

205 Live – June 20, 2017: The Tight Ship

205 Live

Date: June 20, 2017

Location: Nutter Center, Dayton, Ohio

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Corey Graves

We're continuing down the road towards Neville vs. Akira Tozawa for the former's Cruiserweight Title, though for some reason this includes a big detour into Titus O'Neil Land. I'm assuming this is WWE's way of attaching the shows to the main roster, but there are some more interesting options than O'Neil. Let's get to it.

Rich Swann is talking with Tozawa in the back with Swann being ready to face Neville in tonight's main event. Titus comes in and wishes Swann good luck. With Rich gone, Titus has a contract ready for Tozawa to sign. Tozawa won't do it yet so Titus offers a 5% on Tozawa's first merchandise. Say....the Tozawa Towel? That's still not enough so Titus promises to have the perfect deal ready for Raw. Titus leaves and Tozawa just shakes his head.

Opening sequence.

Jack Gallagher vs. Tony Nese

Fallout from Nese telling the injured Austin Aries to get out of his ring last week. Gallagher wastes no time with doing the headstand in the corner to slow Nese down. They fight over a top wristlock until Gallagher eats (ok not really) a clothesline to the back of his head. We hit the Tree of Woe with Nese dropping to his back to kick Jack in the chest for a unique bit of offense.

Jack fights up and grabs a butterfly suplex for two as Aries (with his trusty banana) are watching in the back. The headbutt connects but does more damage to Jack than Nese, as is typically the case. You might want to switch things up there Jack. Nese goes shoulder first into the post

and let's pause for some goldbricking. Tony grabs the rollup into (read as near) the turnbuckle, followed by the running knee for the pin at 5:02.

Rating: C. Totally acceptable match here with Jack wrestling him even until getting caught up by the cheating, which tends to be an issue for someone of his virtue. That's a great way of showcasing the good vs evil idea here and it makes Gallagher's character fit even better. If nothing else it would be a great way to spark a heel turn down the line.

Noam Dar is on his phone with Alicia Fox again, talking about wanting to move on. Cedric Alexander comes in because OF COURSE this is still going. Alexander does his weekly chat about wanting for this to be over but Dar says he threw Alexander's bag in the river. Cedric holds up his bag and has no idea what's going on.

Cue Ariya Daivari to say his \$15,000 bag is missing. Just play the wah wah waaaaah music already. If nothing else it would be better than Cedric spending weeks saying he wants this thing to be over despite beating Dar EVERY SINGLE TIME. In other words, here's the story and we're going with it far past the point it should have ended.

We recap Drew Gulak vs. Mustafa Ali as Drew channels his former characters in CZW and Evolve (yes I know what Evolve is). There's an interesting idea here but again, Gulak needs some followers if this is going to go anywhere.

Drew Gulak vs. Mustafa Ali

What is this, their third showdown? If nothing else Gulak's music is growing on me a bit. On the way to the ring, Drew shouts into his bullhorn about wanting ground based offense and top wristlocks instead of inverted 450s. Ali dropkicks him through the ropes and hits a running corkscrew plancha for good measure. Something close to a moonsault press gives Ali two but he gets shoved over the top and down to the apron on his wrist.

We hit something like a keylock (clearly the setup for the top wristlock, which is what you call foreshadowing....or maybe me overthinking it) for a

bit, followed by an abdominal stretch. The wrist is wrapped around the top rope, only to have Ali come back with a dropkick. The slingshot rolling neckbreaker looks to set up a middle rope dropkick but Gulak tries to counter into a rollup. Ali reverses into one of his own though and grabs the pin at 4:38.

Rating: C-. This wasn't as good as their previous match but the idea of Ali winning is something that could keep this going. That being said I'm not sure why this feud needs to continue without a few big developments. You can only get so far with them trading wins and bringing in another person or two would do them a lot of good.

Gallagher runs into Aries in the back with the latter suggesting they form an alliance of cutting corners. Jack doesn't like the idea but agrees to an accord (Aries: "I thought you had a Lincoln.") because they're international brothers of the mustache.

We look at Neville attacking Rich Swann last week on Raw.

TJP comes up to Swann and accuses him of...I think colluding with Neville but Swann points out how ridiculous that is. It seems to turn into a TJP pep talk, though it's quite the odd segment.

WWE2K18 ad featuring Seth Rollins.

Tozawa is now sitting ringside courtesy of the Titus Brand.

Neville vs. Rich Swann

Non-title. Swann goes right for him and dropkicks the champ out to the floor. They roll around on the mat for a bit before another dropkick sends Neville outside again. Well to be fair Swann has done the same things since his debut so having him do the same thing twice in a match makes sense. Neville gets thrown outside for the third time and Swann hits a good looking running flip dive.

Back in and something like Rolling Thunder hits raised knees so Neville sends the banged up ribs into the barricade. They run in front of Tozawa to remind you that he's here (despite not really needing to be) before Swann goes into the barricade again. Swann's ribs bounce off the

announcers' table, only to just collapse back inside.

Rich pops back up enough for a superkick to drop Neville (making Swann roughly 18 times more effective than the Young Bucks). A kick to the head gets two on Neville and Swann knocks him away while whispering to avoid the Phoenix splash. Neville does as he's told and the Rings of Saturn make Swann tap at 10:41.

Rating: B. Now that's a good story with Swann fighting through the injury and giving it everything he had, only to come up short in the end because he tried one too many big spots and got caught. You don't get that kind of thing around here too often and it's no surprise that Neville was the one to pull it off. Neville is just on another level than these guys right now and it's pretty ridiculous to suggest that he doesn't belong in the heavyweight ranks.

Neville stares Tozawa down to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. This is the kind of 205 Live that I love watching: one with a tight ship that addresses every story going on with the show and sets up something for the future. It's like they took a lesson from NXT and actually focused on advancing things along a set path instead of just saying "here's the end goal, nothing matters as long as we get there". Throw in a good main event and I'm rather content with the night.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the Histories of Saturday Night's Main Event and Clash of the Champions, now in PAPERBACK. Check out the information here:

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<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

Smackdown – June 20, 2017: With Some Fresh Anger

Smackdown

Date: January 20, 2017

Location: Nutter Center, Dayton, Ohio

Commentators: Tom Phillips, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

We're past Money in the Bank and there are two briefcases floating around the blue show. In addition to that, we also saw Jinder Mahal retain his Smackdown World Title when he defeated Randy Orton for the second time. There's a chance we'll be setting up a third match between the two as we head towards Battleground in just over a month. Let's get to it.

We open with a quick recap of Carmella winning the first women's Money in the Bank ladder match with a big assist from James Ellsworth.

The other participants from the women's ladder match are outside Daniel Bryan's door but he won't help them at the moment.

Opening sequence.

Here are Carmella and James Ellsworth to celebrate the win. Carmella addresses the controversy around her winning the briefcase and decides she doesn't care. She's tired of being overlooked compared to all of the other women when she's this great. There have been other issues like this over the years but all the little internet trolls got on their "Tweeter" to talk to Bryan. She won the briefcase fair and square and there's nothing anyone can do about it. This was a solid heel speech but you can tell they're setting up something for later tonight.

Charlotte complains to Bryan and tells him to do the right thing.

Big E. vs. Jimmy Uso

Big E. isn't happy with the Usos leaving on Sunday, saying "the Usos dipped with those ships before we could put them around our hips." We see some stills of the Usos bailing on the match before the Usos introduce us to the warden of the Usos Penitentiary: Deput E! Joined in progress with Jimmy in trouble and staying on the downed Big E. That doesn't last long though as Big E. powers up and throws Jimmy around like he's a power lifter and Jimmy is a small Samoan wrestler. The Usos tease walking out again but Kofi dives on Jey and Woods blocks Jimmy from escaping. Back in and the Big Ending puts Jimmy away at 3:19.

Rating: D+. Just a quick match to keep the feud going here and there's nothing wrong with that. Big E. is actually a pretty accomplished singles wrestler but he's been in the dominant tag team for so long that it's forgotten. I'm sure we'll see more of this kind of match and that's a fine way to fill in time before the next pay per view title match.

Natalya and Tamina come into Daniel's office and suck up to him about being a new father. Tamina gets to the point and asks what he's going to do about Carmella. Daniel promises an answer by tonight.

Naomi thinks Bryan will make the right decision and will face anyone she has to face. Lana comes in and asks what about her. There was interference that cost her the match so Lana wants a rematch. Naomi: "How thirsty are you?" Naomi agrees to a rematch next week.

We look at some stills of Mahal beating Orton again.

Earlier today, Orton sat down to talk about losing his cool on Sunday. He knows how the numbers game works and Mahal played it to perfection. Orton is ready to do whatever it takes to get his hands on Mahal again. Mahal disrespected his family so maybe Orton can go to India and hit RK0's on every member of the Mahal Family. Including his grandmother! That's a running trend for Orton and it's kind of disturbing.

Dolph Ziggler vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

The threats of some early kicks send Ziggler to the floor so he tries a more amateur style back inside. That's fine with Nakamura who sends him into the ropes and says bring it. More strikes stagger Ziggler but he

sends Nakamura into the post and hits that good looking dropkick for two. A big toss out to the floor knocks Ziggler silly though and we take a break.

Back with Nakamura fighting out of a chinlock and scoring with another kick to the head. Ziggler drops him again and mocks Nakamura's little dance, earning himself another series of kicks. The running knees in the corner connect for two but Ziggler kicks him in the knee and gets two off a very ugly Fameasser.

Ziggler's superkick misses and Nakamura reverses into a triangle choke into a cross armbreaker until Ziggler rakes the eye. There's the Zig Zag for a close two and it's off to the sleeper. Nakamura finally rolls out of it and knees Dolph in the back of the head for a breather. Kinshasa finally puts Ziggler away at 16:49.

Rating: B. Some of Ziggler's normal issues aside, this was much better than they've done in recent outings. They were working hard out there, which is a very nice touch considering what we usually get from them. Nakamura needed one of those hard fought victories, even though he's still nowhere near what he used to be down in NXT. Or at least in that one match with Zayn.

Bryan is in the back with Sami Zayn, who gets to face Baron Corbin next week. Becky Lynch comes in and Sami offers his condolences on her loss, which he thought was unfair. As everyone else has done tonight, she asks Bryan to do something about this.

Here's Kevin Owens for an open challenge and a chat. He didn't like what happened on Sunday because everyone conspired against him becoming Mr. Money in the Bank. This is the Land of Opportunity and tonight he's giving someone from Dayton, Ohio a chance to become the US Champion. Cue AJ Styles to say he'll take the title. Owens isn't cool with that because AJ isn't from Dayton. This brings out Chad Gable of all people, who says he just moved to Dayton this morning. He even has an address and we're ready to go.

US Title: Chad Gable vs. Kevin Owens

Gable is challenging and easily takes Owens to the mat a few times before an ankle lock sends Owens outside. We take a break less than forty five seconds in and come back with Gable getting superkicked for two. Another suplex drops Owens and a moonsault gives Gable two of his own. Not that it matters as the Pop Up Powerbomb is good for the pin to retain the title at 5:59. There wasn't enough shown to rate but Gable looked energetic in defeat.

The Hype Bros are in Bryan's office and think they deserve the Tag Team Title shot that they earned back in December. Bryan says things have changed a bit so if they can beat the Usos next week, they can have a future title shot.

Here's Bryan for his announcement on the ladder match. He brings out all of the participants in the ladder match, each with their own entrance. Bryan says that Carmella did follow the rules by being the first woman to retrieve the briefcase but it has never been done this way before. Therefore, we are in uncharted territory.

Ellsworth thinks Bryan being the father of a vegan hippie baby has made him soft. The women get all catty with each other (duh) with Charlotte threatening to make Natalya look like Ellsworth if she doesn't shut up. Bryan cuts them off and says Carmella has to hand over the briefcase. Next week, there's going to be ANOTHER women's Money in the Bank ladder match with the same five participants. A brawl breaks out with Becky and Charlotte beating Carmella up.

ARE YOU SERIOUS??? Let me make sure I have this straight: I sat through weeks of BUILDING MOMENTUM with WWE telling me that it didn't really matter and now we're doing the EXACT SAME MATCH just nine days later? I really have to go back and sit through the same thing that fast? Then what was the point of the pay per view version? After all that build and all that nonsense, they're just saying "eh do it again"? Oh and add to it another pay per view rematch for the Women's Title. They really are doing this same stuff over and over again and trying to act like it's not just a ratings ploy. This is stupid, even by WWE standards.

Jinder Mahal vs. Luke Harper

Non-title. Harper slugs away to start and dropkicks Jinder to the floor as we take another early break. Back with Mahal grabbing a chinlock until Harper fights up with something like a clothesline. A big boot and the sitout Boss Man Slam give Harper two but Jinder comes back with a superplex. Cue Baron Corbin with the briefcase...but he walks right back up the ramp with it and leaves. Harper gets in a superkick but has to swing at one of the brothers. The Khallas gives Mahal the pin at 9:40.

Rating: D+. Just your standard Mahal match here with the Singhs offering the easiest distraction in the world for the finish. Mahal REALLY needs a better finisher though as that cobra clutch slam is one of the weakest things you're going to find. Having Mahal win a match like this is a good idea though and helps give Mahal some credibility. If they just have to sacrifice Harper again, so be it, which seems to be the company's mantra on Smackdown.

Post match Orton comes out to clean house and hits the hanging DDT off the barricade. Mahal bails while Orton gives both Singhs an RK0 (more like a Stunner to the second one) to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. This was your run of the mill placeholder show as they took a breath after Money in the Bank and started planting some seeds for the upcoming stuff. That being said, EGADS they really are redoing all the women's stuff, making that pay per view really look like the biggest waste of time in a long while. This is the kind of thing that makes my head hurt and it's not making their existing problems any better. They'll probably pop a quick rating for it but that doesn't make their pay per view business that much better. Not a terrible show here but it's one really designed to set things up for the future.

Results

Big E. b. Jimmy Uso – Big Ending

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Dolph Ziggler – Kinshasa

Kevin Owens b. Chad Gable – Pop Up Powerbomb

Jinder Mahal b. Luke Harper – Khallas

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Your Chance To Tell Me What I Should Do

What changes should I make?

So the other night, someone left me a comment (politely) saying that my older reviews were better/more entertaining than the current ones. I tend to agree with this, but I'm not entirely sure how to fix it. I know I used to get more annoyed and angry at a lot of the stuff back in the day but that's not something I can just turn back on. My life is a lot better than it used to be but more importantly, so much of wrestling today feels more bland than stupid and anger inducing.

On top of that, I now do live coverage for almost every show, which takes away the amount of time I have to really go into detail and such (notice that in the reviews of older shows, the details/annoyances are at a bit of a higher pace). At the end of the day, the live coverage style is what has me paying my bills and actually doing this for a living so I can't

change much of that.

Now all that being said, the last thing I want to be is boring/dull. Therefore, I thought I'd ask my loyal readers (who I certainly appreciate and whose opinions matter more than most anyone else as you're the ones who stick with me) what they think I should change/what they want to see more/less of. I'm not saying I'll make the changes (some stuff I have to do for the sake of finances) but I can always use input like this.

So what would make things more entertaining for you here? More of a certain kind of show? Less of something? More opinion stuff? More anger/annoyances? More analytical style? Anything really. I'm typically just going off what I've done in the past so I'd like to know what you would like to see. Like I said, I can't guarantee that I'll do/not do some of them but I can always go for some (hopefully constructive) criticism.

Go for it.

KB

Monday Night Raw – June 19, 2017: Hedunit, Lackeys as Bears and ROAR

Monday Night Raw

Date: June 19, 2017

Location: Ford Center, Evansville, Indiana

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Booker T.

As you might have heard before, tonight is all about Roman Reigns, who is going to be announcing what he wants to do at August's Summerslam. While this is likely wanting a World Title shot, I'd be stunned if it didn't

actually end with Braun Strowman interrupting and getting the match with Reigns at Great Balls of Fire instead. Let's get to it.

Here's Roman Reigns to open things up. Roman says the fans won't like to hear this, but he can't be beaten one on one. Ask Bray Wyatt, Finn Balor, Seth Rollins and Braun Strowman. Oh and remember he main evented his third Wrestlemania in a row, where he retired the Undertaker. Reigns doesn't care who he faces but he's getting the Universal Title shot at Summerslam.

This brings out Samoa Joe to say he didn't hear his name mentioned on that list of people Reigns has beaten. Joe introduces himself but Reigns says he agrees with Paul Heyman: Joe will never be Samoa Joe, but rather Just Joe. As in the guy that Brooklyn Brawler beat clean once? The fight is on with Joe being Superman Punched to the floor. This was VERY heelish from Reigns, especially the main eventing Wrestlemania line.

Hardys vs. Anderson and Gallows

The brothers take turns on Gallows' arm and Poetry in Motion gets two. Jeff gets sent hard into the corner though and we take an early break. Back with Jeff getting kicked in the face and armbarred. Jeff kicks Anderson away but Gallows is right there to break up the hot tag attempt.

The hog tag works a few seconds later and it's Matt coming in to clean house. Everything breaks down with Anderson rolling Matt up for two. A right hand to Matt's jaw sets up the Boot of Doom for a close two, leaving Jeff to dropkick Anderson. The Twist of Fate into the Swanton gives Jeff the pin at 10:31.

Rating: C. I'm not sure how many more times these two teams plus Sheamus and Cesaro can trade wins but I have a feeling we'll be finding out for weeks to come. Hopefully the Revival gets into the title picture soon as they're easily the best tag team around today. The match was about as good as you would expect it to be from these guys but at least the fans care about the Hardys.

Goldust challenges R-Truth for next week.

Here's Elias Samson to tune his guitar but it's Finn Balor making a quick interruption for his match.

Finn Balor vs. Bo Dallas

Dallas jumps him before the bell and chokes away on the ropes, followed by a running knee to the head for two. Balor comes back with the Pele and a series of strikes, including the kick from the apron. Dallas is sent hard into the barricade a few times and it's the Sling Blade into the Coup de Grace for the pin at 3:40.

Rating: D+. Balor was showing some aggression there and it's always nice to see him get a win. That being said, it's not like he has anything going on at the moment because WWE is focusing on Samoa Joe at the moment while Seth Rollins and Bray Wyatt have Bray's latest lame feud. I'm sure they'll find something for Balor, but he's not getting the title back until after Wrestlemania, which makes a lot of the commentary about how he's almost there sound stupid.

Corey Graves has to run off and deal with something.

Video on Seth Rollins being the cover star for WWE2K18.

The announcers discuss Carmella winning the Money in the Bank briefcase with help from James Ellsworth.

Corey comes in to see Kurt Angle and says he knows he had a bad Father's Day. Angle looks taken aback but Graves says he got the same message. Enzo and Big Cass come in with Angle wanting to know why Enzo tweeted something to Conor McGregor. That goes nowhere so they talk about who has been attacking Enzo and Cass. It might have been Revival, Enzo himself or Big Show. Angle promises to find out who did it tonight.

Here's Seth Rollins to talk about being on the cover of the game. He brings up his heel turn from a few years back and everything it brought him. The problem was he couldn't look in the mirror. Now he's on the cover of the game and it's his second chance. This cover belongs to both himself and the fans because it's THEIR cover.

Cue Bray Wyatt to talk about how he feels the struggle in Seth's soul.

Seth is still conforming to whatever the people want and he's just not that man. Rollins says he's THE man and lists off some accomplishments. Bray says he's here and blows out the lantern before coming out to the ring. Thankfully Seth is smart enough to dive on Bray as he walks very slowly to the ring.

Graves praises Angle's job as GM and stands by him during his personal issues.

Balor wants the Universal Title back and thinks Roman is tough enough to take down Joe tonight. Samson jumps Balor from behind and tells him to never upstage him again. D-Von Dudley (an agent if that wasn't clear) chases Samson off.

Akira Tozawa vs. TJP

Rematch from 205 Live. Hang on a second as Titus O'Neil comes out to say we need to really hype the match up, meaning he'll handle the introductions. TJP flips over Tozawa to start but gets rolled up for two. A top rope dive misses Tozawa again but the backsplash hits knees. Cue Neville to say neither of these two are the next Cruiserweight Champion as we take a break.

Back with TJP keeping Tozawa on the mat, followed by the springboard forearm into the nipup. We hit an arm trap chinlock before Tozawa sends him to the floor for a suicide dive. Back in and TJP grabs a double chickenwing gutbuster but gets kicked in the face, setting up the top backsplash for the pin at 10:39.

Rating: C+. Thanks for taking away my only reason for watching 205 Live people. I know the show doesn't mean anything but if I just have to wait six days before seeing the same match on Raw, I really don't need to watch the thing in the first place. At least Tozawa vs. Neville, which will likely happen on pay per view and not 205 Live, will be good.

Post match Titus talks about how awesome his Brand is and how Tozawa will be the next Cruiserweight Champion. Neville is tired of hearing about it so Tozawa needs to tread lightly.

R-Truth accepts Goldust's challenge.

Curtis Axel tries to cheer Bo up when Miz comes in to talk about how bad they've been lately. They were in the Marine 5 together and Miz made them stars. He can do it again here on Raw.

Samoa Joe thinks Reigns needs to learn his name because Joe beat him in his Raw debut.

Samoa Joe vs. Roman Reigns

They trade shoulders to start with no one going anywhere. Joe gets punched to the floor through and stays outside for a breather. Back in and Joe knocks him to the floor for a change, followed by a few headbutts with shouts of WHAT'S MY NAME. They head outside yet again with Reigns being sent into the post and barricade as we go to a break.

Back with Joe dropping an elbow and grabbing a chinlock. A backslash hits knees though (meaning ANOTHER crowd reaction shot, which have been on steroids tonight) and Reigns makes his comeback with the ten clotheslines in the corner. The Superman Punch is countered into an atomic drop into the boot, followed by a backslash for two. Joe gets back up and eats a Superman Punch for two more but still manages to block the spear.

There's the Rock Bottom for another near fall so Joe is tired of the messing around. The Koquina Clutch has Reigns in trouble but he backs into the corner and hits the spear to send Joe outside. Roman loads up another spear but he's an ambulance backing into the building. Naturally Braun Strowman is inside for one heck of a face pop and the distraction lets Joe grab the Koquina Clutch for the tap at 18:37.

Rating: B. Good, solid heavyweight slugfest here and that's what the show needed. Strowman returning is a good idea, though that face pop is likely just going to annoy Vince even further and give Reigns more of a push. The match was fun and a good example of the right way to end a match. Reigns looks strong and gets his feud with Strowman advanced while Joe still gets the win.

Post match Strowman comes out and gives Reigns a reverse chokeslam. Fans: "ONE MORE TIME!" Strowman challenges Reigns to an ambulance match at Great Balls of Fire pay per view. As opposed to Great Balls of Fire: a Spike Lee Joint.

It's time for MizTV with Miz apologizing to Maryse. He has two bears and a big present for her, plus champagne. Maryse comes out with Miz guaranteeing her that he's checked the bears out and they're fine. The present is the restored grandfather clock, which he repaired in their garage when she made him sleep on the couch. Maryse seems to forgive him when Dean Ambrose comes out.

Miz hides behind her, sending the champagne onto Maryse's face. Dean keeps going by sending Miz into the clock to break it again. That's enough for Maryse who slaps Miz and storms off, only to have the bears attack Ambrose. Naturally they're Dallas and Axel and the beatdown is on with Miz helping out via a Skull Crushing Finale.

Sheamus/Cesaro vs. Apollo Crews/Titus O'Neil

Non-title. Crews dropkicks Cesaro down to start but eats a right hand for his efforts. Apollo takes a bit of a beating in the corner until an enziguri drops Cesaro. Titus comes in and clotheslines Sheamus in the corner, followed by Apollo's standing moonsault for two. A cheap shot sets up the assisted White Noise to put Crews away at 4:11.

Rating: D. At this point, we're just filling in time instead of putting the women on this show for some reason. The match was about what you would expect, though I'm still not sure if Titus is a face or a heel. Giving Cesaro and Sheamus a win like this isn't the worst idea in the world though as it gave us something fresh, which is definitely something good at this point.

Long video on Samoa Joe vs. Brock Lesnar with both guys talking about the amount of violence we'll be seeing at the pay per view. Good stuff.

Sasha Banks vs. Nia Jax

Alexa Bliss comes out for commentary and we're joined in progress with

Banks hitting the knees to the back. Cue Emma to yell at Bliss and then chase her into the ring. Bliss hides behind Jax so Emma kicks her in the ribs for the DQ at 1:11.

It's a big brawl with Mickie James and Dana Brooke coming in as well. Bayley finally comes in and really cleans house, including a middle rope bulldog to Jax. The good women, as in Bayley/Banks/Brooke/James in this case, stand tall.

Here's Angle to announce the attacker. He brings out Enzo, Cass, Revival and Big Show to really set the stage. Angle starts with Big Show, who says he'd fight someone face to face. If Angle thinks he did it, maybe he doesn't need to be on Raw anymore. Show leaves and Cass is very happy until Kurt cuts him off to talk about Revival. Angle says it wasn't them because enough referees and agents saw the two of them elsewhere.

Corey Graves says he has some information though. A few moments ago Cass said he had a golf ball sized lump on the back of his head, but the medical team said they never treated him. Cass starts backtracking but Graves has security footage. We see Cass staging the scene of the crime and laying on the ground like he's unconscious. Cass admits he did it and yells about how tired he is of Enzo running his mouth about whatever he's always talking about. No one behind the curtain likes Enzo and Cass felt bad for him.

Cass finally snapped and it felt good to lay Enzo out from behind. He unloads on Enzo for all the years of having to put up with him and wanted to see how smart Enzo really was. It turns out that Enzo is even dumber than he looks and nothing but dead weight holding Cass down. All Enzo does is have his mouth write checks that he can't cash but now Cass isn't behind him anymore. Enzo gets kicked in the head to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. This show didn't do much to hide the fact that Great Balls of Fire is just a placeholder show. When they're already setting up stuff for Summerslam and we're still nearly three weeks away from Great Balls of Fire, you can tell the show means absolutely nothing. Now that being said, some of the stuff they've set up is interesting enough, but don't waste your time believing that this is going to mean anything long

term. That's been the case for years in WWE but it doesn't make things any easier to get through.

Results

Hardys b. Anderson and Gallows – Swanton Bomb to Gallows

Finn Balor b. Bo Dallas – Coup de Graces

Akira Tozawa b. TJP – Top rope backsplash

Samoa Joe b. Roman Reigns – Koquina Clutch

Sheamus/Cesaro b. Apollo Crews/Titus O'Neil – Assisted White Noise to Crews

Nia Jax b. Sasha Banks via DQ when Emma interfered

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Money in the Bank 2017: A Show Where You Just Need A Recap... Like Mine!

Money in the Bank 2017

Date: June 18, 2017

Location: Scottrade Center, St. Louis, Missouri

Commentators: Tom Phillips, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

It's time to climb. Tonight is all about the ladders and the briefcases, which could be cashed in tonight, assuming we have a bit of luck. This has the potential to be an interesting show with a five match card, though two of them are major ladder matches whose entrances alone will take about ten minutes. Let's get to it.

Kickoff Show: Hype Bros vs. Colons

This is the Hype Bros' first match since December after Zack Ryder's knee injury. Epico shoulders Ryder down to start but the Bros (as opposed to the cousins) take over without much effort. Primo decides to slap Mojo in the face, which just fires him up. The Colons get in a shot to Ryder's knee though and we take a break. Back with Ryder's knee still in trouble until a neckbreaker drops Primo. The hot tag brings in Mojo for Hyperdrive (something like a release F5) and the running punch in the corner. The Hype Ryder is good for the pin on Primo at 8:11.

Rating: D+. Just a "hey Ryder's back" match here and that's fine. The Hype Bros could be inserted straight into the title picture and likely should be after they won the battle royal before the injury. The Colons aren't going to lose anything with this result and that's the point of having them around.

The opening video looks at the World Title match, along with the ladder matches. That's quite the original thinking.

Charlotte vs. Natalya vs. Becky Lynch vs. Carmella vs. Tamina

Women's Money in the Bank, for the first time ever. During the entrances, we go to a video on Naomi winning the title at Wrestlemania, which goes into a history of the title itself and how important it is to be the first Miss Money in the Bank (that has a good ring to it). Tamina stays in the ring to start and kicks ladders back to the floor but everyone else gets back in without too much effort.

The fans get behind Becky but have to settle for Tamina hitting a Samoan drop on Carmella (in her money themed gear). Natalya gets catapulted face first into a ladder as it's still all Tamina so far. Becky kicks a ladder into Tamina and is willing to help Natalya take her down again. Natalya loads up the ladder as we're firmly in the "everyone lays around" stage.

Charlotte makes a save with an electric chair drop but it's Carmella coming up the ladder for the save. That's fine with Tamina, who shoves the ladder over for a big double crash. Natalya suplexes Charlotte down again but gets sent into a ladder for her efforts. Charlotte and Carmella both make saves, followed by Tamina stopping Charlotte after her hand touched the case.

Tamina and Natalya are sent to the floor for the big twisting flip dive from Charlotte. Becky powerbombs Carmella off the ladder but James Ellsworth comes in for the save. Naturally he goes up and grabs the briefcase, which he throws down to Carmella....for the win at 13:15.

Rating: D. Well that was really disappointing. There was no major spot (save for Charlotte's twisting dive, which she's more than topped in a regular match) and the ending was really stupid. After all the talk about this being the first ever moment for a woman, it's the man who climbs up to win the thing? This was a really bad idea with the ending making it much worse than it could have been on its own.

Lana is glad she's a major underdog because it's going to make her victory that much sweeter.

Tag Team Titles: Usos vs. New Day

New Day is challenging and have some prison jokes due to the Usos calling the tag division the Uso Penitentiary. Kofi and Jimmy start things off

with the champs in early trouble. One heck of a clothesline drops Kofi though and the twins send him into the post to really take over. Kofi's sunset flip is broken up but he gets in a standing double stomp for the real break.

Big E. comes in for the spear through the ropes and it's right back to Kofi, who gets his bad knee taken out. We hit the Tequila Sunrise (I had forgotten that was a thing) with Jimmy diving into a belly to belly from Big E. Kofi's leg is fine enough to grab a dragon sleeper but has to let go to go after Jey.

The SOS gets two and the Big Ending gets the same with Jey making the save. Woods offers a trombone solo for a distraction but the spear through the ropes hits knees. Kofi dives onto both champs and the Midnight Hour is good for two with Jimmy making the save. That's enough for the Usos as they walk into the crowd for the countout at 12:21.

Rating: C. This started off slow but got a lot better by the ending. That being said, I'm not sure I want to see a rematch but it's not like they have a ton of other options. It's not like we have the Hype Bros being owed a title shot or American Alpha ready on the sidelines or Breezango still popular at the moment or anything like that. No we need a rematch instead, which isn't the worst idea but it's not the most exciting.

Bob Orton Jr. and Sgt. Slaughter are in the back.

Women's Title: Naomi vs. Lana

Lana is defending in her singles debut. Naomi drives her into the corner to start but gets taken down by the hair. That just earns her a nipup, only to have Naomi miss a high crossbody. The fans want Rusev, because they have no interest in a gorgeous blonde in a rather small outfit.

We're already in the chinlock before a suplex sends Naomi legs first into the ropes. Naomi grabs a cross armbreaker for a breather but goes with some kicks for the real control. The Rear View gets two but Lana comes right back with the sitout spinebuster for two. So much for th...and here's Carmella. She teases handing the briefcase over but changes her mind and leaves. Naomi has had enough of this and grabs her reverse Rings

of Saturn for the pin at 6:27.

Rating: D+. Lana looked great (both physically and in the ring) but having her lose is the right call. That being said, it wasn't the brightest move to set up a finisher and then have her use it in a match for two. The Carmella thing didn't need to happen as it took the focus off of Lana, which wasn't a good idea either. Just too much going on here, though Lana looked outstanding.

Carmella leaves without doing anything.

It's Fashion Files time. Based on the description Breeze gave, forensics are sending over an idea. The fax says "answer the door" and they find a VHS tape. Fandango: "Is it Coliseum"? The tape says WATCH ME and they see two guys in silhouette saying they did it. They'll reveal themselves if Breezango meets them in the ring tonight. So there's a bonus match.

Here are the debuting Mike and Maria Kanellis (no Bennett mentioned). Maria calls herself the first lady and says she's spent years looking for the perfect partner. Now they're here to educate everyone on Smackdown Live about the power of love. They dance and that seems to be their gimmick: they love each other a lot.

We recap the women's ladder match and whether the ending was fair or not.

We recap Jinder Mahal vs. Randy Orton. Mahal won the title last month in a major upset and tonight it's a rematch in Orton's hometown.

Some legends are at ringside and get a special presentation for the crowd. We have:

Greg Gagne, Larry Hennig, Baron Von Raschke, Sgt. Slaughter, Bob Orton Jr. (from St. Louis) and Ric Flair.

Smackdown World Title: Randy Orton vs. Jinder Mahal

Orton is challenging and tries an RK0, which sends Mahal bailing to the floor. Back in and Orton takes him down and stomps away, only to go after the Singh Brothers. Mahal uses the distraction to take out the knee and send Orton into the barricade a few times. That's fine with Randy, who

whips Mahal over the barricade and into his father's lap.

Mahal goes after the knee again though and grabs a leglock back inside. They head to the floor a second time with the knee being dropped onto the barricade, followed by a superkick for two. With Flair looking on, Mahal grabs a Figure Four for a bit, followed by driving the bad knee into the mat a few times.

Orton fights back and grabs a superplex (makes sense on Father's Day) for two. The clotheslines really confirm the comeback and a powerslam sends Mahal to the apron. There's the hanging DDT and the RK0 (almost taken like a Stunner) but one of the Singh Brothers puts Mahal's boot on the ropes.

The referee teases a DQ but ejects the Brothers instead. Before they go though, the Brothers grab Bob Orton and get pummeled by Randy. One of them gets dropped onto the announcers' table and the other gets an RK0 on the floor. The first takes an RK0 through the table as the referee is fine with all of this. Back in and Mahal kicks the knee out and hits the Khallas to retain at 20:58.

Rating: C-. The more I see of Mahal, the more impressed I am with him. He's certainly not a great performer and is in WAY over his head but he's done everything right and is playing a good heel. Orton having to deal with the Brothers to save his dad was a fine story and it's not like losing another match is going to damage a made man like him.

Breezango vs. Ascension

This sounds a bit misleading. Konnor knocks Breeze down to start as the announcers bicker about Breezango's furry selfie sticks. Viktor comes in for a forearm to the back of the neck and Konnor adds an elbow for two. Fandango comes in and gets beaten down as well, only to grab a small package to put Konnor away at 3:49.

Rating: D. So that happened. Despite Breezango beating Ascension before and the announcers basically mocking Ascension for being on the show, that's all we got here. Just nothing to talk about here despite it seeming like the perfect place for some kind of a swerve so an

interesting team could have attacked Breezango.

We recap the men's Money in the Bank ladder match, with the video focusing on how life changing of an event it can be.

Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Baron Corbin vs. AJ Styles vs. Kevin Owens vs. Sami Zayn vs. Dolph Ziggler

Things get going before the entrances can even finish as Corbin jumps Nakamura during his entrance. Nakamura takes a ladder to the ribs and is left laying as Corbin comes to the ring. Corbin cleans house to start with a few ladder shots, leaving Sami to dive through the ropes and take Owens out. A Ziggler superkick drops Corbin and it's Sami bringing a ladder inside with AJ making the save.

The Phenomenal Forearm is broken up by Ziggler but he dives into Deep Six on the floor. Owens starts cleaning house with the ladder until AJ kicks it back at him. Kevin comes right back and goes up top, only to have Sami slam him onto the ladder, which is completely mangled. Sami loads up the ladder as something happens off camera and here's Ziggler to make the save.

The Blue Thunder Bomb drops Dolph but Corbin takes out Sami. Ziggler and Corbin take out AJ but Baron takes out Dolph and goes up. That just earns him a Zig Zag off the ladder, followed by Sami sunset bombing Ziggler off the ladder for the next major bump. Dolph is bleeding from the eye as he rolls to the floor, leaving Sami vs. Owens on the apron.

The half and half suplex plants Owens but AJ's Phenomenal Forearm makes another save. Corbin bridges a ladder between the steps and the table to chokeslam AJ. Owens goes for the ladder but AJ is up in a hurry for the save, followed by an AA onto the ladder. Corbin heads up this time but it's Nakamura, complete with music, for the save. A series of kicks drop Corbin and there are the running knees to the ribs in the corner, followed by a hard knee to send Corbin outside.

Back to back Kinshasas drop Ziggler and another one hits Sami. Nakamura heads up top but gets stopped by AJ for a staredown. They move the ladder out of the way and do the big slugout, capped off by a forearm to

Nakamura. Corbin shoves Nakamura and Styles off the ladder though and grabs the briefcase (at a Jack Swagger pace) for the win at 29:51.

Rating: B+. This was much more about the collection of spots than the flow of the match and there's nothing wrong with that. Corbin was probably the best option for winning the thing as putting it on a heel makes the most sense. That leaves you with Ziggler (spare me) and the US Champion so options, meaning Corbin was the best bet.

Overall Rating: D+. This is a show that exists and you look up the results for the next day. The big draw here is finding out who is going to be cashing in the briefcases at some point in the future, which really doesn't sound like the most interesting in the world. The undercard was nothing to see either (outside of Lana that is) and it didn't offer anything special. Totally skippable show, which isn't the biggest surprise.

Results

Carmella b. Tamina, Becky Lynch, Charlotte and Natalya – James Ellsworth threw Carmella the briefcase

New Day b. Usos via countout

Naomi b. Lana – Double arm trap

Jinder Mahal b. Randy Orton – Khallas

Baron Corbin b. AJ Styles, Dolph Ziggler, Shinsuke Nakamura, Kevin Owens and Sami Zayn – Corbin pulled down the ladder

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Smackdown – January 16, 2003: Can We Lose The Grieving Widow?

Smackdown

Date: January 16, 2003

Location: Continental Airlines Arena, East Rutherford, New Jersey

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

We're at the go home show for the Royal Rumble and you wouldn't really know based on the TV they've been building towards it. The Rumble itself has taken a huge backseat to almost everything else, including tonight when a good chunk of the focus is likely to be focused on Al Wilson's death. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Dawn and Al's honeymoon with Al dying from exhaustion. Three days before the Rumble and this is what starts the show.

Dawn, in a rather low cut top, is all sad about Al dying. As I've said this whole time, what exactly was her plan here? She really just married him to annoy Torrie? That's getting to Vince levels to ruin Austin.

Opening sequence.

Tag Team Titles: Los Guerreros vs. John Cena/B2

Los Guerreros are defending and they're both in the Rumble too. Both promise they'll win to make Grandma happy. Cena raps about sending Los Guerreros back to their jobs at Home Depot or selling oranges at off ramps. Oh and he used to love Lucy and hate Ricky Ricardo. Eddie and Cena start things off with Eddie spinning all over the place to send Cena down, followed by a basement dropkick from Chavo. The slingshot hilo hits Cena as well as the champs are in full control to start.

Buchanan comes in and eats a belly to back suplex, followed by Eddie kicking at his legs. Cena offers a low bridge though and the champs are finally in trouble. A Falcon Arrow gets two on Eddie and Cena grabs a front facelock until Chavo slaps Eddie's boot for the tag. That's fine with Cena who facelocks Chavo as well. A dropkick gets Chavo out of trouble and everything breaks down. Chavo dives onto Buchanan and Eddie does the same to Cena. Back in and Chavo dropkicks Buchanan again, setting up a frog splash to retain.

Rating: C-. This didn't have the time to go anywhere and I'm kind of glad they just got rid of Cena and Buchanan as challengers in a hurry. Eddie and Chavo have slid right into the face roles without even blinking an eye because they're talented enough to pull something like that off.

Post match Cena yells at Buchanan until someone (who Cena fist bumped before the match) comes out of the crowd and helps Cena beat him down, including wrecking Buchanan's shoulder.

We recap Chris Benoit vs. Kurt Angle, which includes the introduction of Team Angle and a series of beatdowns at Benoit's expense.

Benoit talks about how important the title match is and promises to get to Angle tonight. He's heard about ruthless aggression but he'd prefer toothless aggression.

Here's Stephanie McMahon for a chat. It turns out that the Royal Rumble is THIS SUNDAY but more importantly, tonight it's A-Train/Big Show vs. Brock Lesnar/???. This absolutely didn't need to be its own segment nor in front of the crowd.

Nathan Jones video.

Bill DeMott vs. Rikishi

Before the match, Rikishi talks about wanting to win the Rumble while DeMott is tired of hearing about being told to pick on someone their own size. Rikishi punches him down to start and a few slams drop him again. We hit the armbar until DeMott hits him in the ample gut to take over. That means an armbar on Rikishi for a change, followed by the shoulder going into the post. Unfortunately Bill didn't do anything to the leg so Rikishi superkicks him down for two. The Rump Shaker is loaded up but DeMott powerbombs him down for the pin.

Rating: D-. Well that happened. I have no idea why they think DeMott is interesting but having him pin Rikishi clean doesn't make him any more interesting. He's still the same wrestler he's always been and having him win matches like this doesn't change a thing. Rikishi is still there and there's no reason to think anything of him either. Why in the world is this push still a thing?

Kidman imitates Shannon Moore (Horribly, though since Shannon almost never talks how can you tell?) until Matt Hardy and the real Shannon come up. Matt defends Shannon and punches Funaki as a bonus, triggering a brawl.

Tajiri vs. Nunzio

After saying (in Japanese) that he'll win the Rumble, Tajiri fires off the kicks but gets snapmared down for two. Nunzio spins into a Fujiwara armbar but Tajiri gets his foot in the ropes without too much effort. Tajiri kicks at the legs but something like an Unprettier brings him right back down. It's back to the arm with a cross armbreaker and a whip into the corner but Tajiri comes right back with the Tarantula. Nidia takes the mist to the face but a springboard tornado flying armbar gives Nunzio the pin.

Rating: C+. Fun match here but, again, the Cruiserweight Title is nowhere near this spot on the card because the champion has other people to feud with and can't be asked to defend his title. That's not on Kidman but again shows how worthless that title really is. Putting either of them over Kidman doesn't matter at this point as the title isn't going to mean

anything no matter what they do at this point.

Long recap of the Raw Tenth Anniversary show.

Cena introduces his new buddy as Red Dogg and implies the eating of your Scooby Snacks.

Undertaker is back on Sunday.

It's off to the funeral home where Dawn is all emotional and cries. She opens the casket so the announcers can do another "Look at Al!" "Look at Dawn!" bit. This goes on for WAY too long with Dawn being sad and talking about how she's going to carry on Al's name.

Stephanie is on the phone with Shane when Brock comes in to say that he doesn't need a partner. She says she needs to protect her investment, which is why Lesnar needs a partner. If Stephanie wanted to protect her investment before the Rumble, why is this match happening? I'm going out on a limb and say that Stephanie isn't as smart as she thinks she is.

Brock Lesnar/??? vs. Big Show/A-Train

Before the match, Heyman goes on a rant about how Lesnar has no chance because he won't beat Big Show in the first place. If he somehow does though, he'll have to deal with Team Angle and A-Train. Cue Lesnar with partner....Rey Mysterio. Rey charges right in and kicks A-Train into the F5. Show gets clotheslined to the floor and it's the 619 and a springboard splash to put A-Train away in less than 35 seconds. So to clarify, the pecking order of non-Big Show giants goes Bill DeMott, Rikishi and then A-Train. Yet A-Train is consistently dealing with the main eventers because WWE.

Back to the funeral home when Torrie (also in an outfit that shouldn't be at a place like this) comes in to stare Dawn down.

Matt Hardy vs. Funaki

This is the result of Funaki calling out Matt, who was in the academically gifted class in elementary school, for the earlier attack. Kidman and Shannon are here as the seconds. Funaki goes right after him

to start and hammers away on the mat. A Side Effect gives Matt two and it's Shannon choking on the ropes.

Matt chokes a bit as well, followed by the Ricochet for two. Back up and Matt misses a charge so Funaki grabs a bulldog for two. Funaki sends him hard into the corner but the seconds get in a fight on the apron so there's no one to see Matt being covered. Matt sends Funaki into Shannon and it's a Twist of Fate for the pin.

Rating: C-. Not bad here and at least the champ didn't take another fall. Matt getting a win is a good idea and hopefully it actually leads somewhere for him. By somewhere, I mean something other than just getting squashed by Lesnar or Rikishi, because there's no one else to do jobs like that for some reason.

Shannon: "WE DID IT!" Matt: "NO! I DID IT!" And he throws in a slap to Shannon's jaw.

We go back to the funeral home (GET ON WITH IT ALREADY) where Dawn blames Torrie for Al's death. She didn't love him enough or something and that broke his heart. They get in a slap fight and Dawn shattered a lamp over Torrie's back. The worst part is this could have been even worse.

According to a recent interview with the writer of this whole mess, the original ending was going to see Al sit up in the casket, berate Torrie for being the worst daughter ever, then walk outside and get hit by a bus to kill him once and for all. Even with that ending, I'd love to know what the real point to this was, because even I can't believe that it was really just for the sake of what's probably a four minute match at Royal Rumble.

Back from a break and HERE'S A REPLAY OF THE FIGHT BECAUSE THIS HASN'T EATEN UP ENOUGH TIME IN THE LAST FOUR MONTHS!

Nathan Jones video.

Royal Rumble rundown. The graphics showing the thirty Rumble entrants make me sadder than anything not associated with the Wilsons. It really does look that bad.

Kurt Angle/Team Angle vs. Chris Benoit/Edge

Kurt is still on a crutch. Joined in progress with Benoit suplexing Charlie and asking Kurt to come in. He has to settle for chopping Haas some more and then throwing him down with another suplex. Shelton finally gets smart by drawing Benoit in though and Angle's low blow turns things around.

Charlie starts in on the arm while cranking on Benoit's neck but a third suplex gets Benoit out of trouble again. The hot tag brings in Edge to clean house with his series of clotheslines but Shelton gets in a cheap shot from the apron. Kurt actually comes in to stomp away until he gets caught in the half nelson faceplant (which he over rotates, making it a half nelson backplant).

Benoit comes in and gets taken down for some right hands to the head. The ankle lock is broken up in a hurry so it's back to Shelton. Edge comes in with a top rope clothesline for two but Angle sends him outside in a heap. The heels take over again with Shelton jumping over Charlie to crash down onto Edge's back. Charlie gets two off a bulldog and Shelton grabs a chinlock. The Edge-o-Matic gets Edge out of trouble but Charlie breaks up a hot tag attempt. Angle gets in a few suplexes to keep Edge in trouble and the slow (not a bad thing) offense continues.

Now it's time to roll the German suplexes but Angle takes too much time, allowing Edge to snap off a belly to belly of his own. Shelton breaks up the hot tag AGAIN, only to get kicked away for the tag to Benoit. Everything breaks down and that means a lot more suplexes. Angle tries to bring in the title but gets Crossfaced. Shelton makes a save but Benoit puts Kurt right back in....for a DQ because Angle isn't legal. That's a bit confusing, especially when Benoit's music doesn't play at the bell.

Rating: B. I really liked the slow paced offense from the heels and the buffet of suplexes didn't hurt either. This was a lot of fun with all five looking good. It's also a smart move to have Angle get in the ring before Sunday to knock off any potential ring rust. Very entertaining match here, which is something this show needed in spades.

Angle taps as Edge dives onto Haas and Benjamin. Benoit unloads on Angle

with the crutch to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. The main event is good but it's way too late to save this show. The funeral home stuff is more bizarrely terrible than anything else and you really wouldn't know the Rumble was coming on Sunday without a few random ads for it. Other than Undertaker and whoever wins Lesnar vs. Big Show, almost no one on Smackdown looks to be any kind of a threat to win the thing. The focus is on everything else (basically the same on Raw) and that makes for a really weird set of shows leading up to the pay per view.

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Money in the Bank 2017 Preview

Thank goodness we're finally here. I've made no secret of the fact that I can't stand the build to this pay per view and I never have been able to. We've been BUILDING MOMENTUM to this show for over a month now and it's time to finally pay it off, likely with someone who hasn't built any

momentum yet getting the big win. On top of that...well there's not much actually as there's a five match card with two matches being Money in the Bank ladder matches. Let's get to it.

Kickoff Show: Hype Bros vs. Colons

This one is a bit confusing as I really don't see the reason to have the Hype Bros, who are having their return match after being split up over the last few months due to Zack Ryder's knee injury. In theory this would be a better spot for Breezango, who have been having issues with the Colons over the last few weeks. Either way, it's nice to have another team on the roster, even if American Alpha is STILL sitting on the sidelines.

I'll take the Hype Bros to win of course as there's no reason for the Colons to beat them, especially in their first match back. The Hype Bros are still owed a Tag Team Title shot after winning the tag team battle royal a few months back so having them lose to the heel jobber tag team doesn't make the most sense in the world. So yeah, the Hype Bros win in an entertaining match with Ryder getting the pin.

Smackdown World Title: Jinder Mahal(c) vs. Randy Orton

This is the rematch from last month when Orton lost the title in the first place for one of the biggest upsets in a very long time. That left us with Mahal as the World Champion, which has been hit or miss at best (though he hasn't been the disaster I was expecting). Now we're in Orton's hometown and it's time for his big rematch.

That being said, I don't think he's going to get the title back here. Mahal is the kind of guy who can hold the title for a little while longer and then lose in the big match to give someone a rub. While I have little doubt that John Cena is going to be one of the names that will get a shot, I think it's going to be someone a little lower on the pole than Orton or Cena to take the title. Orton loses here, likely through some form of shenanigans again.

Smackdown Tag Team Titles: Usos(c) vs. New Day

I'm not sure on this one as the Usos have been entertaining with their over the top promos but they've hardly done anything with the titles. On the other hand you have the New Day, who really seem like they're just playing the greatest hits. New Day has been in a weird place for a good while now as they really don't have anything going on at the moment but have also outgrown the tag division. Why they're not in the ladder match helping Kofi Kingston win the briefcase isn't clear but my guess is that's a bit too complicated for the "creative" staff.

I think I'll go with the Usos retaining here, unfortunately as we continue to wait on the return of American Alpha to go after the belts again. The tag division looks good on Tuesday nights but when you actually look at what they've got going on, things take quite the fall. New Day is a great addition to the division but I don't think they're going to be getting the belts here.

Smackdown Women's Title: Naomi(c) vs. Lana

This is one of those rare matches where the result is going to depend on what you think is going to happen in the Money in the Bank ladder match. At the moment, I think a certain heel is going to be winning the briefcase and as a result, it should be the face winning here. On the other hand, I have a bit of a difficult time believing that Lana is going to be hyped up so much, only to lose in her singles debut.

I'll stick with my original train of thought though and go with Naomi retaining. They've done a good job of setting Naomi up as a major player in the division as she's gone from pretty much nothing to someone who feels like a star. Lana should get a big push down the line, but I don't think she's going to win here, likely so WWE can have someone chase her with a briefcase.

Men's Money in the Bank Ladder Match

And now it's time for a mess. It's always hard to guess what they're going to do here but as is usually the case, a heel is the better option to win. I have a hard time getting behind the idea that a face is going to be chasing the champion and basically trying to steal the title from a downed champion. They've kept this down to six names this year which

should make for a better match, though it also keeps the options for winners down.

That being said, I'll go with Baron Corbin winning here. There's no change Dolph Ziggler is going to win (please don't let that come back and bite me), Sami Zayn winning doesn't quite feel right, AJ Styles and Shinsuke Nakamura don't need to win a briefcase to be in the title hunt, Kevin Owens shouldn't win while still being US Champion. Corbin has kind of been left off to the side, and that would make him a good Mr. Money in the Bank.

Women's Money in the Bank Ladder Match

That still feels weird to write out. This is another of those groundbreaking matches which is likely going to be treated as something that is bigger than it is good, though that's not the worst thing in the world. They've set up some potential options here, but the favorite almost has to be Charlotte, who tends to dominate everything else with no one (save for Sasha Banks) really coming near her.

That being said, I'll go with Carmella to win. Charlotte seems too obvious, Natalya and Tamina aren't interesting enough and Becky Lynch is someone who has been there before. Carmella feels like Corbin earlier, and that means she could sneak in under the radar and take the case. If this goes on before Naomi vs. Lana, I really wouldn't be surprised to see her cash in the briefcase that night and walk away with the title. At least it would be nice if that was the case so we don't have to have another briefcase running around for months.

Overall Thoughts

I'm not sure on this one but the good thing about having a show with such a short card is that only two or so matches need to be good to really make it work. However, it can also mean that the show can go badly for the exact same reason. The good thing though is that a gimmick show like this is almost always going to be good because the namesake matches are going to be entertaining enough on their own.

I'm hoping that at least one of the briefcases will be cashed in tomorrow

night as I really can't stand the briefcases, at least in the way that they're booked most of the time. They're going to be around though and if the big matches are good enough then the rest of the show is going to work as a result. Just keep the Orton vs. Mahal match short so we can get on to John Cena making his return and going after the title, as he probably should have done.

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Main Event – June 15, 2017: It Didn't Work Before So Let's Do It Again

Main Event

Date: June 15, 2017

Location: Cajundome, Lafayette, Louisiana

Commentators: Corey Graves, Vic Joseph

It's back to what should be the quintessential recap show as it's not like people come here for the original wrestling content. Raw had one heck of a fight on Monday night and you have to imagine that's going to be a big focal point of this show. We're about three weeks away from Great Balls of Fire and that's not the worst thing in the world. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Curt Hawkins vs. Curtis Axel

Gah this always gets annoying with first names. Axel grabs a headlock to start and stomps away in the corner before getting two off a clothesline. That earns Curtis a knee to the back and a chinlock (with another knee to the back) as the announcers talk about these two teaming together.

Graves makes sure to mention that he and Neville used to be NXT Tag Team Champions, which is a very good idea. He wasn't in NXT very long and that was several years ago. Remind us that you have in-ring credentials and people will pay more attention to you. Axel fights up but can't get the PerfectPlex as Curt kicks away, only to get caught in it the second time to give Axel the pin at 5:12.

Rating: D+. Axel truly is the Main Event Musketeer as he never seems to leave the place. He's good in the ring, the fans react to him and he's using the perfect (See what I did there?) finisher. Just give him a story and see what he can do on the main roster because he's likely going to be more over than most of the people around here.

Long recap of the Hardys vs. Sheamus/Cesaro.

Very shortened version of the Hardys vs. Sheamus/Cesaro from Raw, showing about three minutes of a fifteen minute match.

Also from Raw, this time in full form.

Here's Wyatt to talk about how people shouldn't deny him like Seth Rollins has done. Seth lives in a glass house and a single shout brought it all crashing down. This brings out Rollins, who says he was speaking the truth when he called Wyatt a false prophet. If Bray is that disturbed

by what Seth said, do something about it. Bray says Seth is beneath him and that Rollins doesn't want this fight. The lights go out again and Bray is gone. They go out again and Bray is on the screen, saying Seth can slay a king but not a god.

Gran Metalik vs. Ariya Daivari

Metalik sends him into the corner to start and it's already time for the wristlock. A high crossbody gives Metalik two but gets tossed into the corner. We take a break and come back with Metalik walking the ropes into a dropkick for two. A running hurricanrana sends both guys out to the floor in a big crash and Metalik's top rope elbow is good for two more. Daivari goes for the mask though and it's a hammerlock lariat for the pin on Metalik at 7:53.

Rating: D+. This didn't have the time to go anywhere and I'm still wondering what Metalik did to WWE. He was on 205 Live a few weeks ago and now he's jobbing to Daivari of all people? The match was nothing to see, save for a few good dives from Metalik. I feel sorry for him though as it's like he just can't catch a break.

We look back at Samoa Joe choking out Paul Heyman.

And now, the only way this show could end.

Here are Lesnar and Heyman to get things going with Paul saying it's time for some revenge. Now last week, Samoa Joe attacked Heyman and Paul gets why that's the case. Sometimes he certainly deserves it but that wasn't true last week. Last week, Heyman saw someone that could go man to beast with Brock.

There have been a lot of Samoans in wrestling but Joe is the outcast one. For some reason he's not treated the same and his biggest claim to fame is choking Heyman out. Heyman agrees that the Koquina Clutch was everything that Joe promised it would be. That made Heyman wonder what would happen to the title if Brock was ever caught in that hold. Then Heyman realized that's not a problem because Joe isn't man enough to get the hold on Brock Lesnar.

Cue Joe to headbutt Lesnar right in the face as the brawl is on. Security is sent out and dispatched just as fast so here's the locker room (or at least the midcard) to try again. That goes just as badly with Joe breaking away to superkick Joe right in the jaw. The fight is finally broken up and things settle down. This was an outstanding start but there's one thing: none of this matters if Brock is lazy and just does suplexes into an F5 at the pay per view. Make it a competitive match where they beat the heck out of each other and things will be fine. Just don't make it a squash, please.

Overall Rating: D-. Totally skippable show this week with only the last segment being worth seeing. This felt like one of the older episodes of the show and that's really not a good thing. It was the same cast of characters who weren't interesting in the first place and now don't do anything more than fill in a space on this show.

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205 Live – June 6, 2017: I Guess Neville Isn't a Gamer

205 Live

Date: June 6, 2017

Location: Blue Cross Arena, Rochester, New York

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

It's actually time for a new challenger this week. Neville retained his Cruiserweight Title at Extreme Rules and that means Austin Aries is finally in his rear view mirror. Now it's time for TJP to get his shot in exchange for all the help he's given Neville over the last few months. Neville didn't take kindly to his claim at a shot and attacked him in advance. Let's get to it.

The opening recap looks at TJP helping Neville with Aries and then being attacked anyway. It didn't feel like a face turn though, making tonight more heel vs. heel.

Opening sequence.

Here's Noam Dar for a match, though he doesn't have Alicia Fox with him. Well so much for this one being interesting. As a VERY loud fan keeps asking about Fox's whereabouts, Dar talks about Cedric Alexander losing Fox to him, the better man. Fox is at home recovering but she wants Cedric to move on already. Cedric cuts him off and we're ready to go.

Noam Dar vs. Cedric Alexander

Cedric goes after the arm to start so Dar goes to the ropes, screaming in faux agony. Dar's headlock works a bit better until Alexander pops up and dropkicks him to the floor. Back in and Cedric gets kicked off the middle rope before it's time to work on the arm. A kick to the chest doesn't work as well though and Alexander kicks him in the face.

That just earns Cedric another kick to the leg and things slow down again. An awkward looking rollup gives Dar two and another kick to the

face gives him the same. You might notice a pattern in Dar's offense here and that's not a good thing. Alexander charges into a boot but is still able to reverse the running kick into the Lumbar Check for the pin on Dar at 7:07.

Rating: C. Dar continues to be one of the most annoying talkers (in a good way) and weaker in-ring performers on the brand. He's just not interesting to watch in the ring and that's going to catch up with him. I can't get interested in someone who does a bunch of running kicks to the chest and works on armbars for the rest of the match. He's good on the mic but at some point, the bell has to ring.

Cedric says they're done.

Video on TJP winning the inaugural Cruiserweight Classic.

TJP says Neville has a TJP problem.

Mustafa Ali vs. Louie Valle

Ali grabs the wristlock to start but gets his throat snapped across the top rope. A hard ax handle to the chest gives Valle two and Louie stomps away in the corner. Ali comes right back with a kick to the head and the rolling neckbreaker but cue Drew Gulak with a siren before the inverted 450. Drew: "SAFE AND SOUND! FEET ON THE GROUND!" Not that it matters as Ali reverses a cradle into the pin at 3:34.

Rating: D+. This was just a way to give Ali some momentum back and continue his feud with Gulak. I'm not sure where they're going to wrap things up but I'd have Ali join him for a bit. At some point just having Gulak on his own doesn't work and he's going to need some followers. I know I say that every week but it's still a problem that needs to be fixed.

Gulak keeps talking on his bullhorn until Ali hits a running flip dive to take him down.

Video on Rich Swann's rise to the Cruiserweight Title and eventual partnership with Sasha Banks.

Swann is speaking Japanese with Akira Tozawa when Titus O'Neil comes in and asks to speak to Tozawa alone. Titus wants to spread his Brand international and says Tozawa should talk to his best friend Apollo Crews about the opportunity. As usual, Tozawa seems confused but that might be due to Titus imitating his barking/shouting/grunting thing.

Neville isn't worried about TJP because TJP was just a means to an end.

Cruiserweight Title: TJP vs. Neville

TJP is challenging. After the Big Match Intros, Neville takes him straight into the corner and slaps TJP's head a bit. That earns him a front flip and some head slapping of his own so Neville grabs a headlock to slow the pace a bit. TJP wristlocks him down into an armbar. They take turns flipping out of holds until TJP grabs something like a Sharpshooter/Figure Four hybrid, which sends Neville right to the ropes.

A Tarantula keeps Neville in trouble but he pulls TJP to the floor and stops to glare at the announcers. TJP is in big trouble back inside and a missile dropkick makes things even worse. The champ gets too cocky though and a backdrop sends him outside for a corkscrew dive and a big crash.

There's the slingshot dropkick into the double chickenwing gutbuster for a close two and the shock sets in on the kickout. Neville misses a knee so TJP kicks it out, only to charge into a superkick. The Phoenix splash misses as well and the kneebar goes on but Neville rolls into the Rings of Saturn to retain at 14:07.

Rating: B. This was better than I thought it would be as TJP set up the leg as well as he could have. They're really pushing the idea that Neville is clearing out the division, which is going to make whoever takes the title all the bigger deal. It's almost hard to believe that he's only held the title for five months. Let him do his thing and then move up to the main roster, like he should have been all along.

Overall Rating: C+. The main event helped a lot and helped this show as more of a stand alone episode rather than something that moved the main story forward. Neville needs a new challenger, which he can get in the next few weeks. In theory that would have been Tozawa but he's getting to

deal with Titus O'Neil for reasons of general nonsense. Not a bad show this week but it's nothing you need to see.

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205 Live – June 13, 2017: That's Important Too

205 Live

Date: June 13, 2017

Location: Smoothie King Center, New Orleans, Louisiana

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Corey Graves

It seems that we have a new challenger to Neville's Cruiserweight Title as the champ called out Akira Tozawa last night on Monday Night Raw. Hopefully that doesn't mean we'll be seeing a lot of Titus O'Neil as a bonus because he's been hitched to Tozawa for reasons unclear. We should also be hearing something about Austin Aries' future. Let's get to it.

Tozawa is getting ready in the back when Titus comes in to say he's

gotten Tozawa a main event match against TJP tonight. Akira tries to say something about the Titus Brand but Titus cuts him off and says Tozawa signing would mean, in song, that it's raining yen. Tozawa really doesn't seem impressed and I can't say I'm surprised.

Opening sequence.

The announcers (with Joseph being welcomed to the team) preview the show.

Cedric Alexander vs. Ariya Daivari

Cedric flips out of a wristlock to start and the threat of a kick to the head sends Daivari running away. Back in and Daivari drives Cedric back first into the corner but he comes right back with a good looking dropkick for two. Cedric's springboard clothesline is broken up and we hit the neck chinlock. One heck of a jumping knee to the head gets two on Cedric and it's off to the chinlock again. Cedric fights up and hits the handspring enziguri for two, followed by the springboard clothesline. Hang on though as here's Noam Dar with Alicia Fox on his phone. Cedric kicks him down and grabs the Lumbar Check for the pin at 6:53.

Rating: C+. That might have been the least interesting and worst run-ins I can remember in a very long time. Alexander keeps beating Dar and making him look like a goon so why is he still doing this stuff? The Fox stuff is about as annoying as it can be (in a good way) but what is the point in this story continuing when Alexander has won all the matches and showdowns while saying it's over? I really don't get this one.

Post match Cedric grabs the phone and ignores Fox before hanging up on her.

Here's Austin Aries for his first comments after losing to Neville again. He was thinking this would be a bit of a different kind of moment but he's out here without his Cruiserweight Title. While he's ready to keep going, WWE thinks he needs to be medically cleared and he has to take some time off.

This brings out Tony Nese to say to say Aries needs to get out of the ring before he starts fading into the past. Aries brings up making Nese

tap out recently, which means violence is teased. This brings out Jack Gallagher (Where has he been?) to say this is a city about having fun. If Nese thinks he's Aries' replacement, that makes him the biggest joke of all. Nese swings so Gallagher takes him apart with the umbrella.

TJP runs into Rich Swann, who thinks the fans were starting to believe in him again but that changed in a hurry. Swann wants the old TJP back.

Video on Mustafa Ali but it's cut off by Drew Gulak, who doesn't think Ali has the fans' best interests in mind. On the other hand, Gulak only cares about making fans happy, albeit in a safe way. They square off next week.

Gallagher vs. Nese next week as well.

TJP vs. Akira Tozawa

Tozawa shouts a lot and grabs a headlock. A kick to the chest and the screaming backplash give Tozawa two as Titus O'Neil is watching in the back. TJP finally gets in a dropkick to knock Tozawa out of the air but his arm is a big banged up. He's fine enough to work on a neck crank with an arm trap as things slow down a bit.

Back up and Tozawa hits a nice springboard forearm into a nipup, making him like Shawn Michaels with worse hair. For some reason this brings up a CM PUNK chant until TJP puts on a something like a standing Indian Deathlock. That's switched over to a butterfly lock until Tozawa comes back up with a hurricanrana. TJP bails to the floor and eats a suicide dive for little reaction.

Back in and Tozawa gets crotched on top, setting up the double chickenwing gutbuster for two. They slug it out with Tozawa getting the better of it, only to have TJP grab a quick kneebar. Tozawa grabs the rope so TJP kicks his mouthpiece out. Not that it matters as Tozawa comes right back up with a Saito suplex and the top rope backplash for the pin at 11:16.

Rating: C+. This took a bit to get going but the last few minutes were quite good. TJP's kick to the face looked awesome, as did Tozawa speeding

things up into the Saito suplex. This was the kind of win that Tozawa needed to follow up on the Kendrick feud. Now if only he can ditch Titus, he would be firmly in line for a Cruiserweight Title shot.

Post match Titus is singing It's Raining Yen in the back when Neville comes up. Neville really doesn't care about any of this because Tozawa isn't ready for the Neville level. Titus says Tozawa is the future to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. Good show here as they're setting up a fresh challenge for the title, along with giving us an update on Aries. I still don't get the point in having Alexander vs. Dar continuing but maybe they're setting up something in the future. This might not have been the best show on its own but it helped set stuff up for the future, which is also very important.

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