

Monday Nitro – April 10, 2000: Kevin Nash Said It Best

Monday Nitro #235

Date: April 10, 2000

Location: Pepsi Center, Denver, Colorado

Attendance: 9,074

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Mark Madden, Scott Hudson

It's kind of hard to preview this show as it's all about the company being reset. Russo and Bischoff are coming in to a bigger reception than Hogan back in 1994 because they're writers and therefore more important than anything else. Since WCW is stupid, this is also the go home show for Spring Stampede, which has nothing set up so far. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Most of the roster is in and around the ring to start. More come out as this isn't the most thrilling start. Jeff Jarrett gets to talk first because we're just lucky that way. He came here to be the WCW World Champion but his master plan got derailed by some good old boys who couldn't compete in his league. Jeff gets to the point and calls for the man himself: Vince Russo.

The Long Island accent with a Russo attached talks about making the WWF what it was before coming here to beat Vince McMahon at his own game. Within a few weeks, the new blood of WCW was making a change, but then the good old boy network kicked in. All the political BS in the back brought Russo down and all those people are sitting at home watching him now.

Then they decided that a change had to come and Russo was sent home. Even some of the wrestlers knew the change would suck. The Radicalz knew it and left. Scott Steiner knew it and got suspended. Well now the good old boys network is gone and it's time for the young guys to rise. This brings out Bischoff and they hug, giving us the new power team. The good old boys network screwed both of them over with Bischoff listing Diamond

Dallas Page, Sid Vicious and Hulk Hogan in particular.

We see Sting, Luger, Sid and Page watching on a monitor in the back. Bischoff goes on about Hogan, even apologizing to everyone in the ring for how much trouble Hogan caused them. Now Bischoff wants to see the old guys so here they come. "What's up Sid? No softball game?"

Page doesn't know what Eric is smoking so Bischoff tells him to screw off. Bischoff takes credit for rebuilding Sting's career as the announcers sound like they're in awe of this. A level playing field where everyone has to earn their spot is promised but first Russo has something to say to Ric Flair. After promising to wipe Flair off the bottom of his shoe, Russo drops the bombshell: all titles are vacant.

The bored crowd chants for Goldberg as Sid says he won't give up his title. Bischoff comes up to him and threatens the end of Sid's career. "What's the matter Sid? Can't find your scissors?" Madden: "WOW!" The fans are silent so Bischoff repeats the line. Amazingly enough, the fans are still silent. Sid finally hands it over and Eric announces that all champions will be crowned at Spring Stampede.

That one part where Bischoff mentioned an inside reference and no one reacted sums up this show thing. This was a twenty minute segment made up almost entirely of insider stories and statements that went over the heads of probably 98% of the audience. What good old boys network is he talking about and how did they ruin what Russo had going on? Yeah I know what they're talking about because it's 2015 and this is all ancient history. How many people had any idea what they were talking about in 2000? Also of course ignore the fact that this is Russo yet AGAIN blaming everyone else for his ideas bombing.

This was a long segment to set up the new Russo and Bischoff regime and let them get in their shots at Vince and all of their other enemies (read as anyone else who has ever had a different idea) as the fans are left sitting there wondering what in the world is going on. Finally, it really doesn't instill me with confidence when the new writers who are supposed to save the company are basically saying "yeah this is too complicated for us to fix so let's just reset the whole thing instead of booking our

way out of it.” That’s quite the opening impression.

Hogan arrives.

During the break, all the wrestlers in the ring left.

Sting and Hogan talk about what just happened and Sting says Bischoff might as well have just kicked Hogan between the legs. Sting: “I’m not ribbing you.”

WCW World Title Tournament Semi-Finals: Diamond Dallas Page vs. Total Package

This isn’t a tournament for the title, but rather a tournament to face Jeff Jarrett for the title on Sunday. Page’s music stops halfway through his entrance and he has no pyro. Because he has to prove himself you see. Prove himself in the World Title tournament he’s already in that is.

Luger, as in the guy who was out most of last year and hasn’t had an important win since Halloween Havoc, doesn’t have music either as he comes to the ring as one of five potential World Title winners. It’s ten minutes after the promise of a level playing field and they’re already defying their own logic. In case you’re wondering, Page’s last major win would probably be.....well also at Halloween Havoc.

The match starts slow with both guys looking like they’re in their 40s who are out there for a healthy paycheck. The announcers ignore the match to talk about Bischoff riding Hogan’s coattails in another argument that no common fan would care about. Luger stomps Page in the corner and chokes with a boot as Madden makes fun of Page as is his custom.

Some backbreakers have Page in trouble AND IT’S ANGLE TIME! Buff Bagwell comes out with full music and pyro to distract Luger, allowing Page to get in a low blow. Tony: “What’s going to happen next in this program? It’s only segment two!” Luger and his gonads of steel shrug off the low blow and Page gets powerslammed, only to have Buff go after Liz for a distraction. That would be the second distraction of the match and it allows Page to Diamond Cut Luger for the pin. He gets about half a second of music before they cut it off again.

Rating: D-. Oh man this show is going to SUCK. They had a four and a half minute match between two veterans who have to prove themselves and it took two distractions and a no sold low blow to put Luger down. This is going to be the old Russo idea of running an angle or three in every match because the fans are too stupid to just watch a match without some bonus entertainment to carry them through. Oh and great: we might even get Luger vs. Bagwell out of this. Again. For like the dozenth time.

Hogan can't find Bischoff.

Hennig asks Russo why he isn't in the World Title scene. Russo gives him Jarrett tonight and if he wins, he gets in the World Title match on Sunday. So there are officially three semi-final matches for two spots in a final? Now they're ignoring the laws of numbers.

Here's Tank Abbott to say he's a shootfight and not a wrestler. Well we've known that for months but at least it's confirmed. Tank came here for Goldberg and what a coincidence that Goldberg got hurt the week Tank arrived. Starting tonight, he's going to beat up innocent bystanders until Goldberg comes back. First up: Mark Madden, who loses his shirt in the beating.

Jarrett tells Russo that it better be good.

Kidman tells Torrie he wants to do this.

Hogan is given directions to Bischoff's office. These three scenes took a combined 15 seconds.

Hogan finds Bischoff and they talk in an office.

Here's Kidman with a microphone. He feels like he's been handed a get out of jail free card because he and the rest of the New Blood (of course it's an official thing now) have been held down by the old guys. Kidman wants to talk about Hulk Hogan, who has been talking about him a lot lately. Hogan doesn't have the heart and talent that Kidman have and it's taken all those years of spotlight to give Hogan that grotesque orange tan. He calls Hogan out and wouldn't you know it, Hogan is walking past a monitor in the back.

Hogan comes out and thankfully Hudson explains what the heck Kidman is talking about, because Kidman certainly didn't go into details about it. Again: WCW assumes that all of the fans are on the internet reading everything. Hogan says Kidman gives the young guys in this business a bad name. He brings up Torrie and Kidman goes after him, which Tony declares as the world turning upside down.

They fight to the floor with Hogan getting the better of it (expected) and beating Kidman up even more back inside. Cue Bischoff with a chair. Hogan runs his hand over his eyebrow and gets hit with the chair, drawing blood right where his hand went over the eyebrow. I remember seeing that as a kid and yelling at my TV how fake it looked. Kidman gets a cover and pin with Bischoff counting the three, in what is probably the only time Hogan lays down for him, or anyone for that matter.

Ric Flair arrives.

Hogan wants Bischoff and Kidman and swears a lot.

Flair watches the opening segment in the back and comes to the ring. Ric talks about Russo growing up as a Flair fan (not likely in New York but whatever) and now he thinks Flair is old. In this town, Brian Griese (current Denver Broncos quarterback) throws a lot of touchdown passes but that doesn't make fans forget about John Elway because in this town, Elway is the man. Flair was always great at throwing in the sports analogies and getting easy pops (not a bad thing) for them.

Bischoff has the guts to walk up to come to Ric face to face and he isn't wasting money on attorneys again, so get out here right now. Instead Flair gets Scott Steiner, who calls Flair's teeth crooked. All of the WWF's current champions came from WCW (no, they didn't) because Flair and company ran them off. Steiner puts in some fake teeth to do a Flair impression, allowing Shane Douglas to return and attack Flair.

Kevin Nash returns on crutches.

Bret Hart is in the crowd.

Flair is looking for Douglas.

As luck would have it, Douglas is with Gene, who gets more emotional than you'll ever see him over what Shane just did. Douglas says that was the beginning of Flair's road and he's going to do whatever he wants.

WCW World Title Tournament Semi-Finals: Sid Vicious vs. Sting

Now this would be the semi-finals to advance to the final for the final as opposed to the semi-final for the final. Got that? These guys get their music all the way to the ring because Russo and Bischoff have already forgotten that story. Sting sidesteps a charge to start and kicks Sid onto the turnbuckle, setting up a splash to send Sid outside. Sid comes back and mocks the crowd a bit as I had already forgotten he turned heel a few weeks ago. Back in and Sting's splash hits knees (not feet as Tony calls them) to keep Sid in control.

A cobra clutch slam gets two before a double clothesline puts both guys down. Cue the Wall with a table and the referee gets put down. Sid powerbombs Sting (now the Millennium Bomb. I kind of dig that name actually) but gets chaired in the back. Wall chokeslams Sid through the table and that's a countout because SID'S BODY LAYING ON A BROKEN TABLE isn't enough to make the referee think anything is up.

Rating: D. These two have been having decent to good matches for eleven years and it took Vince Russo less than seven minutes (longest match of the night of course) to screw that up. Wall going after Sid could be one heck of a mess, but at least it's another young guy getting a push against a veteran.

Here's Ric Flair to challenge Shane Douglas for later tonight. Not next week, not at the pay per view, not at some point in the future. Tonight, because Russo doesn't understand what it means to build to a match. That being said, Flair is the only person here who hasn't sounded stupid. It's almost like he knows what he's doing.

Hogan is still on a rampage.

Back from a break and Hogan is still on a rampage and beats up Shannon Moore and Shane Helms for not knowing where Kidman is.

Clip of the Ready to Rumble premiere.

WCW World Title Tournament Semi-Finals: Jeff Jarrett vs. Curt Hennig

I guess this is a tournament match. I mean, the winner goes to the title match on Sunday so why not. They start brawling in the aisle despite no personal issue between the two of them. Curt takes him over to the announcers' table for a beating before Jeff clotheslines him down inside. We get the Jarrett sleeper/suplex sequence but here's the debuting Shawn Stasiak (formerly Meat in the WWF) to what sounds like Curt Hennig's old Mr. Perfect music.

The distraction makes Hennig throw a wild back elbow which Jarrett ducks and the referee gets bumped. I can't say it hit the referee because it didn't come close but Little Naitch went down anyway. Stasiak comes in and mostly fails at lifting Hennig up for a fireman's carry before dropping him in what can be most accurately described as a reverse F5. It was so botched that there's really no describing the move. The Stroke gives Jeff the pin.

Rating: D+. For those of you counting, this is the third match that has ended as a result of someone interfering. It's clear that WCW has decided they know what we want as wrestling fans and if we object we're not giving them enough of a chance. The match could have been good had it been a match and not a punching fest, but these two are just wrestlers and no one would want to see that.

Hogan is storming through sky boxes to find Bischoff.

Nash tells someone to get here if they can.

Sting says he is loyalty and he's coming after Russo's golden boy on Sunday.

Ric Flair vs. Shane Douglas

Both guys are in street clothes. They're quickly on the floor with Ric firing off chops, followed by a low blow back inside. Hudson goes off about Douglas talking trash about Flair on the dirt sheets as Shane kicks Flair low. Cue Russo with a bat to hit Flair and that's a DQ.

Russo steals Flair's watch.

Here's Kevin Nash, who immediately rips on the new bosses who are trying to be wrestlers and screw over some of the boys. He wants to know what happened to that sweet little wrestling show we had every Monday? Like, where is the Dog when you need him? Nash has been talking to Hall, who wants to come back soon. Neither Bischoff or Russo would be here if not for he and Hall, especially Russo who they had to save from Shawn Michaels over and over. This brings out the debuting and reigning ECW World Champion to beat Nash down. Awesome wants some of this opportunity that Russo and Bischoff are offering.

Hogan is on the phone in his limo and demanding Kidman soon. The Hummer (from last summer, now white instead of black) comes up and crushes the limo. Bischoff and Kidman get out and celebrate.

WCW World Title Tournament Final: Diamond Dallas Page vs. Sting

The winner gets Jarrett on Sunday so Jeff is on commentary. Page is thrown outside to start before a pair of Stinger Splashes put him down again. The Deathlock is broken up by an arm in the ropes and Page gets two off a belly to belly. Jarrett goes after Kimberly so Page head outside, allowing Vampiro to run in give Sting the Nail in the Coffin. A Diamond Cutter sends Page to Spring Stampede.

Rating: D. I'm almost done with this show. It's almost over. If I can get through a few more minutes, this will finally be over. Then I can watch ANYTHING ELSE and see a different finish, because it's clear that we're going to be seeing a lot of the same things over and over again and it's going to get more and more annoying every week. This was just a brief workout until the ending happened, as all the matches have been so far.

Jarrett swings the guitar at Page but hits Kimberly instead.

After a break, Jarrett comes out for the closing speech. He talks about six days before his destiny is fulfilled when he is finally crowned WCW World Champion. Cue Page to beat Jarrett down but Scott Steiner hits the ring to make it 2-1. Luger, now a face I guess, comes in to help Page but Bagwell, Vampiro and Wall came in. By George WE'VE GOT STABLE WARS!!!

Sting's save doesn't work as Booker T. (yes T.) comes in to help the New Blood. The New Blood obliterates the Millionaire's Club as Russo and Bischoff come out to watch. They go to leave but an angry Bret Hart is waiting for them to end the show.

Overall Rating: D-. I can't call it a failure because they had an idea but that doesn't mean it was a well executed idea. Nash summed it up best: what happened to the wrestling show? It's very clear that under Russo and Bischoff, this has stopped being a wrestling show and is now just a poorly written drama.

The idea of having the youth vs. the old guys is solid, but when the stuff like "they have to earn their music and pyro" is literally forgotten fifteen minutes after it starts and the stories are almost all based around dirtsheets that wouldn't be frequently read today, those stories are quickly forgotten. That's Russo in a nutshell: yeah there are ideas there, but the ton of horrible stuff on top of them crush any positives.

Either way, this show was not good. It had a lot going on, but that doesn't mean it's a good show. Spring Stampede feels like it has the potential to be an even bigger disaster and I'm terrified to think what we might have to sit through in order to form Russo and Bischoff's vision for WCW.

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Jimmy Snuka Charged With 1983 Murder

<http://411mania.com/wrestling/jimmy-snuka-charged-with-murder/>

This has been rumored for years now and it's finally happening 32 years later. Snuka already has stomach cancer and there's a good chance he could be going down for this too. This has really been a bad year for 80s stars but this is a different kind of bad.

Monday Night Raw – August 31, 2015: Male Cheerleaders And The Periodic Table

Monday Night Raw

Date: August 31, 2015

Location: Amalie Arena, Tampa, Florida

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, John Bradshaw Layfield

Last week saw the return of Sting and the disappearance of a statue, meaning tonight is likely to continue the time honored tradition of destroying that statue once and for all. Sting vs. Seth Rollins for the WWE World Title is confirmed for Night of Champions, but what about Rollins' US Title? John Cena is still lurking so let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week's closing segment where Sting appeared in the statue's place. HHH made the match after the show went off the air.

Opening sequence.

Here's Sting (with complete face paint this week) to open things up. JBL: "The man who put Starrcade on the map!" Just...no. Under no circumstances can that be considered correct. Sting hasn't been around much since Wrestlemania where he lost to HHH. Due to that match, he'll always have respect for HHH, but now his sights are set on Seth Rollins.

Ever since Wrestlemania it has been injustice after injustice and last week he had to hear Seth Rollins comparing himself to names like Bruno Sammartino, Andre the Giant and the Ultimate Warrior. Sting has won titles around the world but there is one that has eluded him throughout his career. At Night of Champions, Sting is going to prove that Rollins isn't half the man HHH is and that Rollins can't hang with Sting on his best day.

Rollins is upset but Stephanie talks him down. Seth lists his accomplishments this year and calls everything Sting said wrong. Stephanie brings up Sting's comparison to HHH and thinks Sting is absolutely right. Seth wants his statue so Stephanie suggests he go ask Sting.

Rusev vs. Dolph Ziggler

An attempt at a single leg doesn't get Dolph anywhere so he dropkicks Rusev in the face instead. Back in and Rusev slowly stomps Ziggler down, as is his custom. We get a dueling Rusev chant, followed by Dolph missing a splash in the corner. The sleeper slows Rusev down a bit so he backs Ziggler into the corner for a break. Ziggler gets knocked into the barricade and we take a break.

Back with Rusev throwing on a bearhug, which really should have been put on during the break. Rusev misses a charge of his own but easily breaks up a neckbreaker with a suplex. A running flip backsplash gets two more and Ziggler is in trouble. The spinwheel kick gets the same for Rusev but

he walks into a superkick out of nowhere.

They head outside with Rusev charging into the steps but both guys dive in to beat the count at nine. Rusev superkicks him down as well because everyone has to use superkicks in this company. Ziggler sneaks out of the Accolade and a quick Zig Zag drops Rusev, only to have Summer come in for the DQ at 14:21.

Rating: D+. This was more long than it was good and again they're setting up the mixed tag. Why we needed to see another match between the two of them to set up the obvious match is beyond me, but at least they didn't have a clean finish. Lana is going to be awesome in the ring, mainly because she's awesome at everything else so why would this be any different?

A catfight ensues until Ziggler pulls them apart.

Post break Ziggler brags about what just happened. He goes into a room as Renee talks a bit and we see Summer sneak in behind him.

It's time for the Beat the Clock Challenge for the #1 contendership to the Divas Title, but Team Bella has something to say. Nikki is so proud of making it this far, but we've got a Bellatron counting us down to the second she breaks the record.

Alicia Fox vs. Becky Lynch

This is the first match in a Beat the Clock Challenge, meaning whoever wins in the shortest time wins, earning a title shot, presumably at Night of Champions. Becky tries for some fast rollups to start but she gets a bit sloppy and Fox takes over. A chinlock slows things down even more and you can see Becky panicking over the time being spent. Back up and some clotheslines get two for Lynch, followed by a springboard kick in the corner. They hit the mat and Becky grabs Disarm-Her for the win at 3:21.

Rating: D. This is the other issue with the Divas Revolution: the newcomers got over having these epic 10-15 minute wars but now they're stuck with the three minute matches that have plagued the division for years. For once, this isn't on them because there's very little they can

do in so little time and that's not going to change.

Ryback talks about defending his title against everyone and tonight the Big Show will be no different. As he's talking, we hear someone scream and see Summer Rae running out of Ziggler's locker room. Ziggler is in a towel and looks surprised.

Intercontinental Title: Big Show vs. Ryback

Big Show is challenging, Miz is on commentary and we get big match intros. Show takes him into the corner for the loud chop to start and slowly drops an elbow for a close two. With Ryback down, Show demands a microphone so he can address the PLEASE RETIRE chants. He says find someone to do it so Ryback picks him up for a slam, only to have Show fall on him for two more. Show hits the chinlock for a few moments but Ryback fights up and hits a good looking flying tackle.

The splash is caught by the throat though, only have Ryback slip out and hook a double leg takedown (no that wasn't a spinebuster) for a near fall of his own. The Meathook is countered into the chokeslam for two but Show goes up. Since we're in Flair Country, the slam off the top is very appropriate. Another Meathook attempt is countered with a spear but Miz gets up for a distraction, allowing Ryback to grab Shell Shock to retain at 7:14.

Rating: C. They had me worried that they were going to change the title here in what would have been one of the dumbest ideas in a long time. I'm sure we'll get Miz vs. Ryback now, even though Ryback beat him in two minutes a few weeks back. Ryback is the best Intercontinental Champion in a long time and it's nice to see the title meaning something.

Charlotte vs. Brie Bella

Charlotte's time to beat is 3:21 because only PCB can win. Brie starts hiding in the ropes to start because she must "protect the Bella Empire." A Figure Eight attempt doesn't work and Charlotte has less than two minutes to go. Instead Natural Selection hits out of nowhere for the pin at 1:40 to set Charlotte's time.

We look at the Dudleyz returning last week.

The Dudleyz say they're back for one more title reign because it would make them ten time Tag Team Champions. Tonight: New Day goes through a table.

Cesaro vs. Kevin Owens

Owens talks trash to start (shocking I know) and gets shoved down to the mat. A big boot stops Owens cold and Cesaro casually lifts him up for a suplex, complete with right hands to the gut. Cesaro gets two off a double stomp and it's time for Owens to bail to the floor. That's fine with Cesaro, who follows him out with a running European uppercut.

A high cross body gets two for Cesaro but Owens comes back with an elbow to the jaw and a backsplash. Owens: "WHERE'S YOUR SECTION NOW???" A corner clothesline sets up the Cannonball and we hit the chinlock on Cesaro. That goes nowhere so Owens busts out the torture rack neckbreaker for two instead and we take a break.

Back with Cesaro failing to superplex Owens so he dropkicks Kevin in the face and gutwrench superplexes him instead. That reverse Angle Slam gets two for Cesaro but Owens superkicks him for the same. Owens tells Cole to watch but misses another Cannonball.

Instead of doing something smart though, Kevin slaps him in the face. In a scary power display, Cesaro catches a tornado DDT in mid air and slams Owens down into a Crossface. Like, how do you even do that? Cesaro can't suplex him over the top and Owens knocks him HARD into the announcers' table. Back in and Cesaro can't Swing him because of the ribs, allowing the Pop Up Powerbomb to put Cesaro away at 16:10.

Rating: B. I liked this better than the Summerslam match as Owens beat him clear after setting up an injury right before the ending. Cesaro took a great looking bump onto the table and Owens has won his last three singles matches. It's very nice to see him not jobbing every single week for a change and I'd love to see him go after Ryback and the Intercontinental Title next.

Ziggler tries to explain that he thought Summer was Lana. Nothing happened and he threw on a towel as soon as he knew who it was. Lana doesn't buy it and leaves.

Dean Ambrose vs. Braun Strowman

The fireflies still look awesome. Bray thanks Abigail for giving him the black sheep as her greatest gift. For thousands of years, mankind has tried to predict the end of the world. Tonight the seventh trumpet sounds and they will walk among you undisguised. Stroman, in a voice that Christian Bale would think is too over the top, says this is the apocalypse. Reigns comes out as backup as you would expect.

Strowman throws Dean around with one hand to start and I think the message has been sent. Dean gets in his face striking but Stroman just throws him down again. A kick knocks Dean to the floor and the slow beating continues. Reigns finally comes over for the DQ at 3:09.

Rating: D+. Nothing to the match here but it did exactly what it was supposed to. Stroman looks like the best monster that we've had in a long time and that's all he's supposed to look like. Eventually someone is going to beat him, but until then it's going to be fun watching him be the modern day Zeus or whatever other monster you pick. It's an old formula that keeps coming back because it works.

Stroman cleans house and now sells a chair to the back. Reigns' right hand has a bit more effect but Harper comes in with the superkick to put Roman down. Dean gets choked out and Reigns takes that spinning powerbomb thing. Bray comes in for Sister Abigail to Reigns. Notice that Bray didn't have to do a thing here, which is exactly why he needs minions.

We look at Rollins beating Cena at Summerslam.

Clip of Sting's opening promo.

Rollins wants his statue back and tells Sting to stay out of his business. Maybe if Sting had a subscription to the WWE Network, he could know how great Seth has been. Yeah HHH used to be a big deal, but HHH never held the US and WWE World Titles at the same time.

Paige vs. Sasha Banks

Paige has to beat 1:40 so she starts very fast and gets some rollups for two each. The fans are split as Paige fires off some running knees for two. The Rampaige connects but Tamina and Naomi pull Sasha to the floor as the clock runs out at 1:40.

Team Bella comes out to pose.

Summer Rae says that Zigler called her into his locker room but then he just started stripping. She was mesmerized and speechless and then he asked her to join him in the shower. After he got out, he gave Summer the look but she ran out. Summer will never forget the image though.

Lana is crying and can't say anything.

New Day vs. Dudley Boyz

Non-title. Woods calls the Dudleyz a menace to culture, society and furniture around the world. Big E. asks if you remember the times sitting around the table with your granny and that weird uncle around the Thanksgiving table. Or all that money you cleaned up at the poker table. Or all those summers around the pool table. And where would we be without the Periodic Table? Remember all the fun you had learning your multiplication table? Big E. and Kofi pull out what Woods calls the last table (covered in bubble wrap) here tonight. A SAVE THE TABLES chant takes us to a break before the match.

The Prime Time Players are on commentary as Big E. and D-Von get things going. But it's quickly off to Bubba vs. Kofi. Woods suggests clapping but Bubba turns it into NEW DAY SUCKS. A clothesline under the arm stops Kofi cold and New Day is sent out to the floor as we take a break. Back with D-Von clotheslining both champions down but Woods low bridges him to the floor. As Woods brushes his hair, Big E. drives D-Von into the barricade. That sounds like a valid reason to dance to me and Big E. agrees.

The rotating stomps set up Big E.'s splash for two. An abdominal stretch slows things down and Kofi's chinlock does the same. Woods mocks the

TABLES chant but Kofi dives into a clothesline, allowing for the tag off to Bubba. Bubba hiptosses Woods in but D-Von hiptosses him right back out in a funny spot. 3D quickly ends Kofi, which JBL calls the Dudleyz' first match in WWE in ten years. Even he doesn't watch Smackdown.

Rating: C. I liked the match but the booking makes my head hurt. You have three members of New Day and two of them are the recognized Tag Team Champions. I think you get what I'm going for here. It's very interesting that the Dudleyz have been doing the same thing for about ten years now and it's still more entertaining than 90% of most tag teams.

Here's Seth Rollins to call out Sting. The things Sting said earlier tonight showed him why WCW went out of business. We can't possibly be talking about that again...right? Rollins wants Sting to take back what he said about HHH being that much better than him because Seth is every bit as good as HHH and one day could even be better. However, Rollins wants his status but gets Stephanie instead.

She suggests the Rollins chill out because Sting is getting in his head over a stupid statue. Rollins still wants his statue but this time gets John Cena. John talks about the Authority bending Rollins to their will because that's what they do. They picked Rollins because he was the only one willing to stab the Shield in the back. Rollins is going to be the flavor of the month because the Authority would never allow him to do what he's about to do right now.

Rollins has a lot of titles right now and since the Authority said every title is on the line at Night of Champions, Cena is cashing in his rematch for the US Title on the same night Rollins has to defend against Sting. Cena asks Stephanie if he can do that and she reluctantly agrees. Sting comes out to pose with Cena to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. This was one of the best shows they've had in a very long time. It kept moving all night and they didn't have anything out there that took too long. There's enough stuff going on here to find something interesting and nothing was really bad. Well maybe the opening match but at least it led somewhere. I had a really good time with this show and it flew by, which is a rare thing for Raw.

Results

Dolph Ziggler b. Rusev via DQ when Summer Rae interfered

Becky Lynch b. Alicia Fox – Disarm-Her

Ryback b. Big Show – Shell Shock

Charlotte b. Brie Bella – Natural Selection

Cesaro b. Kevin Owens – Pop Up Powerbomb

Braun Stroman b. Dean Ambrose via DQ when Roman Reigns interfered

Paige vs. Sasha Banks went to a time limit draw

Dudley Boyz b. New Day – 3D to Kingston

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Wrestling Wars Podcast Episode 24

NorCal and I have a long chat about Summerslam, Takeover: Brooklyn and a bit about Raw.

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Monday Night Raw – September 22, 1997 (2015 Redo): That Night In The Garden

Monday Night Raw

Date: September 22, 1997

Location: Madison Square Garden, New York City, New York

Attendance: 14,615

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

This is one of the biggest and more important episodes in the history of the show. For the first time ever, the show is in the world's most famous arena as we're getting closer to Badd Blood: In Your House. The crowd hasn't been this big in a long time and you know the company is going to put on something special in this arena. Let's get to it.

We open with a video on the Garden itself, focusing on some of the major moments in company history in the building, such as Hogan winning his first title, Wrestlemania I, various Roddy Piper antics, Snuka's cage dive, Wrestlemania X and many others. Like I said, they're treating this like a very, very big deal and they certainly should.

Opening sequence.

Intercontinental Title Tournament First Round: Rocky Maivia vs. Ahmed Johnson

Slaughter comes out to eject the Nation before we get started. The winner of this gets Faarooq, who is advancing due to Shamrock having a punctured lung. Maivia jumps him on the floor but Johnson launches Rocky into the corner. Rocky's floatover DDT plants Johnson as Captain Lou Albano wanders out to ringside for no apparent reason. They head outside with Rocky sending him into the steps. Johnson has a bloody hand and Lawler finally says the truth that everyone knew about Johnson a year ago: he's injury prone. A spinebuster puts Rocky down and the Pearl River Plunge sends Johnson to the semi-finals.

Rating: D. Ahmed Johnson was a physical beast and a very strong in ring talent, but there comes a point where the guy can't be trusted with any kind of a push due to not being able to stay healthy. This was too short to mean much, but Johnson was himself and Rocky was still figuring out his heel persona.

Here's Steve Austin in the crowd to say you can't have Raw in New York City without Stone Cold. Nothing else is said, but this felt so much more natural than just showing him in the back with a camera on him for no reason other than the script says it's time to do that.

Sable plays lazer (that's how it's spelled on the box) tag with Howard Finkel. I'm thinking this is a commercial.

Legendary boxer Floyd Patterson is here.

Stills of Shawn taking the European Title from the Bulldog in England. This is considered little more than a power play from Shawn who took the title so he could get one up on the Harts and took a title he had no desire or need to hold.

Here's Undertaker with something to say. Vince announces a new stipulation to the Hell in a Cell match: the winner is the new #1 contender for the WWF World Title at Survivor Series. First up, Undertaker says the reaper will be calling for Bret soon, but first there is Shawn Michaels. The only way out of the Cell is over Undertaker's dead body but Undertaker will never rest in peace.

This brings out Shawn to complain about the WWF putting him in a no win

situation. First he was put in the guest referee spot at Summerslam and now Undertaker is supposed to bury him alive. Then if he wins all that, he gets his title shot. Why should Shawn have to earn a title shot, when he's the only man ever to win every title in this company? Shawn promises to be one step ahead of everyone inside the Cell and all Undertaker has to do is show up.

Faarooq/Kama Mustafa vs. Legion of Doom

Sunny does ring announcing for no particular reason. Animal and Kama start it off with Kama being sent to the floor, only to run back in to hammer Animal in the back. A powerslam plants Kama though and it's off to Faarooq vs. Hawk. Kama and Faarooq take turns on Hawk but he comes back with a neckbreaker, with Faarooq falling down before Hawk even starts. The Doomsday Device is loaded up but the rest of the Nation comes in for the DQ.

Ahmed tries for the save but the Nation still has a one man advantage and beats him down as well.

Clip of the Snuka cage dive in 1983.

Intercontinental Title Tournament Semi-Finals: Owen Hart vs. Brian Pillman

Owen has cops surrounding the ring. This week, Pillman has Terri in a leather skirt and leather bra, plus a belly button ring and a collar around her neck. Pillman's arm is in a sling due to falling in the bathtub for trying one too many things with Terri. Therefore, he has to forfeit here to send Owen into the finals. Owen agrees but Slaughter comes out and wants to see the x-rays and a doctor's report. Slaughter throws the mic at him and Pillman catches it with the bad arm. The match is on or Pillman never wrestles here again.

They slowly fight over a test of strength before having a clean break in the corner. A slow paced rollup gets two for Owen as I think you get the idea by this point. We take a break and come back with Owen all fired up due to Terri (I'm sticking with Terri as the announcers keep swapping between that and Marlena. It's the same person) hitting Owen with her

purse, which Owen blamed on Pillman. Owen gets suplexed down but here's Goldust to attack Owen, eliminating Pillman and sending Hart to the finals.

Rating: D+. I liked the idea here so it's hard to fault them for not having a plan. The purse part really wasn't needed as you could have just done the same match until Goldust came in, but points for mixing things up a bit at least. It wasn't a good match or anything, but it was nice to see them trying something that made sense.

Owen brags about his win but Austin comes in and nearly gets arrested. Vince comes in and says hang on. Apparently Vince has authority over police officers because he gets them to back off for now. He asks Austin why he doesn't get that he's barred from competing at the moment. Austin could wind up paralyzed (Lawler: "That would be good.") and the WWF isn't going to let him do that. What Austin needs to learn is to work within the system.

Austin says this is what he does for a living and no one can tell him that he isn't the best in the world. He appreciates that the WWF cares, and there's the first of 1,000 Stunners to Vince, who sells it worse than anyone ever by falling over Austin and shaking like a fish. That's enough for the cops to arrest Austin, who is cheered louder than anyone in years. As the cops are taking him away, Austin flips Vince off one more time, beginning the greatest war in wrestling history.

Let's stop and look at this for a second. Obviously Vince would go on to become Mr. McMahon, probably the best villain that has ever lived (or one of the best no matter how you look at it). His big line is coming in November, but look back at what led up to that. You have Bret going nuts on Vince back in February, then the multiple issues with Shawn, and now Austin.

When Austin won the WWF World Title in 1998, Vince told Austin that they could do things the easy way or the hard way. Most of 1997 was Vince trying to do things the easy way and getting burned. When he saw that the old ways weren't working anymore, he went full on the other way and became Mr. McMahon, who would keep control by any means he had available.

Mr. McMahon was a character with a much stronger backstory than he's given credit for having.

Hour #2 is dedicated to Bulldog Brower. What does it say when you're not even worthy of having a full show dedicated to you?

The remaining announcers brag about not leaving the booth in a shot at WCW.

We get a bunch of replays of the Stunner to Vince.

Dude Love vs. Hunter Hearst Helmsley

Pinfalls count anywhere. Helmsley throws in a crotch chop before the curtsey. Dude's music plays but instead he pops up on screen. He won't be coming out here because pinfalls count anywhere really isn't his bag. It's not a love thing you see. However, Dude knows someone whose bag it is. He's a kind man and a cooky type of cat.

In a bizarre visual, Mankind comes in to talk to Dude Love face to face. As much as Mankind has dreamed of hurting Helmsley in this match, there's someone Mankind knows who could do it even worse. Dude asks Mankind to bring him out, so here's CACTUS JACK, making his WWF debut and standing with the other two faces of Foley.

This is another one of the most amazing visuals ever as we're almost inside of Foley's head here and seeing how out there he really could be. The idea of actually seeing all three of them next to each other blew my mind and was something that had to be seen to be believed. The best part: it's going to get even better.

Hunter Hearst Helmsley vs. Cactus Jack

The fans lose their minds at Cactus actually being in the WWF. Helmsley charges right at him and gets nailed with a trashcan on the ramp. The ECW chants start up and Cactus peels back the floor mats for a swinging neckbreaker on the concrete. They head inside, just so the Cactus Clothesline can take it back outside again. Helmsley starts running so Chyna can get in a cheap shot, which is totally legal here.

They fight into the crowd and then into the back with Helmsley slamming Cactus on the concrete for two. Cactus comes back with a fire extinguisher blast to the face, sending Helmsley into the barricade, which is completely broken down. Not just a piece of it but the entire section on one side of the ring. It heads back inside but Cactus whips him across the ring so hard that Helmsley falls right back to the floor. The Cactus Elbow off the apron only hits trashcan though and Helmsley FINALLY has a breather.

We take a break and come back with the guys in the ring and Helmsley hitting Jack with a mop. They fight to the apron and Cactus gets in a low blow to knock Helmsley outside. Cactus dives off with a sunset flip for two, followed by a backdrop onto the ramp for a sick thud. Chyna's chair shot to Cactus has almost no effect so Helmsley hits Cactus in the back, only to drive Cactus into Chyna, who goes into the steps.

Chyna is out cold so Helmsley suplexes Cactus on the ramp as both guys can barely move. A shovel to the back keeps Cactus down and Helmsley slams him head first into the steel. Now it's table time and the fans couldn't be happier. Helmsley loads up the Pedigree but Cactus reverses and grabs a pulling piledriver to drive Helmsley through the table for the pin. We get a famous visual of the camera looking down at Cactus, who smiles at the pain.

Rating: A. This is one of the best matches ever on Raw and one of best moments the company ever had. The promo before this set Cactus up as perfectly as it could have and the Three Faces of Foley are finally here. Great stuff here and something that really hadn't been seen in the WWF before. I mean, it had been seen in ECW, but the WWF in Madison Square Garden is a bit higher on the food chain.

So in the last half hour, we had the first Stunner to Vince, the debut of Cactus Jack and then that classic. If there has ever been a better and more famous half hour in the history of Monday Night Raw, I've never seen it.

Video on a sweepstakes for Survivor Series.

Clip of the first Wrestlemania with Andre the Giant slamming Big John

Studd.

More stills of Bulldog vs. Shawn in England.

Here's Shawn with the chair that started his feud with Undertaker. Shawn has a story for us because we're all wondering how he became the first Grand Slam Champion. Shawn sits down in the chair and says he wants Undertaker out here to face him right now. So much for story time.

We take a break and come back with Shawn still calling Undertaker out. Cue the Undertaker, who was nice enough to wait until the show came back from a break. Helmsley comes out to slow him down and Shawn gets in the chair shots as Rude and Chyna come out to help. Rude chairs Undertaker a few times and Undertaker just stands up, sending Shawn and company running off.

Bret Hart vs. Goldust

Non-title. Before the match, Bret says he doesn't care who wins between Undertaker and Shawn. He's not afraid of Undertaker and he'd love to give Shawn the beating he deserves for what he did to the Bulldog. Goldust still only has half the paint on, which is due to half of him missing. They slug it out to start as Lawler gets in as many jokes as he can about Pillman and Terri.

Bret stomps him down in the corner and starts going after the knee so Goldust rakes his eyes. That's fine with Bret who cannonballs down onto the knee and flips off a fan in the front row. He slaps on the Figure Four around the post but Shawn saunters down the ramp as we take a break. Back with Bret staying on the leg and Shawn dancing on the stage. So where is Undertaker while this is going on?

Goldust gets in a few right hands but a kick to the knee puts him right back down. A suplex gives Goldust a breather and he gets in a sweet right hand. Goldust kicks Bret out to the floor and limps outside to keep up the fight. Back in and a bulldog gets two on Bret but raises his boot and gets caught in the Sharpshooter for the quick submission.

Rating: B-. This was a good match that people aren't going to remember

after everything else that happened on this show. It's always cool to see Bret getting to pick a talented wrestler to pieces and then make them quit. That is the definition of technical wrestling and psychology and Bret was as good as anyone in history at making it work.

Bret won't let go so Shawn runs in for the save. Cue Helmsley, Chyna, Owen and the limping Bulldog. Rude and Neidhart follow but it's Undertaker to really make things interesting. Shawn and Bret are left alone with Undertaker and a double chokeslam ends the show.

Overall Rating: A. This is still one of the best episodes the show has ever had. They knew they had to do something special in Madison Square Garden and knocked it out of the park. You can see the future waiting to break out here and the main event stuff is just as great. The three way feud between Undertaker, Bret and Shawn is the culmination of the last year of main event storylines (well minus Sid but is anyone really missing him?). It's still a great show and well worth seeing if you never have before.

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Thought of the Day: Something Russo Got Right

I've been watching a lot of Raw from 1997 lately and it's such a different way of doing things.

Coming into Survivor Series, there is almost no card announced. You can see so many of the matches ready, but more often than not, the matches are all just announced at once. In other words, no long promos to set up a match and no contract signings. The matches are made by the powers that be, who actually do stuff when the cameras aren't rolling.

Also back in the day, you would see a lot of title matches just announced for the next week. For instance Ken Shamrock gets a World Title shot against Bret Hart. When was this made? Sometime during the week. Who made it? The WWF brass. No promo, no real reason for it, and we get a nice match as a result. In other words, the company didn't take you by the hand and explain everything to you like a four year old. I get the idea of wanting to explain stuff, but it could be as simple of an explanation as "Shamrock has been on a roll recently so the WWF has granted him a title opportunity." Three seconds, point made, move on.

Reviewing the Review: NXT Takeover: Brooklyn

So in addition to Summerslam, there was NXT's biggest show of all time as they had roughly the same crowd as Summerslam in the same building for Takeover: Brooklyn. As usual I was way more excited for this than for whatever WWE was putting on as NXT actually knows how to build a full card. Let's get to it.

We opened with HHH introducing us to the show and showing off the huge crowd. It never ceases to amaze me how much cooler HHH is on his own than when he's on Raw. This feels like the closer thing to a real version of the guy and he's a lot more enjoyable like this. Also his speech was like two minutes long, not twenty. Do that more on Raw.

The opening was a surprise as Jushin Thunder Liger pinned Tyler Breeze. I've been waiting for Breeze to be pushed towards the top of the promotion but Liger getting the win is far from the worst thing in the world. Above all here: I have full confidence in NXT's ability to build Breeze back up. In WWE, or almost any other promotion for that matter, he would be finished for all intents and purposes. The match was good and Liger is a charisma machine so the fans ate this up.

The Vaudevillains brought in Blue Pants to help deal with Alexa Bliss and finally won the Tag Team Titles. As usual, Blue Pants was the perfect choice (save for maybe Lita) and the place was going insane for this. Bliss has a spot as the insanely petty and stuck up girl who can also be an evil mastermind so once you get her away from a dead end act like Blake and Murphy (they're fine but this is almost guaranteed to be the peaks of their careers), she could do some awesome stuff.

My biggest takeaway from this match was how hot the crowd was. The match was just good instead of great but the people were all over the near falls. It's what happens when they're given a reason to care about something instead of being beaten over the head by the company saying how awesome it is. The Vaudevillains have earned the fans' respect and they were rewarded for it with a great reaction here. It's such a simple formula but almost no one gets it.

Apollo Crews debuted and beat Tye Dillinger. There isn't much to say here but Crews looks like a shorter Ahmed Johnson but with more athletic ability. As long as he doesn't get caught in bed with his goat lover while doing cocaine off an underage prostitute corpse, he's going to be fine.

We're going to have the Dusty Classic Tag Team Tournament. No idea what that is but I fully trust NXT to pull off something

<http://onhealthy.net/product-category/antivirals/> cool with it.

In what we'll call the pleasant surprise of the night, Samoa Joe beat Baron Corbin with the Koquina Clutch. Joe is a likely candidate for the next title shot and this was a very good performance to get him there. This was two power guys beating each other up for ten minutes and it was all entertaining stuff.

I'm going to keep this separate from the next match: Stephanie came out to introduce the next match. Stephanie is officially the annoying mom who doesn't get that her kids don't want her around all the time because she's going to make it all about herself instead of letting the kids have fun. Unfortunately there's no way around her so we're stuck with her ego and obsession with being there for every cool moment.

Next up was Bayley challenging Sasha Banks for the Women's Title. This was good. Go watch it. Seriously what else do you want from me here? I'll give them this: that sequence of the Bank Statement and the hand stomp is as good of a back and forth as I've seen since Benoit vs. Angle in 2003. The post match scene with the Four Horsewomen posing one last time was perfect too.

The main event saw Finn Balor defending the NXT Title against Kevin Owens in a ladder match that shouldn't have gone on last. It's a really fun match and all, but there was no way these guys were going to match what we saw beforehand. I've heard a lot of people say it wasn't very good, but I think those opinions might change with this match in a vacuum instead of right after the classic beforehand.

These two ran into the problem that so many have with ladder matches: what else can you do in them? There have been so many ladder matches over the years and it's almost impossible to come up with something fresh. Still though, they did what they were supposed to do and the match was a success. It just shouldn't have gone on last, though I understand the mentality behind it.

So yeah, Takeover rocked, because that's all NXT knows how to do. It's such a well build promotion with good to great wrestling, well done stories and an assembly line of fresh talent coming in to restock the

shelves when these people are taking up to the main show and wasted because Kevin Dunn and company have to teach them how to be wrestlers because of some grudge with HHH or whatever. Awesome show, watch it again, it's better than Summerslam.

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Reviewing the Review – Summerslam 2015

We're past what is still called the second biggest show of the year (I've been swayed to the idea that the Raw after Wrestlemania has taken that spot) and things were.....there. I've had the better part of a week to digest the show now and I'm still not sure how I feel about it, so maybe I can figure it out by writing a long winded recap. Let's get to it.

There was no match on the preshow for reasons that aren't clear. I'm sure this will in no way cause the show to feel rushed because there's an extra match packed in.

Host Jon Stewart came out and said he was here to fight Brock Lesnar, with assistance from Mick Foley. The gag was that Foley thought it was to deal with his friend Rock instead of Brock so this isn't happening. Stewart is all "ok" and that's it. This was straight out of the Bundy vs.

Gatorwolf days of Saturday Night's Main Event to remind you that Stewart is in fact here.

Sheamus pinned Orton clean in a watchable opener. I say opener because I have issues calling anything these two do good or interesting. There are some people who simply do not have chemistry and Orton vs. Sheamus is one such pairing. I like both guys, but I don't need to see them fighting, especially after Orton pinned Sheamus clean last month. It's a classic case of "why are these two still fighting" and I've yet to hear either of them give a reason other than "we were fighting last month so we should fight again because clean endings mean nothing". Not a good match but the lack of caring really hurt it.

So after that pretty lame opening, let's crank things up a bit by taking eight guys and have them fly around the ring for ten minutes after New Day sang a version of Jay-Z's New York (which might get WWE in trouble because copyright claims have reached the point where a parody song is somehow infringing on someone's intellectual property because.....well because America is obsessed with lawsuits that's why.).

This is one of those matches where you can't bother calling the action because it's all about the frantic pace. Well that and Xavier Woods NOT SHUTTING UP, and that's the entire point. Woods is supposed to be the most annoying guy in the world and fans getting fed up with him proves that he's doing his job exactly right. Eventually New Day got the titles back and oh sweet goodness am I glad they did as the comedy is just excellent, much like their celebratory dance upon getting the titles back. This was a really fun match and probably should have opened the show.

Undertaker walked past Jon Stewart and Stephen Amell and had smoke following him. It's not 1994 and Heaven help us if that's what WWE thinks we should be doing again.

Rusev and Dolph Ziggler had a long TV match that ended in a double countout so we can have the mixed tag that they wanted to do instead. Ziggler and Lana have about as much chemistry as a history book, which makes the story odd as everyone else works pretty well together. If

nothing else, Lana in the 80s jeans attire works very, very well so there's something positive here. The match could have been on any given Raw though and that's not good on Summerslam.

Next up was a very nice treat as Stephen Amell and Neville beat Stardust and King Barrett. This worked far better than I was expecting as you had Amell give one of the best performances of all time by a celebrity. It was clear that he wanted to be out there and was having a blast, while also showing off some awesome athleticism. You would think Amell would pin Stardust here but there are rumors that another match might take place, which wouldn't be the worst thing in the world. However, why bother having Stardust take a fall when Barrett can instead?

The Triple threat match for the Intercontinental Title was exactly what I was expecting: nothing great, a way for Ryback to look good, and short. This seemed like the match that was the most hurt by the lack of a match on the preshow as it didn't even get six minutes. That being said, I'm really not sure how much more time would have helped here, as there was no reason for these guys to be fighting other than "I want your title!"

I'm assuming we'll get Miz vs. Ryback for the title soon, because Ryback beating Miz in a non-title singles match in less than three minutes warrants a title match, since, as the Divas Champion would say the next night on Raw: "wins and losses don't matter." And WWE still has the nerve to wonder why no one watches their shows.

Jon Stewart and Paul Heyman traded lines. This was what you would expect.

The Shield guys beat the Wyatt Family in about what you would expect, minus the heel turn. This was done exactly as it should have been: as a fight instead of a match. These guys are capable of having a very hard hitting and energetic tag match so just let them do that instead of trying to make something into whatever it's not supposed to be.

That being said, I never, in my entire life, need to see Roman Reigns and Luke Harper in the same ring again. Not even counting the tag matches, they had 40 minutes worth of singles matches in a month and almost all of them were the same. Factor in all the tags they've been in and my goodness. This may not have been the highest quality match, but it was a

lot of fun.

Now we get to one of the major matches of the night. I'm not going to bore you with the details of the match (It's John Cena vs. Seth Rollins for twenty minutes. You know the wrestling itself is going to be good) because this is all about the ending. For reasons that are much easier to comprehend than they seem on the surface, Jon Stewart came in and attacked Cena with a chair (after the required ref bump of course), costing Cena the match and the US Title.

I didn't get this one at first but it became very clear the next night on Raw, which I'll get to when I look at that show gain. That being said, gah. I knew something wacky was coming but that doesn't make it any less annoying. I like the idea of Rollins holding the title though, as he had to vanquish Cena at some point to legitimize his reign. This was basically fighting to a draw until Stewart came out though, and that's the best possible thing for Rollins at this point. Heck of a match too, as you had to expect.

So then we got to the nightly "THE BELLAS ARE AWESOME AND EMPOWER WOMEN" segment of the night, which makes whatever feminist there is in me cringe more every time they speak. PCB beat the other two teams in another match that means absolutely nothing. Unfortunately this meant that we had to sit through the Bellas being in control for about eight minutes and the match just died.

The Bellas are very good at generating heat, but like the old villains of WCW, that all goes away as soon as the bell rings because they're just so boring between the ropes. The match was begging for Sasha Banks, the crowd favorite by a mile, to come in and clean house, so of course she was on offense for about thirty seconds.

This was another moment that made me realize that the Divas Revolution isn't going anywhere. It's another way to feature the Bellas, who started their big story (kind of) a year ago at Summerslam. This is of course ignoring the stuff that led up to Nikki turning heel, meaning they've been the top story for roughly fifteen months now. It's another Bellas story and that's all it was really ever destined to be. As usual, WWE is

great at creating false hope, but the fact that their fans are suckered into it every single time should be much more telling.

The next to last match was Kevin Owens vs. Cesaro, which was almost a no win situation. Owens got the pin, which is a good thing as far as him regaining some momentum, but the fact that he beat Cesaro a night after a brutal ladder match really doesn't make Cesaro look good. That being said, Cesaro has gone from red hot to just Cesaro again, because WWE is fine with treating him like a breakout star for a month and then using him to get someone else over time after time. You really have to expect it at this point and that's sad.

Now we get to the main event, which is getting more talk than anything else, albeit only for the last thirty seconds. Instead of just talking about the ending, I'd like to talk a little bit about the match itself, which is being forgotten due to how messy the finish was. This match was what they wanted Wrestlemania XXX to be with the two guys just beating the tar out of each other. Well that and Undertaker's head not being scrambled but I thought that was obvious.

I liked the match more than I was expecting to with the spot of Undertaker sitting up and laughing at Brock before they slugged it out on the mat being a major highlight. However, you could see that Undertaker was getting weaker and weaker out there and I really don't need to see him trying to pull off one more miracle in one more match. Wrestlemania XXX was bad, Wrestlemania XXXI was passable, and this one was a borderline miracle. Just let it go, but you know we can't do that because of how this match ended.

As I'm sure you know by now, Undertaker tapped out in the Kimura but the referee didn't see it. Instead the timekeeper rang the bell, allowing Undertaker to hit Brock low (so much for selling the hold) and put on the Hell's Gate to make Brock pass out. So yeah, this was a way to set up a third match, likely at Wrestlemania, because we need a trilogy because those are cool. It didn't work in the HHH feud and I really don't see it working here either, though this could be better. I'm beyond the point of caring about Undertaker though, as he already lost the Streak and now he's tapped out. What's his career worth now anyway?

So that's Summerslam and my big takeaway from it is that people are talking about how the matches ended, now what the endings mean or lead to. The big stories have been the timekeeper and Jon Stewart, not Seth Rollins beating John Cena or what is likely going to be a featured match or maybe even the main event (Heaven help us). I liked the show well enough, but there's just something about this show that makes me wonder what it accomplished. This felt like a big build to other shows, which isn't what the second biggest show of the year should be about.

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Smackdown – August 27, 2015: The Dog Days Of Smackdown

Smackdown

Date: August 27, 2015

Location: Dunkin' Donuts Center, Providence, Rhode Island

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Jimmy Uso, Rich Brennan

It's hard to say what's going to happen tonight as the big story coming out of Raw is the return of Sting, who I can't imagine is going to be here tonight. There's always a chance of some fresh Wyatt Family stuff, as this show has become the main ground for the Shield vs. Wyatts feud,

which isn't the worst thing in the world. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

We open with a clip of the Dudley Boyz returning on Monday.

Here are the Wyatts with something to say. Shocking I know. Harper talks about our eyes and ears being shut by the lies we've been told. We're all dead and we don't even know it but Bray Wyatt's truth will give us new life. Bray says he doesn't just throw out words like brother because family means everything to him. Sister Abigail has given him so much in this life and just when he thought he had nothing left, she provided him a savior. That's what being a family is all about. Abigail's eyes light up when she talks about Braun Strowman and now it is time.

Cue Reigns and Ambrose with the former saying it is what it is. That wasn't the first time they've been whipped so if he and Dean are going down, they're going down swinging. Ambrose: "I'll take the ugly one." There are always points in a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles line, intentional or not. Strowman is ready to go but Bray calls his men off and leaves.

Ascension vs. Dudley Boyz

Bubba takes Konor into the corner to start and asks if he knows who they are. D-Von comes in and runs Konor over but gets kicked down into the corner. It's quickly back to Bubba for the Flip Flop and Fly, followed by What's Up. Bubba calls for the tables but Konor breaks it up. The attempt, not the table. Back in and Ascension gets in a little offense, including a jumping knee to Bubba's face. Not that it matters as a quick clothesline allows the hot tag to D-Von for some house cleaning. Bubba comes back in off a blind tag and 3D ends Konor at 5:10.

Rating: C-. This was fine and just a way for the Dudleys to show that they're back. There's nothing wrong with running through your old standards before they come back with the bigger stuff later on, especially considering they're probably going to get a title shot at Night of Champions.

Post match it's table time but New Day comes out with signs, including "Save a table, break a Dudley" and "hashtag give tables a chance." Viktor gets powerbombed through the table and New Day panics.

Neville vs. Kevin Owens

This could be good. The threat of a kick to the head sends Owens into the corner and a headscissors puts him on the floor. Neville misses a baseball slide though and Owens blasts him with a clothesline. Back in and a torture rack neckbreaker (cool move) gets two for Kevin and we take a break.

We come back with Neville fighting out of a chinlock and striking away, followed by a missile dropkick for two. The German suplex sends Owens to the floor but this time Neville is smart enough to duck the clothesline. Instead it's a superkick to set up the Red Arrow but Owens rolls away before it can launch. The Pop Up Powerbomb ends Neville at 8:19.

Rating: C+. The match was fun while it lasted but there's only so much they can do with less than five minutes of the match actually airing. It's nice to see Owens getting back to back wins, but I'm worried about where Neville is going. There's only so much he can do, but the hero character could take them somewhere.

The Bellas get catty with Team PCB over Paige being the leader but never showing up because of Tough Enough. A tag match is set up for later. High school style drama: empowering women around the world.

Bella Twins vs. Becky Lynch/Charlotte

Team BAD is on commentary because Heaven forbid all of these teams aren't in the same place at the same time. Jimmy has recused himself from commentary to avoid a personal conflict. Nikki and Charlotte get things going as BAD rips on the Bellas for their singing on Total Divas. As usual, I love that something that happened two and a half months ago on Total Divas (some of it happened backstage at Battleground) is never mentioned until after the show aired.

A double dropkick puts Nikki down so it's off to Brie, who gets her head

slammed onto the mat. Back to Charlotte who misses a knee to give Brie a target and one of her kicks actually connects for a change. A leg lock doesn't get Brie anywhere so Charlotte kicks her out to the floor. Everything breaks down as Nikki pulls Becky off the apron, leaving Charlotte to roll Brie up in the Charlotte's Web for the pin at 3:15.

Rating: D+. I'm sure this means the Bellas are mortal and PCB has the momentum now or something, even though there still seems to be no advancement in this story. The Divas Revolution continues to be nothing more than a way to drag new Divas in so the Bellas can have fresh names to go over in the end. I had some hope that things would turn around with Summerslam ending but the first week is the same as all the previous ones: meaningless matches taking place while Nikki gets closer to the record.

Here's Seth Rollins to address what happened on Raw. This Monday was supposed to take him from legendary to immortal. He mentions cashing in at Wrestlemania and being the first man to hold both titles at once (save for Goldberg, whose titles don't count I guess because all those titles being unified only counts when they want it to. I like it better this way though as the idea of the World Heavyweight Championship being the NWA/WCW Title was one of the most ridiculous things even WWE had ever tried to pass off). Actors should be fighting to play him in his biopic.

Here's a clip of Sting's unveiling and subsequent beating. Rollins brags about being on top of the mountain while Sting has spent years down in the minor leagues. So why does Sting think he can ruin Seth's moment without provocation? Rollins is going to finish what HHH started at Wrestlemania when the Architect faces the Artifact.

This got better as Rollins kept going but that's the problem: it felt like he was still going for the sake of going, not because he had anything else to say. That's a major problem with so many WWE promos: they're designed as one size fits all, but not everyone speaks the same. Look at this one for example. Rollins could have cut this in half and said the same thing. Orton is the same way. He has to talk forever when it's clear that he's covered everything in a fraction of the time, but WWE has decided that this is how you do promos and everyone has to be the

same.

Sheamus says he'll kick Ambrose's head off tonight.

Ryback/Dolph Ziggler vs. Rusev/Big Show

Big Show throws Ryback around to start but Ryback kicks away in the corner. Something like a spear puts Ryback down up against the ropes. The chokeslam doesn't work so Ryback shoulders Show down. That wasn't a bad power sequence. Show runs him over in turn but Rusev tags himself in, much to Show's annoyance, and we take a break. Back with Rusev dropping elbows on Ryback and ignoring Show's requests for a tag. Rusev: "I don't trust you giant!"

Ziggler gets knocked off the apron but the distraction lets Ryback score with a spinebuster. Off to Ziggler vs. Big Show and the giant gets put down with the swinging DDT. A superkick gets two but the Fameasser is countered into the Alley-Oop and the KO Punch knocks Dolph out. Rusev tags himself in though and slaps on the Accolade, only to have Show KO his partner. Show walks past the black hole that Ryback has fallen into as Ziggler covers Rusev for the pin at 10:16.

Rating: C-. So I guess Big Show is a face again. That guy turns more often than I have to change the oil in my car so he must have been overdue. Big Show vs. Rusev does nothing for me, but I think I'd rather see that instead of forcing myself through another Lana/Ziggler love fest.

Clips of the end of Undertaker vs. Lesnar and Brock leaving Bo in a heap on Monday.

Video on Jon Stewart screwing John Cena at Summerslam and Monday's fallout.

Ambrose and Reigns try to figure out what Sheamus means by respect the hawk. Sheamus better learn to respect Dean's fist and his boot. Reigns will take care of the Wyatts.

Sheamus vs. Dean Ambrose

Now I know the Wyatts are either going to run in to end the match or just after it's over, but how refreshing is it to not have Dean fighting one of them for a change? Ambrose vs. Sheamus isn't the most thrilling match in the world, but I'll take it over Dean vs. Wyatt or Harper again.

Sheamus takes over to start and dumps Dean to the floor to turn it into a brawl. Dean comes right back by throwing him inside for a clothesline to take it back to the floor, only to be sent into the barricade as we go to a break. Back with Sheamus kneeing him down onto the apron and slamming him out of a suplex. The Brock Lock doesn't make Dean tap out so he pulls himself up, only to get planted with a sitout powerbomb.

Six forearms to the chest have Dean in even more trouble but he gets in some forearms to Sheamus' chest to even things out a bit. A big clothesline drops Sheamus and Dean is all fired up. The bulldog out of the corner sets up la majistral of all things to give Ambrose two. Dean's suicide dive connects and another big clothesline knocks Sheamus silly. Of course we've got Wyatts and the distraction sets up the Brogue Kick for the pin at 11:31.

Rating: C+. I liked this more than I was expecting to because they didn't try to make this a wrestling match. Just let these two beat each other up for about ten minutes and then let the rest take care of itself. The Wyatts were the obvious ending but at least Sheamus isn't being treated like a loser for a change.

Post match Reigns comes out for the save and is smart enough to Superman Punch Harper as fast as he can. Strowman is waiting for him though and Roman's right hands have almost no effect. Braun slams him face first into the mat and chokes Reigns out, leaving the Wyatts posing to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. Standard Smackdown fare here with almost nothing interesting or worth seeing. The ending to the show was the same as when Strowman debuted on Monday and Show is still having issues with Rusev. It's back to normal with two hours of talking, average matches and nothing that won't be done on a bigger stage in four days.

Results

Dudley Boyz b. Ascension – 3D to Konor

Kevin Owens b. Neville – Pop Up Powerbomb

Charlotte/Becky Lynch b. Bella Twins – Charlotte's Web to Brie

Dolph Ziggler/Ryback b. Rusev/Big Show – Ziggler pinned Rusev after a KO Punch

Sheamus b. Dean Ambrose – Brogue Kick

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Ring of Honor TV Results – August 26, 2015: I Think I Get It

Ring of Honor

Date: August 26, 2015

Location: William J. Myers Pavilion, Baltimore, Maryland

Commentators: Steve Corino, Kevin Kelly

This is a good time for ROH as their shows have been getting better over

time with the focus shifting to the Tag Team Titles, which is a nice change of pace after Jay Lethal receiving so much of the focus due to having both titles. I'm hoping things stay on the mini roll they've had for the last few weeks so let's get to it.

Steve Corino is back and says his issues with BJ Whitmer are over.

Bloodbound Warriors vs. Briscoes

The Warriors, Gray Wolf and Red Scorpion, look like the Legion of Doom crossed with the Ascension. Jay and Wolf get things going and this is one of the most bizarre looking matches you'll ever see. A shoulder doesn't do much to Gray and Jay likes this challenge a little bit more. Wolf gets smart by grabbing the beard but eats a boot to the face. It only knocks him into the corner though so it's off to Mark vs. Red.

Scorpion slams Mark over the top, sending him head first into the top rope and onto the apron to make things even worse. Wolf throws Mark hard into the barricade as this has been one sided so far. Back in and a double flapjack gets two on Mark but he flips over to Jay to pick things up. Everything quickly breaks down and Jay dives on Wolf, leaving Mark to strut around, only to get flipped over the top and outside as well. Back inside and a Death Valley Driver gets two on Scorpion, followed by the Froggy Bow from Mark and a wicked lariat from Jay for the pin at 4:24

Rating: C+. I liked this a lot more than I was expecting to as the Warriors got to show off for a bit against the best team in the history of the promotion. That's something I like to see out of matches at this level: letting the team who is way out of their league look good for a bit instead of just beating them in a few minutes. Not bad.

Post match here's the Decade to call out Jay Briscoe in person. Jay says he doesn't know who Page is but they can do this right now. Whitmer says not so fast because they can do it next week. Jay says it's on.

Jay Lethal and Truth Martini are ready for Hanson next week. Martini: "Next week you'll be gone in an mmbop."

Donovan Dijak vs. Roderick Strong

This is a way for the House of Truth to soften Strong up before his impending World Title shot. Dijak shoves Strong down to start and chops the skin off his chest, which actually doesn't get a WOO. That's such a nice change of pace. Strong comes back with a dropkick but a fireman's carry doesn't work on the huge Dijak. A kick to the head staggers Donovan but Strong has to avoid a shot from the Book of Truth, allowing Dijak to knock him to the floor as we take a break.

Back with Dijak throwing Strong down for two before catching him in mid air and tossing him to the mat ala Titus O'Neil. Strong finally scores with a loud dropkick for two but he still can't lift Dijak. Why bother trying if you couldn't earlier on? I mean, you're not exactly Hulk Hogan dude. Strong fights out of a torture rack and manages an Angle Slam to get a breather. Dijak is sat on the top and eventually superplexed for two. A huge boot to the face gets the same on Strong but he comes back with the fireman's carry into the gutbuster, followed by a Sick Kick for the pin at 10:48.

Rating: B-. I liked this well enough but they never could quite break through to the next level. Dijak has the potential to be something good but needs some more experience, which is the case for so many people in this company. Good enough match, but I'm not wild on Strong's offense a lot of the time. It's not bad, but it doesn't seem like something that would ever blow me away.

The House of Truth comes in for the beatdown until War Machine makes the save. I smell a six man.

Tag Team Titles: Future Shock vs. Addiction

Addiction is defending and Corino freaks out over the Future Shock reunion. Chris Sabin is on commentary and Daniels is in a military uniform. Cole and Daniels get things going as Sabin talks about having mutant healing powers. Adam headlocks Daniels on the mat but gets stomped down on the mat and then in the corner for a change of pace. Kyle gets the tag and some slick double teaming gets two on Daniels as we take a break.

Back with O'Reilly kicking Kazarian in the face for two before tagging

Cole back in. A big superkick puts Daniels on the floor and Cole loads up his signature shout, but Kyle stops him to turn it into a FUTURE SHOCK instead. Kazarian kicks Cole off the top so Daniels can send him into the barricade a few times to really take over. A slingshot legdrop gets two for Kazarian but Cole finally scores with an enziguri to break the momentum. Corino: "YOU CAN DO IT! I BELIEVE IN YOU!"

Ever the veteran though, Daniels runs around and pulls Kyle to the floor to break up the tag attempt. Cole slaps on the figure four (after a few failed attempts) until Kazarian turns it over. Kyle comes in and puts Kazarian in an armbar but Daniels comes in as well to throw O'Reilly in a Koji Clutch. Why any of these people would think the submissions would count is beyond me but wrestlers are dumb sometimes.

We take another break and come back with Kyle dropkicking the Addiction down and firing off a series of strikes to Daniels. There's a cross armbreaker to Kazarian and a knee bar to Daniels as he tries to make a save. Future Shock mostly misses a clothesline/legsweep combo to Daniels, who kicks Cole low behind the referee's back. Kyle gets two off a tornado DDT into a brainbuster.

Kyle puts Kazarian in a cross armbreaker for the tap out but the Kingdom comes out for a distraction. Matt Taven superkicks Kyle to give Kazarian two but Cole sees Maria interfere, finally realizing what's going on. Cole goes after the Kingdom, leaving Kyle alone to take Celebrity Rehab for the pin at 14:33.

Rating: B-. More good tag wrestling around here and any match where I get to look at Maria is a good thing. The tag division is the best thing going in ROH right now and it's nice to see one of those teams actually getting a shot instead of just having the contenders fighting each other all the time.

Bobby Fish and the Young Bucks run in for the save but the Kingdom comes back in to make it a huge brawl. The Bucks hit stereo dives and soak in the cheers to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. This was pretty easily the best show since they debuted on Destination America with an hour of solid wrestling, but they

also advanced the stories as well as they have yet. The one thing I'd like them to work on though is doing a better job of explaining when these matches are taking place. I know there's Death Before Dishonor, All-Star Extravaganza and some TV matches coming up, but I've completely lost track of when each is taking place. Settle those things down a bit and the show gets better. Good stuff this week though.

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