react to this so Dolph says the loser of this match is still Baron Corbin.

Miz is on the set of his new movie and needs to get some rest before shooting starts.

Owens, Jericho and Del Rio bicker about the six man tag. They agree to work together but Jericho calls them both idiots after they leave.

Alberto Del Rio/Chris Jericho/Kevin Owens vs. Dean Ambrose/Cesaro/Sami Zayn

Del Rio suplexes Cesaro to start but Cesaro runs to the floor for the running uppercut on Jericho. The Swing is blocked by a rope grab and Cesaro is taken outside for a triple team. Jericho stomps away as the fans chant STUPID IDIOT. Cesaro suplexes his way out and the hot tag brings in Sami to clean house with his clotheslines. The villains get in a fight on the floor and Sami scores with a big dive as we take a break.

Back with Owens dropping Sami ribs first over the top rope and getting two off the backplash. Del Rio grabs the leg to stop a tag and it's back to Jericho who misses a Lionsault and bangs up his own knee. The Blue Thunder Bomb finally allows the hot tag off to Ambrose as house is

cleaned again.

Jericho dives into a kick to the ribs but still blocks Dirty Deeds. Instead Dean hits the suicide dive to take Chris out, only to have Jericho grab a Codebreaker back inside. Owens wants the pin but only gets two. The Canadians start arguing so Cesaro knocks them together and Swings Jericho. Everyone comes in and Owens tries the Pop Up Powerbomb on Zayn, only to get caught in Dirty Deeds for the pin at 17:56.

Rating: B. This was good, albeit a bit pointless. You have to expect things like this over the coming weeks as there isn't much you can do to set up the ladder match other than having mostly meaningless matches like this one. At least the finish was clean though and we have some dissension among people.

Overall Rating: C+. It wasn't exactly a great show but there was more good than bad going on. The problem is you have something like Stephanie yelling at Charlotte without her being able to say a thing because ALL HAIL STEPHANIE but then you have something amazing like AJ vs. Cena being set up which basically makes people hand their wallets over in advance. The rest of the show was hit or miss but I'm really not too excited about so many feuds continuing in the lame duck period between now and the Brand Split.

Results

New Day b. Vaudevillains via DQ when Karl Anderson and Luke Gallows interfered

Usos b. Breezango – Crucifix to Fandango

Rusev b. Zack Ryder – Accolade

Enzo Amore/Big Cass b. Dudley Boyz – Rocket Launcher to D-Von

Dana Brooke b. Natalya – Samoan Driver

Baron Corbin b. Dolph Ziggler via DQ when Ziggler kicked him low

Dean Ambrose/Cesaro/Sami Zayn b. Chris Jericho/Alberto Del Rio/Kevin

Owens – Dirty Deeds to Owens

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Lucha Underground – May 25, 2016: I Never Thought I'd See It Again

Lucha Underground

Date: May 25, 2016

Location: Lucha Underground Temple, Boyle Heights, California

Commentators: Vampiro, Matt Striker

Last week's show was uh....well not exactly up to Lucha Underground's normal standards. It did however give us a big match for tonight as Cage will be challenging Chavo Guerrero Jr. for the Gift of the Gods Title which Cage has a legitimate claim towards. Other than that you almost never can tell what you're going to get around here. Let's get to it.

The recap looks at Cortez Castro/Joey Ryan as cops, the Trios Titles and Cage helping Chavo win the Gift of the Gods Title last week.

Pentagon Jr. is on his feet and looks ready to go back to the Temple but

Vampiro says he isn't ready. A quick wrench of his arm has Pentagon slowing back down but he still says no fear. Vampiro says Pentagon can return to the Temple, though he's not ready to face the monster.

Some Marines are here in an always cool move.

Matt Striker gets a phone call from someone who asks if he wants to be famous.

Joey Ryan vs. Mascarita Sagrada

The fans are WAY into Mascarita's entrance, though that might be due to Famous B. doing the announcing. Joey isn't interested though and kicks Sagrada in the head to take over fast. Mascarita sends him to the floor for the flip dive but Joey throws Sagrada down again. This sets up a trade as Joey gives B. his sucker for a business card. Back in and Mascarita throws him down and scores with a moonsault. Famous B. offers the referee a business card so Sagrada can kick Joey low....but that doesn't work on him for reasons I won't go into. A tornado DDT puts Mascarita away at 3:14.

Rating: D. Just a comedy match here as Famous B. continues to screw up Sagrada's career, which wasn't exactly doing much in Lucha Underground to begin with. Joey is over with the crowd though and that's going to get him somewhere given where things are going with the undercover cop story.

Famous B. consoles Sagrada.

Taya video with her looking at herself in lingerie and then putting on a dress to beat up masked men. That's one thing I'll never get tired of around here: even the goons are luchadors.

King Cuerno is in his office (or whatever it is) talking about how Mil Muertes thought he was king of the jungle. He gets up and we see Muertes stood up in a glass coffin as Cuerno's ultimate trophy. Well that's a bit creepy.

Gift of the Gods Title: Chavo Guerrero Jr. vs. Cage

Cage is challenging and drops Chavo at the bell before firing off

clotheslines in the corner. Vampiro doesn't buy Striker's claims of Chavo being one of the best in the world pound for pound. Vampiro: "When? When he was born and there were no other babies around?" Chavo's dive is plucked out of the air so Cage can drive him into the barricade a few times.

Back in and Chavo gets a headscissors to send Cage outside, followed by a suicide dive to actually put Cage in trouble. A middle rope cross body just goes badly but Cage bangs up his knee trying a moonsault. Chavo is smart enough to start in on the knee but Vampiro wants Chavo to kick him in the head instead. The champ goes to the top so Cage gets up for an apron superplex. Cage snaps off a sitout Alabama Slam for two, only to get caught in a tornado DDT for the same.

A Liger Kick doesn't do much for Chavo as Cage just blasts him with a discus lariat. Chavo gets up top again and sunset bombs Cage down, followed by the Frog Splash for two. Three Amigos are countered into a suplex powerbomb (as in Cage lifts him up for a suplex and then slams him forward into a powerbomb). A buckle bomb sets up a STEINER SCREWDRIVER (I never thought I would see that move again but my goodness is still looks amazing) to give Cage the title at 8:05.

Rating: B-. This was much better than I was expecting as Chavo actually wrestled instead of running away like a coward. Cage continues to be what Ryback should have been and I can't imagine WWE won't bring him back at some point in the future. Above all else though, STEINER SCREWDRIVER!!!

Cage gets right to the point: he wants a title match next week.

Johnny Mundo has attacked Fenix and will be taking his place in the Trios Titles match alongside PJ Black and Jack Evans.

Cortez Castro and Joey Ryan raid Dario Cueto's office and find some cash, which Joey steals. Mr. Cisco comes in and isn't happy with not being invited to the robbery. This earns him an arrest as Joey holds a gun on him. Uh...on what charge?

Taya comes out to announce the replacement.

Trios Titles: Johnny Mundo/PJ Black/Jack Evans vs. Rey Mysterio Jr./Prince Puma/Dragon Azteca Jr.

Mundo's team is challenging. Jack and Dragon get things going with Dragon scoring off an early dropkick. Some very loud chops have Jack in even more trouble and a dropkick sends him into the corner for the tag off to Black. Puma comes in as well but gets elbowed down for two. Mundo and Black double backdrop Puma for two until the Prince channels his inner Davey Richards by throwing Evans into a DDT from Black and grabbing a neckbreaker to make the partners hurt each other. I've never liked that before and I still don't here.

The hot tag brings in Mysterio to clean house before Dragon's legdrop and Puma's springboard splash gets two on Mundo. Evans gets kicked in the face but he kicks Puma in the back to take over again. Mysterio comes back in to send Mundo outside, followed by a slingshot hurricanrana from Puma as this picks up in a hurry. Evans charges into a boot to the face but is still able to cartwheel into a kick to Azteca's head.

This sets up what looked like a super hurricanrana to Dragon who would land in another hurricanrana on Black. It would have been an awesome spot if both halves of it hadn't been at least somewhat botched. The 619 on Black sets up the 630 but Johnny pulls the referee out. Mundo isn't done yet as he kicks Rey low, setting up a double superkick from Johnny and Taya. The other two champs are kicked low and a top rope double stomp into an AA on Azteca.

Black hits a brainbuster called the Wellness Policy (I'm not sure what to think about that one) as we have a second referee. Somehow Puma backflips out of a belly to back superplex and makes the tag to Dragon. Taya has the referee though as Johnny is caught in a sunset flip for two. The distraction lets Evans blast Dragon with a chair to give Johnny the pin and the titles at 10:50.

Rating: B. Good match here as they really fir in with the Lucha Underground mold for the most part. Just let everyone go insane and do high spots to pop the crowd and the rest will be just fine. I'm not wild on these titles changing hands so fast as there's really not much of a

story in sight for them, though Mundo with a title will be fine.

Overall Rating: B. This was a bounce back show as they set up the big showdown between Cage and Matanza while also advancing some of the background stories. At some point they need to actually have these things start coming together so it's a good step to have something like this happen. It's not a blow away show but I'm looking forward to seeing where this goes.

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