

Monday Night Raw – December 30, 2002: Something is Missing

Monday Night Raw

Date: December 30, 2002

Hosts: Terri, Jonathan Coachman, Michael Cole, Tazz

It's the final show of the year and that means....a Best Of show. I'm not entirely sure how many great things there were on Raw in 2002 but thankfully we're getting a Best Of WWE show, meaning we'll be seeing Smackdown and pay per view matches as well. That offers a few more possibilities so let's get to it.

Opening sequence, with a mix of Beautiful People and Across the Nation. I've heard worse.

Terri and Coach welcome us to the show and run down some of the stuff we'll be seeing later.

Before we get into this, two quick notes: they're showing clipped versions here but I'll be posting the full versions. I'm also going to be skipping the quick introductions from the hosts and the recaps, which don't really add anything.

From Smackdown, September 26.

Eddie Guerrero vs. Edge

No DQ. Eddie starts hammering away until a monkey flip puts him down. The fans are all over Eddie as he easily breaks up a keylock. An elbow to the head drops Edge and Eddie hits some rather hard right hands. We hit a chinlock for a bit before Edge snaps off a powerslam, only to take too long getting to the top.

That means a huge superplex to give Eddie two and it's time to head outside. Unfortunately it's also time for a ladder and that means a ref bump as the ladder goes straight into his face (looked great actually). Back in and Eddie unloads on him with a chair but misses the frog splash to put both guys down.

We come back from a break with a new referee and the second only now being taken to the back. That's really not a good response time.

Edge gets in the half nelson faceplant but takes too much time going up, allowing Eddie to snap off a hurricanrana for a close two. A springboard hurricanrana is countered into a sitout powerbomb with Eddie's head bouncing off the mat in a scary visual.

The ladder is brought in but it's also knocked into Edge's face to drop the Canadian again. That means Eddie needs a second ladder so he can sandwich Edge together, setting up the slingshot hilo. Guerrero gets one heck of a cheer from the crowd and it's really hard to blame him with how hard they're beating each other up out there.

Eddie goes up the ladder but Edge is there to slug it out...so Eddie sunset powerbombs him off with one of the biggest bumps you'll see on regular TV. Edge just got folded up and it looked awesome. That's good for another respectful round of applause and somehow only two. In almost any other match, that should have been the fall.

Back up again and Edge backdrops him into the ladder in the corner before they climb the second ladder a second time. You know, because it ended so well earlier. This time Edge rams him face first into the top a few times and grabs an Edgecution off the ladder (looked a bit more like a superplex for the sake of clearing the ladder but the landing still looked great) for the pin and one last big reaction from the crowd.

Rating: A. Sometimes you need a great story with all kinds of intricacies and plot details. Sometimes you need a big climax to a major story. Then sometimes you need two incredibly talented wrestlers doing crazy things to each other involving a ladder. This was spectacular with both guys absolutely destroying each other with one more big spot after another. Nothing was topping that sunset powerbomb though and I think everyone knew it. Edge winning the match (and in theory the feud) is the right call and Eddie didn't lose a thing here. Aside from the match of course. This is on multiple DVDs and it's easy to see why.

From Raw, July 1.

WWE World Title: Jeff Hardy vs. Undertaker

Undertaker is defending and it's a ladder match. JR warns us that this could be the biggest trainwreck in history. Before the match, Jeff jumps onto Undertaker's motorcycle to start the mind games. The champ goes outside and has a ladder dropkicked into him, followed by

a chair shot to the head.

That goes nowhere though as Undertaker clotheslines Jeff's head off, only to have Jeff send him into the ladder up against the apron. Another ladder shot to the head knocks Jeff into the announcers' table but Undertaker opts to climb back down and do some more beating. They both wind up inside for I believe the first time with the very slow beating continuing. Jeff slugs away for a bit but is punched right back down to kill the crowd again.

Undertaker puts Jeff inside the ladder for the apron legdrop and the destruction continues. A Whisper in the Wind gets Jeff out of trouble and he uses the ladder as a springboard to take Undertaker down again. It's time for the big ladder and a horrible looking hurricanrana sends Undertaker outside. Jeff gets a hand on the belt but a chair to the back brings him right back down.

Undertaker loads up the Last Ride but Jeff gets in a weak chair shot to the head. Thankfully Undertaker almost pops back up so Jeff BLASTS him with a much better shot. That's not really sold either as more chair shots slow Jeff down. A chokeslam off the ladder (chokeshove really) allows Undertaker to pull the title down.

Rating: C-. This is one of those matches that just hasn't aged well. I remember losing my mind when Jeff hit Undertaker with the chair on the original viewing but this really doesn't hold up later on. The last few minutes help this but it was a long squash until the ending. We've sat through a few weeks of Undertaker destroying the Hardys and now he does it again in Jeff's signature match before moving on to the Angle match. Not great but watchable enough.

For some reason they don't show Undertaker's post match face turn.

From Summerslam.

Kurt Angle vs. Rey Mysterio

Rey showed Angle up recently and Kurt wants to prove that it's just a fluke. Angle's singlet looks like a barber pole and Rey sneaks in from behind with a springboard ankle scissors. The ankle lock goes on in less than thirty seconds but Rey sends him into the ropes with Kurt having to duck the 619.

A hard wheelbarrow suplex sends Rey hard onto the mat and one heck of a clothesline gives Angle two. Rey's back is bent around the middle rope and Angle is getting a bit too cocky. A one legged

Liontamer has Mysterio in even more trouble but a rollup gives him a fast two. Rey is certainly sticking around well enough so far.

That just ticks Angle off though and he throws Rey with a belly to belly. Kurt misses a charge though and goes sailing over the top but the referee won't let Mysterio fly. That's fine with Rey who flips OVER THE REFEREE to take Kurt down. The fans are losing their mind and Rey Dropping the Dime (springboard legdrop) for two makes them even worse. Now the 619 connects and the West Coast Pop is good for a VERY near fall. Rey puts him on top for a super hurricanrana but Angle slips out and grabs the ankle lock for the submission at 9:20.

Rating: A-. What a match. This is one of the best opening matches in company history as they just do not stop for the better part of ten minutes. It's an outstanding performance with Rey getting his big breakout performance and Angle showing that he's still one of the best in the world.

Raw Retro: Raw is Owen.

From Wrestlemania XVIII.

The Rock vs. Hollywood Hogan

Make no mistake about it: this is the main event. Hogan is here alone and instantly the biggest face on the roster because Toronto is an old WWF town. Rock is nearly booed out of the building for the second year in a row. They stare each other down and you can feel the energy. The bell rings and we get the big lockup with Hogan shoving him down and posing for a standing ovation. Hogan is only the heel in name only here and everyone knows it.

A shoulder puts Rock down and it's 1987 all over again as Hogan plays to the crowd. Hogan even calls him a meatball as a callback to Rocky III. Now it's Rock shoving him down and telling Hulk to just bring it. The Rock Bottom doesn't work and it's Hogan punching even more. A clothesline sets up an abdominal stretch on the Rock as they're keeping it very simple so far with big moves to fit the stadium style.

The fans boo Rock out of the building for some chops in the corner so Hogan comes back with a chokeslam of all things. They head outside with Hogan hitting him in the back with a chair. Back in and we've got a ref bump which really isn't needed here. Rock hooks a Sharpshooter and Hogan makes the ropes, only to tap when Rock drags

him back to the middle.

A loud ROCKY SUCKS chant breaks out but Hogan turns it into cheers with a low blow and a Rock Bottom of his own. It's weightlifting belt time but Rock grabs a DDT, allowing him to do some whipping. The Rock Bottom connects....and he Hulks Up. Hulk kicks out at two and 68,000 people are suddenly five years old again and Hogan is their hero. It's as if he apologizes for every bad thing he's done in just a few seconds and the fans accept him with open arms.

The three punches, the big boot and legdrop (JR: "HE BEAT ANDRE THE GIANT WITH THAT MOVE!") get two so Hogan loads up another leg but it's Wrestlemania VI all over again. There's a second Rock Bottom, followed by a third and Rock nips up. The People's Elbow puts Hogan away at 16:23.

Rating: B. This is ALL about the crowd as the in ring action was ok at best. The fans carry this to an epic encounter though and the ending was the only option they had. Hogan is the biggest name ever but this isn't WCW and a guy ten years past his prime doesn't beat the biggest star in the business at the time. That Hulk Up spot is one for the ages and it was done so perfectly that it's the part of this show people remember more than anything else. Not a great match but an incredible performance and spectacle.

Post match Hogan gets to his feet and stares Rock down again before weakly extending his hand. Rock shakes it and leaves but here are Hall and Nash to beat Hogan down for reasons that aren't entirely clear. Rock comes back in for the save and it's posing a go-go. They knew they had something with Hogan here but they had a short time window. He was World Champion in April and lost it a month later, but the idea worked at the time.

From Summerslam.

HHH vs. Shawn Michaels

Anything goes and unsanctioned with Shawn in jeans. Shawn hammers away to start and spears HHH down for more right hands. They're quickly on the floor with Shawn ramming him head first into the post. It's time for some toys, including a trashcan to HHH's head and a top rope right hand for the same.

Sweet Chin Music misses less than three minutes in and Shawn walks into a spinebuster for the first real shot to his bad back. Like a

smart villain, HHH starts in on the back but Shawn says bring it, earning himself a kick to the chest. One heck of a chair shot to the back has Shawn's face in agony, which is where so much of this match's strength comes from. Michaels could tell such a story with his face and it really does bring you deeper into the story they're trying to tell.

Shawn gets in a desperation rollup for two but walks into the facebuster to cut him off again. A DDT on the chair gets two and we've got some blood. HHH steals Shawn's belt for a good old fashioned whipping followed by a few buckle shots to the cut head. With Shawn pulling himself to his feet, it's sledgehammer time. As is his custom though, Shawn cuts HHH off at the exactly right time, earning himself an abdominal stretch.

HHH goes for the hammer again but Earl Hebner calls him off and yells a lot. A superplex is broken up so HHH blasts him in the back with the chair again. There's a side slam through an open chair and Shawn looks dead. You can feel the fans getting more and more into this and JR wants the referee to do a fast count. Shawn kicks out and now HHH is getting frustrated because Michaels won't stay down. Another side slam onto a closed chair gets the same and HHH covers three times in a row. The Pedigree is broken up by a low blow and you can feel the crowd coming back to life. HHH grabs the chair but a desperation superkick knocks it into HHH's face to draw blood as well. Shawn hits the forearm into the nippup and the fans actually come to their feet as it's the old Shawn one more time. A great chair shot to the head drops HHH and Shawn picks up the belt to even things up a bit from earlier.

Shawn bulldogs the very bloody HHH onto the steps to knock him even sillier. Since that's not enough, let's bring in a ladder too. Said ladder is thrown inside but HHH baseball slides it into Shawn's ribs for a breather. HHH goes up top for some reason and it's a superplex to bring him back down for two. Now the steps are brought in but Shawn drop toeholds HHH into them before knocking him outside again. With nothing else left, here's a table too with Shawn splashing HHH off the top through the wood. HHH very slowly rolls back in and Shawn brings the ladder inside again. The big elbow off the ladder crushes HHH and Shawn pops right back up. It's superkick time but HHH counters into the Pedigree which is countered into a jackknife

rollup for the pin at 27:19.

Rating: A+. My goodness what a performance. That's the only way to put it as Shawn basically started all over again and had this kind of an amazing match. This was some outstanding storytelling with Michaels taking us to the very brink but fighting back until there was an actual way to believe he could pull it off. HHH was at his most dastardly here and that makes for one heck of a match. This is one of the best matches of both of their careers and the circumstances make it even more amazing. Shawn timed that comeback as well as anything I've ever seen and I got swept up in the match all over again. Just excellent.

Post match, HHH hits a celebrating Shawn in the back with a sledgehammer to go biggest heel ever. Shawn does a stretcher job, seemingly putting him out of action for a long time. Oh and one more thing: for some reason HHH has tried to claim that this match was forty five minutes long. Even if you count the entrances and the post match stuff, it's less than thirty six minutes total. That's a big stretch even in wrestling, which is covering a lot of ground. For some reason they only aired about seven minutes of that one. Everything else has had at least half.

From Backlash.

Kurt Angle vs. Edge

I love those big pieces of metal that swing back and forth to go with the Backlash name. You don't see that kind of stuff enough anymore. Angle makes the mistake of charging at Edge to start and runs into some right hands. A flapjack sends Kurt outside and he's rather upset by these circumstances.

Back in and a wicked German suplex sends Edge flying and an overhead belly to belly gets two. It's already off to the chinlock and things slow down a bit. Edge fights back again and gets in a belly to belly of his own to buy a breather. The yet to be named Edgecution gets two on Angle but Edge takes too long on top, allowing Angle to run the corner for the superplex. That always looks great.

Some rolling Germans give Angle more near falls but Edge gets in something like a release German suplex of his own. A backdrop puts Angle on the floor again (Why is that floor so shiny?) and Edge dives down onto him for a lighter pop than I was expecting. Back in

and an Angle Slam sets up a quick ankle lock but Edge rolls through for a near fall. Angle brings in a chair (Why does the referee never even try to stop that?) but walks into an Edge-o-Matic. The spear is blocked by a knee to the face and the Angle Slam gives Kurt the clean pin.

Rating: B. I know he's run a lot of his legacy into the ground but dang Angle was good back in the day. It's crazy to think that he had only been in the WWF about two and a half years at this point because he's been great for so long. Edge is getting a heck of a rub out of this feud and it's doing a lot to make him into a bigger deal. That's such an important key to his career: they didn't go nuts and hot shot Edge because they knew he was going to be something special. Let him season in this role and then move him up when he's ready.

We see about five minutes of Rock vs. Lesnar.

From Raw, October 7.

Tag Team Titles: Rob Van Dam/Jeff Hardy vs. Dudley Boyz vs. Chris Jericho/Christian vs. Kane/Hurricane

TLC with Kane defending on his own as Hurricane is still down in the back. It's a huge brawl to start with Jericho throwing in an early ladder as people pair off. Christian and Jericho are easily shoved off said ladder though and everyone else heads outside. Jeff dives off the barricade to take Kane down and it's Christian and Jericho putting the ladder on the turnbuckle.

Spike goes into the ladder but heel miscommunication puts Christian down. Kane comes back in with the top rope clothesline and chokeslams Bubba for good measure. There's a ladder up in the ring as Kane throws Spike over the top and onto Van Dam. The Canadians knock Kane to the floor and put him on a table so Jeff can hit a legdrop off a ladder. Christian gets powerbombed off the ladder and we take a break.

Back with Bubba and Jericho slugging it out on top of the ladder as it's clear that Kane is the only one tall enough to reach the belts at that height. Jericho bulldogs Bubba off the ladder and Christian gives Van Dam a reverse DDT off another one. This match is still all over the place and doesn't feel like there's any teamwork or anything other than a bunch of people doing a bunch of spots.

With everyone down, the fans want tables. Christian goes up but gets crotched on the top by Kane, followed by a powerslam to Jeff. Bubba plays Matt for some Poetry in Motion to Kane and there's the Van Terminator to knock him even sillier. Jeff goes up so Bubba superplexes him right back down and everyone is done. In an interesting note, we see a replay of the superplex and the original commentary is still there. You don't hear that too often.

Now it's Jericho going up with Spike shoving the ladder over, sending Jericho out to the floor in a scary looking crash. Christian throws Spike through a table as this just keeps going. The Five Star hits Christian and Jeff misses a Swanton before being backdropped through a table. Kane comes back in and chokeslams Jericho off a ladder before pulling down the titles for the win.

Rating: B-. This was entertaining but WAY too long at over twenty five minutes, the fourth longest of all time and the longest team version ever. Above that though, there was no flow or psychology to the match. With the more famous one, you could tell that the matches were laid out with far more precision, which made for a better match. This one was all over the place with everyone hitting random spots and popping back up for the next one. It's entertaining but nothing I'll remember watching in a day or two.

Coach and Terri wrap it up.

Overall Rating: A-. I never know how to rate these things but they had some great stuff and covered almost everything that mattered, save for the Smackdown Tag Team Titles. Now even ONE MATCH? There was a lot of Summerslam here, which really is best for everyone. It's a nice way to wrap up 2002, but the fact that they're moving towards HHH vs. Scott Steiner doesn't help things.

Overall 2002 was all over the place. The first few months feel like the show is running on fumes, then the Brand Split breathed some life into it for a few weeks, then the shows were horrible over the first half of the summer, then Summerslam was one of the best shows ever, then Raw was horrible and Smackdown was great. The company seems to be searching for a way forward and I really don't think they've found it yet.

As we head into 2003, things are as different as ever. Over on Raw you have the HHH show where he tries to prove that he can carry everything on his back. That's not exactly thrilling TV but I have a

feeling it's what we're going to be seeing it for a very long time. If there's one thing you can count on from HHH, it's him hammering things into your head until you agree with him.

On the blue side, things are starting to come into focus. It's clear that they're building towards Angle vs. Lesnar, which should be one heck of a match. In addition to that you have Los Guerreros, Edge and Benoit getting better every week. As always, Smackdown is the wrestling show and that makes for some very entertaining TV.

The upcoming year shows no signs of changing the pattern of the shows as the same trends could go on for months. Raw will continue to be the storyline heavy show while Smackdown is much more about the in-ring product. If they could find a way to combine those things into one, you could have one heck of a wrestling program. Instead though, we're likely stuck with one good show and one horrid one. Such is life in WWE, even to this day.

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Smackdown – May 30, 2017:

Back in the Fall

Smackdown

Date: May 30, 2017

Location: Philips Arena, Atlanta, Georgia

Commentators: Tom Phillips, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

You might have heard about this one before but tonight has a Fatal Five Way for a future title shot. In this case it's the Smackdown Women's Title as Charlotte, Becky Lynch and the Welcoming Committee will go at it for a shot at Naomi at the upcoming Money in the Bank pay per view. Let's get to it.

Charlotte says she's ready to face anyone.

Carmella will make a fabulous champion.

Natalya says her one and only catchphrase which isn't even hers.

Becky Lynch doesn't need the luck of the Irish to win.

Tamina says she'll win.

Opening sequence.

We open with Kevin Owens' Highlight Reel with Owens talking about how he's going to climb the ladder for the briefcase. After winning that, it's one step away from the Smackdown World Title, which will make him the face of the entire WWE. One thing he needs to step on before he gets there is his guest tonight: Shinsuke Nakamura. Owens calls Shinsuke a rock star and you remember what happened to the last rock star around here. If Nakamura shows up at Money in the Bank with the fans singing his song, it's going to be the day the music died.

This brings out Baron Corbin to show a clip of his beatdown of Sami Zayn. Owens: "I've been beating up Sami Zayn for fifteen years so you've got nothing to brag about." Nakamura says he pinned Owens last week and Corbin has lost to Sami twice in a row. The brawl is on with Sami coming in for the save. A challenge is issued and the tag match is on after the break.

Sami Zayn/Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Baron Corbin/Kevin Owens

Nakamura sends Corbin into the corner to start and tells him to bring it. That earns Corbin some Good Vibrations in the corner before it's off to both partners. Sami sends Owens outside so it's back to Corbin to hammer away in the corner. Owens adds a kick to the head and Baron grabs a powerslam as we take a break.

Back with Sami fighting out of Owens' chinlock and hitting the Blue Thunder Bomb. Corbin gets dropped as well and the hot tag brings in Nakamura. Everything breaks down and we get some heel miscommunication, causing Corbin to deck Owens with a right hand. Kinshasa makes things even worse for Owens and is good for the pin at 11:10.

Rating: C+. At least there were extenuating circumstances this time. You really don't need to have the US Champion losing so often but you know full well that everything is going to be sacrificed for the sake of building to the Money in the Bank ladder match in the only way this company knows how to do it.

Here are the Usos to brag about beating American Alpha and Breezango so no one is left. As you might expect (or should expect if you've been paying attention), heeere's New Day. Jey: "Did you three get lost skipping down the Yellow Brick Road?" Kofi: "It's more of a skip clap." Big E. gets right to the point: they want the titles. The Usos threaten to shoot New Day so Kofi brings up Shane McMahon, who has granted them a title shot at Money in the Bank. The Usos leave as Big E. and Woods carry Kofi around. This did exactly what it needed to do.

Long recap of Jinder Mahal winning the title and all the fallout that ensued.

It's Fashion Files time with Fandango as a film noir style gumshoe saying that it might be time to go back to the discount rack. He finds the fashion police department ransacked so he pulls out his price tag gun, only to find a woman's silhouette. It's Breeze in a wig and dress for some reason and, after realizing they can hear each others thoughts, they find a bottle containing ethanol alcohol,

tree frog excrement and hibiscus. They have a new case.

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

Elimination rules and the winner gets Naomi at the pay per view. The brawl starts before the bell with Tamina hitting a Samoan drop on Charlotte. Becky beats up Carmella in the timekeeper's area and Charlotte hits the moonsault onto Tamina and Natalya. Charlotte powerbombs Natalya through the table and everyone is down with the match never starting.

Cue Shane to say let's do something big, like the first ever women's Money in the Bank ladder match. In other words, we have no idea how to book a solo feud so let's just throw everyone into one match and put our feet up while saying the big matches are coming later on. That's the writers' solution instead of, you know, WRITING SOMETHING ELSE.

Breezango vs. Colons

Breezango is still wearing the same stuff from the film noir bit, including Breeze in the dress. Primo rips off the dress and the wig (because of course there's a wig) but Fandango squirts Primo with the water gun. Back from a break with Fandango in a chinlock, followed by Epico getting two off a Downward Spiral. Epico pulls Breeze off the apron so he bails under the ropes, only to come back as the janitor. Fandango and Epico fight over the mop, allowing Breeze to grab the Unprettier for the pin at 8:04.

Rating: C-. Just a quick match to keep Breezango going strong. I know the comedy isn't the best stuff in the world but the division is REALLY weak on teams at this point so putting a gimmick on two guys is one of the best things they could do. It's not brilliant or anything but at least they're doing something. If it gets over, sweet.

AJ Styles and Dolph Ziggler are ready to fight tonight.

Here's Randy Orton to talk about Jinder Mahal. His family is full of wrestlers and if his grandfather was still alive, he wouldn't say anything to Randy. Instead he'd just smack Orton for losing a title

to someone like Mahal. At Money in the Bank, Orton is going to take a lesson from his grandfather and smack some sense into Mahal. Cue Mahal on the screen to say he's champion and Orton isn't. Orton poses like it doesn't mean anything.

Dolph Ziggler vs. AJ Styles

Feeling out process to start with AJ scoring off a great looking dropkick to take over. Ziggler sends him outside though and we take a break. Back with AJ hitting his seated forearm and a Teshocker for two. Ziggler knees him in the head, only to get suplexed hard into the corner. AJ gets in a backbreaker but Ziggler hits him in the back of the head for something you don't see too often.

A running knee to the jaw drops AJ again but he comes right back with the Calf Crusher. Ziggler rakes the eyes (like a true heel should) for the break, followed by the Zig Zag for a delayed two. AJ gets back up and tries a springboard, only to get pulled down for a crash. The superkick is good for the pin on AJ at 12:13. Did I mention that AJ was billed as the hometown boy here?

Rating: C+. Standard Smackdown main event as they try to push Ziggler for some momentum. I'm still not sure how winning a match via pinfall gives you the momentum necessary to climb a ladder but then again I've never been the biggest fan of this time of the year in the first place.

Overall Rating: D+. Yep it's Money in the Bank time, meaning we can stop pretending that ANY of this matters because the writers have come up with their group of names, thrown them into a random match generator and put their feet up until the end of June. We're currently looking at THREE multi-person matches, none of which are for anything more than a future shot at a title. In other words, absolutely none of this matters so check back again in July so you can see them stall even more until Summerslam rolls around.

Results

Sami Zayn/Shinsuke Nakamura b. Kevin Owens/Baron Corbin – Kinshasa to Owens

Breezango b. Colons – Unprettier to Primo

Dolph Ziggler b. AJ Styles – Superkick

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Monday Night Raw – May 29, 2017: Tune In Next Week To Find Out

Monday Night Raw

Date: May 29, 2017

Location: Bon Secours Wellness Arena, Greenville, South Carolina

Commentators: Michael Cole, Booker T., Corey Graves

It's the go home show for Extreme Rules and we already have two matches announced. Tonight we have Seth Rollins vs. Roman Reigns and Finn Balor vs. Samoa Joe vs. Bray Wyatt to help set up the Fatal Five Way at the pay per view. Other than that there's always the chance that some new matches could be announced so let's get to it.

We open with the John Cena narrated Memorial Day tribute.

Opening sequence.

Here are Miz and Maryse for MizTV. Miz complains about Dean Ambrose stealing his Intercontinental Title and then getting himself disqualified to retain it. Therefore, the rematch is going to have the title changing hands on a disqualification. We see a clip of last week's match where Miz got Ambrose disqualified, which he'll do again on Sunday.

As for tonight though, Miz brings out his guests: Sheamus and Cesaro. Miz praises them for being hard working guys but Sheamus and Cesaro think the fans have been fickle. After months of working harder than anyone, the fans turned on them for the sake of the shiny new toy. Miz thinks the same thing is true for him as he's the one who made the title mean something. Cue Ambrose to say that someone needed to shut these three up. He's not out here alone though as the Hardys run out to help clear the ring.

Hardy Boyz/Dean Ambrose vs. Cesaro/Sheamus/Miz

Joined in progress after a break in what shouldn't be the biggest surprise. Sheamus works over Matt and throws him around before hitting the forearms to the chest. Cesaro comes in with a chinlock for a few seconds, only to have Matt get up and bring in Dean to clean house. Jeff baseball slides Cesaro and Dean hits the swinging neckbreaker on Sheamus.

A Miz distraction lets Sheamus knee Dean in the head though and we take a break. Back with Miz missing the big YES Kick and getting rolled up for two. A big boot gives Miz the same though and Dean stays in trouble. Ambrose fights away again but Cesaro and Miz take the Hardys off the apron so there's no one to tag. I've always loved that spot and it still works.

The Rebound Lariat is enough for the hot tag to Jeff as everything breaks down. Miz eats Poetry in Motion and Side Effect for two. The Twisting Stunner drops Sheamus and it's Dirty Deeds to Cesaro. A neckbreaker (looked like a Twist of Fate that was sold wrong) and

the Swanton are enough to put Miz away at 12:45.

Rating: C. A bit dull at times but the ending helped it a lot. They had a hot finish, which is really what matters most in something like this. I've always been a fan of combining the two feuds into one match and the ending would suggest that at least one title will change hands on Sunday, which would be the best option.

The announcers talk but Graves is on his phone and leaves, looking a bit distraught.

Graves takes the phone to Kurt Angle, who says if it's true, it could ruin him.

Elias Samson has a song for us before his match against a somewhat old looking jobber.

Elias Samson vs. Zac Evans

Samson throws him around and hits something like a spinebuster before pounding away on the ropes. Evans' back is bent around the post, followed by the reverse swinging neckbreaker for the pin at 2:40.

Graves is back and doesn't want to talk about what happened.

Samoa Joe watches a Finn Balor video and says he's broken Balor before and can do it again. Bray Wyatt pops up on screen to say that Joe is blind like the masses. Only one man can slay the Beast and that man is the Eater of Worlds.

Bray Wyatt vs. Samoa Joe vs. Finn Balor

Bray bails to the floor to start so Finn hammers on Joe, which goes about as well as you would expect. Joe tosses Bray back inside, leaving us with the Balor showdown. One heck of a kick to the head staggers Bray but Joe is back in to hammer on Balor. The idea of a Bray vs. Joe showdown seems to intrigue the fans, only to have Joe sent outside again.

All three are back in for a Tower of Doom with Bray being the only man standing. Sister Abigail is broken up by Joe but Balor breaks up the Koquina Clutch. The big flip dives takes out the monsters and we

go to a break. Back with Balor getting double teamed as the big guys take turns crushing him in the corner.

They take turns hitting backsplashes but Bray finally turns on Joe, as you had to expect him to do. Things don't go well for Bray though as Balor makes his comeback with a string of strikes to the face. Balor sends both guys outside and hammers away, only to get caught in Joe's Rock Bottom out of the corner. Bray dumps Joe again but Sister Abigail is broken up again. Joe takes it instead, only to have Balor jump Bray from behind. The Sling Blade and corner dropkick but Joe tosses Balor into the post and steals the pin at 16:48.

Rating: B. Really good match here with all three working hard. I like the idea of Joe winning, even though it's fairly certain that either Balor or Rollins will be the one getting destroyed by Lesnar first. They're certainly doing a good job of building Joe up though and that's a great sign for the future.

Rollins says he knows Reigns better than anyone and knows that he owns him. Tonight it's going to be the knee that used to be his greatest weakness but is now his greatest strength.

Noam Dar vs. Rich Swann

Alicia Fox and Sasha Banks are here as seconds. Dar jumps him from behind at the bell and stomps on the back of Swann's neck. Rich makes a quick comeback as the women get into it. A middle rope Phoenix splash puts Dar away at 2:55.

Swann and Banks dance post match.

The Revival is back and asked about attacking Enzo. They deny any wrongdoing and play down the footage of them being seen last week around the time of the attack. Corey says that Big Cass has seen the tape.

We look at the 205 Live street fight between Brian Kendrick and Akira Tozawa.

Big Cass comes out to yell at Graves for implying that he had something to do with Enzo being attacked. There's a more natural,

fast paced feeling to this show and it's working so far.

Kalisto vs. Titus O'Neil

Kalisto starts fast with the kicks and dropkicks Titus into the corner. A victory roll is broken up and Titus grabs a rollup with trunks for the pin at 49 seconds.

Here's Alexa Bliss with a table of stuff and some random people for This is Your Life Bayley. Bliss talks about the kendo stick hanging in the corner, which Bayley would probably try to hug instead of use on her. Now it's off to the table, which includes Bayley's first doll, which she still plays with. Then we have a trophy for best in sportsmanship. Bliss also has Bayley's yearbook where she was voted most likely to apologize.

That's enough for the table of stuff though so let's move on to the guests, starting with Mrs. Flapper, Bayley's fourth grade teacher. Apparently Bayley had perfect attendance and sat next to her father, who she just couldn't be away from without crying. Then we have Bayley's best friend Tracy, who says Bayley was the nicest girl in the world. The problem was Bayley let people take advantage of her by taking the fall for them or doing their homework. Then something happened and they stopped talking. Bayley wanted to watch wrestling instead of going out and doing anything else.

Bliss finds this hilarious we have Bayley's ex-boyfriend Phil, who said their first date was ok but kind of strange. Her dad was there every single time, including the time they almost had their first kiss. Phil didn't really like her though because he just wanted to get closer to Tracy. She liked him too so they kiss, which Bliss deems disgusting. Cue the real Bayley to clean house, including going up to grab the stick. Bliss cuts her off though and pulls out a second stick to give Bayley a beating. This was a long segment but Bliss sold it as she can do so well. The joke got old in a hurry more than once but at least they kept it moving fast enough.

Enzo has been attacked again. Maybe we could see who did it if we didn't use all of the cameras on crowd reaction shots. Cass blames the Revival but Angle says they were gone. Angle tells him to calm

down while we figure this out.

Austin Aries/Jack Gallagher vs. TJP/Neville

TJP and Gallagher get things going with Jack being driven into the corner for some kicks from Neville. That just means the headstand in the corner and a quick dropkick to take us to a break. Back with Gallagher in trouble as TJP puts on a chinlock. Jack fights up again and makes the hot tag to Aries, who comes in and works on the leg. The Last Chancery is broken up with a jawbreaker and the villains are sent outside for a double suicide dive. Aries misses the missile dropkick but Neville misses the Phoenix splash. The Last Chancery makes Neville tap at 12:40.

Rating: C-. And so, we see it again. These four have had every possible combination as many times as they can now and I really don't need to see them again. The match was fine but I have no interest in seeing anything else from these four. Hopefully Sunday is it for Neville vs. Aries as we've seen this match built up on two shows for the better part of three months.

Reigns says he'll win.

Post break, Neville is livid.

We look back at Goldust attacking R-Truth a few weeks back.

Goldust says the story is about to be finished.

R-Truth Productions cuts Goldust off and we have Truth quoting Pulp Fiction. Goldust is gonna get got.

Sasha Banks will be on 205 Live. Pay no attention to the audience being tiny for weeks leading up to this.

Roman Reigns vs. Seth Rollins

They circle each other to start with the fans being almost one sided behind Rollins. Reigns throws him around and stares Rollins down. Some big forearms send Rollins outside but he hits the jumping knee, followed by a clothesline over the top. A dive takes us to a break with a good deal of time left.

Back with Rollins being sent into the barricade, right in front of a

good number of empty first and second row seats. Reigns hits the corner clotheslines but the Superman Punch is pretty easily blocked. Rollins springboards into the Superman Punch for two but it's too early for the spear. Instead Rollins hits the low superkick for two of his own, only to have Reigns no sell the Buckle Bomb and hit another Superman Punch.

They head outside with Reigns going shoulder first into the steps, setting up a Blockbuster for another two. That great looking frog splash is still only good for a near fall but Rollins misses the third Phoenix Splash of the night. An enziguri sets up the windup knee but Reigns spears him down for the pin at 18:22.

Rating: B-. As is the case in the tag match (albeit to a better degree), the match was good but nothing we haven't seen several times before. I know the idea is that Reigns has the momentum heading into Sunday, though it's really hard to buy the idea that he's getting the title shot at some nothing show in July instead of in his fourth Wrestlemania main event in a row. Good main event, but people really didn't seem to care.

Overall Rating: C+. That's one of the better shows they've done in a long time as they kept the action strong and even had some stuff that left you coming back next week. I've never understood why so many shows have to be tied up nice and neat by the end. Give us some cliffhangers and stories to keep going instead of finishing things up and starting over again next week. I liked this show more than more recent Raw's, even though it was only pretty good. I'm really not sure what that means but I don't think it's a positive.

Results

Dean Ambrose/Hardy Boyz b. Sheamus/Cesaro/Miz – Swanton Bomb to Miz

Elias Samson b. Zac Evans – Reverse swinging neckbreaker

Samoa Joe b. Bray Wyatt and Finn Balor – Coup de Grace to Wyatt

Rich Swann b. Noam Dar – Middle rope Phoenix splash

Titus O'Neil b. Kalisto – Rollup with a handful of trunks

Austin Aries/Jack Gallagher b. TJP/Neville – Last Chancery to

Neville

Roman Reigns b. Seth Rollins – Spear

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Smackdown – December 26, 2002: He's Got Guys

Smackdown

Date: December 26, 2002

Location: Tulsa Convention Center, Tulsa, Oklahoma

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

It's the final show of the year as we're getting ready to start the build towards the Royal Rumble. We also have Brock Lesnar vs. Paul Heyman/Big Show/Kurt Angle in a feud that is likely to lead to a major feud down the line, though Lesnar is likely going to need some help along the way. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week's Angle heel turn and the announcement of Angle vs. Big Show for the title this week.

Opening sequence.

Here's Stephanie, who seems to be a face again, to open the show. She's not going to lie to us and say the World Title match is going to happen because it's been canceled. Last week, after Smackdown went off the air, Brock did something to Angle and now Kurt is out of action for a good while, potentially all the way until the Rumble. She won't tell us what happened but she'll show us later tonight. Since there's no reason given for the delay, here's Big Show to interrupt.

He's not happy with the idea of waiting until Royal Rumble but he's even more annoyed at the fact that Stephanie didn't name him #1 contender. She was just about to make that match though, RIGHT? Show tries to intimidate her and for once, Stephanie actually sounds scared as she threatens to suspend him. He'll have a chance to be #1 contender when he faces Chris Benoit in the main event. That's not cool with Show either but here's Benoit to interrupt. Benoit says he'll break Show's neck later tonight but Show plays the size card. That just earns him a low blow and Benoit leaves with a smile on his face.

Crash vs. Bill DeMott

DeMott is now all mean and angry, which the announcers tell you as often as they can. He works on Crash's arm before the match and sends it into the post but of course the referee starts the match anyway. DeMott slaps on an armbar as Tazz praises his psychology. A powerbomb and the moonsault finish Crash in a hurry.

Al Wilson and Dawn Marie exchange gifts: a bottle of Viagra and a camera. Both are for the honeymoon. Again: why is this such a bad thing for Al? Can I get some clarification on that?

Here are Matt Hardy, who was MVP in the 1999 No Mercy ladder match and always sticks to his New Year's resolution, and a badly damaged Shannon Moore with something to say. They want to talk about something destroying WWE: Brock Lesnar. After that belly to belly injured Moore last week, Shannon didn't stop but someone must stop Lesnar. Next week, Hardy wants Brock one on one and has a special plan for him. Matt beats Shannon down, though it feels like a lesson instead of a turn.

Heyman and Angle arrive with the latter on crutches and with a big cast around his leg.

Tag Team Titles: Los Guerreros vs. Edge/Billy Kidman

Edge and Kidman, who seems to get a shot at these titles every other week, are challenging. Kidman hiptosses both champs to start before snapping off a headscissors on Chavo. The champs take over with some chicanery and it's Kidman in early trouble. Eddie's slingshot hilo connects but so does an enziguri, allowing the tag to Edge. A double missile dropkick puts both champs down and a flapjack to Chavo makes things even worse.

As usual though, Eddie is smart enough to go after the bad knee but Kidman breaks up the Lasso From El Paso. A quick spear gets two on Eddie and the champs tease leaving, only to have the referee say a countout will give us new champions. Back from a break with Edge missing a charge into the corner to put the champs back in control. Chavo's chinlock works as well as any other chinlock (aside from Kevin Owens' of course) and the Edge-0-Matic gets Edge out of trouble.

A double flapjack really gets him out of trouble and it's off to Kidman, who is suplexed down almost immediately. Eddie misses the Frog Splash and Kidman drops the shooting star on Chavo, only to have Eddie pull the referee out for the DQ. And again never mind as the referee is restarting this as a No DQ match.

Chavo is in trouble to start the second fall but Eddie breaks up another shooting star attempt. Edge hits Chavo with the belt (which Chavo brought in) for two and heads to the apron for a tag for some reason. Cue A-Train with the backbreaker on Edge though, allowing Eddie to Frog Splash Kidman to retain.

Rating: B. Gah they were rolling here until the A-Train interference. Edge vs. A-Train isn't interesting but these four going on for nearly twenty minutes certainly was with Los Guerreros' cheating not working for a change. I was digging this match as Kidman continues to show that cruiserweights are more than capable of hanging with the big guys, making the division kind of a waste of time.

Here's the footage from after last week's Smackdown. Angle talks trash and beat on Brock bit more until Lesnar fought back and beat up Kurt and Big Show. Kurt took a chair to the head and back to back F5's on the floor with his knee hitting the post both times. Trainers came out but Lesnar dropped Angle's knee onto the barricade just to be sure. This would be a way to write Angle off for knee

surgery, which makes you wonder why they put the title on him in the first place. Then again, an injured Angle is probably worth more than Big Show at this point.

Back from a break with Heyman in the ring to blame Stephanie for Kurt's injuries. This brings out Angle on crutches to compare his rookie year to Lesnar. They both won the World Title in their first year but Angle did it without Heyman helping him out. Kurt: "AND I'M AN OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALIST! WHO SUCKS NOW???" Fans: "YOU SUCK!" Angle has an agent because he's a very important person. More importantly though, he's the kind of man that Lesnar could never be. He'll defend the title at the Royal Rumble and then he'll take Lesnar down like the punk that he is.

Heyman agrees, but he has a surprise for Kurt: Team Angle. That would be Charlie Haas and Shelton Benjamin, a pair of All-American wrestlers, with Shelton being Brock's former roommate at the University of Minnesota. Angle tells Lesnar that's checkmate. This is a great idea and something that could do a lot of good. If Team Angle is kept strong, they could be a great addition to the tag division, which suddenly needs a burst of energy. The segment was long but it did its job, which is far more important.

B-2 vs. Rikishi

Cena's rap says that B-2 is the physical version of R2-D2. Rikishi sends B-2 into the steps before the bell as Cena sits in on commentary. That lasts all of ten seconds until he gets up to break up the Stinkface. Back in and Buchanan (mostly) hits his top rope spinning clothesline. Cena tries to bring in a chair but uses the distraction to throw B-2 the chain. That just earns B-2 a superkick and the Rump Shaker for the pin.

Torrie Wilson isn't sure she'll be here for the wedding. Her dad comes up to yell at her for being selfish and says he's getting married next week no matter what. After the wedding, he and Dawn are going to have a child and he hopes it won't be a disappointment like her.

Los Guerreros celebrate their win when they run into Cena and B-2. Eddie and Chavo speak Spanish but Cena goes into a rap. Eddie mocks Cena's voice and says they still have the title. This was completely bizarre and yet still rather funny.

Benoit says he'll win and then go on to win the World Title that has

always eluded him.

Angle fires Big Show up.

Chris Benoit vs. Big Show

The winner gets Angle at the Rumble. Show doesn't waste time by throwing Benoit into the corner, followed by a big boot to make things even worse. Benoit chops away and tries the Crossface but gets tossed away with ease. More power offense sends Benoit flying into the corner before Show pulls off a turnbuckle pad. Benoit goes for the knee for a breather, followed by muscling Show up for a German suplex. The Swan Dive (a splash this time as Show is too close to the corner) gets two but the chokeslam is countered into a rollup (with feet on the ropes, though it might not have been intentional) for the pin.

Rating: D+. This was as good as Big Show throwing Benoit around for a few minutes before getting caught at the end was going to be. Benoit as the #1 contender is a great thing and the story of him never winning the title is a strong story. The match wasn't bad and they made sure to keep it short to make sure Big Show didn't mess anything up.

Show tries a chokeslam but gets countered into the Crossface (I always love that counter). Cue Team Angle for the superkick into a German suplex and the debut of the Haas of Pain (kind of a Liontamer/Indian deathlock combo). Show adds a chokeslam as the fans don't get their requested Brock. Angle comes out to talk trash and chokes Benoit with a crutch to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. They were very heavy on the storylines this week with several long explanations about what's going on in the main event. However, we also got a long title match, a World Title match set up for a month away and the debut of a new team. They covered a lot of stuff tonight and that's the best thing you could have after the mess that Raw has become.

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Your WWE Champion Ladies and Gentlemen

Main Event – May 25, 2017: Pick Something Already

Main Event

Date: May 22, 2017

Location: Van Andel Arena, Grand Rapids, Iowa

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Corey Graves

Dang it just when I'm getting used to Graves and Phillips being on every show together, or at least feeling like they are. They leave NXT and are now on one of the main shows each, 205 Live and this one. It's allowed these two to develop a great chemistry together and that makes the shows so much easier to listen to. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

TJP vs. Gran Metalik

Joseph points out that this is a rematch from the finals of the Cruiserweight Classic, which of course is taking place on this show instead of anywhere else. Metalik starts fast with his flips off the ropes and an armdrag to send TJP outside for a big dive. Back in and a springboard elbow gets two but it's way too early for the Metalik Driver.

Instead it's time to go for the mask but TJP settles for just throwing him off the top for two. TJP grabs a modified crossface chickenwing before switching over to a regular chinlock. Back up and TJP kicks him in the face a few times, followed by the top rope splash. A moonsault misses though and TJP hits the Detonation Kick for the pin at 5:27.

Rating: C. Completely watchable cruiserweight match here, which is really not saying much given the history between these two. Metalik has fallen all the way through the floor lately and I really hope there's a big reason for it instead of something petty that was holding him back, like some mistake six months ago.

To Raw for the first time.

Here's Finn Balor for a match but first he has something to say. At Extreme Rules we have a Fatal Five Way (he said Final Five at first) but here's Paul Heyman to interrupt. Paul lists off Lesnar's potential challengers and says Brock would make them all victims. Finally we have Balor himself, who Heyman thinks is the most talented performer in WWE today. Paul wants to see them fight and Balor agrees, even though Brock isn't here tonight.

And again from Monday.

Sheamus vs. Matt Hardy

The winner gets to pick the stipulation for the title match at Extreme Rules. Matt clotheslines him to the floor to start but Sheamus takes over in the brawling. The ten forearms set up a running knee to send Matt into the barricade. Back in and Matt avoids a charge into the corner but gets caught in a Regal Roll for two.

We come back from a break with Sheamus fighting out of a chinlock and using a Jeff distraction to elbow Sheamus in the head. The Side Effect gets two on Sheamus and a jumping knee to the face gets the same on Matt. Sheamus knocks him to the floor but stops to kick at Jeff, allowing Matt to grab the Twist of Fate for the pin at 12:07.

Rating: D+. Are we done yet? Like really, are we done with this feud yet? They've been doing the same stuff over and over again now with the Hardys never even seeming to break a sweat against these two. I'm liking Sheamus and Cesaro more and more but they need to actually beat the Hardys at some point to make it actually matter. Matt makes it a cage match.

Heath Slater/Rhyno vs. Curtis Axel/Curt Hawkins

Wait Axel is heel again??? Hawkins and Axel argue over who gets to start with Slater but it's quickly off to Rhyno for a HUGE pop. A clothesline gets two on Curt and it's back to Slater for a much more modest pop. Slater falls for a distraction though and gets shoved out to the floor, allowing the villains to take over as we take a break.

Back with Hawkins putting Slater in a sleeper before it's off to Hawkins for an armbar. A good looking dropkick gets Axel booed again but Slater flapjacks Hawkins, allowing the tag off to Rhyno. Everything breaks down with Heath diving onto Hawkins, leaving Rhyno to hit a spinebuster on Axel for the pin at 11:07.

Rating: D. Rhyno's level of overness never ceases to amaze me. The guy goes out there and does his thing every single week, despite not really changing anything in his offense for the last twenty years or so. Maybe it's the Michigan thing but sweet goodness he was as popular as free beer in a frat house.

And the final Raw clip.

Roman Reigns/Seth Rollins vs. Samoa Joe/Bray Wyatt

As usual, Reigns is hated. Joe and Rollins start with Seth getting in a few jabs, only to be sent crashing to the floor as we take an early break. Back with Reigns giving Bray a Samoan drop but getting

dropped by Joe. A chinlock and enziguri keep Reigns in trouble and Bray throws him outside.

That doesn't go quite as well as Reigns sends Joe into the barricade, allowing the hot tag to Rollins. House is quickly cleaned with Seth nailing a double suicide dive, only to get caught on top. A double high crossbody takes the villains down but Reigns runs into Rollins by mistake. Rollins and Reigns get into an argument and it's the Koquina Clutch to knock Seth out at 14:58.

Rating: C. This would be the latest in the long line of matches that mean nothing but feature people who are going to be important later on and therefore are supposed to make you care. It would have done them a lot of good to slowly announce the participants and give us something to bridge the gap between now and Extreme Rules but that's just not how WWE operates.

Overall Rating: D+. Just a run of the mill show here though the new commentator could have been a lot worse. He has a smooth voice and makes the show a bit easier to sit through. The Raw clips didn't help things though, which is what drives this show every single week.

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205 Live – May 25, 2017: The Right Way To Do A Street Fight

205 Live

Date: May 23, 2017

Location: Huntington Center, Toledo, Ohio

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

We're getting closer to Extreme Rules and that means we're setting up another Austin Aries vs. Neville match. That would be the third match on pay per view between the two, which suggests to me that they really need to build up some fresh stars. Maybe that can be Cedric Alexander, who returns tonight. On top of that we also have a street fight between Brian Kendrick and Akira Tozawa to finally blow off their feud. Let's get to it.

Brian Kendrick talks about how great Tozawa is and now he's come here. Kendrick took it upon himself to take Tozawa under his wing but Tozawa disrespected him. That meant it was time to learn a lesson, and another lesson, and another lesson. Then Tozawa thought he could teach Kendrick something because he hasn't learned anything yet. Now things between them need to end and Brian can think of no better way than in a street fight. Good talk from Kendrick here as he kept it simple and laid everything out there while conveying emotion at the same time.

Opening sequence.

The announcers preview the street fight.

Rich Swann vs. Ariya Daivari

I wrote Daivari's name down as soon as Swann's music hit because....well who else would you have as a heel jobber on this show? I mean, they're also fighting over Swann causing Daivari to ruin his \$1,500 shirt last week but I only remember that thanks to

the nifty video package. After some yelling from Daivari, Swann sends him outside for a baseball slide.

They both head outside this time with Swann being sent into the LED ring skirt. Back in and we hit an armbreaker, followed by a Codebreaker to the same arm. It's off to a cobra clutch for a good while until Swann fights up with the good arm. The big spinning kick to the head gives Swann two, followed by the Phoenix Splash for the pin at 6:31.

Rating: C-. Not much to see here as it was just a step above a squash. Swann is in a weird place as he's one of the better stars on the roster and could pretty easily hang with Aries and Neville but for some reason he hasn't been near the title, at least not for the long term, in months. Then again it wouldn't be hard to throw him in there pretty easily, which is always a good thing.

Post match Noam Dar comes out to shove Swann off the top for a big crash to the floor.

We look back at the history between Aries and Neville.

Neville and Aries (eating a banana of course) join us via satellite for an interview. Graves asks if Neville sees this as the biggest challenge of his career and Neville is instantly annoyed at such a suggestion. Aries doesn't like Neville saying that he's beaten him twice and brings up the cheating. Neville calls that slander but Aries says it's just truth. Not that it matters as Aries has a bunch of submissions ready, capped off by the Last Chancery to take the title that belongs to him. Neville says bring it. Really good segment here and it's nice to have something that doesn't break down into a physical brawl.

Cedric Alexander vs. Johnny Boone

Not to be confused with the former WCW referee. A big elbow to the face sends Boone outside and he looks a bit shaken. Boone comes back in and eats the springboard clothesline, followed by the Lumbar Check for the pin at 1:33. That's how you bring a star back.

We look back at Drew Gulak and Tony Nese attacking Mustafa Ali last week.

Gulak gives us something like a campaign commercial, talking about how horrible it is when cruiserweights ruin the division's good name for the sake of drawing applause. Join him in his campaign for a better 205 Live.

Brian Kendrick vs. Akira Tozawa

Street fight and Kendrick starts with his jacket still on. Brian tries for an early weapon but gets taken down by a suicide dive instead. A hiptoss onto the announcers' table is good for two back inside and Kendrick is in a lot of trouble early on. The right hand sends Kendrick to the apron but he low bridges Tozawa to the floor for a big crash.

A table is pulled out but they slug it out instead of setting it up. Tozawa's dive is broken up with a thrown jacket and Kendrick suplexes him on the floor for good measure. It's time to get creative as Kendrick wraps duct tape around Tozawa's mouth before putting on the Captain's Hook. Thankfully Tozawa only uses the ropes to climb to his feet and the hold isn't broken.

Sliced Bread is broken up as Brian is sent outside, leading to a fight on the stage. Kendrick gets the better of it and tapes Tozawa to the post for a whipping with the belt. Now it's table time, prompting Phillips to say Kendrick made a name for himself in the Attitude Era. Given that he debuted in 1999 and didn't really get anywhere aside from various indies until 2002, I don't think that's quite right.

Anyway Tozawa frees himself somehow and whips Kendrick IN THE FACE with the belt. That doesn't do him much good though as he jumps into the Captain's Hook. The escape sends them both outside again with Tozawa firing off kicks and snapping off a Saito suplex for a painful sounding thud. Kendrick goes face first into the steps so Tozawa can put him on the table for a HUGE top rope senton backsplash. Brian is completely done so Tozawa throws him inside for the pin at 14:32.

Rating: B+. So often in these matches, it feels like they're just wrestlers doing spots that you would see in a fight. This time, it

felt like we were watching a fight between two people who used wrestling moves, which is a major upgrade. I had a lot of fun with this and Tozawa hitting the huge spot at the end to finish the match and feud looked definitive instead of something to set up another match down the line. This should set up Tozawa to fight for the title and I have no idea why that wouldn't be the case.

Kendrick is helped out as Tozawa celebrates to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. The main event is easily enough to carry the show and having Tozawa finish the feud against Kendrick makes things even better. Things are looking up around here but Aries vs. Neville needs to wrap up so we can move to a fresh direction in the title scene. I like the show almost every week but they need to do something to draw in some viewers and make fans care, because this show apparently is a bomb in the Network viewership. Granted that's not surprising but that doesn't make things any better.

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Impact Wrestling – May 25, 2017: And There Goes The Steam

Impact Wrestling

Date: May 25, 2017

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: D'Angelo Dinero, Jeremy Borash

It's time for another triple threat match, this time with World Title implications. Tonight it's James Storm vs. Ethan Carter III vs. Magnus in a match that will likely help set up the World Title picture as we approach Slammiversary. We're about six weeks away from the pay per view, meaning it's almost time to start setting things up. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week's show, focusing on the Ultimate X match and the setup for tonight's triple threat.

Opening sequence.

Here's Bruce Prichard to get things going with Tyrus as his new bodyguard. Despite what Carter did to him last week, Bruce wants to get us to the most important thing around: the Impact Wrestling Heavyweight Championship. This brings out Lashley, who brags about his dominance. He doesn't care about the people in the triple threat match, which does seem to be for a shot at the title.

Before Bruce can announce the challenger, here's Carter to say he'll win and get the title shot. Magnus comes out to say the same thing because Lashley has never beaten him. Naturally Storm is here to say he should be getting the shot. Bruce makes the match a #1 contenders match with the winner getting the shot at Slammiversary (Forget all those weeks of talking about the GFW Title being the golden ticket I guess). He'll even make it No DQ (because triple threat matches are known for their disqualifications) but no one can touch either of the other two before the match starts.

Carter says he's winning tonight to fulfill his destiny.

The announcers talk about the upcoming JB/Joseph Park vs. Josh Matthews/??? match at Slammiversary. We'll find out Matthews' partner tonight.

KM/Kongo Kong vs. Braxton Sutter/Mahabali Shera

Sutter and Kong get things going with JB saying we're in for a treat with Kong in the ring. JB needs to learn the definition of "treat". Allie gets in an argument with Sienna/Laurel Van Ness as Shera can't slam Kong. He can slam KM but stops due to a Laurel distraction. Since it was just a slam, KM pops up and takes over on Shera. An elbow to the jaw keeps Shera in trouble and it's back to Kong for a headbutt (giving us quite the jiggle).

Kong hits a belly to belly and a rolling backsplash to take us to a break. Back with Sutter getting the hot tag to clean house, including a middle rope neckbreaker for two on KM. Everything breaks down and the women get into it again, leaving Shera and KM down in the ring. Allie crossbodies both of them, followed by Kong headbutting Shera into a rollup (with trunks) for the pin at 11:30.

Rating: D+. This feud is still going despite not much really changing. It's still fallout from the wedding but, other than having more people brought in, it doesn't feel like anything has changed since then. Shera really only seems to be there for the sake of the India tour (at least he wasn't made World Champion) and Kong is just an embarrassment from a physical standpoint. The feud isn't horrible but I could go for a fresh plot point instead of just adding a new name.

The guys fight to the back with Allie being surrounded. Cue Rosemary of all people for the save, including mist to Sienna and the Red Wedding to Laurel. So the evil Rosemary is now face yet Allie still can't get a big win? That seems to be taking a few too many steps in the booking.

GFW Tag Team Title Tournament First Round: Fallah Bahh/Mario Bokara vs. Veterans of War

The winners get LAX in the finals because we had a four team tournament to crown a second pair of champions, assuming you don't count the titles that Bahh and Bokara bring with them. Bokara and Wilcox start things off with a toss into the corner allowing the tag off to Mayweather.

A shot to the face gives Mayweather a little trouble and it's off to the huge Bahh. Mayweather walks into a Samoan drop, allowing Bahh to bite his own fingers for some reason. Bahh misses a charge into the post and it's off to Wilcox to clean house. A missed charge sends Bahh to the floor so Mayweather can kick him in the face. The MOAB ends Bokara at 5:08.

Rating: D. Bokara and Bahh haven't done a thing for me since they debuted and that's still the case now. It's an average guy and a low rent Yokozuna imitation which isn't exactly worth much as a team. The Veterans on the other hand are rather awesome and I'm digging them more every time I see them.

Magnus is ready to win the title shot.

Here's Matthews to make his announcement. Josh calls JB into the ring to talk about making up for all of his mistakes. Matthews loves Jim Ross, who is the greatest announcer of all time (to clarify: they're fighting over an announcer who has never and likely never will work here). He's now a Vice President of the company (Fans: "WASTE OF MONEY!") and has to act as such. As Pope rips on how stupid this is, Josh offers a handshake but gets cut off by Joseph Park.

We get a history of Josh lying and getting shoved down, which is enough to turn Josh back into his normal, ranting self (So the point of him being nice for two minutes was....?). Josh goes on about how he should be the face of the Fight Network and calling all the major sporting events. He wants the match right now so here we go.

Josh Matthews vs. Joseph Park

The bell rings and twenty seconds later here's SCOTT STEINER of all people, despite having lost about 50lbs of muscle since he was last

here. No contest of course but JB and Park's eyes bugging out are great.

JB and Park bail as Steiner shakes the barricade and beats up a fan as Josh hits Park low, allowing Steiner to put him in the Recliner. So to recap: Josh is married to an active wrestler but the only option was to bring in Scott Steiner. What was that chant again? WASTE OF MONEY?

Back from a break with a recap of what we just saw, because that's really the top story in this company.

Video on Moose's reign as Grand Champion.

Eli Drake says he isn't going to change for anyone but has to back off from Moose, who is being held back by security. Moose agrees to give him a title shot next week but Chris Adonis comes in to help on the beatdown.

Alisha Edwards/Eddie Edwards vs. Angelina Love/Davey Richards

It's a brawl in the aisle to start until the guys officially get things going. Davey rips at Eddie's face and shouts that Eddie made him do this. Eddie sends him outside for the suicide dive, leaving Alisha to hit one of her own on Angelina as we take a break. Back with Davey slapping on a Figure Four for a good while until Eddie fights up for some chops. Josh makes a nice mention of the Manchester attacks as Eddie gets a hot tag to Alisha, meaning it's off to the women. Alisha misses a high crossbody but comes back with a rollup for the pin at 11:48.

Rating: C-. This was more about Eddie vs. Davey but it's a good idea to have Alisha get her feet wet like this. The division is dying for some more talent and Edwards would be better than a lot of their options. The match was nothing special but it's another case of a feud continuing after it probably should have ended, or at least taken a break. Davey vs. Eddie is still good but it needs an endpoint, which I'd assume is at Slammiversary.

Post match Davey handcuffs Eddie as Alisha is powerbombed through a table.

Spud isn't here tonight (despite saying he would be and given that IT'S A TAPED SHOW that shouldn't be hard to avoid) but promises to be back next week. As he's talking, Spud's mom yells at him from upstairs. Spud: "KAYFABE MOM! KAYFABE!" As usual, Spud is funnier than pretty much everyone else in this promotion.

Magnus vs. Ethan Carter III vs. James Storm

The winner jumps past Alberto for the title shot at Slammiversary, which I'm sure will change. It's a brawl to start with Carter being sent out to the floor, leaving the other two to chop it out. The fight heads outside in a hurry with Storm taking a double suplex onto the ramp as we take a break.

Back with Josh making fun of JB as the weapons are brought in for the first time. Storm takes a kendo stick to the back but heel miscommunication sees Magnus and Carter both take stick shots. Magnus realizes that's not a bad thing and unloads on Carter, allowing Storm to make his comeback with a clothesline.

Some chops allow Storm to grab a chair of his own for some hard shots. Carter breaks it up and gets two off the TK3 to Storm, only to be sent to the floor. Storm's Last Call is countered into a Cloverleaf but Carter makes the save with a chair. The 1%er gets two on Magnus, followed by a Codebreaker with a chair getting the same on Carter.

A Tower of Doom sends Storm flying but he sends Storm heads first into a chair in the corner. Magnus makes the save with a top rope elbow for two. Josh: "You know they're watching in the UK right now!" The show airs on Friday night Josh, so I doubt that's true. Storm hits a Last Call on Magnus but Carter throws him to the floor and steals the pin at 20:10.

Rating: B-. Good match but does anyone really believe Carter vs. Lashley is officially set in stone and actually happening now? Like, we're just supposed to believe that Alberto is going to do something else? I mean, I know common sense isn't TNA's strong suit but I could actually see them having two World Title matches and stretching it out to Bound For Glory to make sure they drain any

interest people might have in the story. Anyway, good action packed match here and while Carter would have been the favorite, he didn't feel like a lock to win.

Overall Rating: D+. Once they get done with these double titles, they might actually have something. The problem again comes down to these marathon tapings. You can only go so far with the one idea and it's probably asking a bit much to have the writers come up with something that fresh in a hurry. Unfortunately that means we're stuck with stories dragging on forever and a severe lack of steam when they reach the end of a taping cycle. The show was still good but it's needing a breath of fresh air and I don't think Scott Steiner is the solution they're looking for.

Results

Kongo Kong/KM b. Braxton Sutter/Mahabali Shera – Rollup to Shera

Veterans of War b. Fallah Bahh/Mario Bokara – MOAB to Bokara

Josh Matthews vs. Joseph Park went to a no contest when Scott Steiner interfered

Alisha Edwards/Eddie Edwards b. Angelina Love/Davey Richards – Rollup to Love

Ethan Carter III b. Magnus and James Storm – Last Call to Magnus

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UK Championship Special: They're Not Old Enough For This

UK Championship Special

Date: May 19, 2017

Location: Epic Studios, Norwich, England

Commentators: Jim Ross, Nigel McGuinness

This was a special two day event taped about two weeks ago as WWE continues their UK expansion. The idea here is to set up the UK Title match at Takeover: Chicago, which was announced before this show ever aired. The initial tournament shows were a lot of fun so hopefully this continues the trend. Let's get to it.

We look back at the tournament with Bate shocking everyone, including himself, by winning the title. The participants talk about how it's changed their careers in a positive way. Everyone is after Bate and the title though.

Video on Wolfgang, a big Scottish wrestler who is more aggressive now that he lost to Bate.

Joseph Conners is a high flier says his future looks good.

Wolfgang vs. Joseph Conners

The arena looks a bit dark. They trade shoulders to start with Wolfgang kicking him in the face to take over. JR makes sure to tee up McGuinness for some easy questions, which is exactly what Nigel is supposed to be able to do as an analyst. Wolfgang blocks some suplex attempts before lifting Conners up for a very delayed one of his own.

It's way too early for the Howling (Swanton) though as Conners

shoves him to the floor for a crash. Back in and a bad looking slingshot splash gives Connors two as the fans are trying to get back into this. Nigel gets into the simple story of the English vs. Scottish rivalry as Connors kicks Wolfgang in the ribs to keep him on the floor. Joseph throws him back in to crank on something like a seated abdominal stretch.

That's enough to start a comeback (as is always the case) but a crossbody messes with Wolfgang's damaged ribs. Wolfgang thinks about the Howling again but comes down instead. A gutbuster sends Connors outside as the fans seem to have sided with Wolfgang. The ribs are made even worse by a sitout spinebuster but Connors gets speared out of the air. The Howling gives Wolfgang the pin at 11:00.

Rating: C+. Good but not perfect way to open the show. There wasn't much of a spark here and a face power wrestler vs. a heel speed wrestler is always a bit of a weird choice. The ribs were a simple enough story to keep things rolling but the match was nothing that hasn't been done if not done better before.

Tyler Bate and Mark Andrews are getting ready.

TJP/Brian Kendrick vs. Dan Moloney/Rich Swann

So it's a match on a UK show that only has one person from the UK (Moloney). That's probably not the best choice to use on a show like this, especially after the lackluster opener. Also, you have RICH SWANN on the card and you don't use him in the opener? This is quite the curiously booked show. Finally, TJP (who JR keeps calling Perkins) covers his ears to block out Rich's music.

Kendrick and Moloney get things going with a feeling out process until the veteran drags Dan into the corner. TJP comes in and the fans start singing about him in some rather unflattering terms. JR: "What's this wanker thing they're talking about?" Nigel basically tells him not to ask if JR wants to keep his job.

The heels try some cheating with TJP grabbing an arm over the ropes, only to make the mistake of not looking and working over Brian's arm by mistake. TJP comes in and gets kicked in the head for a hesitant

two, perhaps because Moloney made sure to look at the camera (which he was probably told to do) first. It's off to Swann for some dabbing, which angers TJP so much that he misses a charge out to the floor.

One heck of a flip dive takes out both Kendrick and TJP, which is made even better when Swann sticks the landing. Back in and some double teaming puts Swann in trouble for all of fifteen seconds before he kicks Kendrick in the face. Moloney comes in off the hot tag for some chops and a clothesline to Kendrick.

More double teaming (they're good at that) takes Dan down though and TJP covers his ears to block out the singing. We hit the chinlock for a bit before Dan backdrops his way to freedom, setting up the real hot tag to Swann. Everything breaks down and Swann gets caught in the Captain's Hook with Moloney making the save. Swann is tossed to the floor and Kendrick grabs a sloppy rollup (with tights) for the pin at 11:30.

Rating: C. This didn't work and the fact that Moloney is only twenty years old has a lot to do with it. You can tell that he's really young and is still having to think a lot out there, which can cause some problems. That's not say he was bad, but you could tell he was easily the weakest in the ring. The rest of the match was good enough but they never really hit the top speed that you've seen them reach before. Granted a lot of that could be due to the whole being in another country issue, which is a common problem.

We look at Wolfgang injuring Trent Seven's arm the previous night. Seven doesn't have a broken bone and is going to keep at it. Pete Dunne, his opponent for the night, comes in and hits him in the bad arm. That guy is a special kind of heel.

Video on Pete Dunne, who is rather evil. The tournament got him the credit he deserves and he's been making money ever since.

Trent Seven has a sweet mustache and hits people really hard.

Trent Seven vs. Pete Dunne

The winner gets a UK Title shot at Takeover: Chicago. Dunne comes

out with his Progress Wrestling Championship but it's not on the line here. The fans are split here between Mustache Mountain and the Bruiserweight before going with BRITISH STRONG STYLE instead. Pete starts on the good arm in an interesting strategy but Seven goes to the ropes.

One heck of a chop with the bad arm drops Dunne but he kicks Seven in the arm to send Trent outside. The arm gets crushed between the steps and the post before it's back to working on both arms at once. A kick to the mustached head gets two but he sends Pete outside for a flip dive.

Back in and another shot to the arm looks to set up the Bitter End, only to have Trent nail a hard left armed lariat for two. A suplex into a powerslam gives Trent two more but the arm is sent into the post. Pete can't quite grab a Kimura (which sends JR into a mini rant about how it's a double wristlock and NOT a Kimura) so he sends the bad arm into the barricade instead.

The arm is good enough for a dragon suplex onto the apron and both guys are left in a heap on the floor. They both dive in at nine and Dunne manages to flip out of a dragon superplex, only to eat a huge lariat for a very delayed two. The Seven Star Lariat is broken up though and we hit another double wristlock. Trent slips out again but walks into the Bitter End to send Pete to Chicago at 14:47.

Rating: B+. This was all about the arm and Dunne being one of the most evil wrestlers around because he'll do whatever it takes to win. The fact that the match was another brutal back and forth fight makes Dunne look great all over again. Seven seems like a comedy guy with the mustache stuff but he's more than capable of backing it up in the ring.

Dunne says he'll be champion by any means necessary.

We recap Tyler Bate vs. Mark Andrews. Bate (now twenty years old) won the inaugural title in January while Andrews was a semi-finalist. It's the young upstart vs. the slightly more experienced high flier.

UK Title: Tyler Bate vs. Mark Andrews

Bate is defending. The fans serenade Bate with a song and then boo someone out of the building for trying a TNA chant. They take their time to start with Andrews working on the arm before Bate twists all over the place to escape. Bate powers out of a front facelock by casually setting Mark on top and walking away to get under his skin a bit. Andrews gets taken down to the mat for a double arm crank but he reaches the ropes and gets a clean break. That might be brought up again later.

They trade some flips and cartwheel up before nipping into a standoff for some applause. The sportsmanship starts going away as they go nose to nose and yell a bit. Andrews goes back to the technical stuff and manages a modified Octopus Hold. Bate shows off the freakish strength by walking the hold over to the ropes for the break. Tyler slaps on a reverse Boston crab which Nigel names and JR calls innovative. Something tells me JR isn't a big Colt Cabana fan. Bate grabs the arms to lift Mark up for a little rocking back and forth. Mark comes right back by sending him outside for a big flip dive and a double stomp to the chest for no cover. With nothing else working, Bate starts swinging before avoiding a charge to send Mark outside. This time it's Tyler hitting a dive of his own but it's too early for the Tiger Driver 97.

A Frankendriver gives Andrews two and he takes Bate to the apron for a standing Sliced Bread #2. Mark's moonsault to the floor is caught so he goes with a tornado DDT instead. Unfortunately Bate is out on the floor and therefore able to kick out when Mark finally gets him back inside. Mark gets crotched on top (Fans: "NO MORE KIDS!") and takes a jumping European uppercut to put both guys down. Of course that means they slug it out from their knees with Bate getting the better of it, as you might expect.

There's the airplane spin but Bate takes too much time resetting, allowing Mark to hit a reverse Frankendriver for a close two. Now the fans are getting into these near falls because they're smart enough to know the match wasn't ending earlier. Bate is ready for

the shooting star but his super Regal Roll is countered into a super hurricanrana, followed by a running shooting star for two.

The champ is reeling but still manages to earn his independent credibility with a superkick. His suplex is countered into the Stundog Millionaire but the shooting star hits Bate's raised knees. The fans get behind Bate again as he kicks Mark in the head, followed by the Tyler Driver 97 to retain at 24:15.

Rating: A-. There's very little I enjoy watching more than taking two wrestlers and having them look so polished and untouchable at first and watching them be broken down until they can barely stand. That's exactly what we got here and it made for one heck of a fight. Bate is scary good for his age and TNA continues to look like a bunch of morons for wasting someone capable of doing this. If you watched Andrews in TNA, you would think he was a one move wrestler. Now he had a great match that went nearly twenty five minutes. Who do you think did the better job with him?

Post match Dunne comes out to deck Andrews, drawing out William Regal to stare him down. Bate and Dunne stare each other down to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. The first two matches, while good, really do feel like little more than weak appetizers before the two outstanding feature matches. You can feel a real feud here with Bate vs. Dunne and it's no surprise that their match in Chicago was a near masterpiece. Fix up the first two matches on this show and it's a classic. As it is, it's just very good.

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Ring of Honor TV – May 24, 2017: Here We Go Again

Ring of Honor

Date: May 24, 2017

Location: Korakuen Hall, Tokyo, Japan

Attendance: 1,636/1,271

Commentators: Rocky Romero, Kevin Kelly

We're less than ten days removed from the War of the Worlds pay per view and last week was a stand alone episode. Therefore, this week it's....a series of matches from the Honor Rising event back in February. In other words, these matches have nothing to do with anything going on at the moment, other than featuring New Japan stars. Let's get to it.

Ian Riccaboni welcomes us to the show via voiceover.

Never Openweight Six Man Tag Team Titles: Delirious/Tiger

Mask/Jushin Thunder Liger vs. Los Ingobernables de Japon

Los Ingobernables (Bushi/Evil/Sanada) are defending as we start with five New Japan wrestlers and the ROH booker who hasn't been seen on TV for probably over a year. We're joined in progress with Tiger Mask coming in and taking over on Bushi via some choking with a shirt (despite Tiger being a face).

It's off to Jushin to face Sanada as the announcers continue to treat everyone as people we should know without offering much of an explanation. The villains start ripping at Liger's mask with Evil

getting two off a backplash. Sanada misses a charge and gets sent outside, allowing the hot tag to Tiger Mask for a dropkick.

We take a break and come back with Bushi neckbreaking Tiger for two, only to have Delirious get the tag a few seconds later.

Everything breaks down in a hurry and Delirious gets Sanada in a cobra clutch. The champs start triple teaming him for the save though and it's a Backstabber into a belly to back for two.

Delirious grabs some rollups for two each on Sanada but Evil chairs Delirious in the face, setting up a dragon sleeper to retain the titles at 10:34 (total match time).

Rating: C. This was good enough for most of a ten minute match with people we're just supposed to know because they're in New Japan and if we watch Ring of Honor, we clearly watch New Japan. These titles have caused Ring of Honor to create their own version and the waste of time that came with them so I'm not too fond of the originals in the first place.

Never Openweight Title: Hirooki Goto vs. Punishment Martinez

Martinez is challenging and we start from the beginning for a change. Goto gets run over to start but avoids a big stomp to give us a standoff. A quick trip to the floor goes badly for Goto as Martinez hits a good looking spin kick back inside. Goto hits one of his own in the corner though, followed by a kick to the chest to drop Martinez again.

It's time for the forearm exchange/slow down/second forearm exchange until Goto hits the fireman's carry flip onto the knee (the move that Mauro Ranallo always told us that Goto invented during AJ Styles matches). Back from a break with Martinez getting two off a clothesline and going up top. Goto bails to the floor to take the over the top dive, followed by a spinwheel kick from the top. A suplex is broken up with a headbutt and Martinez is stunned but not badly enough to get kicked in the chest. The chokeslam is countered though and Goto hits the GTR (Eye of the Hurricane onto the knee) to retain at 10:49.

Rating: C+. Good power match here with the same complaint I had

earlier. Martinez looked like a player here, even if there was no reason to believe he was going to win the title. This is basically the tough man title so Martinez was a very good choice for the challenger here.

Chaos vs. Bullet Club

Chaos: Briscoe Brothers/Will Ospreay/Kazuchika Okada

Bullet Club: Cody/Young Bucks/Kenny Omega

Since we're coming up on Supercard of Honor, the Bucks keep chanting DELETE. We get the big Okada vs. Omega showdown to start but, of course, there's no contact made and it's off to Mark vs. Cody. Mark is quickly annoyed with Cody's antics so it's off to Jay, who takes an elevated dropkick from Matt. A few right hands get Jay out of trouble and Ospreay gets a chance, only to have to deal with the Young Bucks, who you know aren't going to take much offense.

Ospreay sends them outside and does the backflip into the pose, only to load up a very early Meltzer Driver. That's broken up just as quickly though and Ospreay sends the brothers outside again. A kick to the head sends Ospreay outside and we take a break. Back with Ospreay being thrown into three boots in the corner but avoiding a superkick. That's it for his good luck though as four straight superkicks set up a springboard 450/moonsault combination for two.

Omega comes in and grabs a chinlock for two arm drops (you don't see that every day) as Ospreay is in trouble. A suplex is countered into a Stunner and a tornado DDT allows the hot tag off to Okada. The Bucks aren't impressed (of course) so Okada punches them outside, followed by an over the shoulder backbreaker to Cody. Everything breaks down and the Briscoes come in to clean house as we take a break.

Back with Mark hitting a suicide dive, followed by a Cactus Jack elbow off the apron. Cody is right back up though and superplexes Ospreay onto the big pile. That leaves Omega vs. Okada (who looks like he just got out of the shower and doesn't even appear to be sweating) for the huge strike off with Omega getting the better of

it. Both finishers miss though and it's the Bucks superkicking Okada down.

Omega and the Bucks get into a Three Stooges eye poke sequence on each other before a triple superkick drops Okada again. Cue Ospreay to kick Omega in the head, only to get powerslammed down by Cody. The Briscoes come back in to clean house with a superplex into the Froggy Bow on Omega.

The Rainmaker is broken up but Ospreay is right back in there to catch Kenny with the one man Spanish Fly. Will gives Cody a Falcon Arrow for two but misses the shooting star. The spinning kick to the head connects for Ospreay, only to have the Osscutter countered into Cross Rhodes for the pin at 20:16.

Rating: B+. That certainly worked. You knew what they were going to do here as soon as you saw who was in here and that's all that mattered. Omega vs. Okada was a very fresh match at this point and it's one of the few things that's actually well timed here as we're less than a month away from their rematch. Anyway, really good stuff here, which isn't exactly a surprise.

We're off the air with two minutes left in the hour.

Overall Rating: B-. This one ENTIRELY depends on what kind of wrestling show you were looking for here. If you're looking for an hour of no frills and good action, you're going to like this. If you're looking for Ring of Honor, just wait until next week. In other words, the taping cycle curse strikes again because, for whatever reason that I've never heard, we can't just move the new shows a bit closer to the pay per view. No instead we NEEDED to see a New Japan showcase. I still don't get why this company works this way and I don't see it changing anytime soon.

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