

Impact Wrestling – April 6, 2017: One Story Can Kill a Show

Impact Wrestling

Date: April 6, 2017

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Josh Matthews, D'Angelo Dinero, Jeremy Borash

We're past Wrestlemania so it's time for the real Orlando wrestlers to take their city back. Last week's show focused on a wide variety of stories, which helped set up a lot of this week's material.

Tonight we have a gauntlet match for the #1 contendership to the Knockouts Title plus a last man standing match between Eddie Edwards and Davey Richards. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Eli Drake vs. Caleb Konley

This starts immediately after the opening sequence with no entrances. Drake sends him outside for a cheap shot from Tyrus, followed by some right hands from Eli back inside. A neckbreaker out of the corner gives Eli two but Caleb comes right back with a rolling palm strike. That actually sends Drake outside for a suicide dive, followed by a high crossbody for no cover. Caleb goes up but Tyrus offers a distraction, allowing Drake to hit White Noise for the pin at 4:05.

Rating: D+. I'm very glad Drake has a better finisher as no one was going to buy a knee lift and clothesline for someone who is supposed to be climbing the card. Drake seems to be just a few months away from rocketing towards the main event (or at least he should be) and changing finishers was the right call. Not the worst match here and it's a rare instance of just a match to put someone over.

Josh and JB bicker AGAIN, this time focusing on Josh calling JB

ugly. Bruce Prichard comes down and demands that Josh and JB get in the ring. Josh: "I'm sorry I said I wished you were dead!" Bruce says everyone is sick of hearing from these guys so he's got a solution. They're both going to pick a team and we'll see who knows the most. I hope that means the loser is off commentary.

Gauntlet Match

This is basically a Royal Rumble with the final two having a regular match where the winner gets a future title shot. Ava Storie is in at #1 and Madison Rayne is in at #2, complete with the Killer Queen song. That goes nowhere so after the first one minute interval, Rebel is in at #3. Storie runs them both over with a double clothesline and Amanda Rodriguez is in at #4.

The two newcomers slug it out with no one even attempting an elimination. M.J. Jenkins is in at #5 as the announcers just act like we should know who all these new people are. Diamante from LAX is in at #6 and Rodriguez is the first one eliminated. ODB is in at #7 and sends the other five into the corner for a huge splash.

Storie is put out after a pretty solid performance and Brandi Rhodes completes the field at #8. Brandi gets rid of Diamante and Jenkins eliminates Rebel. ODB and Brandi double team Jenkins out but Madison tosses Brandi a second later. That leaves ODB vs. Rayne for the title shot and it's now pin or submission. Not that it lasts long or anything though as ODB hits a quick Bam for the win at 9:21.

Rating: F. Yeah this was horrible and there's no way around it. I have no idea who half the wrestlers in this match were and commentary would rather talk about Josh being married to Madison than tell us ANYTHING about these people. To be fair though, TNA fans have proven that they'll watch anything this company presents so they might as well fill the shows with cheap talent.

Here's James Storm for a chat. During his entrance, Josh says he won a coin toss to determine who gets to make the first pick. So wait: do they get to pick anyone they want or do the people have to agree? Earlier tonight it was implied that the announcers have to pick the teams with JB saying Josh didn't have enough friends to fill a

lineup. Anyway, Storm says the Cowboy is back and it's time for him to become World Champion again.

Cue Bram and Kingston to rant about Storm lying to them about the DCC. Storm says he picked the music and bought the suits while Kingston was the one begging for a job. Kingston spits in Storm's face and takes a Last Call. Bram loads up a chair shot but gets stared down. Another Last Call sends the chair into Bram's face and Storm hits the catchphrase.

Andrew Everett thinks he's earned an X-Division Title match. Gregory Helms and Trevor Lee come up to say Everett can have a shot if he wins his triple threat tonight.

Andrew Everett vs. Marshe Rockett vs. Suicide

Everett kicks Rockett to the floor as the announcers KEEP GOING about their upcoming tag match before switching over to fantasy baseball. This is the kind of stuff you expect from One Night Only shows. Suicide knocks Andrew to the floor and follows with the falling dive. Back in and Rockett stomps on Everett before powerslamming him out of the air.

Everett sends both of them to the floor again and follows with a corkscrew dive. Suicide grabs something like a Black Widow on Everett as the announcers argue over whether Al Snow should have Pope's job. A kick sends Suicide to the floor and Everett hits a shooting star for the pin on Rockett at 6:24.

Rating: C. I like the fact that they're actually building someone up as a challenger for a title match down the line and for once there's an actual story in this division. I have no confidence in them to follow up on all this stuff but at least we've got something brewing for now, which is more than they've done in a long time.

Davey Richards vs. Eddie Edwards

Last Man Standing and Eddie jumps Davey in the aisle. Eddie knocks him into the barricade and follows with two suicide dives as they quickly head into the crowd. Davey gets crotched on a barricade but ducks a dive, sending Eddie crashing into a garbage can for a good

looking spot. Richards gets in a few kicks, stops to kiss Angelina Love, and grabs a chair.

Angelina throws in two more chairs with Davey setting the two of them up in the middle. Josh's response: "I have my third member!" Eddie uses another kiss distraction to powerbomb Davey through the chairs for a six count. Not that it matters as Eddie grabs even more chairs (bringing the total up to at least six) and pelts one at Davey's head. Eddie piles the chairs up but Angelina grabs the foot, allowing Davey to superplex Edwards onto the pile. We see Eddie's wife Alisha Edwards in the front row for some trash talk with Angelina.

Back from a break with Davey hitting Eddie in the head with a chain wrapped fist but Alisha's cheers bring Eddie back to his feet. Rapid fire chops have Davey in trouble and a belly to belly into the corner makes things even worse. A baseball slide sends a chair into Davey's face and Eddie wraps a chair around Davey's neck.

The top rope double stomp somehow doesn't kill Davey so the women get into it, resulting in a chair taking Alisha down. Eddie gets chaired as well so Davey wraps a chain around his foot but stops with second thoughts. Angelina tells him to do it for her and Creeping Death with the chain ends Eddie at 22:43.

Rating: B+. This got the time that it needed and the violence was more than enough to make it work. These two beat the heck out of each other and made it look like they wanted to kill each other. Now the problem is they need to let the feud end here instead of just continuing it for the sake of continuing it, which gets old in a hurry.

We get a video on Veterans of War involving Operation Iraqi Freedom. I believe one of them was Gunner, who is a former member of the military.

JB wants to make Impact Wrestling great.

LAX celebrates their title win.

We look at James Storm updating his theme music in a studio.

Alberto El Patron vs. Jon Bolen

A few kicks have Bolen in trouble but he grabs a powerslam. That's about it for his offense though as Alberto sends him into the corner for the top rope double stomp and the pin at 1:18.

Post match Alberto calls out Lashley.

Allie/Braxton Sutter and KM/Sienna are getting into it again when Karen Jarrett comes in to break it up. They'll have a mixed tag next week.

Fury is unleashed next week and has something to do with Sutter and Allie.

Bruce Prichard is out to moderate the picking of the teams, which really is how they're closing the show. Josh goes first and picks Lashley while JB picks Alberto El Patron. Next up we have Bram for Josh and JB picks Chris Adonis (Masters). There's nothing in between these picks save for a little arguing here and there. Josh goes with Eli Drake and Tyrus helps Josh's team beat down the good guys. Matt Morgan comes out for the save and gets in a staredown with Lashley as someone else gets out of a limo. We're out of time though so go to Impact's website to find out who the last team member is (it's Magnus).

Overall Rating: D+. This is a show where one thing really does bring the whole thing down. We had a great gimmick match and some stuff involving the World Title but what closes the show? Bickering announcers. Can you imagine if Cole vs. Lawler closed a show instead of something involving John Cena?

This show also gave a great illustration of the problem with announcers as major characters: it was the main thing we heard about all night long. The stuff in the ring got almost no focus because we had to hear about how great Josh was and how JB didn't want to hear about it. I'm going to assume Josh winds up being some big heel manager (which wouldn't be the worst idea in the world) but DANG this story is ruining some good stuff on the show. Big step down from last week here and it's almost all because of one story.

Results

Eli Drake b. Caleb Konley – White Noise

ODB won a gauntlet match last eliminating Madison Rayne

Andrew Everett b. Marshe Rockett and Suicide – Shooting star press to Rockett

Davey Richards b. Eddie Edwards – Creeping Death with a chain around the boot

Alberto El Patron b. Jon Bolen – Top rope double stomp

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Impact Wrestling – March 30, 2017: That's...Not Bad

Impact Wrestling

Date: March 30, 2017

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Jeremy Borash, D'Angelo Dinero, Josh Matthews

So we're still in Orlando...with a regular episode of Impact. One might think they might try to do something special with the

wrestling world's eyes on their hometown but last week's show ended with Karen Jarrett returning, seemingly to start a feud with heel commentator Josh Matthews. That's special, right? Let's get to it.

We open with a board meeting where Dutch Mantel is handing out ideas while Matthews wants to be in on everything. Karen comes in and says she needs one of the bosses to send Sienna to the ring. So wait: does Karen have authority or not? Dutch flat out said he's not an authority figure yet he seems to be running things, so I guess Bruce Prichard is in charge? Can I get a flow chart? Anyway, Bruce and Dutch call the meeting because Josh and JB keep arguing.

The opening recap looks at the end of last week's show with Matthews getting in Karen's face and getting slapped down.

Opening sequence.

Here's Karen to open things up as the announcers are already bickering. She's here to talk about Maria Kanellis leaving, especially how Sienna has used the departure to become a huge bully. Cue Sienna (Why did Karen need Dutch/Bruce to get her to the ring if she can just call Sienna out?), who asks if there's a problem.

Karen has been here a short amount of time and hasn't heard one nice thing about Sienna. She's not going to tolerate any bullying from anyone but Sienna wants to know where Karen heard this. Sienna thinks it was Allie and doesn't think much of Karen because she didn't marry her way into the show.

Cue a big man who Pope knows but the fans greet with a WHO ARE YOU chant. Karen looks terrified as the guy introduces himself as KM (Kevin Matthews, though not mentioned here) and says he's Sienna's cousin. KM shouts about demanding respect and tells Karen to shut up. Braxton Sutter and Allie come out for the save and now Karen has a backbone again. Sutter vs. KM is set for later. This was FAR longer than it needed to be, especially when most of it was just so Karen could do her best Stephanie McMahon impression.

The X-Division wants to make Impact Wrestling great.

DJZ vs. Andrew Everett

Everett kicks him to the floor to start but it's time for a flip off, allowing the announcers to talk about AJ Styles. An armdrag sends Everett to the floor for a big flip dive, followed by some kicks in the corner. Speaking of AJ, Everett gets in a quick Pele but his moonsault hits raised feet. The ZDT is loaded up but Everett small packages him for the pin at 4:26.

Rating: C-. Impact Wrestling could go through a million bosses and regime changes and the X-Division would still get about five minutes in a meaningless match with the announcers talking about the good old days and how important it is while ignoring most of what happens in the ring. Such is life in the X-Division of course and I don't see it ever changes. Either do something with it or scrap the thing already because this is just lip service at best.

Post match Gregory Shane Helms comes out to say that Everett has earned an opportunity of some sort for next week.

Fury will be unleashed on April 13.

We look back at the horrible Rebel vs. ODB match from last week with Earl Hebner kissing both of them for reasons of unfunny comedy. After a break, ODB and Hebner seemed to go on a date. There is no way this can possibly end well.

Here's Rosemary, who has somehow been Knockouts Champion for five months, is here for the Burial of the Knockouts Celebration. She talks about all the women's she's destroyed but ODB comes out to interrupt. ODB calls herself a four time "Knocked Up Champion" and wants a shot at the title. Rosemary says the Hive disagrees and goes to leave but here are Brandi Rhodes and five other women to chase her back to the ring. A huge brawl breaks out and that's enough to take us to a break.

Ethan Carter III wants to make Impact great again.

Announcers, bickering, nothing of note.

Here's Carter for a chat. He wants to apologize to Karen for what happened last week but he wasn't happy with the man he was becoming. This place is changing and he needs to change with it. Carter was

the man who beat everyone around here and it's time for him to get back to that point. He needs to be the real EC3 and become an EC3 time World Champion.

Cue James Storm in regular clothes (and with no music for some reason). He didn't hear his name mentioned in Carter's list of former World Champions (maybe because he was listing multiple time World Champions). Storm wants to know where Carter was when Storm was on the first pay per view. Carter: "At my buddy's house watching the pay per view." We hear about AMW and Beer Money so Storm wants to know where Carter was back then. Carter: "I was probably drinking a lot of beer and making a lot of money." Storm: "Ok that's a really good answer!"

Both of them want to be the World Champion again and, since they're allowed to do this, they decide that the fans will get to pick which of them will be the new #1 contender. I like the idea of these two wanting to be World Champion and I especially like the idea of Storm being out of the DCC even more. This sounds like a way to turn Carter heel again, which would probably be best all around.

Garza Jr. and Laredo Kid want to win the Tag Team Titles tonight.

Reno Scum want to show everyone that they're the best.

We recap Cody vs. Moose for the Grand Championship. Cody wants the title but Moose was in Japan so tonight they can finally have the title match.

Grand Championship: Moose vs. Cody

Moose is defending but Cody comes out with his Nex-Gen Title again. Cody gets shouldered into the corner to start but a quick DDT drops Moose. That just earns Cody a powerbomb and a middle rope moonsault for two. A big chop hits the post though and Cody superkicks one of the judges by mistake, because this match didn't have enough rules already and needed an angle. Cody can't quite get a cover as the first round ends. Bruce Prichard comes out to replace the injured judge and it's Moose winning round one.

Round two starts with Cody kicking the knee but missing a big kick

to the head. Moose apron bombs him and grabs a chair, only to have Brandi get in his way. The distraction lets another leg shot set up the Figure Four but Moose hangs on to end the round. Cody wins the round to tie it up and round three starts with Brandi yelling at her husband and walking out.

They slug it out with Cody getting the better of it and the announcers bickering over Josh's wife being a fair judge. I mean, she's not a judge but she would be a fair one if she was. Moose peppers him with left hands but eats the Disaster Kick for no cover. They slug it out again and the round ends at 9:00 with neither having an advantage. Moose wins via split decision and Josh loses it.

Rating: C. This match showed my major problem with the entire concept: they had a nine minute match with a commercial and another break between the second and third rounds, yet at eight minutes in neither can stand up? You would think they should have a deeper gas tank than that. Nine minutes is a rather odd time limit, but then again so is a round system in general. Also, what was the point in the judge going down? I'm assuming Cody will claim conspiracy, because that's the kind of original thinking that's going to get this company to the top.

Video on Davey Richards vs. Eddie Edwards. Next week it's a last man standing match.

Eli Drake wants to make Impact Wrestling great.

We look at Moose vs. Cody again.

Karen brings JB a message about a Knockouts gauntlet battle royal to crown a new #1 contender. I see absolutely no reason for Karen to have been out here for this scene.

KM vs. Braxton Sutter

The much bigger KM (billed at 6'8) drives Braxton into the corner to start but gets kicked in the face. KM dropkicks him down and we're off to a quickly broken chinlock. Instead it's a double clothesline to put both of them down, leaving the women to get into a chase on

the floor. Sienna grabs Allie though and the distraction lets KM grab a powerbomb into a Backstabber for the pin at 3:37.

Rating: D+. The time hurt this and I'm glad it wasn't a clean pin. Sutter hasn't won a big match in months and I don't know how much longer the strength of the wedding angle and his relationship with Allie can carry him. Giving KM a victory is a good idea and there's nothing wrong with establishing new talent, but it might help to further establish your older talent first.

Post match the four of them get in a fight with the forces of good clearing the ring. Laurel Van Ness stumbles out, somehow looking creepier every single week. Sutter and Allie look terrified.

We go to the LAX clubhouse where Konnan talks to the team before the Tag Team Title match. Has anyone brought up that Konnan has brought in a team to fight against the team that works for his own company? Like, wouldn't it mean more money if Garza and Laredo won? I guess loyalty goes before money? It would be nice to have it brought up at least.

Davey Richards wants to make Impact Wrestling better.

Fury is still coming.

Tag Team Titles: Garza Jr./Laredo Kid vs. LAX vs. Decay vs. Reno Scum

The titles are vacant coming in and this is one fall to a finish. Thornstone and Kid start things off with Scum taking over in a hurry. Ortiz tags himself in for some lucha, capped off with a backbreaker to drop the Kid. Everything breaks down in a hurry and Kid dives onto a huge pile of people, followed by Garza doing the same as we take a break.

Back with Garza getting two off a Lionsault but LAX makes the save. Abyss comes in and clotheslines Kid against the ropes but Scum tags themselves in for some corner clotheslines. Kid scores with a DDT so both members of LAX come in to clean house, including a top rope double stomp onto a hanging cutter to Steve. It means posing instead of covering though, leaving Rosemary and Diamante to get into a

catfight. Ortiz loads Laredo up for a powerbomb with Santana coming off the top with a Blockbuster for the pin and the titles at 12:13.

Rating: B. I had more fun with this than I was expecting and LAX wining is the right call. We've had Decay as champions, Scum really isn't interesting and the Crash guys are fine but nothing all that memorable. LAX is over and arguably better than any other team here so making them the new champions makes the most sense. Good action here too with a bunch of chaos, which is the best option given how little we know about the teams. Keep things moving and let the action be the draw.

Overall Rating: C+. This show accomplished one major thing above all others: it helped bolster almost everything on the show. We have people fighting to be #1 contender for the World and Knockouts Titles, the X-Division Title got a mention, the Grand Championship was defended and we have new Tag Team Champions. That's quite the usage of two hours and it's very nice to see them actually doing something with a lot of the roster instead of just doing the same stuff over and over.

Unfortunately, there's a lot of bad stuff here to go right along with it. I know I asked this earlier, but who in the world is running this show? I know there are multiple names but various people seem to have authority at some point or another. The worst part is the show doesn't even need an authority figure (just say the Impact Wrestling bosses have made a decision) but with three being introduced, you're going to wonder who is running things.

One of the names who might have authority is Karen Jarrett and we saw WAY too much of her tonight. The far too long opening segment really didn't need Karen as Sienna could have called out Allie to the same result. It really does come off like a Stephanie impression and that's not a good idea, especially when Karen is supposed to be a face yet she was ready to fight Sienna, who should be able to kill her. So I guess she's a hybrid between Stephanie and Shane?

On top of that, a lot of the wrestling really wasn't that great. It was completely watchable but that's not quite enough. When everyone

is putting their best effort out for the biggest weekend of the wrestling year, you need to do something a little better than just a somewhat above average show. The main event is definitely the best thing about the show and it helped things quite a bit.

Overall the show had more good than bad but it needs a lot of work. Getting rid of multiple authority figures (and probably a title or two) would do some good and dropping the MAKE IMPACT GREAT vignettes would give them some more time for the matches. This was a good step in the right direction but since it's Impact, I have no reason to believe it's going to last.

Results

Andrew Everett b. DJZ – Small package

Moose b. Cody via split decision

KM b. Braxton Sutter – Powerbomb into a Backstabber

LAX b. Reno Scum, Laredo Kid/Garza Jr. and Decay – Sitout powerbomb/Blockbuster combo to Kid

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Monday Night Raw – November 4, 2002: At Least It's Wrestling

Monday Night Raw

Date: November 4, 2002

Location: FleetCenter, Boston, Massachusetts

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

Please let it be better than October. I mean, I'm not sure it could possibly be much worse and the Elimination Chamber could certainly help things out a bit. If it gets Kane on to ANYTHING else, it's a step in the right direction. Raw has been horrible lately and it all starts with the main event so hopefully that gets better. Let's get to it.

Eric Bischoff is in his office and a hidden camera (which he said he was responsible for) shows him watching a tape of kissing Stephanie on Smackdown. He's a good bit distraught, because of course he is.

Opening sequence.

Shawn Michaels arrives and is given a new shirt.

3 Minute Warning vs. Bubba Ray Dudley/Jeff Hardy

Fallout from last week when Jamal and Rosey cost Bubba and Jeff the Tag Team Titles. It's a brawl to start of course with Jeff being thrown into the air but turning into a dropkick to put Jamal down. A great looking Poetry in Motion over the top takes out Rico and the Samoans as we settle down with Bubba actually hitting the middle rope backplash on Jamal. Of course the fans already want tables but have to settle for Jamal throwing Bubba down to take over.

Rosey comes in for a belly to belly but the Samoans bang heads (I'm not sure if that should hurt), allowing Bubba to get in a double clothesline. That's enough for the hot tag to Jeff for the house cleaning. The Whisper in the Wind gets two on Jamal and Rico tries to interfere, only to have Spike make the save. Spike and his bad ribs are dropped onto the barricade but Rosey takes What's Up. Jamal comes back in and takes Poetry in Motion, only to have Rosey break up the Swanton. The Samoan drop puts Jeff away.

Rating: D. 3 Minute Warning is one of those teams who are great for run-ins but then they actually have to wrestle, which defeats the entire purpose. They're just not that good in the ring and it's not like they have a lot of teams to fight in the first place. Bubba and Jeff aren't exactly interesting either and, again, D-Von is doing NOTHING on Smackdown right now.

Victoria is glad Ivory is on Raw and can't wait to see Ivory destroy Trish tonight. Ivory thinks Victoria is a bit nuts.

Women's Title: Trish Stratus vs. Ivory

Ivory is challenging and pops the champ in the jaw at the bell. The aggression continues as Victoria comes out to do commentary. Trish gets a kick to the head for two but gets taken down by....I guess we'll call it a spinebuster. Victoria hasn't said a word and Ivory gets two off a gutwrench suplex. Back up and the Stratusphere gives the champ two as the announcers still can't get anything out of Victoria. A middle rope shove to the back of the neck (called a bulldog and Trish landed a good second before Ivory) retains the title.

Rating: D-. As much as I enjoy Trish in something close to Kentucky blue, this was as sloppy of a women's match as you'll see not featuring Jackie Gayda. Ivory is one of the better workers of the previous era but the chemistry was WAY off here, making for a really bad outing here.

Victoria and Trish get in a fight on the stage.

F-View shows us Victoria beating up Terri with clothing being torn. I kind of like these better than just having...RNN BREAKING NEWS!

Orton's shoulder is up to 32% mobility, up from last week's 30%. Thank you for all the support.

...random camera crews all over the building.

Bischoff yells at the production guy who put a hidden camera in his office. My goodness they actually covered a plot hole. HHH and Ric Flair come in and want to know what Bischoff is going to do about Shawn. Before that can be explained, HHH wants to know why Bischoff has been treating him so badly since the rosters have been frozen (save for trades and Batista popping up of course). Apologetic sucking up ensues so Flair shows Eric the kiss tape again. HHH: "So I put on a mask to screw with Kane and you put on a mask to make out

with my ex-wife?" Thankfully we cut away before that can go any further.

William Regal/Lance Storm vs. Tommy Dreamer/Al Snow

Storm's pre-match speech is cut off by a Scott Steiner video. Dreamer still has his hat. JR brings up Snow vs. Dreamer in a Singapore cane match a few weeks ago and doesn't know why they're teaming together now. My guess is bad booking. Storm and Snow start things off with Al being sent into the corner where his leg is slammed into the apron. The USA chants start up as Regal keeps Snow in trouble with a leglock. Storm does the same as this is already dragging. Snow gets up and makes the hot tag so Dreamer can give Lance a Death Valley Driver. Not that it matters as Regal kicks him in the head so Storm can get the pin.

Rating: D. This wasn't so much bad as much as it was incredibly boring. The tag division is such a worthless piece of junk right now as Regal and Storm, one of the better in-ring teams, are some of the least interesting people around. Dreamer and Storm are there for a nostalgia pop and there isn't much of a future in that.

Shawn, in his new shirt, drinks coffee and looks for HHH.

Stacy Keibler tells Test about the success of the Testicles marketing plan but now he needs a haircut.

Dave Batista vs. Justin Credible

Two tosses, a Regal roll, a clothesline that obviously misses and the sitout powerbomb to the only reaction of the match for the pin on Justin.

HHH is tired of waiting on Shawn and goes to the ring to call him out.

Here's HHH to call Shawn out because it's the top of the second hour and we need star power. There's no Shawn so HHH tells him to not accept the invitation to the Elimination Chamber. So it's an offer and not a demand? Is there a waiting list? HHH goes on a rant about how there's nothing anyone can do about him being champion. JR: "Well they could beat him." Booker T. comes out instead of Shawn to say right now, HHH has bigger problems than Shawn.

HHH doesn't care about the five WCW Titles because Booker can't even hold his jock. Booker promises to take the title at Survivor Series and cuts the champ off to say HHH doesn't run him. We even get a

Don't Hate the Player line, which actually makes sense here. Now it's Chris Jericho to interrupt because he's sick of hearing Booker say sucker. Chris Jericho IS NOT A SUCKER! Jericho rips on the Spinarooni which has nothing on the Chris Jericho Juke N Jive. Double teaming ensues but Kane comes out for the save, setting up tonight's already announced main event.

Stacy sees Test's haircut and swears it's going to make the Testicles grow.

Test vs. Hurricane

It's Test, but with short hair! He elbows Hurricane in the jaw and stomps away in the corner as Lawler tries to figure out the plural of Testicles. A powerbomb is countered into a hurricanrana and Hurricane starts kicking at the leg. The Shining Wizard gets two on Test but the Blockbuster misses. Test can't hit a big boot (not good when it's his one move) so he settles for something like Cross Rhodes for the pin.

Rating: D. I know the idea here is to get Stacy out there in really small outfits and while that's working fine, I don't know if anyone was thinking another Test push was going to work. Then again their big idea is saying Testicles over and over again so I don't think there's a lot of thought going into this one.

Post match Test doesn't want to do something so Stacy kisses him. Test: "I LOVE MY TESTICLES!"

Video on the Elimination Chamber, which is basically just blueprints of the design without telling us much else.

Chris Jericho video, set to Saliva's King of My World.

Jericho loved the video and can't wait for the Elimination Chamber. Christian says don't worry about it because he'll beat up Rob Van Dam so badly that Bischoff will have to put him in Van Dam's spot. This turns into an argument over who is going to be champion.

F-View shows HHH telling Jericho to watch out for Shawn in the tag match. Not that it matters of course because Flair will be at ringside. The villains leave and Shawn is shown watching/listening in.

Christian vs. Rob Van Dam

Van Dam acknowledges the RVD chants and we're ready to go. Feeling

out process to start until Van Dam gets a spinning kick to the face to drop Christian. The moonsault from the apron misses, as does the spinning kick from the apron. Christian sends him hard into the steps and it's time to mock the finger pointing, which is totally and completely original.

Back in and we hit the chinlock for a bit as the announcers talk about Shawn. Van Dam fights up and hits his step over kick, followed by another spinning kick. A monkey flip into an awkward looking splash gives Rob two and a high crossbody gets the same. Rolling Thunder hits feet though (with Christian having to stretch his legs out for Rob to hit those) and Christian grabs a chair. Unfortunately so does the referee, allowing Rob to sweep the leg. The middle rope kick to the chest sets up the Five Star for the pin.

Rating: D+. This was a lot worse than you would expect as Rob seemed way off for some reason. Christian wasn't quite used to singles wrestling here and wasn't the best choice to carry Van Dam when he was this off. Then again it doesn't really matter as Rob is clearly just a name on a list for the Chamber as he's lost every bit of his momentum after Unforgiven.

Here's Christopher Nowinski to talk about how awesome Harvard really is. He loves Boston but the town has gone downhill since he left. Chris goes after the local teams by saying Ted Williams, Larry Bird and Nomar "Garcia-whatever" are not great men. Cue Al Snow for a distraction so Maven can make his return and beat Chris down. I can't wait for Tough Enough III to get going so these guys can stop getting so much TV time. I know it has to be done but that doesn't mean this is interesting stuff. Actually, given some of the other options, this might be the best choice. Or maybe some 1993 WCW.

Goldust congratulates Kane on having Booker T., a fabulous man, as his tag team partner tonight. He even throws in a bit of advice: Kane should try some breathing exercises. This earns him a choke up against a wall until Booker comes in to save his buddy. Booker says HHH is messing with Kane by making up stories about having sex with a dead body. Booker: "WHO WOULD HAVE SEX WITH A DEAD BODY?" Goldust: "I was young and stupid!" Booker asks if Kane can dig it. He certainly can....."SUCKA!"

Shawn is still here. Well when did anyone suggest he'd left?

HHH/Chris Jericho vs. Kane/Booker T.

Booker and Jericho get things going with Booker chopping away up against the ropes. A knee to the ribs cuts Booker off though and the World Champion graces us with his presence. Booker knocks him down and it's off to Kane, sending HHH crawling back to Jericho. I get the idea here and I appreciate the effort but Kane has already lost every bit of his credibility and it really doesn't work here.

Jericho gets in his middle rope dropkick for two and HHH makes it even worse with a chop block. The referee tries to keep Booker out and Jericho chairs Kane in the leg to give the villains a real target. Unfortunately that means a leglock because Flair hasn't had the chance to teach HHH leg work yet.

Just to further hammer home the fact that HHH isn't as good at this as he thinks he is, Jericho comes in and goes through Flair's checklist of knee attacks and the match suddenly picks up. HHH puts on a Figure Four (right next to the ropes) but gets caught holding Jericho's hand for the break. The knee doesn't seem too bad though as Kane suplexes both villains down and makes the ice cold tag to Booker.

Everything breaks down with Booker firing off a variety of kicks, including one to knock Flair off the apron. The ax kick gets two on HHH with Jericho making the save. Kane makes a similar save as a top rope clothesline breaks up the Walls. Booker misses the missile dropkick but here's Shawn with Sweet Chin Music on HHH to give Booker the cheap pin.

Rating: D+. The leg work didn't go anywhere but at least they were trying something. Shawn interfering was the only possible ending and at least HHH gave up the pin to end the match. It's certainly not a good match but they did something to help set up the title match, even though Booker has almost no chance to win the thing.

Shawn agrees to enter the Chamber to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. And somehow, that's their best show in weeks. Above all else, we seem to have moved on from Katie Vick, which is an instant improvement. The main thing here is the focus shifting back to wrestling, which is the best thing that could have ever happened. This shock value stuff is crippling and while the HHH and Shawn Show isn't must see TV, at least it's watchable TV that won't embarrass fans.

That being said, sweet goodness this show is still a wreck. The tag

division has flown off a cliff, the women are doing what they can in the three minutes a week they're allowed and the Tough Enough jazz isn't making me want to watch the reality show (though I did back in the day). I was really not impressed here but it's somehow going in a better direction. However, that direction is going to be gone when they can't put six people in one match for the title and we need something else for the rest of them to fight about. It's almost like that lone singles male champion thing might not be the best idea.

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Heading to Smackdown

And that's the last show for the week. Talk about it here.

205 Live – March 28, 2017:

Covering Their One Idea

205 Live

Date: March 28, 2017

Location: Richmond Coliseum, Richmond, Virginia

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

It's the last show before Wrestlemania XXXIII and while I know I'm a bit behind schedule, it's always worth looking at everything setting up a major title match. I was really looking forward to Austin Aries vs. Neville for the Cruiserweight Title and it's time for the final push to the match. Let's get to it.

Neville doesn't think much of Aries dancing with New Day on Raw because it's everyone wanting to see what 205 Live would be like without him. Tonight, he'll make that happen.

Opening sequence.

Rich Swann vs. Ariya Daivari

The announcers start suggesting that Swann has been sending Alicia Fox the presents, an allegation which Swann certainly hasn't shied away from. Daivari runs him over a few times but gets knocked to the floor. Swann gets dropped face first onto the announcers' table and Farsi is shouted.

Back in and Ariya stays on the neck before sending him hard into the corner. The frog splash misses though and Swann grabs a Michinoku Driver for two of his own. Daivari's running neckbreaker and frog splash get two, only to have Swann kick him in the head. A Phoenix splash (which seems to be the most popular move in the world anymore) ends Daivari at 7:27.

Rating: C. This was fine with Daivari being a bit more watchable than usual. His in-ring work is fine enough but being a black hole of charisma has crippled any long term potential he has. Good enough match here though as Swann is just fun to watch almost no matter what he's doing.

Fox is talking about Noam Dar's injury when Swann comes up to ask

about why Dar hates him. Another gift is delivered with Fox getting perfume this time. She eats it.

Drew Gulak tries to recruit Mustafa Ali to become a more mat based wrestler instead of doing all the flips. So he's Drew Gulak For a Better NXT? Ali leaves while he's talking.

Mustafa Ali vs. Brandon Scott

Ali flips around to start and grabs a hurricanrana before kicking him in the head. Scott gets in a few kicks to the chest and gets two off a hard clothesline. A high crossbody drops Scott again and a kick to the head sets up the inverted 450 for the pin on Scott at 3:24.

Rating: C-. This was fine given how little time it had but the idea of Ali vs. Gulak in a technical vs. high flying feud could be fun, especially if it gives Gulak any kind of a character. Good enough match here with Ali continuing to get to show off as he's still one of the best surprises of the show so far.

Video on Aries vs. Neville.

Akira Tozawa vs. Brian Kendrick

This is the result of a long feud as Kendrick keeps attacking Tozawa to teach him a variety of lessons. Kendrick gets kicked in the face to send him outside in a hurry, followed by a top rope backsplash for two inside. A quick Captain's Hook has Tozawa in trouble but he's out in a hurry. Kendrick bails to the floor and suckers Tozawa into a drop toehold onto the ramp. A suplex gives Brian two and we hit a half nelson of all things.

Kendrick switches up to a reverse chinlock with a few shots to the face like a villain should do. Tozawa fights up and kicks him in the face, only to get caught in Sliced Bread #2 for a near fall. Now the Captain's Hook goes on full but Tozawa gets out again. They go to the corner where a turnbuckle pad comes off. As you might expect, Tozawa charges straight into the steel a few seconds later, giving Kendrick the pin at 9:53.

Rating: C+. I liked this one again but why in the world do you have

Tozawa lose here? It wasn't clean but you would think he's going to be the next challenger for the Cruiserweight Title assuming Neville retains. Kendrick is a gatekeeper instead of someone who should be winning a match, making this a rather confusing ending to a solid match.

Kendrick says that was Lesson #9: Anything can be used as a weapon. Here's Neville for the second time on a show he wasn't going to be part of. Neville says he's at a crossroads after facing many trials over his career. He's picked himself up every time though, including after his broken ankle last year. Then he became the face of 205 Live and carried the division. Yet the people boo him, even though he's the reason there's a Cruiserweight Title match at Wrestlemania. The fans want to cheer for a commentary guy like Aries, even though there is no 205 Live without him. Want to see what it's like without him? Here's a black screen.

Cue Aries to say 205 Live is twice as good with him on it but Neville looks miserable all the time. They've both had to prove people wrong all their lives. When they both step in this ring, all they want to do is prove that they're the best in the world and steal the show. Neville punches him in the face and stomps away but takes a microphone to the ear. A quick Last Chancery sends the champ bailing to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. This was fine enough for the go home show as the lone 205 Live contribution to Wrestlemania weekend is Neville vs. Aries. It wasn't the most thrilling show in the world or anything like that but it did its job, which is far too often the case for a lot of shows around here.

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NXT Takeover – Orlando: Homecoming

Takeover: Orlando

Date: April 1, 2017

Location: Amway Center, Orlando, Florida

Attendance: 14,975

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Tom Phillips, Percy Watson

It's time for the big one again as NXT gets to run a major show from its home city. Wrestlemania is in Orlando this year and that means we get a special Takeover right down the road from Full Sail University. The main event is Bobby Roode vs. Shinsuke Nakamura II for the NXT Title in what might be Nakamura's farewell. Let's get to it.

I was in the arena for this show so it's going to be my second look at it.

We open with a HHH voiceover talking about how this is our night to make history. Tonight we show the world that we are NXT and we are home.

The opening video looks at NXT over the years (or at least NXT from Full Sail), which really does include some amazing moments and stars getting their starts. This turns into a video on Roode vs. Nakamura, which is a fight over Roode fighting for himself and Nakamura fighting for the fans. The Women's Title gets a quick look as well.

Sanity vs. Tye Dillinger/No Way Jose/Roderick Strong/Ruby Riot

Sanity all has black paint around their eyes, making them look like Deadpool. Actually hang on a second as Sanity jumped No Way Jose at Axxess and has put him out of action. We have a replacement though.

Sanity vs. Tye Dillinger/Roderick Strong/Ruby Riot/Kassius Ohno

The good ones hit the ring at a run and the brawl is on in a hurry. The women officially start things off with Cross throwing Riot across the ring by the hair. I still have no idea how that doesn't make anyone scream. Ruby sends Cross into the corner so it's off to Wolfe, meaning Ohno has to come in. That earns Wolfe and Young a big right hand each with Kassius easily taking over. At Takeover. Kind of makes sense no?

Young offers a distraction though and Wolfe takes over like the cheater he is. Another big elbow cuts off the heel control though and it's off to Strong for some speed. Roderick does his running leapfrog (one of my favorites) and backbreakers Wolfe before kicking Dain in the head. I do love how face teams always stay on the apron and let their buddy fight everyone off at once. It's just not polite otherwise you see. Dain runs him over though as the SHAVE YOUR BACKS chant start up.

Roderick's comeback is cut off by a running dropkick and it's off to Young for some choking. A top rope elbow draws Tye in for the save and there go the TEN chants. Eric misses a charge in the corner though and NOW it's off to Tye with the hot tag. House is cleaned as everything breaks down, including Tye hitting a high crossbody on Wolfe, straight into a dive on Young for a sweet sequence.

Wolfe makes the save so Ohno loads up a dive but Wolfe moves just in time. Not that it matters as Ohno manages to bail by landing hands first on the apron and flipping onto his feet outside. Cross breaks up Ruby's dive and the closest thing you'll get to an NXT catfight breaks out.

That leaves Tye vs. Eric with Dillinger cleaning house, including a superkick for a close two on Dain. Onno BLASTS Wolfe with a forearm and Strong Sick Kicks Young to the floor. Roderick vs. Dain looks to give us a rather interesting showdown but the women jump on their

backs. Tye loads up the Tyebreaker on Dain but Wolfe makes a save, setting up the Ulster Plantation (One Winged Angel) for the pin on Dillinger at 12:21.

Rating: B. This was a really good choice for an opener and could have been a classic if Tye had gotten the pin and FINALLY won something but instead let's have him job again. You have to imagine a big showdown with Dillinger facing Young once and for all, but if he loses, I have no idea what's left for him in NXT. At some point you have to actually win something and Tye hasn't quite pulled that off yet. Also, Ohno was the only real option here. He's been featured too much on NXT TV lately and he had to get a spot on here, especially with a great tease of something with Sanity going forward.

Edge and Beth Phoenix are here.

Andrade Cien Almas vs. Aleister Black

No real story here other than it's Black's debut and he needed an opponent. Black's entrance (which I couldn't see from the upper deck) is straight out of Nosferatu as he rises up from what looks like a casket and onto the stage. Black slingshots over the ropes and lands in a sitting meditation style position, which is almost guaranteed to become a signature pose.

They trade armbars and headscissor escapes to start until Black misses a swinging kick, leaving Almas to pose at him. Back up and Black kicks him to the floor for a dive, only to moonsault back into the mediation pose. Back in and Almas takes him into the corner for a stomping and one heck of a slap. A missile dropkick gets two for Almas and it's time to start in on the arm.

Nigel isn't sure on this as Black mainly uses kicks but figures it might just be overconfidence. Almost immediately thereafter, Black starts firing off the kicks to send Almas outside for a huge middle rope moonsault. Back in and Almas grabs a cross armbreaker over the ropes, followed by something like the Rings of Saturn (I'm glad that's becoming more popular).

Black ducks the running knees in the corner and they trade kicks to the head for a double knockdown. A moonsault kick to Black's head sets up a snap German suplex for two so Black starts snapping off kicks. Black Mass (a spinning kick to the head) knocks Almas silly at 9:35.

Rating: B-. This was fine without much of a story other than Almas getting cocky, as is his nature. I wasn't wild on him at first but this was a solid debut performance. The meditation pose is going to be a winner for him, especially once we get to know him a little bit better. I also like the Black Mass as sometimes you just need to kick someone in the head.

Also of note, I wasn't really able to pay much attention to the finish live as the fans in section 220 decided they were more important than the rest of the show. This included declaring their section's greatness, chanting TWENTY after each near fall ("1-2-TWENTY!" Get it?) and calling the other sections around them S-A-W-F-T. You can imagine how this went and you can hear the other sections telling them to shut up during the ending.

We recap the Tag Team Title match, which is almost guaranteed to be the best match on the card. DIY and the Revival tore the house down for the better part of six months but the Authors of Pain took the belts from DIY, setting up a three way feud. This meant a triple threat elimination tag, which for once made perfect sense.

Tag Team Titles: Revival vs. DIY vs. Authors of Pain

The Authors are defending but before the match, William Regal presents some snazzy new title belts (the Women and NXT Titles will get new belts as well), possibly due to the Women's Title being involved in Paige's sex tape. Revival and DIY stare each other down before they both turn to face the Authors, drawing the first major pop of many. Rezar is sent into the barricade so DIY grabs a table, even though this shouldn't be No DQ (I believe a DQ would count as an elimination).

Akam goes into the steps and the four challengers stare each other down, setting up the showdown that the fans really wanted to see.

Nigel is beside himself as the champs are recovering while the other four fight each other. We settle down to a regular match until Akam tags himself in for a double clothesline.

Ciampa's high crossbody is caught but he kicks Rezar in the head, only to have Revival back down the steps instead of taking a tag. That's smart in this kind of a match, which shouldn't be surprising given how intelligent those two come off most of the time. With the referee distracted, Dawson sneaks in for a DDT on Akam to give Ciampa two. Dawson comes in legally but takes a shot to the ribs. This time it's DIY dropping to the floor because they're just that smart.

Gargano tags himself in and gets two off the slingshot spear before kicking Dawson in the head. Johnny adds a slingshot DDT and the fans are WAY into this, just as you would expect them to be. The champs catch a dive so Ciampa tries a suicide dive of his own, only to have the Authors THROW GARGANO THROUGH THE AIR to break it up. Things slow down with Akam working on Gargano's ribs, including throwing him up into a torture rack. Johnny finally sends Rezar into an uppercut from Dawson, allowing the hot tag off to Ciampa.

It's time for a series of strikes into a pair of German suplexes on Rezar, followed by the running knee for two. With Rezar reeling, Gargano tries a powerbomb from the apron through the table but can't put him down. Ciampa's help isn't enough so Revival punches Rezar in the jaw, setting up the double powerbomb through the table for the big crash and an even bigger cheer as the giant is in trouble. That leaves Akam on his own...and all four surround him.

Since he's a monster though, he actually drops all of them on his own because screw it. A chop block brings Akam down though and Dawson slaps on the reverse Figure Four. Gargano thinks about breaking it up but adds his version of the Crossface for the double submission. The partners grab Rezar so he shoves them into Akam and company for the save, drawing a loud round of boeing. A series of strikes drop Rezar and it's Dawson/Gargano hitting DIY's double strike. Naturally this means Ciampa and Wilder give Akam a Shatter

Machine, sending the fans even further into orbit with the champs going outside.

The fight is on and Ellering cheers both teams on in a perfectly logical (yet still amusing) moment. Gargano and Wilder hit stereo dives on the champs and Ciampa goes up top, only to have Dawson SUPERPLEX HIM ONT THE BIG PILE OF PEOPLE, putting all six down at once. Dawson goes after Gargano (Nigel: "NO! This is a mistake!") It turns out that he's right as the Authors get back in for the Last Chapter and the elimination on Ciampa at 18:54. You could feel the energy going out of the crowd at that point and it never recovered for the rest of the match (or show for that matter).

The fans chant DELETE (because they're such big fans that they forgot the Hardys were 40 minutes away at Ring of Honor) but have to settle for Revival, who are now the most over team in the world. A German suplex/top rope elbow gets two on Rezar but Akam kicks Dawson in the face. Almost stereo powerbombs earn the champs a NO ONE LIKES YOU chant as this is getting brutal. Rezar spears Wilder into the barricade while Akam sends Dawson into the corner. The Super Collider retains the titles at 23:43.

Rating: A-. Give this a more popular and less deflating ending and it's the Match of the Year so far. Those first seventeen minutes or so were as smart and well thought out that I've seen in years but as soon as the Authors turned into Super Cena, everything went flying out the window. In theory this means DIY and Revival are heading to the main roster (this is being written after Revival debuted on Raw) and if that's the case, this is the logical move. If DIY sticks around though, I have no idea what they're thinking.

The NXT fans want to see DIY vs. Revival in their awesome matches and the Authors are as far removed from that as they could possibly be (not saying they're bad, but that they're not what the fans want). It makes them look unbeatable though and that means the team that takes them down will be even more awesome than anyone could imagine. It's a great match but the ending really brings it back to earth.

We recap the Women's Title match. Asuka is sitting by a pool and says the division rises and sets with her. She's said she'll keep the title forever but Ember Moon is undefeated as well. Asuka might be a more complete wrestler than Moon but she has the biggest weapon in NXT (close enough) in the Eclipse. That's the whole idea: if Ember can hit that one big move, nothing Asuka can do matters. The video goes on a good bit longer than it needs to, which is a pretty common problem in WWE.

Women's Title: Ember Moon vs. Asuka

Ember is challenging and has some of the best theme music in NXT at the moment. No special entrance for Asuka but I believe she has new gear. After the Big Match Intros, Regal presents the new title which looks like a cross between a UFC belt and the old X-Division Title. I really liked the first one but come on: it had to change eventually.

They lock up and go to the mat to start with neither being able to get any kind of an advantage. Stereo dropkicks go nowhere and it's time for a standoff. Asuka offers a handshake but pulls her hand back instead, showing quite a bit of confidence (fair enough). Shoulders go nowhere as they're doing a great job of portraying both of them as equal. The flying hip attack only sees Ember nip up...and make a not funny face in her way of saying bring it. Yeah that looked dumb.

Another hip attack sends Ember outside and it's time to really take over with some spinning elbows to the head. A third hip attack drops Ember and Asuka fires off kicks to the chest. The Asuka Lock is broken up and Ember blasts her in the jaw to send the champ outside. They're doing a really good job here of having Ember hang with Asuka until one big shot cuts her off all over again.

Case in point, Ember kicks her in the head but takes a Shining Wizard for two. The Asuka Lock goes on (To very little reaction for some reason. Even live this didn't feel important.) with Asuka on Ember's back, allowing Ember to drop backwards for the break. A good looking superkick drops Asuka and even more kicks have her reeling.

Ember's springboard is broken up though and a German suplex gives Asuka two.

Asuka loses a slugout and gets capture suplexed for two more. Ember loads up the Eclipse and throws Asuka off the top...only to have Asuka shove the referee into the ropes for the heel turn. Somehow that's not a DQ (I need to read that WWE Book of Rules) and Asuka kicks her in the head to retain at 12:12.

Rating: B. Commentary really helped this one a lot as Nigel was selling the heck out of the idea that Asuka had met her match. That's the story here and it worked really well: Asuka couldn't beat Ember using her standard stuff and was in real danger from the Eclipse so she cheated to win instead. I'm fine with Ember losing as she never got to hit the Eclipse (so there's your rematch) and you have Ruby Riot, Kimber Lee and Nikki Cross ready to challenge too. In your big surprise of the night, DREW MCINTYRE is in the crowd. That's the best news I could hear as McIntyre was all over Wrestlemania weekend and I've wondered why he isn't WWE Champion like, now for example. I'm very happy with this and it couldn't have been much of a better choice.

We recap Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Bobby Roode. As mentioned earlier, it's basically Roode being out for himself and Nakamura being out for the fans.

NXT Title: Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Bobby Roode

Nakamura is challenging and does his entrance behind a translucent screen where you can see his shadow. That feels very Michael Jackson-esque for some reason. The fans of course sing Nakamura's song (despite it not having any words) and it's yet another awesome entrance. Granted they also sing Roode's song as Roode spins around on a pedestal, accompanied by two pianos (TAKE THAT REBY!). Regal brings out the new belt, which looks almost identical to the Women's Title.

We're ready to go, but first this reason why I can't stand Twitter. Phillips: "These fans are on their feet and they're ready for this

hashtag NXT Championship match!” Roode goes straight for the knees as the fans like both these guys. A headlock doesn't get the champ very far so Nakamura lays him on the ropes for the head on Roode's chest spot. Roode laughs off the bring it but gets caught up in the rapid fire strikes to bring him down.

Nakamura drops a knee and sends him into the corner for Good Vibrations. Roode gets in a dropkick and knocks Shinsuke off the apron and into the barricade for a crash. Nakamura seems to have hurt his shoulder but Roode opts to just stomp him down in the corner. Being the cocky jerk that he is, Roode stops for the GLORIOUS pose but still manages to chop Nakamura in the corner.

We hit the nerve hold for a long stretch (softening up the neck for the DDT) before Nakamura gets in a kick to the head for a breather. It's time to start in with the knees, including one in the corner and one on the apron. Roode comes right back with a heck of a clothesline and a chop block to start in on the knee again. The knee is wrapped around the post and we hit a bad looking Figure Four. Nakamura turns it over to, sending Roode straight to the ropes so he can get right back to the knee.

Another hold is countered into a cross armbreaker but Roode gets to the ropes again. Nakamura fires off strikes in the corner but knees the buckle by mistake. That earns Roode a series of kicks from the good leg so he grabs a Backstabber to put both guys down. They slug it out with Nakamura kneeing his way out of a suplex and dropping another knee for two. Kinshasa sends Roode bailing to the floor but he kicks the ropes to hit Nakamura low.

The Glorious DDT connects for two and again Nigel is right there to sell the heck out of it. Roode goes to get the bell but gets kicked in the head, followed by the exploder. Kinshasa is countered into one heck of a spinebuster for two and Nakamura is done. Back up and Roode drives him into the corner for a tornado DDT into the Glorious DDT to retain at 28:14.

Rating: B+. This was....long. The first match had far better drama with the story around the knee while this was just more long than

anything else. That's not to say it's a bad match but I did like the first one earlier. The key here though is Roode winning clean without ever really doing anything all that complicated to counter Nakamura's insane offense. Roode is a very basic wrestler but he does everything so proficiently that it's hard to beat him. It's a very good match and pretty clearly Nakamura's swan song, but not as good as the predecessor.

After the show ended, Nakamura got the big sendoff with his music playing and taking a bow to all parts of the arena. See you Tuesday.

Overall Rating: A-. This show has one problem: it's going to be compared to Takeover: Dallas. Last year's show was one of the best of all time while this was just a really good one. There's absolutely nothing bad on here but the lack of title changes hurt things. This show felt like a big goodbye instead of NXT showcasing itself, which is one of the problems that a developmental territory is going to have. It's an outstanding show though and definitely worth watching, only being held back by what happened last year.

Results

Sanity b. Tye Dillinger/Kassius Ohno/Roderick Strong/Ruby Riot – Ulster Plantation to Dillinger

Aleister Black b. Andrade Cien Almas – Black Mass

Authors of Pain b. The Revival and DIY – Last Chapter to Dawson

Asuka b. Ember Moon – Kick to the head

Bobby Roode b. Shinsuke Nakamura – Glorious DDT

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Ring of Honor TV – March 29, 2017: We're Almost There

Ring of Honor

Date: March 29, 2017

Location: Sam's Town Live, Las Vegas, Nevada

Commentators: Ian Riccaboni, Kevin Kelly

I think we're up to the pay per view now, only a mere three weeks after it took place. The big story is Christopher Daniels FINALLY winning that elusive World Title, which was the best possible option since Adam Cole is reportedly on his way out. That's the case with far too many people and it's a bad sign for the company. Let's get to it.

Christopher Daniels talks about how he couldn't lose on this one night and then he wouldn't let it happen. So we're FINALLY to the Anniversary Show, just as it's the go home show for the next pay per view. Got it.

Opening sequence.

Here's the Addiction to open things up with Daniels looking very happy holding that title. We even have APPLETTINIS! Daniels immediately hits the bragging by talking about the brilliant plan, which can overcome a younger, faster and arguably more talented opponent. Kazarian couldn't be happier for his buddy and just happens to be the new #1 contender to the TV Title. Cue Dalton Castle as we take a break.

Back with Daniels introducing Castle to the appletini, which seems to blow his mind. Dalton would love one of his own but there's only one glass. No worries of course though as a single snap of the fingers brings out the Boys with a large glass for Castle. A toast

allows Dalton to congratulate the new champion, but that brings some changes. This includes a title defense against Castle at Supercard of Honor and Castle wouldn't wish that on anyone.

Cue the Bullet Club with Adam Cole not wanting to hear about the fairytale ending because he remembers it as the title being stolen. As for Castle, who in the world thinks he's the best option for the title? Kazarian throws out a challenge for a six man later tonight and the match is made.

Marty Scurll cuts a promo about facing anyone when Kenny King comes up to challenge him for a title match. It seems to be all set.

Tag Team Titles: Briscoe Brothers vs. Hardys

Matt and Jeff are defending in a match with fifteen minutes' build. Sweet goodness I can't stand this show's taping schedule. The champs have a very Broken style entrance without actually doing any of the Broken trademarks. Mark busts out some Redneck Kung Fu to confuse Jeff early on (you don't hear that too often) but everything breaks down as the Hardys take over.

Chops in the corner give us some OBSOLETE/DELETE chants but Poetry in Motion is easily countered. Jay nails a suicide dive to set up the Cactus Elbow from the apron and it's off to a break. Back with Jeff getting stomped down and then rear chinlocked for good measure. Jeff fights up and scores with a double Whisper in the Wind though, setting up the hot tag for the loud DELETE chants.

Matt's bulldog is good for two on Mark and it's back to Jeff for a chinlock. Back from another break with Mark and Jeff hitting a double clothesline to set up the double tag. Matt bites Jay in the corner to bust him open a bit. The neckbreaker gets two on Matt and the champs take back to back superplexes.

The Froggy Bow is only good for two on Matt though as the fans don't seem sure who to cheer for. Mark comes in to slug away at Matt and the Doomsday Device gets yet another near fall. Back up and Jay is sent outside for a big crash, leaving Mark to take the Twist of Fate and Swanton....for two? Dang I bought that as the finish, along with Mark rolling Matt up for two. Jeff makes a blind tag though and Matt backslides Mark down so Jeff can cradle him to retain at 17:44.

Rating: B+. That's the best ROH match I've seen in a very long time and, while I'd love to see it actually get a proper build, there's

only so much you can do with the Hardys' limited schedule. As a bonus, it's pretty amazing to see Matt come back to ROH just a few years after he was Big Money Matt as this completely different character. He really is someone capable of re-inventing himself like this and it's great stuff a lot of the time.

Post match the Young Bucks come out to challenge the Hardys to a ladder match at Supercard of Honor XI. The champs quickly agree.

Adam Page/Young Bucks vs. Addiction/Dalton Castle

This is joined in progress in a huge brawl and Daniels taking a double superkick. Nick adds a huge springboard flip dive to put everyone down, followed by another superkick. Of course that means the heels get to pose but the Boys break up the Rise of the Terminator dive. For your comedy, they even take the Bucks' place next to Cole, who somehow doesn't notice. The Bucks save another dive though and beat up the Boys (it's not that hard) as Cole is STILL kneeling in the ring.

What does that say about the good guys on the floor Somehow they're unable to be ready for the dives, which were loaded up about a minute before they even launched and Addiction had no chance of avoiding them. That's a stretch even for wrestling. Back in with Kazarian getting beaten down in the corner before his partners come in, only to be triple suplexed. We take a break and come back with Kazarian blocking a double superkick but taking the slingshot X Factor.

Kazarian grabs a cutter though and it's off to Daniels so house can be cleaned. Cole sneaks in with a superkick to drop Daniels but since he's not a Buck, the champ can actually get the better of him. Castle (I forgot he was in this match) comes in for some suplexes but can't hit the Bang-a-Rang. He can however catch Matt's springboard in a German suplex. Nick comes back in with a Swanton on Castle but Daniels gets in Angel's Wings on Matt.

Cole superkick him down though and everyone is out. The Canadian Destroyer nails Kazarian but it's time for a Superkick Party. The Bucks kick Cole by mistake and Castle no sells a double superkick (that's a new one and while I can't stand the Bucks, that's a bit of a stretch), setting up the Bang a Rang to put Cole away at 13:48.

Rating: B-. This was fun, though also served as the weekly Young Bucks party. At least the new champ was on the winning team, but he

could have gotten the pin over Cole. You can see the problems with the Bullet Club coming through which is likely the way to set Cole's exit from the company.

Castle and Daniels grab the title to end the show.

Overall Rating: A-. I know this isn't going to last long term but at least we had a great show here. This was ALL about the wrestling with the Daniels promo as a bonus. This also helped set up the two Supercard of Honor main events, which certainly need the help with the show so close. Really good and entertaining show, mainly because they got back to the regular stuff instead of all the filler episodes.

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Live Notes From Monday Night Raw

Back from the show with some quick notes.

1. This wasn't the most interesting show. The big reveal of Balor at the end was hardly a surprise, though that's just going to happen every now and then. Other than that we had Reigns' promo (which only kind of felt like a heel turn as WWE still won't go full speed ahead with anything he does), the Revival (again not really a surprise) and Angle as GM (not really a surprise, though Teddy Long's R-Truth

style cameo was hilarious).

2. Reigns reached a new level of booing tonight. I've never seen such loathing.

3. The THANK YOU TAKER opening was rather touching.

4. As is always the case on here, the wrestling meant nothing, though it's not supposed to.

5. Uh...oh yeah there's the Draft (or whatever it is), which is going to change everything. That kind of makes tonight's show worthless, which isn't the best possible idea. Make the announced next week and do the Draft in two weeks, or after Payback. It's not like it's doing you much good by announcing it tonight.

6. Overall, the show was entertaining, but it's kind of collapsing under its own reputation. If you don't have 134 different stories and angles and surprises, it feels underwhelming. It was good, though there's only so much you can do when your surprises aren't really surprises.

7. Oh and the beach balls. SCREW OFF WITH THOSE THINGS ALREADY! During the Neville match, there were probably close to 25 of them being batted around in the span of five minutes. It's really, REALLY distracting for someone trying to watch the match (much like the Wave in the main event) but then again this crowd, which claims to be a bunch of wrestling fans, would rather entertain themselves because apparently WWE doesn't do it for them.

8. Could anyone make out what they were chanting during Sheamus/Cesaro's match? I never could get it.

Heading to Raw

Discuss it here. I'll have a quick live report up when I get back. Also I've started on Takeover and it should be up tomorrow if I'm lucky.

Main Event – March 30, 2017: The Slow Road to Wrestlemania

Main Event

Date: March 30, 2017

Location: Wells Fargo Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Byron Saxton

It's Wrestlemania week and there's a good chance that you'll never know it based on watching this show. If I had to guess, we'll be seeing some nothing matches and a bunch of build towards the pay per view. In other words, it's going to be Monday Night Raw all over again. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Alicia Fox vs. Dana Brooke

Dana is freshly face. Feeling out process to start with Fox running her over, only to get slammed for two. For some reason this makes the announcers suggest that Dana is cheating, even though she certainly didn't. Fox's northern lights suplex gets two and we're off to the chinlock. That goes nowhere so Fox misses a boot in the corner and gets caught in a Samoan Driver for the pin at 4:09.

Rating: D+. Yeah fine. Dana is pretty much the same character as a heel or a face, which isn't the best sign in the world. This was really just having Brooke shrug off Fox's offense and hit her finish, though she has a good smile and the entrance works well enough. It's clear that neither of these two are going near the title anytime soon and this didn't seem to do much to help them.

From Raw.

Here are Rollins and HHH for the contract signing. HHH doesn't get in yet because he has to tell Seth that the match is off if there's violence before the match. Seth has to sit down and listen to what he has to give up or there's no match. HHH explains the idea all over again and then blames the fans for putting Seth in jeopardy.

The boss doesn't understand why people hate success so much. How dare HHH drive a nice car and live in a nice house? You have one life to live and there's no point in holding back. HHH finally gets to a logical point by saying Seth doesn't want to miss Wrestlemania twice in a row but if he walks in to Wrestlemania, he's not walking out.

Seth says that's the same nonsense he bought into three years ago but he's not doing it now. He didn't mind wrestling in front of 100 people for a hot dog and a handshake in the Philadelphia National Guard Armory because he loves this business. Seth loves this and it's more than just a match at Wrestlemania. Rollins signs and the beating is on with HHH going after the knee. HHH loads up the crutch but gets caught by an enziguri and backdropped over the top.

Also from Raw.

Here's Reigns for his big talk about Undertaker. He was in this building two years ago when he won the Royal Rumble and then went on to main event two straight Wrestlemanias. Roman, sounding rather heelish, doesn't care what the people say and doesn't care what Undertaker thinks: this is his building and this is his yard. The gong strikes and Undertaker is on screen in the graveyard.

We see him digging the grave, which is in a special part of the cemetery. At Wrestlemania, the Roman Empire will crumble and the ultimate thrill ride will be Reigns' Last Ride. Reigns should live each day like it's his last because at Wrestlemania, he will.....and there go the lights because Undertaker is in the ring. As he was saying, Reigns will rest in peace. The lights go dim again and Reigns isn't phased.

Lince Dorado/Gran Metalik/Mustafa Ali vs. Ariya Daivari/Tony Nese/Drew Gulak

Nese runs Metalik over to start but Metalik starts using the ropes, including walking across them into a springboard armdrag. Ali comes in and gets sent hard to the floor as we take a break. Back with Gulak getting two off a hard clothesline before grabbing a one arm camel clutch. Ali pops back up with the rolling neckbreaker and there's the hot tag to Dorado. A shooting star gets two on Nese and everything breaks down with Metalik getting in a big dive. Nese adds the inverted 450 for the pin on Gulak at 9:05.

Rating: C-. This was every run of the mill cruiserweight six man you've ever seen. Metalik had some good dives in there but there was nothing else of note in the whole thing. They really do just throw these people on TV and hope for the best. The match isn't bad by any stretch but it's completely uninteresting.

We'll wrap it with this.

Here are Paul Heyman and Brock Lesnar for the big closing segment. Lesnar is the extremist who is going to derail Goldberg's ultimate thrill ride. The Universal Title is what matters most around here because it's the one (Heyman: "There's a number you're familiar with at Wrestlemania.") thing that matters more than anything else. Lesnar craves and lusts after that title but more than that he wants to destroy Goldberg.

While Goldberg may be the man, Lesnar is the Beast that will chew him up and spit him out at Wrestlemania. Now we need a reason to get people to buy the show ("Or buy a ticket off a secondary market because Wrestlemania is sold out. Thanks for the house Brock!") so here it is: Goldberg is going to Suplex City! Lesnar doesn't fear the spear because Goldberg can't survive the F5. Here's Goldberg to say the people are here to see us fight, meaning it's a spear to Lesnar in the aisle. Lesnar is down on the floor as Goldberg poses to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. Complete waste of forty five minutes here with recaps of segments that weren't great in the first place and two nothing matches. Main Event is a show that has to put in some strong effort to get above being a nothing show and they certainly didn't

accomplish that here. Bad show and one of the weakest since I've been watching.

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