

Monday Nitro – November 20, 2000: Set It Up, Blow It Off

Monday Nitro #267

Date: November 20, 2000

Location: Augusta-Richmond County Civic Center, Augusta, Georgia

Attendance: 3,000

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Mark Madden, Scott Hudson

It's the last Nitro before Mayhem and most of the show would seem to be set up already. Scott Steiner continues to be one of the strongest heels the company has pushed in years but at the same time he's not exactly lighting the world on fire with the chinlock finisher and all the insanity in his promos. Maybe the TV being back in America will be better so let's get to it.

We open with a video on some of the big stories at the moment, including Luger vs. Goldberg, Nash vs. the Thrillers, Major Gunns leaving the Misfits for Canada, because that's still a thing, and of course Steiner being all crazy.

Also in Europe, at a show called Millennium Final, the Boogie Knights won the Tag Team Titles in a major upset. Wright won the match on his own after Disco was injured early on.

Earlier today, Luger tried to get a World Title match tonight. Sanders wasn't sure but seemed to agree, only to have the Thrillers bail when they found Sean O'Haire laid out in the hallway.

Sanders says there will still be a Tag Team Title match tonight no matter what. Luger's title shot is confirmed.

Opening sequence.

Jamie Noble vs. Yang

Yang hits the ring and starts fast as Madden realizes that Jamie is "a white guy." Jamie sends him to the floor for a flip dive (Madden: "He's

pretty fly for a white guy.”) but Yang powerbombs the heck out of him back inside. Jamie bails back to the floor where Leia Meow snaps off a hurricanrana to pop Madden harder than it should. Back in again and they chop it out, followed by Jamie getting two off a middle rope legdrop. Yang catches him coming out of the corner for an over the back piledriver but here’s Evan Karagias and 3 Count for a distraction. Jamie dives on Moore and Helms before rolling Yang up for the pin.

Rating: C. Standard yet fun fast paced cruiserweight match here and that’s always a good way to open the show. The three team idea is fine and could set up some interesting stuff down the line, though I have no hope of any of these guys getting anywhere as a result. They’re far too low on the WCW totem pole and there’s almost no way to rise up that thing before turning 40.

Evan and Noble clear the ring post match.

Luger talks to Flair about doing the right thing and Ric promises to make sure it happens.

We look at Scott Steiner beating Sting down on Thunder to put him on the shelf AGAIN.

Alex Wright is on the phone with the injured Disco and doesn’t know who his partner is tonight. He finds Kronik but they won’t take a check. The Filthy Animals chase Wright away.

We see Rick Steiner vs. T-Money (Terry Crews) on Battledome in a boxing match which turned into a big brawl because of course it did.

Here’s Ric Flair with something to say. Ric talks about how awesome WCW is for going from Europe to Georgia and tells Tony that he was great in England all night long. Madden: “DID YOU SLEEP WITH RIC FLAIR???” My goodness there’s an image I never need to think about again. He can’t change Luger vs. Booker T. for tonight because it came from the Commissioner (Can we please pick a set of rules for these two?) but he’ll spice things up tonight.

If Luger wins the title tonight, Goldberg has a title shot on Sunday.

Flair doesn't care about the Streak that Russo invented because Goldberg can get a shot on Sunday. Cue Jeff Jarrett to threaten Ric with a guitar shot. Jeff actually has a reason to be out here: he has information about the father of Stacy Keibler's baby. Ric looks a bit shaken up Jeff says that he (as in Jeff) knocked Stacy up, or gave her the guitar shot of love that is.

David comes out and wants to know when and where this happened. Apparently it was on the night of the Great American Bash at the Baltimore Marriott after Jarrett won another World Title. Stacy came to the door wearing very little and carrying a shopping bag. The Keibler elf wanted to know if Jeff wanted some of her cookies and didn't care what happened with David.

Things happened and the next morning all that was left was the shopping bag. That bag was full of garbage, just like the rest of this story. Jeff guitars David as the announcers try to figure out why Jarrett came up with this story, which is a fair question. Cue Buff Bagwell to go after Jeff, only to be whipped into the set like the goon that he is. Buff gets back up and knocks Jeff off the stage for his big hero moment.

Kevin Nash tells Fit Finlay (now an agent) that he's not here alone.

Team Canada is in the back and apparently Elix Skipper is going to be Wright's partner.

Tag Team Titles: Perfect Event vs. Elix Skipper/Alex Wright

Wright and Skipper are defending. Stasiak and Wright get things going with Alex stomping away before Palumbo comes in with a big right hand. A double slingshot suplex puts Wright down and Stasiak gets two off a neckbreaker with Skipper making a save. Everything breaks down and here are the Filthy Animals to lay out Wright, giving Stasiak the pin and the titles.

Rating: D. Another nothing match in a move pretty clearly taking place to transition the titles from O'Haire and Jindrak to Perfect Event because that was the big solution they needed or something. They would have been better off having Kidman or one of the Animals in there as the partner

but instead they went with Skipper for reasons of randomness, even though he wound up being a normal partner for Wright.

Video of Mancow attacking Jimmy Hart to set up their match at Mayhem.

Kwee Wee thinks Lance Storm is scared to fight him so he's dropping out of the tag match so General Rection can fight instead. How does that make sense? Kwee Wee's partner Meng promises (yes he's talking) to rip those crossed eyes out of his head. So much for any kind of logic.

Mike Sanders has an idea for Kwee Wee tonight.

Vito hits Reno in the head with a bat with compliments of Maria (Vito's sister). Ignore the bat clearly bending as it made contact.

The Battledome guys are here yelling about something.

Wright thinks WCW is scared of the Boogie Knights being champions so now they want the Animals in a handicap match at Mayhem.

The Battledome guys are still here so Rick Steiner comes out with the Battledome belt. Naturally this means it's time to talk about Luger vs. Booker T. tonight. Steiner challenges them to a fight and T-Money gets in, only to have the other three get in and help with the beatdown. Security comes out for the save and this takes WAY too long to break up.

The Thrillers are ordering pizza when Reno comes in and says he wants to fight Vito tonight.

Rection gives the Misfits a pep talk.

Here's Kevin Nash to introduce his help against the Thrillers. Nash has come to the realization that he has thirteen months and ten days left on his contract and he's not sure how he wants to spend the rest of that time. He drove here from Atlanta today with a good friend of his and now he has to watch the Thrillers be handed the Tag Team Titles.

Cue Sanders to make the match because he's convinced that Nash doesn't have any friends around here. Nash says he's here to make money instead of making friends, which somehow turns into a discussion about cheese

whiz 101. For some reason Nash insults Sanders' ability to hold himself in a bar and that's enough to bring Mike to the ring. Cue Diamond Dallas Page to the ring for the save, which would have worked a lot better had he not come out a few weeks ago for a Battledome segment. Jindrak eats a Diamond Cutter and Page says he'll see them on Sunday.

Luger isn't worried about fighting Booker T. tonight because it's a main event style match.

We recap Meng/Kwee Wee vs. Team Canada in a bizarre yet interesting feud.

Jim Duggan/Lance Storm vs. Kwee Wee/Meng

Before the match, Storm rips on America for not being able to figure out its Presidential race two weeks in. Meng kicks Storm in the ribs to start but a Duggan 2x4 shot to the back puts him down. Duggan comes in for some shoulders to the ribs as the fans chant USA. So I guess they're for Duggan as he's the closest thing to an American that they have in the ring right now. A Tongan Death Grip is quickly broken up but the hot tag brings in Rection. Skipper blasts him with the flagpole, which draws out the Misfits to give him a beating. In the melee, Rection rolls Duggan up for the pin. Tony makes WAY too big of a deal out of this.

Rating: D. Well that happened. I'm really not sure why Rection pinning Duggan is supposed to be a big deal but Tony certainly seemed to be excited over what we just saw. The match was too short to mean anything, much like everything else that's happened tonight, but at least we had that Jeff Jarrett/Stacy story.

Jeff Jarrett and Shane Douglas are talking about something.

Kwee Wee vs. ???

Sanders is on commentary and very pleased when the opponent is revealed as Goldberg. The match lasts 29 seconds in case you were expecting something else.

Post match here's Ric Flair to say Sanders deserves equal treatment. Goldberg isn't all that tired though so here's a bonus.

Goldberg vs. Mike Sanders

36 seconds and it's 21-0, even though Flair said the Streak didn't matter anymore.

Booker isn't worried about Goldberg interfering tonight because he can beat Luger on his own.

We flash back to Halloween Havoc at Shane Douglas attacking The Cat and then beating up Ms. Jones the next night on Nitro.

Shane Douglas vs. Buff Bagwell

Before the match, Torrie insults the Georgia women because she's from Los Angeles. Oh and Shane wants Cat at Mayhem. Buff gets sent into the corner to start before coming back with a neckbreaker and that stupid strut of his. Shane knocks him towards the ropes though and Torrie adds in some choking from the floor. The announcers try to push Bagwell as a matinee idol because so many of their fans know what that means.

We hit the chinlock on Buff for a bit before he gets out with an electric chair. The Pittsburgh Plunge gets two but Buff gets in a Vader bomb for the same. A quick double arm DDT (Hudson: "The Kobashi DDT!") puts Shane down so here's Jarrett to interfere and Cat to cut him off. The Blockbuster gives Buff the pin.

Rating: C. Totally watchable match here and it's nice to see something actually get a little time (less than six minutes is a marathon tonight) for a change. Douglas isn't much to see in the ring and Bagwell was his usual self but at least we had something decent enough to watch. You can only watch so many three minute matches around here before it gets tiring.

Post match Cat wants to fight right now but it winds up being dance time instead.

Scott Steiner comes out for the main event but first of all he has something to say. He pulls out a box of Kleenex to cry over Sting but doesn't need them because he isn't really sorry for the injuries. Sting had a fair warning to walk away but he came to the ring anyway. Whenever

he comes back, Steiner is more than willing to hurt him again. As for Flair, all he wants to do is screw Steiner out of his World Title. It doesn't matter though because Steiner beat Goldberg at Fall Brawl and he can do it again anytime. Steiner can put Luger and Booker out of wrestling too if he has to because he's a genetic freak.

WCW World Title: Booker T. vs. Lex Luger

Steiner is on commentary, Luger is challenging and we've got less than five minutes left in the show. Luger gets kicked in the face to start, followed by an elbow to the jaw. Some forearms to the back have Booker in trouble and a backbreaker gets two. The champ gets in a spinning kick to the head and the ax kick sets up the Spinaroooni. Cue Goldberg so Steiner gets up, triggering their big brawl. Luger loads up a chair but Goldberg gets in and spears Lex to give Booker the retaining pin.

Rating: F. This was about four stories mixed together in a match that didn't even last four minutes. I don't know who thought bringing Luger back was a good idea and I don't know who thought putting him in the main event was an even better idea. The match barely existed of course because we needed to see the Cat dance earlier but did you want to see more of Luger?

Booker yells at Goldberg but has to fight off Steiner to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. Pretty worthless show here other than to set up the Tag Team Title match on Sunday. The main event was one of those stories that was invented and blown off in the span of a night and went nowhere while not really changing anything. The wrestling was nothing to see, the angles were nothing interesting and the show did almost nothing to make me want to see Mayhem. Such is life in WCW as we approach one of its final pay per views.

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Balls Mahoney Passes Away At 44

I'm sure you've heard about this by now. I never was a fan of the guy but 44 is too young for anyone.

Impact Wrestling – April 12, 2016: Hardy vs. Hardy To Set Up Hardy vs. Hardy

Impact Wrestling

Date: April 12, 2016

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: D'Angelo Dinero, Josh Matthews

Things have picked up a little bit in recent weeks around here after a strong showing last week. The big story continues to be the imminent Tyrus title shot but first we need to get through Matt vs. Jeff, which is still the biggest feud in the promotion despite Drew Galloway being World Champion. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Matt Hardy losing to Drew Galloway last week.

Here's the Matt Hardy Brand to open things up. Matt insults the fans that paid to see him (even though they don't charge for tickets) and says every dollar in his bank accounts was built on the Hardy name. However, there's a ball and chain around his ankle and it's named Jeff Hardy. Jeff comes out and says the title is bigger than any one of them because it means who is the best in this business.

Matt claims that he's carried Jeff over the years and has he's tired of seeing Jeff ruin their name. Therefore, Matt wants Jeff to go off and do his paintings or music or whatever and leave the Hardy name behind forever. Jeff says no to a match over the name (seriously) but the only thing that really scares him is Reby's crazy genes infecting the family tree. Apparently the fight is on.

Tag Team Titles: Beer Money vs. BroMans vs. Decay vs. Eric Young/Bram

Beer Money is defending and this is one fall to a finish. It's a huge brawl to start with Storm heading outside to ride around on the Booser Cruiser and hit Bram low. Back in and Bram takes the double suplex which means it's time for the opening bell. It gets annoying to have all that brawling before the match actually starts with none of it really counting.

Anyway Young works on Roode to start before Abyss tags himself in, only to chokeslam his partner onto Bobby for two. Young comes in again and decks Storm but walks into a backdrop for two. Robbie gets the tag instead and it's a BroDown to set up the Adonis Lock on Eric with Abyss making the save. Everything breaks down and Robbie dives onto Bram and Steve. Young hits Bram by mistake and it's the Last Call on Eric to retain the titles at 4:54.

Rating: D+. The match was watchable enough but it was a lot of chaos for the sake of Bram and Young screwing up again. I could go for them just splitting the team and giving Bram the title already as it's not like there's much left for the title anyway. Maybe Bram can get a small rub off of it but this isn't doing him anything. Decay and the BroMans were just window dressing here.

Matt comes up to Jeff and says the match is on for next week but he wants it to be an I Quit match. Jeff has no problem with this but wants a tag match tonight with the stipulations on the line. If Matt and Tyrus win then it's I Quit. If Jeff and his mystery partner win, it's Full Metal Mayhem. So now the main event is a Hardy vs. Hardy match to determine the stipulations of the next Hardy vs. Hardy match.

Eddie Edwards has been attacked in the back.

Here's Maria to say it's time for the genesis of the new Knockouts division. Maria asks Jade to come out here and hand over the title to its rightful owner. That's not cool with Jade because the champ calls the shot in the division, but here's Gail Kim to interrupt. We get the traditional "you have to work for this" thing before Maria laughs at the Knockouts and how they're all barking at her.

This brings out Rebel and Marti Belle to say they run this place, followed by the Beautiful People with Velvet saying they're the OG Knockouts. Madison says she knows how to lead, which Velvet doesn't quite get. Maria thinks the division needs a leader so here's Billy Corrigan to again explain that he has authority around here. He's been talking to Dixie and in a week there's going to be one big match over leadership of the division. For tonight though, Madison gets a title shot. Everyone brawls and Maria leaves.

EC3 doesn't think Mike Bennett is a miracle but he's certainly talented. Tonight though, Bennett takes a beating.

Here are Shane Helms and Trevor Lee with something to say. Apparently Lee was going to fight Eddie Edwards but that surprise attack has changed plans. There's a replacement though.

Trevor Lee vs. DJZ

Non-title for whatever reason. DJZ starts fast and snaps off a headscissors before hitting a big flip dive over the top to take Trevor out. A tornado DDT looks to put Lee away but Shane offers a distraction, allowing Trevor to load up his fisherman's DDT. DJZ is ready though and grabs a small package for the pin at 2:59.

Post match Edwards runs out to save DJZ from a post match beatdown.

Bennett promises to beat Carter tonight.

Drew Galloway will be Jeff's partner tonight.

Mike Bennett vs. Ethan Carter III

Carter takes him down and hammers away to start before cranking on the arm for some chops. They head outside with Bennett not being able to suplex him onto the ramp, only to have Carter give him one instead. Back in and Maria rakes the eyes while Bennett chokes on the ropes to give Mike his first real advantage.

Carter fights back but Bennett grabs the ropes to block an Irish whip. A jumping Downward Spiral gets two for Ethan and the TK3 gets the same with Maria having to put Mike's foot on the rope. Ethan gives chase but walks into a cutter for no cover. Instead Bennett brings in a chair, which Carter takes away and uses on Bennett for the DQ at 7:28.

Rating: C+. This was all about setting up a rematch and there's nothing wrong with that. Carter and Bennett have some chemistry together and Bennett is going to be a good choice for a main event player, assuming he gets past the whole Miracle thing, which really isn't working for me. At least the match was good and the rematch should be even better.

We look back at Al Snow beating down Mahabali Shera and Grado two weeks back.

Snow is willing to apologize tonight.

Al Snow is in the ring to talk about what he did two weeks ago and apologize. All he wanted to do was make sure that some young talent paid some dues. Cue Shera to get in Snow's face and yell about how his friend is in the hospital. Snow says he's been doing this a long time and it's all he knows. Back in his day, you had to earn your way in here and that's what he wanted to happen again.

When he was 19, he was beaten in the back of the head so many times that he went blind in one eye for over an hour. Snow was trying to relive

those old days and maybe it was out of jealousy but he's going to pay for all of Grado's medical bills. Al agrees to try and do better and offers to mentor Grado and Shera. That's fine with Shera and they go to leave, only to have Snow send him into the steps over and over. The segment worked well enough but was there NO ONE besides Al Snow that could play this role? No one at all?

Drew is getting ready when Tyrus comes in and suggests that Drew get a bodyguard. Bad things happen to good people and he can have his title shot anytime he wants, which makes him very dangerous.

Knockouts Title: Jade vs. Madison Rayne

Madison is defending and gets an early two count off a rollup. Jade comes back with a hard shot to the face and something like a reverse DDT for two. A release northern lights suplex gets the same on Madison but she comes back with a kick to the head for a breather. Some hard chops have Jade in trouble and a discus forearm sets up a loud screech. Jade shrugs them off though and avoids a high cross body, followed by an STO to retain at 5:15.

Rating: C. This was fine and that's all it needed to be. Rayne is a good choice for a first challenge and gets to put Jade over as the new champion. The division and the title both needed a breath of fresh air after Gail's latest title reign and Jade is different enough to make it work. It wasn't a great match or anything close to it but it did everything it was supposed to do.

Matt Hardy/Tyrus vs. Jeff Hardy/Drew Galloway

If Matt's team wins, next week is an I Quit match but if Jeff's team wins, next week is Full Metal Mayhem. Tyrus and Jeff get things going but things quickly break down with Drew and Jeff cleaning house. Drew isn't quite Jeff as he tries some Poetry in Motion but it's enough to have them in control as we take a break. Back with Matt pounding Drew down in the corner, followed by Tyrus stomping on Drew's hand.

We hit the camel clutch for a bit, followed by a belly to belly for two on the champ. Drew avoids a charge in the corner and it's a double tag to

the brothers Hardy. Jeff beats Matt down with ease and gets two off a backslide. Matt rolls away before the Swanton is launched though so Jeff dives onto Tyrus instead. A quick Claymore drops Tyrus but Reby slips Matt a hammer, which goes upside Jeff's chin. Somehow this doesn't kill him so Matt hits a quick Twist of Fate for the pin at 11:54.

Rating: C-. They really need to cut out these screwy endings, even though they had to do something nefarious here to give us the I Quit match. You don't want the champion losing so Jeff taking the fall is the only option. I get the idea of not wanting it to be clean, but you can't hold his foot or use the ropes or something? The only option is HIT HIM WITH A HAMMER? There's no in between?

Post match the losers are in the ring when Lashley comes in for some spears to Galloway.

Overall Rating: C. This was watchable enough but they need to find some more fresh blood in the main event. Matt vs. Jeff over the Hardy name really isn't enough to make me care about whatever they're doing. Lashley vs. Galloway for the title is interesting and Bennett vs. Carter should be good. In other words, this would be setting up a good pay per view card but that's not what they have around here so we're likely getting a big TV taping instead. Lucky us.

Results

Beer Money b. Decay, BroMans and Eric Young/Bram – Last Call to Young

DJZ b. Trevor Lee – Small package

Mike Bennett b. Ethan Carter III via DQ when Carter used a chair

Jade b. Madison Rayne – STO

Matt Hardy/Tyrus b. Jeff Hardy/Drew Galloway – Twist of Fate to Jeff

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Ring of Honor TV – April 6, 2016: We Get The Concept

Ring of Honor

Date: April 6, 2015

Location: Sam's Town Hotel and Gambling Hall, Las Vegas, Nevada

Commentators: Mr. Wrestling III, Kevin Kelly

We're still in Las Vegas and it's time to have another show that airs after a big show with no mention of the big show's results. In this case it's Supercard of Honor from Wrestlemania weekend but we're doing the TV that deals with the fallout from the 14th Anniversary Show. It would be nice if they could find a way to work this out but I don't see it coming anytime soon. Let's get to it.

Instead of the regular opening sequence, we get a look at Donovan Dijak laying out Jay Lethal and injuring Truth Martini a few weeks back.

Lethal goes on a rant about how Dijak has injured his best friend after it was all Martini's idea to bring him into the House of Truth in the first place. Now Dijak has the ROH World Champion coming for him and that's not going to be pleasant.

Opening sequence.

Kazuchika Okada/Gedo vs. ReDRagon

Okada is IWGP Champion coming in. The Japanese guys want nothing to do with a pre-match handshake so it's a bit testy as we get things going. Gedo cranks on Fish's head to start before getting two off a rollup. That's countered into a legbar as the fans chant for the New Japan guys.

Fish wants Okada and even lays down in the ring, offering him a chance to come in. Okada does come in but it's also off to O'Reilly as the announcers talk about Kyle's ear injury. An early sunset flip attempt is countered into a cross armbreaker until Gedo comes in to break it up with a right hand to the bad ear. The Japanese guys start in on the ear and we take a break.

Back with Kyle striking away at Okada and diving over for the hot tag to Fish. Everything breaks down and Okada hits his over the shoulder backbreaker on Fish but the Rainmaker is countered into a Samoan drop. Gedo breaks up the hot tag and superkicks Bobby for two as everything breaks down again. Okada gets sent to the floor and it's Gedo getting double teamed with rapid fire forearms, followed by Chasing the Dragon for the pin at 12:24.

Rating: C. The match was fun but it's nice to see the New Japan guys get beaten for a change. I know they're a special attraction but far too often it seems there's no reason to watch the match because it's a guaranteed win. ReDRagon needs better opponents though because they're at the point of having nothing left to do in tag action.

We look back at the Briscoes picking up the Tag Team Titles last week, much to War Machine's annoyance.

The Briscoes say War Machine can't call themselves the best of all time because they've never beaten Dem Boys. That sounds like a challenge to me and it should be one heck of a fight.

Adam Cole vs. Kushida

Kushida's IWGP Junior Heavyweight Title isn't on the line. Cole shoves him around to start and for once the ROH guy seems to be the crowd favorite. Kushida doesn't take kindly to this and rides Cole on the mat to some nice applause. A Fujiwara armbar sends Cole scrambling to the

ropes. Adam gets in a few shots from the apron though and we take a break. Back with Kushida hitting an atomic drop and some seated dropkicks to the head to get the fans back on his side.

A front flip kick sends Cole out to the floor but the moonsault hits knees back inside. Cole gets two off a hard running Shining Wizard, only to have to get out of the Hoverboard lock with a small package. Kushida tries more kicks so Cole stomps on his hand, only to get kicked in the arm. There's another Hoverboard lock but Cole puts him on his shoulders for two and forcing the break. Back up and Cole superkicks him in the back of the head, setting up the suplex into the backbreaker for the pin on Kushida at 11:05.

Rating: C+. This is the kind of match that I'm not wild on: exchanging moves and then doing the finish. There's no real connection between these teams and there's no real reason to see the two of them fighting. It's certainly not bad or anything but I'm going to forget I saw it in a few minutes because it had no impact on anything whatsoever.

Dalton Castle is ready for his Fight Without Honor with Silas Young. He might even fill Young's pants with brine shrimp and throw him in a blender.

We look back at the Motor City Machine Guns reforming at the 14th Anniversary Show.

Addiction vs. The Machine Guns

Yeah no Motor City now. Sabin and Daniels get things going but Kazarian gets in a cheap shot thirty seconds in like a heel should. As you might expect, the Guns clean house and send us to an early break. Back with Shelley coming in off the top to work on Kazarian's arm, setting up the quick takedown and rapid fire basement dropkick.

The double dive sends the Addiction into the barricade, followed by a high cross body from Shelley for two on Kazarian. Daniels gets in a shot to the back though and Addiction finally takes over. Kazarian and Daniels take turns on Shelley, including a double clothesline, allowing Daniels to put his foot on the chest for two. We take another break and come back

with Shelley giving Kazarian a Stunner while DDTing Daniels at the same time.

That's still not enough for the hot tag as Daniels pulls Sabin off the apron, only to have Shelley send Daniels head first between Kazarian's legs. We finally get the hot tag to Sabin as everything breaks down. Kazarian gets kicked in the face but Daniels sends Shelley outside, setting up a big dive to take Alex out. Shelley slides back in almost immediately and starts the double team strikes on Daniels, followed by Skull and Bones for the pin at 12:21.

Rating: C. I was a big fan of the Guns back in the day but given how many fast paced teams there are now and the fact that Sabin is nothing compared to what he used to be (And somehow a former TNA World Champion. I still don't get that one.), there's really nothing left for them to do, making this a fairly worthless reunion. The match was fine but still not my style for the most part.

Post match the Addiction beats the Guns down, only to have Kushida and Matt Sydal run in for the save. The Young Bucks come in to superkick the two of them down, triggering another brawl to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. I'm really getting tired of these tag brawls to end the shows. We get it: the tag division is really competitive. Now either do something with them or stop having the same story over and over. There's almost no reason for most of them to be fighting other than "the tag division is competitive" and that's not going to work for months at a time.

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Middle Kingdom Wrestling – April 7, 2016: It Actually Worked

Middle Kingdom Wrestling

Date: April 7, 2016

Location: CWE Gym, Dongguan, China

Commentators: Eddie Strong, Pressley King

Season two started well last week but you never can tell what these shows are going to bring. In this case it's going to be a tag match with MKW Champion Dalton Bragg teaming up with the Slam, possibly to set the stage for a title match between the two down the line. Slam has been one of the best in the promotion so far so this should be fun. Let's get to it.

We get the 8 bit intro, which is still cool but could get old if there are more episodes than last season.

The opening video talks about the big tag match between Ho Ho Lun/Claude Roca, a 70 year old French wrestler and Bragg/Slam. Yeah 70 years old and still in the ring. I'm still not sure how I feel about that.

Dalton Bragg/The Slam vs. Ho Ho Lun/Claude Roca

Bragg, who now has better looking tights, starts with Roca and gets snapmared down for his trouble. King is already getting on my nerves on commentary as he's doing a horrible Elvis impression and isn't funny. We get an awkward sequence in the corner with Bragg trying a headscissors but Roca isn't ready to take it, leaving Dalton to just kind of crash. Bragg superkicks the 70 year old man before it's off to Slam vs. Lun, the latter of whom will be in WWE's cruiserweight series in a few months.

Slam tells Lun to bring it on and kicks him down, which Pressley refers to as mashing that tater. Lun avoids another kick in the corner and it's time to hide for a bit. It's back to Roca who gets kicked down again, complete with instant replay which has too many sound effects and looks like the camera is glitching more than anything else.

Roca gets two off a sunset flip (a flip pin according to Strong) before Slam kicks him down again. Everything breaks down and Slam cleans house even more before it's off to Bragg, who Roca trips to the mat before cranking on the legs. Strong doesn't think Bragg has ever fought anyone with Roca's experience. You know, of all those people with fifty years' experience. Roca actually gets in a surfboard while Lun is walking around with a kendo stick for no apparent reason.

The hold doesn't last long so Bragg kicks him in the head, meaning it's time for a tag off to Lun. Slam comes back in for a side slam as Bragg drops a top rope legdrop. Naturally Pressley is talking about A Million Little Pieces as Roca hits his partner by mistake, allowing Slam to send Bragg into both of them in the corner. A double DDT gets two on Roca/Lun, followed by a top rope forearm to drop Lun again. The fans aren't exactly thrilled by this.

Lun gets two off a dropkick as Pressley continues to babble incoherently without being funny. Slam gets double teamed and Roca hammers away, only to have Slam get away for the tag. Bragg starts hammering away but we get another awkward moment. That's fine with Claude who uses his experience to hit Dalton in the face over and over. Cue the overly large King Michael to blast Bragg in the head with a kendo stick, allowing Roca to throw Bragg in an airplane spin, which also knocks Slam out to the floor. Roca actually goes up top for a high cross body and the pin on Bragg for a big upset.

Rating: C+. I liked this a lot more than I was expecting with Roca being limited but still more than capable of doing things in the ring. The ending wasn't the best idea in the world but there really isn't anyone you want to see lose in there. It's an entertaining match and helped set up Bragg's first challenger so it's decent wrestling and well booked, save for maybe the person taking the fall. At least it wasn't clean

though.

Post match Slam is ticked and throws the MKW belt at Bragg. Dalton says he wants to fight King Michael for the title tonight. Well next week but you get the idea. Bragg isn't the best talker but it got the point across.

Overall Rating: C. Pressley is the biggest reason to downgrade this as he was driving me crazy with his unfunny comedy stuff and adding nothing whatsoever. I can get behind these shows being one match long and the storyline stuff at the end helps a lot. That's the thing I'm not wild about here: everything is a one off match without much being built up for the future. At least with this you get a title match set up for the future and even the long term feud with Bragg vs. the Slam. Well done here but please get Ferguson back.

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Monday Night Raw – April 11, 2016: WWE Is Like Butter.

Because They're On A Roll You See.

Monday Night Raw

Date: April 11, 2016

Location: Staples Center, Los Angeles, California

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

Things have changed a bit now as we're past Wrestlemania weekend and back to the normal way of life around here. AJ Styles is the new #1 contender to WWE World Champion Roman Reigns and we have Shane McMahon as the new temporary boss of the show. It should be interesting to see where that goes but you never know if anything is actually going to happen. Let's get to it.

The show is dedicated to the memory of Blackjack Mulligan.

Here's Shane McMahon to get things going, unfortunately suggesting that the new regime means more talking. He gets right to the point: tonight we're starting a tournament for the #1 contendership to the Tag Team Titles. On top of that, AJ Styles is going to be facing Roman Reigns at some point in the future. That's quite the opportunity. Another opportunity will be given tonight as AJ Styles will be facing Sami Zayn. If Zayn wins, he's added to the World Title match at Payback.

This brings out Kevin Owens to say that he's getting ripped off because Shane has a few screws loose after diving off that Cell. Shane says Owens has blown his opportunities but Owens sees it as being ripped off over and over. Kevin wants his rematch at the Intercontinental Title so Shane is willing to give Owens a chance, if he can win a match tonight. The winner will get a title shot at the Miz, presumably at Payback.

Kevin Owens vs. Cesaro

Winner gets Miz for the Intercontinental Title. Owens bails to the ropes to start and heads outside for an early breather. A headlock has Cesaro in trouble but Owens gets shoved outside again. Back in and Owens

realizes that Cesaro has a big bandage on his shoulder and grabs a wristlock followed by an armbar. This turns into a discussion of the Authority with JBL brow beating Byron about how awesome HHH and Stephanie are. Cesaro comes back with the running European uppercuts and a dropkick for two. Owens sends him shoulder first into the post though and we take a break.

Back with Owens kicking him in the arm to break up the Swing before rolling through a high cross body into a crossface. Cesaro rolls into the ropes but Owens pops up to the top for a great looking frog splash and a near fall. The Pop Up Powerbomb is countered though (possibly due to Owens shouting about how it's over) with Cesaro scoring a springboard uppercut. The shoulder gives out on the Swing though and Owens sends the arm into the buckle. Another attempt at the powerbomb is countered with a hurricanrana though and Cesaro grabs the Neutralizer for the pin and the title shot at 14:50.

Rating: B-. If they don't give Cesaro the title at Payback they've lost their minds. Cesaro was his usual self here and the fans are way into him, at least much moreso than they are with the placeholder Miz. Owens losing clean isn't the best result but at least it gives us a good option with the title shot.

We look back at Natalya getting in Charlotte's face last week.

Charlotte is ranting about how she should be on Legends With JBL instead of defending against someone like Natalya. This brings in Dr. Phil to say that Ric is holding her back and now letting her be who she is. Phil wants her to stand on her own two feet and be her own woman. This results in a WOO off with Ric. Words cannot describe how forced Phil felt here.

Shane ejects Owens from the building to prevent him from screwing over Sami later.

Here's New Day to talk about the tag team tournament. Much like a game of NBA Jam, this division is on fire. Woods shows us the following brackets:

Usos

Social Outcasts

Golden Truth

Vaudevillains

Enzo/Big Cass

Ascension

Lucha Dragons

Dudley Boyz

They'll be at ringside for at least the first match.

Tag Team Tournament First Round: Lucha Dragons vs. Dudley Boyz

This is joined in progress but we come back with Kalisto down on the floor and being attended to by medics. D-Von attacks Sin Cara anyway and we see a clip from the break of Kalisto being sent hard to the floor and taking a hard clothesline from D-Von to cause the injury. We get things going with the Dudleyz attacking Cara from behind, setting up a quick 3D at 2:04 shown.

Post match here are Enzo and Cass to draw a HOW YOU DOIN chant. Enzo says the catchphrases but the Dudleyz cut them off to say they're the kind of team that paved the way for Enzo and Cass. D-Von: "We're the reason you guys exist." Enzo: "No the reason I exist is my mom and dad got it on, how you doin." Cass says they're putting holes in the ground so Bubba and D-Von need to put on their hard hats and get back to work because they're SAWFT.

Owens leaves the arena.

Here's Roman Reigns with something to say, including the "I'm the guy" sequence. Roman talks about tonight's match for the #1 contendership, which doesn't matter because he's going to be champion for a long time. This brings out the League of Nations with Sheamus asking how confident Reigns would be if he was fighting one of them for the title. Rusev calls himself the best looking man in the WWE and Del Rio does his usual

insults.

The fight is on and here are the Wyatts of all people for the save. The League is quickly out and we've got the Wyatts staring Reigns down. Before this goes anywhere, Shane comes out and says that tonight it's any two members of the League vs. Roman/Bray. BUT I THOUGHT BRAY WAS BURIED AT WRESTLEMANIA! HOW CAN HE BE IN THE MAIN EVENT EIGHT DAYS LATER????? THE INTERNET CAN'T BE WRONG ABOUT THIS STUFF!!!!!!

Primo and Epico send their greetings from Puerto Rico.

Women's Title: Natalya vs. Charlotte

Charlotte is defending and Dr. Phil is at ringside. Natalya tries a choke to start but gets countered into a spinebuster, only to go for an armbar instead. That sends Charlotte bailing to the floor, followed by the stepover into the basement dropkick back inside. Back in and Charlotte starts dropping some knees before choking with the leg across the throat as we take a break.

Back with Charlotte doing those headscissors face pounds before putting on the Figure Four. That goes nowhere so Charlotte puts on a Sharpshooter but Natalya rolls through for the break. A release German suplex sets up the discus lariat but Charlotte punches her in the face to break up the Sharpshooter. Charlotte kicks her in the face for two more, only to miss a moonsault. Now the Sharpshooter goes on but Ric tries to get in. That goes nowhere so Ric pulls the referee out, just as Charlotte taps, drawing the DQ at 11:00.

Rating: C+. So ignore the referee watching Charlotte tap I guess. This was straight out of the Evolution playbook and it's getting old. Hopefully, and I can't believe I'm saying this, the Dr. Phil thing leads to Flair and Charlotte splitting but they really need to stop doing this same nonsense over and over. We get it: Flair can cheat to help Charlotte keep the title. Now let Charlotte do her thing.

Dr. Phil is disappointed.

We look back at Kevin Owens attacking Sami Zayn last week.

Sami says he didn't come this far to lose because he's the underdog from the underground. This brings in AJ Styles to say he agrees with all that, but he's the only #1 contender and that's how things are staying.

Tag Team Tournament First Round: Usos vs. Heath Slater/Curtis Axel

Jimmy works on Axel's arm to start before it's off to Jey who seems to injury his arm/shoulder early on. Jey gets stomped down in the corner and it's back to Axel for a chinlock. Slater comes in as the referee sounds like he said to go home. Heath clotheslines Jey down and it's time for the Bo Train so Jimmy gets the tag and rolls up Slater for the pin at 4:21.

Rating: D. This was a bunch of laying around with the Usos getting a fluke pin. I mean, it's not like you want to push the Outcasts over a team like the Usos or anything because no one is going to buy it long term but at least come up with something better than stomp, stomp, chinlock, rollup.

Post match the BULLET CLUB (Luke Gallows/Karl Anderson) debuts to beat the Usos down. Jey is sent shoulder first into the steps a few times as the fans are VERY pleased with the debut. They leave through the crowd as security forces them out.

Miz and Maryse are in the back with the latter yelling at a production assistant for having blue M&M's and American water. JoJo comes in and gets yelled at too but Miz brags about his car and calls himself Cesaro's Kryptonite. The last line requires two takes until Cesaro interrupts. Cesaro promises to roll out the red carpet version of all his uppercuts at Payback. Miz tries some water, causing Maryse to freak out that it's domestic.

Sami Zayn vs. AJ Styles

If Sami wins, he's added to the World Title match at Payback. AJ goes after the taped arm to start but Sami reverses into some rollups. Sami jumps over him and snaps off some armdrags into an armbar and it's a standoff. That's fine with AJ who suplexes him down a few times, only to get chopped HARD in the corner. The dropdown into the dropkick gives AJ

his first real advantage and we hit the quickly broken chinlock.

Zayn goes to the floor and eats a stiff knee to the face for two back inside. Back in and Sami knocks AJ right back to the floor for the big flip dive and we take a break. We come back with Sami fighting out of a chinlock, only to eat the seated forearm. The AA onto the knee gets two for Styles but Sami pops back up with the high cross body for two. A tornado DDT connects for two more as they're just trading big moves here.

The half and half suplex is countered with the Pele but the Phenomenal Forearm is countered into the Blue Thunder Bomb for the hottest near fall in the business from a move that has never won a match. AJ rolls into the Calf Crusher but Sami finally gets over to the ropes. With nothing else working, AJ loads up a super sunset powerbomb, only to have Sami backflip out. The Helluva Kick misses though and the Phenomenal Forearm puts Sami away at 16:50.

Rating: B+. This was your standard (yet awesome) let's hit each other with one big move after another until one of us can't get up. Sami losing is fine as he's basically a Canadian Daniel Bryan on the main roster. AJ gets another big win to look like he could pull off the miracle at Payback, meaning everyone gets something out of this. Well done, as usual.

Shane congratulates Sami and AJ on a great match.

It's time for the Highlight Reel with Chris Jericho and a surprise special guest. Jericho tells us to shut up and enjoy the greatness that is himself before talking about all the people he's beaten. Cue Dean Ambrose who gets in trouble for touching the potted plant. Dean has something from Shane and gives Jericho a piece of paper. Jericho: "This is a California speeding ticket." Dean: "Oh wait I need that for later."

Apparently the gift from Shane is a note saying that the Highlight Reel has been canceled and replaced by the Ambrose Asylum. Dean even has a tie for the special occasion. Dean asks Jericho about losing last week and a brawl breaks out, capped off by Dean hitting Dirty Deeds to leave Chris laying.

R-Truth is in the back when Goldust comes in to see him. Goldust asks about the audition that Truth promised him for tonight but now they're in a tag team tournament. Truth says that is the audition and wants to know whose bright idea this was. Cue Dr. Phil (drawing a lot of booing) to say something but he just walks away instead.

Apollo Crews vs. Adam Rose

They run the ropes to start until Crews does a standing moonsault and clotheslines Rose to the floor. Rose clotheslines him down for two, only to lose a battle over a suplex. Dallas tries to offer a distraction but Crews just hits the toss powerbomb for the pin at 3:32.

Rating: D. This was another debut style squash with Crews destroying someone that had no chance in the match. They need to get him over because he really didn't have enough time to develop a reputation in NXT but you can only have him go over the Outcasts so many times before it stops mattering.

Video on Baron Corbin.

Bray says Roman can trust him.

Roman Reigns/Bray Wyatt vs. Sheamus/Alberto Del Rio

Bray insists that he start for his team and takes Sheamus into the corner, setting up a quick spider walk. Reigns tags himself in and helps stomp away, only to get booed out of the building. It's back to Bray for the cheering but Sheamus gives him a quick Irish Curse to set up a top rope double stomp from Del Rio for two. A chinlock goes nowhere so it's back to Reigns for the hot tag (because of the crowd heat) and a boot to Sheamus' face.

Sheamus tied him up for the ten forearms, only to have Del Rio kick him in the ribs to break up a comeback attempt. The fans count along with Sheamus before it's off to Del Rio. The top rope double stomp is broken up with a situp (thank you), only to have Sheamus break up the comeback. Roman drops Sheamus again and looks over at Bray before making the hot tag to Wyatt for the big comeback. A release Rock Bottom drops Del Rio

and the running cross body gets two with Sheamus making the save.

Roman knocks Sheamus outside but the Superman Punch is knocked out of the air. Rusev kicks Bray in the head and the Backstabber gets two on Bray. Thank goodness for that as they had me thinking they were going to have him lose his first match as a face. Cue the Wyatts to take out Rusev and have a standoff with Del Rio. Alberto slides back in and eats Sister Abigail for the pin at 11:00.

Rating: B-. This was better than it had any right to be and thankfully it seems that they're teasing turning Reigns heel soon enough because the booing isn't stopping now that they're past Wrestlemania weekend. Bray looked awesome as a face (bizarre but awesome) and there could be something interesting if they push this hard. Good match too, which stuns me even though all four are good workers.

Bray and the Family stares at Roman to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. I had a good time with this show and they did a great job of pushing the wrestling as the focus tonight. Unfortunately the show still feels far too long and needed to be an hour shorter but the Bray Wyatt face turn gives me some hope for the future. It's clear that people want to cheer him so it's far past the point of having him turn. I'm not sure if the Family sticks around or not but at least we're getting something out of him for a change. Good show overall though and a good followup after last week.

Results

Cesaro b. Kevin Owens – Neutralizer

Dudley Boyz b. Lucha Dragons – 3D to Cara

Natalya b. Charlotte via DQ when Ric Flair interfered

Usos b. Heath Slater/Curtis Axel – Rollup to Slater

AJ Styles b. Sami Zayn – Phenomenal Forearm

Roman Reigns/Bray Wyatt b. Sheamus/Alberto Del Rio – Sister Abigail to

NXT – April 6, 2016: A Rare Disappointment

NXT

Date: April 6, 2016

Location: Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center, Dallas, Texas

Commentators: Corey Graves, Tom Phillips

This is the first of a series of special shows from Wrestlemania weekend with most of the matches taped from Axxess weekend. It should be interesting to see how things go with a very different style audience. Also it's not clear whether or not we'll get much advancement in the major angles as everything needs to reset after Takeover: Dallas. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Takeover as you might guess.

Phillips and Graves welcome us, clearly from Takeover.

New correspondent Catherine Kelly tells us what we can expect, including Apollo Crews vs. Elias Samson, which was a dark match at Takeover.

We see a video on American Alpha winning the Tag Team Titles, followed by Jordan (nearly in tears) and Gable talking about what it means to win the titles on the biggest weekend of the year.

Video on Asuka winning the Women's Title from Bayley.

Bayley says congratulations to Asuka and admits that Asuka is just on another level. A champion is made by how many times they get back up and get better so she'll rise to the occasion again.

We recap Elias Samson getting pinned by Johnny Gargano a few weeks back. Post match Samson beat him down until Apollo Crews made the save.

Recap video of Aries vs. Corbin.

Aries calls himself the most polarizing man in wrestling and that's just fine. He's not out there to prove anything to the people though because he's out there to prove something to himself. Talent and passion can't be measured with a ruler and a scale but he proved everything he needed to prove to Baron Corbin and isn't going anywhere soon.

We see Finn Balor retaining the NXT Title over Samoa Joe.

Balor says he escaped and survived Joe again.

Joe has nothing to say.

We see Samson singing a song to Crews but backing away from a fight.

No Way Jose is coming.

Elias Samson vs. Apollo Crews

Samson comes out with his guitar and has something to say but we have a lot of booing to get through first. The fans say that they want wrestling but thankfully Crews cuts it off to get things going. Crews throws him into the corner to start so Samson hides behind the guitar. A headlock doesn't get Elias anywhere and it's an armbar to put him on the mat. The armbar even goes to the floor so they head back inside for yet another armbar.

Back from a break with Samson getting in a shot to the back of the head and putting on a chinlock. Another chinlock doesn't go anywhere and it's Crews getting up and hammering away to a surprisingly strong reaction. Samson bails to the floor and gets taken down with an apron moonsault, only to have the standing version hit knees back inside. Elias gets in a jumping knee to the head but asks for silence, allowing Apollo to kick him in the face. The toss powerbomb puts Samson away at 14:46.

Rating: D. This really wasn't very good and that's probably it for Samson

for a little while. Crews moving to Raw is still a surprise but at least he went out on a win unlike Corbin. Unfortunately it wasn't a good match as most of it was spent on armbars and chinlocks. Samson is much more of a character than a wrestler but I'm not sure how far he can get on that alone.

Video on Zayn vs. Nakamura.

Sami can't put all of his emotions into words.

Nakamura says strong style has arrived.

Overall Rating: D+. This is a tricky one as the show should have been white hot coming off Wrestlemania weekend and the awesome Takeover but instead it's a recap and dark match. Maybe you can argue that this is a breather from all the action and a fear of burnout but I was looking forward to something entertaining here and wound up seeing a bunch of stuff all over again. It's not often that I get to say this but I was disappointed here.

Results

Apollo Crews b. Elias Samson – Toss powerbomb

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Impact Wrestling – April 5, 2016: Nope, Not Buying It

Impact Wrestling

Date: April 5, 2016

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Jeremy Borash, Josh Matthews

It's a night of revenge tonight in what might be (and hopefully is) the last match in the Jeff Hardy vs. Eric Young feud. In this case they're inside a cage in a match that doesn't mean much, especially since the King of the Mountain Title isn't on the line. To be fair the thing is hardly ever defended so this isn't a big surprise. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the end of last week's show with Drew Galloway successfully defending the title against Jeff, setting up Matt Hardy challenging for the title tonight, along with Jeff vs. Eric.

Jeff Hardy vs. Eric Young

Non-title and inside six sides of steel. Before the match, Young gets his standard promo time and promises to piledrive Hardy to death. Young has Bram with him so Hardy brings out a table. They start brawling on the floor without a bell and Bram helps Eric send him into the cage wall. A piledriver on the exposed concrete doesn't work as TNA's insurance policy doesn't cover death.

Young tells Bram to get a table as the handicap beating continues. They FINALLY get inside for the opening bell with a table and a bunch of chairs thrown inside for fun. A jawbreaker staggers Young and the whole double beatdown is forgotten. We take a break less than a minute after the bell and come back with Young sending Hardy head first into the cage. Eric wedges a chair into the corner but of course Hardy reverses him into it instead.

They tease putting each other through the table until Jeff gets kicked to the mat. The legdrop between the legs has Young down for two but Jeff

takes too much time loading up some chairs in the middle of the ring, allowing Eric to piledrive him through them for two. You know, because of course a piledriver onto open chairs only gets two. Young sets up a table instead, only to have Jeff hit a quick Twist of Fate. That's not enough either of course as he puts Eric on the table for a heavily edited Swanton off the top of the cage for the pin at 13:19.

Rating: C+. The match was fun but nothing we haven't seen before. On top of that it's also a waste of the King of the Mountain Title, which Hardy never mentioned or showed any suggestion of wanting whatsoever. I know the belt already means nothing but it's not like Jeff has to pretty much acknowledge it throughout the feud. Good match though.

Dixie Carter talks to Maria and Gail over how they can't just make a #1 contender. The result is a three way for the title tonight because what else were they going to do. Dixie doesn't want to hear Maria's ideas either.

Jeff is icing his head and wants the Creatures to stay with him.

Here are Matt Hardy (with the Brand) and Drew Galloway for their final speeches before the title match. Granted they're also the first speeches but you have to stretch sometimes in TNA. Drew says Matt is going to talk all night long so it's time for him to shut up. Matt thinks that Drew has his property because he has an entourage like a champion and is the epitome of success in this business.

Tonight he's going to take the title that belongs to him. Drew talks about how Matt has lost his passion and is now only in it for the money. Matt doesn't like Drew bringing up his win over Jeff but promises to get the title back. That's it but Tyrus says he's coming for the winner. Are we really waiting for Tyrus vs. Galloway or Hardy now? Apparently it's set up like a Money in the Bank as he implies he might cash it in tonight.

Pope talks about being ready for a fight tonight because it might be the last thing he knows how to do. It's a lot easier to jump on than it is to jump off daddy.

Post break Ethan Carter III comes up to laugh at Tyrus' threat. Tyrus: "I hate you." Ethan: "I hate you more."

Lashley vs. D'Angelo Dinero

This is a street fight after Pope saved Josh Matthews from a beatdown a few weeks ago. Pope has been active at least down in OVW so he's certainly not coming out of mothballs. Lashley jumps him from behind to start and the beating is quickly on with Pope in early trouble. The opening bell is late again and it's all Lashley early.

As you might expect, the announcers ignore the match to talk about Tyrus cashing in, which apparently has to be announced in advance. That's a bit better at least. Lashley gets in a delayed vertical suplex and loads up a stomp onto the steps, only to get blasted with a trashcan. Some kendo stick shots to the back have Lashley down with Josh being far too happy over the beatdown. Not that it matters as Lashley comes right back with a spear for the pin at 6:48.

Rating: C-. This had a lot of potential on paper but the match really wasn't much to see. I get the idea of having it be a street fight for the sake of giving Pope a fighting chance but this was just a step above a squash. Pope would be a good addition to the roster as he's not that old and can cut an energetic promo. I mean, it's not like they have anyone else to put out there.

Lashley spears him down two more times before Ethan Carter III comes out for a slow save. As Lashley leaves, Mike Bennett sneaks in and jumps Carter from behind.

Post break, Carter offers to fight Bennett right now. Instead he gets Maria who talks about the people. Carter: "OH PUT A SOCK IN IT T00TS!" Bennett comes out and accuses EC3 as someone who is looking for an excuse, just like everyone else around here. Carter is willing to get rid of Bennett at any time but Mike yells at him for losing the title. It means Carter has nothing left but he's still making excuse after excuse. Bennett goes on a great rant about how he's going to be World Champion after beating Carter, leaving everyone to say YES WE DO.

Carter is ready right now but Mike says we'll do it next week. That's not enough for Ethan as he goes after Mike and runs Maria over in the process. They go into the parking lot with Bennett getting hit in the back with a chair until he steals a tire iron from a car to knock Carter away, allowing him to steal the car and escape. This was REALLY good stuff and one of the best buildups to a match that I've seen TNA do in a long time.

Rockstar Spud has a plan for Tyrus but he crumples it up. Man that's just rude. Imagine the time and effort he put into that.

Knockouts Title: Jade vs. Madison Rayne vs. Gail Kim

Gail is defending. Jade gets beaten back and forth to start but Gail is sent to the floor, leaving Rayne to get a rollup for two. The champ gets suplexed and it's the challengers slugging it out until Gail pops back up for a neckbreaker to Madison and a DDT to Jade at the same time. Jade dives through the ropes to take Madison down as the announcers talk about Gail potentially injuring her leg. Well that and the Schitt's Creek show with a horrible transition. As the challengers fight on the floor, Maria sneaks in with a belt shot to Gail, setting up an STO from Jade for the pin and the title at 3:41.

Rating: D-. The ending is the right choice (though you know Gail is going to get the title back in a few months at most because we must praise Gail Kim at every given chance) but the match was a mess with almost no time and all three looking in different libraries instead of on the same page. Nothing to see here but at least we have a fresh champion.

Galloway is ready to defend his title.

Shane Helms wants to hear Eddie Edwards' answer but it should be obvious from here.

We look back at Al Snow beating up Grado last week.

Snow says Billy Corgan should understand his actions. Apparently Snow is upset that they're letting anyone in, including people like Grado. Snow is suspended for a week without pay and is expected to publicly

apologize.

Here are Helms and Trevor Lee for Edwards' answer about joining up for a tag team. Eddie comes out and says everything takes time but Helms doesn't like that word. He's teamed with people a lot less talented than Eddie and found success so imagine what they could do together. Eddie doesn't buy it though and thinks Shane just wants the automatic title shot he has coming. That belongs to Davey Richards though, meaning he wants no part of the Helms Dynasty when he's already part of the Wolves Nation.

Violence is about to erupt when Beer Money comes out for the save. Insults are issued and Beer Money confirms that they are in fact, Beer Money. Storm says line up the teams because they'll knock them down. Cue Decay with Rosemary saying when you wish on a dying star, you will decay, decay, decay. Abyss wants the titles so Storm says they're ready to fight right now. The brawl is quickly on but security breaks it up even faster.

Matt talks about being ready to take his title back tonight. As he talks about how it's time for him to take, Tyrus is slowly seen walking up the hallway behind him for a really cool visual.

Beer Money wants Decay next week.

TNA World Title: Drew Galloway vs. Matt Hardy

Drew is defending. Tyrus stands in the ring for the intros before taking off his gear and...going to the floor. Matt is smart enough to use the distraction to jump Drew from behind for an early advantage. A bulldog and legdrop have Drew in trouble and we take a break. Back with Matt hitting a Side Effect on the apron and going back inside, allowing Spud (called a ring rat by Josh) to get in a few cheap shots. A pair of neckbreakers gets two for Matt but Drew comes back with a good looking belly to belly.

Matt takes him up top for a quick gutwrench superplex but has to stop and take off his boot due to an ankle injury. Apparently it's just a ruse though (how villainous) as Spud tries to come in for a cheap shot, only to get suplexed as well. Futureshock connects but Tyrus pulls the referee

out at two. Cue Jeff to beat up Tyrus as Matt Twists Drew for another near fall. Drew is done with this though and grabs the Iron Maiden for the tap out at 12:10.

Rating: C-. Too many Hardys around of course but it's good to have Matt and Jeff out of the way so we can get on to some more interesting challengers. You know, like Tyrus apparently. They really need to give him his title shot already so we don't have to sit around waiting on him to cash in like he's someone interesting.

Overall Rating: C+. I had a good time with this show as they seem to actually be setting up some stuff for the future. Unfortunately I don't have much hope for this company to pull stuff off but at least they're showing some potential here. At long as they stop focusing on the Hardys as the stars of the promotion, things could get better over the next few weeks.

Results

Jeff Hardy b. Eric Young – Swanton Bomb through a table

Lashley b. D'Angelo Dinero – Spear

Jade b. Madison Rayne and Gail Kim – STO to Kim

Drew Galloway b. Matt Hardy – Iron Maiden

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Thunder – November 15, 2000: Wrestlers Doing Wrestling

Thunder

Date: November 15, 2000

Location: Evening News Arena, Manchester, England

Commentators: Mike Tenay, Tony Schiavone, Stevie Ray

We're still in England and we're still creeping towards Mayhem where the inevitable Scott Steiner title reign is coming. Things are right back down in the depths where they were a few weeks ago and now the nice run they were on is over. Hopefully the stories make sense tonight. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Monday, which isn't the best idea in the world.

Scott Steiner is angry on arrival and beats up a security guard.

Big Vito vs. Reno

We actually get a bit of the history leading up to this, which is basically I hit you and you hit me. They slug it out on the floor with Reno taking over, including a dropkick to the ribs for the first real advantage. Vito comes back with a clothesline and the good looking Mafia kick, followed by the equally good looking top rope elbow. There's something about that move that makes it hard to screw up. Since this is starting to be entertaining, here are Jindrak and O'Haire with the former offering a distraction and the latter offering a superkick to Vito's jaw. Roll of the Dice gives Reno the easy pin.

Rating: D+. Not enough time to go anywhere of course here and they didn't need to have interference in a match like this. It also doesn't help that Vito continues to lose no matter who he's in there against. Reno doesn't seem to be going anywhere but at least he got a win here, even if it's

over someone who should get better treatment.

Post match Reno challenges Vito for the Hardcore Title at Mayhem.

Here's Ric Flair with something to say. He wants an answer on what Mike Sanders is going to do about the Cruiserweight Title (which was brought up on Monday) and also we're getting a Hardcore Title match between Bam Bam Bigelow and champion Crowbar. As for Mayhem, it's going to be the final match between General Rection and Lance Storm. Amen to that one.

Lance Storm puts the Canadian sticker back on the US Title and wants Booker T. for the World Title tonight.

Hardcore Title: Crowbar vs. Bam Bam Bigelow

Crowbar is defending and stands in the ring while Bigelow pulls out the tables. Just get straight to it I guess. Crowbar goes outside and sends Bigelow through one such table leaning up against the apron, followed by some trashcan lids to the head back inside. Well to be fair, trashcans and tables go together.

Bigelow sends him into a table but it doesn't break. See, British furniture is quality. A splash misses Crowbar and puts Bigelow through the table, allowing Crowbar to send him outside for a chair shot to the back. Crowbar dropkicks a chair into Bigelow's face but he comes back with a BIG chair shot of his own, or at least a very loud one. Bigelow puts Crowbar under the table for what appears to be a headbutt, only to have Mike Awesome come out and shove him off, giving Crowbar the pin to retain.

Rating: D+. This was more entertaining than most of the hardcore matches and that chair shot had a lot to do with it. Crowbar continues to be the most entertaining guy in this division though unfortunately it means he's still here being wasted instead of doing something interesting. Fun enough match here though and that's all you can ask for in these things.

Booker is tired of being disrespected and would love to fight Storm tonight.

Bigelow jumps Awesome in the back.

The Misfits are devastated by the loss of Major Gunns and contemplate splitting up. Realizing that means unemployment, Rection says they should stick together and they'll keep going for now.

Kwee Wee vs. Rey Mysterio vs. Kidman vs. Corporal Cajun vs. Lieutenant Loco vs. Elix Skipper

Elimination rules for the #1 contendership. Loco suplexes Skipper down to start and it's already time for the women to get into it because that's what they're for in WCW. Cue AWALL to yell at Gunns so the women are thrown out, which is probably best for everyone. Cajun and Loco start double teaming Skipper...until the referee does his job by disqualifying them for being in the ring at the same time.

We get a rare break in a match and come back with Kidman baseball sliding Kwee Wee in the corner so Mysterio can hit the Bronco Buster. Skipper comes back in with a dropkick, allowing Kwee Wee to faceplant Kidman for a quick elimination. Kwee Wee holds Mysterio so Skipper can add a top rope spinwheel kick to eliminate Rey, getting us down to one on one. Before Kwee Wee can get anywhere, here's Jim Duggan to help Skipper, only to have Meng come out and nail Skipper to give Kwee Wee the pin and the title shot.

Rating: C. They could have cut this down to three or four people and it would have been a much better match but any time I get to see Meng and Kwee Wee together, my world is just a little bit brighter. Kwee Wee vs. Sanders doesn't do much for me but the division is such a death trap right now that it doesn't make much of a difference.

The Boogie Knights aren't worried about facing Konnan and a mystery partner tonight.

Ric Flair has a mystery opponent for Sanders tonight.

This week's interview is with Buff Bagwell, who is frustrated over his lack of a chance around here. He's been around for a long time but for some reason he's never been given the ball. For some reason he's never been given the chance like Luger, Sting and Jarrett. Somehow he's never had a singles title, which actually surprises me even to this day. You

would think he might get a token US Title run in there somewhere. Buff wants Jarrett at Mayhem.

Mike Sanders is on the phone with Jeff (presumably Jarrett) and thinks Buff has no respect for the veterans. So he doesn't respect himself?

WCW World Title: Booker T. vs. Lance Storm

Booker is defending of course and I still don't understand why the champ is always on in the middle of the show. Before the match, Storm demands respect before he brings dignity back to the WCW World Title. They trade arm holds to start before Booker kicks him down for a standoff. Storm gets in a shot of his own and they head outside with Storm sending him into the barricade to take over.

Back in and Storm hits that great looking superkick, followed by a springboard missile dropkick for two. The Bookend is countered into a neckbreaker for two and that annoying horn in the crowd keeps honking. Booker comes back with the ax kick but gets thrown into the Mapleleaf on the bad knee. I know he's not tapping but point here for actually setting up some drama here. Booker gets out to the floor for the break for a bit, only to have Storm counter a suplex into a DDT for two back inside. Storm follows Booker to the top and shoves him down, only to dive into the Bookend to retain the title.

Rating: B. I had a great time with this one and both guys looked awesome. It's amazing what happens when you let two talented wrestlers have some time to work a good match. Storm continues to be one of the shining stars of WCW and I almost always enjoy whatever he's doing out there. Good stuff.

Team Canada runs in after the match but Booker quickly dispatches them, including a Bookend to Gunns. Stevie loses his mind with laughter.

The Boogie Knights are in the back, talking about whether Konnan will find a partner. Disco has an idea but he'll need money. Gee I wonder what that means.

Cruiserweight Title: Mike Sanders vs. ???

There's no opponent yet but here's Ric Flair to say he has good news and bad news. First of all, this is going to be a non-title match. The bad news is it's a non-title match because the opponent is almost 100lbs over the cruiserweight limit.

Mike Sanders vs. Kevin Nash

Nash starts with a very slow motion right hand, which Tony describes as high gear. Sanders gets thrown across the ring again and a side slam gets two as we see security holding the Thrillers back. Nash kicks him in the head and takes the straps down but here are the Thrillers for the DQ.

Rating: D. This was an angle instead of a match and another example of how bad things are if you're a cruiserweight in 2000 WCW. Nash was squashing Sanders for about three minutes before the Thrillers came in, showing how valuable the Cruiserweight Title really is. At least Sanders didn't get....yeah I can't finish that. This was a horrible way to treat a champion and proof that they need to keep the bigger guys FAR away from the top cruiserweights unless they change a whole lot first. Also well done on making back to back champions look bad.

The Thrillers beat Nash down.

Post break Nash is having his knee looked at.

The Cat/Konnan vs. Boogie Knights

Cat is of course a surprise partner. Wright grabs a wristlock to start before it's off to Konnan, who somehow is the workhorse of his team. Some cheating has Konnan in trouble and Disco gets in a few good stomps. I still feel sorry for him having such a goofy gimmick because he really good work well in the ring. Back up and Cat tags himself in for a variety of kicks, followed by that dancing elbow to Disco.

It's off to Wright for a quick double clothesline, though to be fair Cat had been wrestling for a good 45 seconds straight. Konnan comes in and blocks the Chartbuster but the referee gets bumped. Cue Kronik to chokeslam Konnan because the referee seems to be dead, allowing Disco to get the cheap pin.

Rating: D. What else are you expecting in a match like this? The Knights are underrated workers but Miller is one of the worst in the company at the moment. Konnan continues to be fine while still looking horribly lazy most of the time. At least he gets a reaction though and that's what matters most.

Plug for Goldberg's book.

Lex Luger is annoyed at not being in Goldberg's book, which he can't put down. He was there when Goldberg's career began and he's going to be there when the career ends.

Goldberg vs. Buff Bagwell

Goldberg starts fast with a gorilla press drop but Buff grabs the double arm DDT. That means it's time for posing but Goldberg is on his feet first. The spear and the Jackhammer make Goldberg 19-0 in a hurry.

Goldberg helps him up post match.

Booker leaves.

Lethal Lottery Finals: Scott Steiner vs. Sting

Winner gets a title shot the night after Mayhem. Steiner hammers on him to start but gets backdropped to the floor where Sting hits him with a ball bat. They go to the announcers' table (Sting: "Hey Stevie.") with Steiner going face first into the wood. Back in and Steiner counters the Stinger Splash with a belly to belly. There are the pushups and a slam for two, followed by another belly to belly. Steiner is ticked off at the near fall so he cranks on both arms at once instead. We get the choking in the Tree of Woe but more pushups allow Sting to make his comeback, including a quick Death Drop for the pin out of nowhere.

Rating: D. So the solution to building up Sting is to have him get pinned clean in the middle of the ring. Sting winning is the only thing that makes sense here though because they built up this idea of getting a title shot the night after Mayhem. As usual they stop thinking with because they'd rather do a gimmick than set up something that makes long term sense.

Post match Steiner beats Sting down with the pipe and puts him in a straitjacket. A huge beatdown ends the show and puts Sting on the shelf until the final Nitro.

Overall Rating: D+. It much be a WCW law that the shows have to get weaker as they go. They would have been much better off closing with Booker vs. Storm for the World Title instead of setting up a #1 contender in the main event but they're the "draws" I guess so therefore they must go on last. You would think the British shows would be better but somehow WCW manages to screw that up as well.

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Lucha Underground – April 6, 2016: The Brock Lesnar Push

Lucha Underground

Date: April 6, 2016

Location: Lucha Underground Temple, Boyle Heights, California

Commentators: Vampiro, Matt Striker

It's time to get the focus back on the Trios as we're starting a tournament to crown new #1 contenders. This could be interesting as I'm

not sure if I can even name two trios, let alone enough to fill in a full set of brackets. Odds are we'll get more Dario goodness as well, which is more than enough to carry the show. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the stories tonight, including Cortez Castro and Joey Ryan being undercover cops, Sexy Star being stalked and Matanza destroying Pentagon last week.

Vampiro looks at his anti-psychotic medication when Dario comes in and calls him Ian Hodgkison. Dario knows there's a part of Vampiro that wants to bash his brains in and then go fight Matanza but Vampiro isn't crazy enough to do that. He's valuable to Dario as the voice of Lucha Underground so tonight Vampiro needs to be on commentary. Vampiro takes his pills.

Castro and Ryan report their findings to their boss, who wants them to take out Dario. Apparently they're in the Trios tournament together, which seems to please the captain. I'm really interested in where this goes and it's nice to finally get back to the story after several weeks away.

Ivelisse vs. Kobra Moon

Feeling out process to start with Moon working on the arm but getting taken down into an armbar. A headscissors has Ivelisse in trouble but it turns into a pinfall reversal sequence for two each. Moon does her slithering into a choke over the ropes for two, followed by something like a Tarantula/Anaconda Vice combo. A butterfly suplex into a double underhook choke keeps Ivelisse in trouble but she grabs a Russian legsweep to put both of them down. Ivelisse wins a slugout and kicks Kobra down with Striker admitting that this is an ugly match. Back up and Ivelisse grabs a running sunset flip bomb for the pin at 6:35.

Rating: D. Striker was right when he called this ugly. Kobra is just not working and it's getting worse with each week. At the same time it's nice to see Ivelisse getting some solo time instead of being on the wacky team. She's still awesome in the ring and you can hear TNA cry a bit more every time she has a match.

Video on Killshot, who was a sniper in the military. He and his unit were captured for thirteen months but he escaped and made it back home. Of course this is accompanied by some well choreographed video showing Killshot in combat. Really cool stuff here of course.

Famous B. comes in to see Mascarita Sagrada and offers a business card.

Sexy Star is working out when the Mack comes in. Apparently he's on a team with Marty the Moth and Mariposa and would like Star out there for moral support. She screams a lot and I guess that's a no.

Trios Tournament First Round: Cortez Castro/Mr. Cisco/Joey Ryan vs. Mariposa/Marty Martinez/The Mack

The fans are WAY into Joey here. The announcers point out that the prize for the winners isn't clear, though I'd assume it's a title shot. Cisco and Mack start things off after Vampiro thinks Cortez and Castro are two different people. Mack gets two off a hard shoulder but gets dropped by a springboard armdrag. The fans actually start cheering Cisco after a hurricanrana but Mack flips up to his feet and we get a respectful fist bump.

Joey tags himself in and wants Mariposa, who he facepalms down like a jerk. That's fine with Mariposa who destroys Ryan with armdrags and kicks to the back, sending Joey over for a tag to Castro. Marty is knocked down in the corner and kicked in the face, only to come back with a dropkick. The fans tell him that he still sucks though and it's back to Mariposa to dropkick Cisco. Things settle down with a cravate on Cisco, only to have him grab a neckbreaker on Marty for the breather.

Castro comes back in with a tornado DDT, only to have Joey and Mack tag themselves in. Mack Samoan drops him and gets two off a standing moonsault as everything breaks down. Mariposa blocks Mack's dive so he kicks her onto the pile and dives anyway. You don't block the Mack. Back in and Marty tags himself in, causing a slap off with Mack. That earns Marty a Stunner, followed by a 3D into a Codebreaker to give Joey the pin on Marty at 8:35.

Rating: B. This was way better than I was expecting and Mack had a star

making performance here. Castro and Cisco seem to be on the verge of a face turn but that might be due to having Joey Ryan on their team. I'm not wild on the Mariposa/Marty/Mack thing but it could turn around if Mack keeps performing like he did here.

Mariposa goes after Mack but Sexy Star comes in for the save and finally fights back against Mariposa after weeks of cowering away.

Dragon Azteca is on the roof when Rey Mysterio comes in. Apparently Dragon wants to kill Matanza but Rey points out what happened in Aztec Warfare. They're in the trios tournament next week though and here's Prince Puma as their partner. Puma actually speaks for the first time, agreeing that they fight next week.

Lucha Underground Title: Fenix vs. Matanza

Fenix is challenging. Matanza shrugs off a kick to start and shoves Fenix away with ease before choking in the corner. Fenix tries some more kicks which just seem to annoy Matanza, setting up a release German suplex to send Fenix into the buckle. Dario calls for blood but Fenix escapes the Wrath of the Gods. A big German suplex sends Fenix flying again as this is getting into massacre territory.

Matanza charges into a superkick and a springboard missile dropkick staggers him. Dario tells him to remember mom so Matanza catches a dive and plants him with a World's Strongest Slam on the floor. Matanza just unloads on him with right hands, setting up the Wrath of the Gods to retain the title at 4:50.

Rating: D. It's rare that a squash is the way to go but that's what we're getting here. This is approaching the Brock Lesnar style monster push with no one being able to touch Matanza until we get someone really special out there. I mean, I know Muertes is going to be lurking eventually but you can only run through so many people before it gets goofy. We're not there yet, but I'm not sure who else they can throw at Matanza for now.

Matanza destroys him even more post match until Catrina shows up to say stop. Mil Muertes runs in and knocks Matanza out to the floor. You knew

this was coming and there's no way it's going to be anything other than awesome.

Overall Rating: B-. That main event doesn't really hold the show down as it was much more about setting something up than the match itself. Matanza vs. Muertes is going to be sweet and given that this is Lucha Underground, they're going to give it the time to build things up. That's one of the best things around here: they know how to set things up instead of just going through everything at once, like the Trios tournament and then the big showdown. It's another good show and gives you more to look forward to in the future.

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