

# Daily News Update – December 3, 2016

So as you might have noticed, I'm not doing as many news stories and articles around here lately. This is due to me basically becoming a full time news reporter at WrestlingRumors.net, which takes up a lot of my time. However, it occurred to me that I had a list of articles I've written with the links up so I might as well put them on here as well. These are just going to be links and headlines but the articles include my take on them at the end. I don't know if I'll do these every day but I'll do them more often than not.

John Cena Nominated for Award. December 2, 2016.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/john-cena-nominated-for-award/>

John Cena Hosting "Saturday Night Live" on December 10. December 2, 2016.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/john-cena-hosting-saturday-night-live/>

Free Match: AJ Styles vs. Christopher Daniels vs. Samoa Joe. December 2, 2016.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/free-match-aj-styles-vs-christopher-daniels-vs-samoa-joe/>

Major Development at NXT House Show \*SPOILERS INCLUDED\* December 3, 2016.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/major-development-at-nxt-house-show-spoilers-included/>

Broken Matt Hardy Appears at ROH's "Final Battle 2016". December 3, 2016.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/broken-matt-hardy-appears-at-rohs-final-battle-2016/>

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# Tables, Ladders and Chairs 2016 Preview

It's been long enough since the last pay per view right? I mean, two weeks is more than enough time to get ready for the next big show. This Sunday we have "Tables, Ladders and Chairs 2016" from "Smackdown Live", meaning it's time for the big gimmick based show with all the matches built around the name of the show. No I don't mean Survivor Series. Let's get to it.

To begin with, we have a match that has been built up for a few months despite both guys barely being in the same place. We'll start with the chairs match between Baron Corbin and Kalisto, which was recently enhanced by Corbin ruining Kalisto's Cruiserweight Title shot and therefore keeping the cruiserweights over on "Monday Night Raw". Kalisto then attacked Corbin with a chair for the sake of having a chairs match on the pay per view.

There's really no reason to put Kalisto over here so I'll go with Corbin, who seemed to be ready for a push towards the main event but was thrown back into this for reasons that aren't clear. I'm sure Kalisto will get in some impressive offense but I can't imagine this ending with anything other than a big power move onto a chair with Corbin getting the pin.

We'll just to a title match now with Smackdown Women's Champion Becky Lynch defending against Alexa Bliss in a tables match. These two have feuded for months now but they've managed to only have one title match in that span. Yeah imagine that: building up a feud by means other than having them trade the title back and forth. On this occasion, we're having a tables match after Bliss pushed Lynch through one on "Smackdown Live" earlier this week.

On paper, this is the perfect way to put the title on Bliss but I think we're going to see Lynch retain the title in a surprise. They seem to be

getting ready for the big showdown with Nikki Bella because that's just how things work on Tuesdays. Bliss has gotten a lot out of this feud but I don't think she's ready for the title just yet. I wouldn't be stunned if they change the title but I think Lynch retains here.

We'll stick with the title matches for now with the Wyatt Family (Bray Wyatt and Randy Orton) challenging Heath Slater and Rhyno for the Smackdown Tag Team Titles. Slater and Rhyno are the inaugural champions and have held the belts for a few months now, which really has surprised me after expecting them to fall apart in the span of their first feud.

That being said, if there is any reason for the Wyatts not to get the titles here, I have no idea what it could be. Somehow Wyatt has never won a title in WWE and Orton would seem destined to turn on him eventually, so the title change here makes sense. Also it's not like Slater and Rhyno losing to one of the biggest stars ever and a top name like Wyatt is going to seem like an upset. They're playing with the house's money here so the loss is fine. Give the Wyatts the belts they deserve and arguably need.

Before we get to the two big matches on the rest of the show, let's take a look at the grudge match between Nikki Bella and Carmella, who will be facing off in a No DQ match. This isn't the most interesting thing in the world but it's been built up well enough over time and I wouldn't mind watching it again. I mean, assuming Bella doesn't shrug off Carmella's finisher time after time again.

This time though I think I'm going to go with Carmella in an upset. The weapons are a nice way out and as much as I'm sure they want to push Bella as this unstoppable force, Carmella needs this win a lot more. Carmella could challenge Lynch down the line and while there's a very good chance this is the Bella show all over again (in addition to her two other shows), I'm going with Carmella in a surprise.

Now we get to the portion of the show involving climbing high objects, starting with Miz defending the Intercontinental Title in a ladder match against Dolph Ziggler. These two have feuded for what feels like forever and this is being billed as the big final fight. I didn't really need Miz

losing the title in the first place as I could have gone with a big long title reign but Ziggler's win was great.

I'll go with Miz retaining here as Ziggler really doesn't need anything at this point. Unfortunately I have a bad feeling they're going to go with Ziggler getting the big win again because that's worked so well in the long term all those other times. Miz winning, hopefully without Spirit Squad interfering this time, sets up something bigger for him down the line while Ziggler can be built up for his latest "I JUST WANT ONE SHOT!!!" speech.

That leaves us with the main event with AJ Styles defending the Smackdown World Title against former champion Dean Ambrose in a TLC match. Styles won the title back in September and Ambrose has yet to get his one on one rematch. This is the kind of match that is fun almost by definition: take two talented people and have them beat each other with various hard objects over and over again until one of them is done.

I'll take Styles retaining here as the word on the street is Undertaker vs. Styles for the belt in San Antonio. On top of that there's a pre-made story of Undertaker being mad at Ambrose for costing "Smackdown Live" the Survivor Series match. Even if Undertaker doesn't interfere, Styles winning makes the most sense and hopefully wraps up this feud for good.

Overall, Sunday's show is going to be the same as it always is: a lot of fun depending on the level of violence they're allowed to involved. I always look forward to this show and it's a great way to wrap up the year. No big storytelling moments, no technical wrestling exhibitions and no overly complicated gimmicks. Just a bunch of matches with people beating on each other with various metal objects.

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And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

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

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## **New Column: We Get It Already**

Looking at why Sasha vs. Charlotte is a horrible way to book a feud and why the blue women are that much better.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-we-get-it-already/>

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## **Smackdown – November 29, 2016: Going Home With A Smile**

### **Smackdown**

Date: November 29, 2016

Location: Colonial Life Arena, Columbia, South Carolina

Commentators: Tom Phillips, David Otunga, Mauro Ranallo, John Bradshaw Layfield

It's the go home show for Tables, Ladders and Chairs 2016 and Smackdown has managed to put together a pretty decent build in such a small time

frame. Tonight we've got Dean Ambrose hosting the Ambrose Asylum with James Ellsworth as his guest, meaning AJ Styles is bound to get involved. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

There are tables, ladders and chairs all over the arena.

Renee Young is in the ring for a contract signing for the Women's Title match. Alexa Bliss and Becky Lynch come out with Alexa telling Renee to get out of here because they need someone with better fashion sense. They recap the feud with Becky saying Bliss has the mentality of a four year old. The champ signs but Alexa keeps talking about Becky's accent and how this isn't the Disney Channel where you get further by being nice. Becky rips into her for not accomplishing anything in her time here other than having a loser mentality. Alexa signs as well and the fight is on with Becky actually being knocked through the table.

Dolph Ziggler/Kalisto vs. Baron Corbin/The Miz

Corbin knocks Ziggler down to start and we take a break less than thirty seconds in. Back with Corbin whipping Dolph hard into the corner and doing that slide underneath the bottom rope to keep Dolph in trouble. It's off to Miz, who pulls out a ladder to lean up against the steps. Ziggler gets in the running DDT on the floor, followed by a superkick to Miz.

The hot tag brings in Kalisto for his usual, including the hurricanrana driver for two on Miz. A big suicide dive sends Miz into the announcers' table. Everyone is staggered and Maryse shoves the ladder onto Ziggler. Back in and the Salida Del Sol looks to finish, only to have Corbin use a chair for the DQ at 7:31.

**Rating:** B-. For a match this short, they packed in a lot of action into the time. Kalisto could be an interesting guy if they would stop cutting his legs out from underneath him. The same is true with Corbin, who certainly has the look but I'm not sure if he has enough in ring skills yet to hang at this level.

American Alpha isn't scared of the Wyatts and are ready to levitate the Wyatts with suplexes.

The Wyatts are ready for American Alpha and don't like their positivity. Orton gives Luke Harper a pep talk for his match with Kane but Harper doesn't seem to trust Randy.

Carmella comes out for her match but first of all she has a message for John Cena. She promises to hit Nikki with a chair so hard that the real Bella Twins pop out of her back. Nikki charges to the ring and the brawl is on, meaning no match. Carmella is easily cleaned out.

We recap last week's ladder match with Ellsworth earning his contract and a shot at Styles' World Title.

It's time for the Ambrose Asylum, complete with a single piece of carpet in the middle of the ring. Ambrose gets right to it by bringing out Ellsworth as the first guest. Dean asks how old James' boots are before letting James celebrate his win a little bit. Ellsworth offers to do anything Dean needs so Ambrose gives him money to pick up a six pack after the show. As far as James' future, he'd rather face AJ for the title after beating him three times in a row. Ambrose: "He's drunk with power ladies and gentlemen."

Cue AJ to stand on the announcers' table and make puppet jokes about Ellsworth. Dean: "So what you're saying is you lost to a dummy three times?" AJ gets in the ring and promises to get rid of Dean before dealing with the new superstar, as long as James shows up on Sunday. The brawl is on with AJ shoving both guys through the furniture. Ellsworth is hung upside down for a chair shot to the back, followed by a Styles Clash onto the steps. That should get rid of him for awhile but odds are he'll be at the pay per view.

Post break, Ellsworth is taken out on a stretcher.

### Kane vs. Luke Harper

Harper's headlock doesn't get him anywhere as Kane comes back with his own power offense. A big boot and clothesline puts Harper on the floor

and we take a break. Back with Harper kicking him in the knee and head, only to get caught with the running DDT. Harper hammers away in the corner but gets powerbombed out for two more. The swinging Boss Man Slam gives Luke two of his own and a superkick drops Kane again. Back up and Harper misses the discus lariat, setting up the chokeslam to give Kane the pin at 11:05.

**Rating:** B-. What is with the good matches on here tonight? These two beat the heck out of each other in the only kind of match they should have had. Kane has taken a backseat since the Draft but he's still fine for something like this. You can tell they're doing something with Harper so maybe he'll wind up getting a push out of the thing.

We recap the contract signing.

Becky has a sore back but doesn't care what kind of match she has with Alexa. Again, and I can't emphasize this enough: they've taken a simple idea and ran with the thing, which can often make for something very entertaining.

#### Bray Wyatt/Randy Orton vs. American Alpha

The winners get the title shot on Sunday. Orton and Jordan get things going with Jason snapping off some armdrags and working an armbar. It's off to Wyatt who throws Jordan throat first into the ropes to take over. The beatdown begins with Orton draping him over the top rope and grabbing a chinlock.

Jordan fights up and makes the tag off to Gable, who cleans house for a bit until being sent hard to the floor as we take a break. Back with Gable getting DDT'ed onto the apron for two as the beating continues. Bray hits the release Rock Bottom and Orton's awesome looking superplex has both guys down.

Unfortunately it's actually enough for the hot tag to Jordan as everything breaks down. The suplexes begin on Bray but the lights go out, revealing Harper at ringside. Gable breaks up Sister Abigail but an RKO breaks up the Grand Amplitude. Jordan's spear hits the post and Sister Abigail sends the Wyatts to the title match at 15:29.



**Rating:** B. Heck of a match here with the right team going over. Bray almost has to win a title soon and they even protected Alpha in the loss. There's something so cool about watching Jordan fighting for all he's worth as he does the big comeback as well as almost anyone in the company right now. This was better than I was expecting and I had a good time with it.

Slater and Rhyno are ready for the challenge when Styles comes up to say no one cares about the Tag Team Titles. Ambrose runs in and beats AJ up to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** A. Now THIS is how you go into a pay per view. Smackdown had a battle plan tonight and executed it to near perfection. I'm pretty sure every match on Sunday got some focus here and the wrestling was even good on top of that. You really can tell that there's a lot of effort put into the planning of these shows and they know exactly what they want to do on almost any given week. This was one of the better go home shows I've seen in a very long time and it was everything they needed to do and more.

### Results

Dolph Ziggler/Kalisto b. The Miz/Baron Corbin via DQ when Corbin used a chair

Kane b. Luke Harper – Chokeslam

Randy Orton/Bray Wyatt b. American Alpha – Sister Abigail to Jordan

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# Smackdown – November 22, 2016: I Thought Raw Was The Red Show

## Smackdown

Date: November 22, 2016

Location: Canadian Tire Centre, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, John Bradshaw Layfield, David Otunga, Tom Phillips

It's two days after Survivor Series and less than two weeks to Tables, Ladders and Chairs, meaning it's time to make up a card. Thankfully Smackdown is ready for that and has already announced a tag team turmoil match to determine who will challenge Rhyno and Heath Slater. Let's get to it.

We open with a quick recap of Smackdown winning the men's tag match.

Here's a banged up Shane McMahon to open things up. After a YOU STILL GOT IT chant, Shane praises Team Raw for bringing it as hard as they did. That being said, he's not happy with AJ Styles and Dean Ambrose, who couldn't keep it together for a single night. Shane is as close to serious as he can get but Dean keeps chuckling and brings out James Ellsworth, who took out Braun Strowman.

Apparently there's a surprise for Ellsworth but Dean jumps the gun by saying James is getting a contract. So he was working freelance until then? And he had a World Title shot? Didn't Shane learn anything from the Monday Night Wars? Dean has been given the night off and Shane wants him out of the building.

This brings out AJ Styles, who wants Dean's title shot revoked. After that goes nowhere, AJ goes to Ellsworth, who is being handed his contract. Since TLC is in two weeks, AJ needs a warmup. How about we put that contract above the ring and have a ladder match? Ellsworth actually agrees but if he wins, he wants a future title shot.

Daniel Bryan interrupts Miz and Maryse's photo shoot and Miz is ready for Mizgiving. That's not what Daniel has in mind though as he's going to give Miz an Intercontinental Title defense against Kalisto, who was screwed out of the Cruiserweight Title on Sunday.

After a break, Shane makes sure Dean leaves the arena.

### Intercontinental Title: Kalisto vs. Miz

Miz is defending. Kalisto goes behind to start and backflips under a clothesline. A suicide dive sends Miz down to the floor and us to a break. Back with Kalisto still in control and hitting his springboard corkscrew crossbody for two. A slingshot sitout powerbomb is countered into a hurricanrana for two more on the champ as Miz is reeling so far. Cue Baron Corbin for a distraction though and a Skull Crushing Finale retains the title at 7:15. Not enough to rate but Miz was getting squashed until the ending.

Corbin lays Kalisto out and Dolph Ziggler superkicks Miz to make up for last week. Good grief can we PLEASE go somewhere with Corbin vs. Kalisto but more importantly, MOVE ON FROM MIZ VS. ZIGGLER???

Alexa Bliss comes in to see the bosses but Bryan bails to go deal with what happened. Becky Lynch walks in ("I knocked.") and says the rematch is at TLC. Cue Natalya with the whistle and talks her way into a match with Becky. Natalya leaves so here's Dean with a pizza, much to Shane's annoyance. Becky: "I'll see you later....after I take out a PIZZA Nattie's arm!"

Video on the Wrestlemania ticket sale party.

Bryan gives Corbin a match with Kane.

### Tag Team Turmoil

This is a gauntlet match with the last team standing getting the Tag Team Title shot at TLC. Ascension and the Hype Bros start things off with the Bros getting jumped from behind and beaten down on the floor. Things settle down with Ryder getting beaten down and chopped a lot. A double neckbreaker gets Ryder out of trouble though and it's a Hype Ryder for the first pin.

Breezango is in next and we take a quick break. Back with Breezango in control and avoiding a Broski Boot. A slingshot elbow puts Ryder away and it's American Alpha in fourth. Fandango is right on top of Gable as he comes in and Chad is in early trouble. That goes nowhere as Gable rolls Breeze up for a quick elimination. It's the Vaudevillains in at #5 and they're out in less than thirty seconds off a German suplex. That leaves the Usos vs. Alpha for the title shot but the twins aren't thrilled with getting in immediately.

We take an early break and come back with Jordan in trouble. A belly to back suplex gives Jey two and we hit the chinlock for a bit, only to have Jason pop up and make the hot tag. Gable comes in and cleans house with a snap German suplex getting two on Jey. With Jordan still down, Chad gets caught in a backbreaker/top rope knee combo for a near fall. Jason makes a blind tag and the Steiner Bulldog gets two with Jimmy making a save. Jey scores with a superkick but the Superfly Splash hits knees, setting up a small package for two. Grand Amplitude ends Jey at 21:02.

**Rating:** B-. The first half of this wasn't much to see but Alpha and the Usos tore the house down. It's a good idea to give Alpha the title shot as you can only keep them away from the belts for so long. They're just so far ahead of almost everyone else and only the Usos can really keep up with them. Check out the final fall but the rest is pretty skippable.

The Wyatts pop up on screen to say they're the final team but won't face Alpha until next week.

Ellsworth knows he's in over his head but wants to fight anyway because any man with two feet can climb a ladder. This brings in Ambrose...who is dressed as a Mountie (not THE Mountie of course). Shane comes back in and freaks out, telling Ambrose to leave again. Dean: "Don't you want to know

why I'm dressed as a Mountie?" Shane leaves before he does something he'll regret. Bryan actually asks why he's dressed like that, which Dean says is because he always gets his man. JBL: "A lunatic Rougeau Brother?"

### Becky Lynch vs. Natalya

Alexa is on commentary. They hit the mat to start with Natalya getting the better of it as we take an early break. Back with Natalya in control with an abdominal stretch. It's almost time for the Sharpshooter but Becky reverses into the Disarm-Her for the tap out at 7:12. Again not enough to rate but it did its job just fine.

Bliss jumps Becky post match.

The Hype Bros still merchandise.

Miz wants Dolph Ziggler to be suspended but gets a title match against Ziggler at TLC in a ladder match. This is their LAST match.

Nikki Bella accuses Carmella of attacking her at Survivor Series. Carmella suggests that it was Charlotte or Dana Brooke. See, Nikki has made a lot of enemies because she's not exactly Mother Theresa. There's going to be an anything goes match at TLC.

### Kane vs. Baron Corbin

The masked one goes after him to start but walks into one heck of a right hand to stagger him into the corner. Corbin does his slide underneath the ropes but here's Kalisto to go after Baron for the DQ at 1:05.

Kane chokeslams Corbin for good measure. Kalisto grabs a chair but Corbin bails before anything can happen. For some reason Corbin charges back in and takes a Van Daminator.

### AJ Styles vs. James Ellsworth

Non-title ladder match and if AJ wins, Ellsworth is gone for good. If Ellsworth wins, he gets the contract and a future title shot. What Ellsworth, in a neck brace, doesn't get is an entrance though as AJ comes out after a break. Ellsworth is knocked out to the floor and a kick to

the face makes it even worse.

A backbreaker further damages James' bad back and AJ puts the ladder on top of him. As AJ goes up for the climb, here's Ambrose in a hockey jersey and helmet to take AJ down. The Phenomenal Forearm drops Dean but Ellsworth shoves the ladder over, sending Styles down to the floor. No Chin Music knocks AJ into the ropes and his boot is tied up in the ropes, allowing Jams to get the contract at 6:00.

**Rating:** D. This was about the story instead of the match but I'm getting tired of seeing AJ lose to Ellsworth. I know there's interference and it doesn't really matter but this is the third time we've done this same story and this time the big final shot was Ellsworth on his own. Not a good match of course but this was more of an angle than a match.

JBL does a trademark freak out to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C. I really wasn't feeling this one as it felt like an episode of Raw. The matches were mostly short and featured a ton of interference, though they did set up a bunch of stuff for the pay per view. The good thing is they had most of their stuff set up in advance so this wasn't the hardest card to throw together. Not a bad show but it didn't have the Smackdown feel.

## Results

Miz b. Kalisto – Skull Crushing Finale

American Alpha won Tag Team Turmoil – Grand Amplitude to Jey

Becky Lynch b. Natalya – Disarm-Her

Baron Corbin b. Kane via DQ when Kalisto interfered

James Ellsworth b. AJ Styles – Ellsworth pulled down the contract

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# Survivor Series 2016: There Are No Words

## Survivor Series 2016

Date: November 20, 2016

Location: Air Canada Centre, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Commentators: Corey Graves, Byron Saxton, Mauro Ranallo, John Bradshaw Layfield, Michael Cole, David Otunga

For the first time ever, Survivor Series is a four hour show with a two hour pre-show. Now some might think this is too...oh wait I'm not a real fan if I complain about shows being too long unless it's Raw when it's unquestionably too long. Pay per views can be as long as they want you see. Tonight is all about Raw vs. Smackdown and Brock Lesnar vs. Goldberg so let's get to it.

Pre-Show: Ariya Daivari/Drew Gulak/Tony Nese vs. TJ Perkins/Rich Swann/Noam Dar

Swann gets out of a suplex to start and dropkicks Nese in the jaw before handing it off to TJ. More flipping ensues and we can hear Renee Young talking to her producer and saying "nine minutes". The kneebar has Gulak in trouble but everything breaks down to send us to a break.

Back with Dar getting crotched on the middle rope and superkicked for two. A delayed vertical suplex gets two for Nese and it's back to Gulak for a leg lock. Some kicks finally get Dar out of trouble and it's off to

Swann for the house cleaning. We hit the dives on the bad guys and it's Swann's standing 450 for the pin on Daivari at 11:50, or 8:57 after Renee said "nine minutes".

**Rating:** C. Standard six man tag though the pace seemed a bit faster here. Maybe giving them their own show is the solution because they still feel out of place on the main roster. They're more than talented enough but the lack of charisma and personalities are killing them. Someone like Gulak or Nese for instance are great examples of this as there's no reason to care about anything they're doing and it shows more every week they're out there. Not a bad match but it was in one ear and out the other.

#### Pre-Show: Kane vs. Luke Harper

Feeling out process to start with both guys going after the arm. That's not the most interesting thing in the world though so it's Kane being sent outside for the suicide dive. Back in and a Falcon's Arrow gets two for Harper as we take a break. We come back with Kane in a chinlock until a belly to back suplex drops Luke on his head. As JBL makes a Walking Dead reference, Kane walks into a superkick for two. A big boot to the shoulder and the running DDT give Kane his own near fall. Harper comes back with the discus lariat but Kane grabs the chokeslam for the pin at 10:08.

**Rating:** C-. This was every match you've ever seen these two have, meaning it wasn't half bad. Harper has been a little overshadowed so it's nice to see him have a match on his own for a change. Kane winning is fine, albeit a bit unnecessary as he just pops in and out of Smackdown at will.

The opening video is pretty standard and focuses on the three elimination tags plus Goldberg vs. Lesnar.

#### Survivor Series Women's Tag Team Match: Team Raw vs. Team Smackdown

Raw: Bayley, Alicia Fox, Nia Jax, Charlotte, Sasha Banks

Smackdown: Nikki Bella, Natalya, Carmella, Naomi, Becky Lynch

Actually hang on a sec as there's no Nikki. We cut to the back where



someone has attacked Nikki, meaning Natalya will be taking her place. Alicia and Carmella start things off but it's quickly off to Bayley vs. Becky. Unfortunately that doesn't get to happen as Charlotte tags herself in, leading to a big ten woman staredown with Nia breaking everything up on her own.

It settles down to Becky trying the Disarm-Her on Charlotte but Nia comes in and runs through the Smackdown women one by one. Some double teaming finally puts her back on the apron and it's Alicia hitting an ax kick to eliminate Carmella at 6:26. Bliss pulls Alicia right back down though and Twisted Bliss ties us up at 6:47.

Everything breaks down and Naomi dives onto Jax, who sends Naomi head first into the post. That's enough for a countout at 8:46 and it's 4-3 Raw. Alexa takes Sasha into the wrong corner but Banks comes right back with the double knees without missing a beat. Alexa saves Natalya from the Bank Statement and it's a rollup from Natalya to get rid of Sasha at 10:26.

Charlotte takes Natalya down but the moonsault is countered into a sitout powerbomb. The Sharpshooter doesn't last long as Charlotte makes the ropes, allowing her to kick Natalya in the face for the elimination. So it's Becky/Alexa vs. Nia/Bayley/Charlotte but the Smackdown women get in an argument. Nia suplexes them both at the same time before falling to a horribly botched double DDT. The Disarm-Her (looks really bad as Becky can't lock it in) makes Nia tap at 13:26, leaving the match at 2-2.

Actually never mind as Charlotte boots Alexa in the face for the pin at 14:15. Becky is in trouble but comes back with clotheslines and forearms, followed by the Bex Plex. It's off to Bayley who takes a Bex Plex of her own but blocks the Disarm-Her. A quick Bayley to Belly gives Bayley the surprise winning pin at 17:49.

**Rating:** C. This was pretty sloppy and the eliminations felt like an excuse to get us to the final few people, which makes sense as they're the most interesting but it also shows the problems with this kind of match. Bayley getting the pin was a good choice though I'm not sure why they got Sasha out of there so fast. All that being said: this was so far

ahead of what these matches used to be that it might as well have been a different sport entirely. Things are trending in the right way and that's a good thing.

Charlotte destroys Bayley post match to set up the next title feud.

Anderson and Gallows pick on James Ellsworth until Mick Foley comes in for the save. After talking about how much he loved seeing Foley get beaten up as a kid, Ellsworth turns down an offer to come to Raw. Braun Strowman comes up and scares Ellsworth away.

### Intercontinental Title: The Miz vs. Sami Zayn

Sami is challenging and the title can change brands. The Canadian fans are way behind Sami as he starts fast with a leg lariat and sends Miz to the floor for a breather. That's fine with Sami who moonsaults off the barricade to drop the champ again. The standard Miz distraction lets Miz take over on the leg with some kicks and a swing into the post.

Sami comes right back with a flip dive and the Michinoku Driver for two but Miz starts doing Daniel Bryan stuff again and takes over. That just means a Blue Thunder Bomb to give Sami two but the Helluva Kick only hits the buckle. The Figure Four goes on until Sami turns it over for the counter.

Miz starts in with the YES Kicks but gets pulled down into a Figure Four (which takes a bit as Sami doesn't seem to know how to do it) and the bell rings....as rung by Maryse. The distraction lets Miz grab a rollup (and tights according to Cole, even though his hand isn't grabbing anything) to retain at 14:09.

**Rating:** C+. Not the best here as the ending felt like they needed a way out and didn't want either guy to do a job. I'm really not sure what they're waiting on with Sami as he's more than over enough and ready to do something but he keeps going from one story to another (like Strowman, who didn't even have a match against Sami) without really getting anywhere.

Dean Ambrose and AJ Styles argue over what's going to happen at TLC when

Shane McMahon comes in and tells them to cool it.

### Survivor Series Tag Team Elimination Match: Team Raw vs. Team Smackdown

Raw: Enzo Amore and Big Cass, New Day, Anderson and Gallows, Shining Stars,

Smackdown: Heath Slater/Rhyno, Breezango, Usos, American Alpha, Hype Bros

When one member is eliminated, their partner is as well. Fandango and Big E. get things going but Fandango would rather give away fashion tickets. The Midnight Hour takes care of Breezango at 46 seconds but Jimmy superkicks Kofi to tie it up at 1:13. Well that's certainly a surprise. Ryder, with the old Survivor Series logo on his trunks, flapjacks Primo before it's off to Mojo (Graves: "Smackdown's resident blithering idiot.") for his bell clap in the corner. Ryder comes back in and has to deal with Anderson and Gallows, meaning it's a Magic Killer for the pin at 5:14.

We get the big moment of the match as American Alpha comes in for multiple double dropkicks but Sheamus starts stomping Gable down in the corner. The Shining Stars actually beat on Gable for a bit until the hot tag brings Jordan back in for the house cleaning. It's actually a Steiner Bulldog to get rid of the Shining Stars and tie things up.

Everything breaks down and it's Enzo being launched onto the pile. Slater hits a dive of his own, leaving Jordan to get caught in the Swing. Another Magic Killer eliminates American Alpha at 10:46 and we're down to 3-2. Slater has to fight off Anderson and Gallows but some Raw miscommunication allows a tag off to Rhyno. The Gore gets rid of Anderson and Gallows at 12:26 but the Bada Boom Shaka Lacka takes out Rhyno and Slater at 13:00.

The Usos remember they're in the match and superkick Enzo into the Superfly Splash for the elimination at 13:30, leaving us with the Usos vs. Sheamus/Cesaro. Sheamus eats a superkick but Cesaro shoves him out of the way of the second, meaning it's a Brogue Kick for two on Jimmy with Jey making the save. Cesaro comes in with the Uppercut Train followed by a 619. The high crossbody gets two on Jey and there's the Swing to make

it even worse. Jimmy superkicks the knee out to set up the Tequila Sunrise but Cesaro reverses into a Sharpshooter for the tap out at 18:56 as Sheamus cuts Jey off.

**Rating:** D+. Yeah ok we get it: Cesaro and Sheamus are a thing and we'll like them already. This was REALLY disappointing as they flew through the eliminations for reasons I don't even want to try to comprehend. But hey, they got the match in and out of there as fast as they could and that's what matters right? That's why we added an hour: so the matches that could be interesting could be short with two eliminations in less than eighty seconds.

So in theory the final Survivor Series match, which now means even less as Raw has secured the brand supremacy thing (assuming they're not counting the stupid singles matches), is going to run about forty five minutes.

Stephanie McMahon and Foley give Cesaro and Sheamus a Tag Team Title match tomorrow night on Raw.

We recap the Cruiserweight Title match, which is another non-existent feud because there's no story here. Kendrick has the title and Kalisto's job is to bring it to Smackdown.

#### Cruiserweight Title: Kalisto vs. Brian Kendrick

Kendrick is defending and Kalisto snaps off some hurricanranas to start. A running corner dropkick has Brian in trouble so he grabs the ropes to avoid getting pinned. That would be his craftiness you see and that makes him an interesting villain. Or so I'm told. Kendrick grabs a long cravate until Kalisto gets him to the apron for a Spanish Fly to the floor.

Back in and Kendrick gets flipped off the top but still grabs the Captain's Hook. The rope is finally grabbed and Kalisto starts snapping off the kicks, followed by a middle rope seated senton to the back. The Salida Del Sol gets two as Kendrick puts a boot on the rope. Kalisto heads up top...and here's Baron Corbin to hit Kendrick for the DQ at 12:19. Therefore, Raw is now 3-1, making the last Survivor Series match even less important.

**Rating:** C. I was digging this one until the end and it's amazing how much more interesting this is when you have a high flier that we've actually gotten to know a bit over the years instead of someone who was brought in without much backstory. Oh and another reason why the division hasn't worked so far: the champ's finisher is a chinlock.

Corbin gives Kalisto the End of Days.

Pre-Show recap.

### Team Raw Men vs. Team Smackdown Men

Raw: Kevin Owens, Chris Jericho, Roman Reigns, Seth Rollins, Braun Strowman

Smackdown: Shane McMahon, Bray Wyatt, Randy Orton, Dean Ambrose, AJ Styles

Ellsworth is here as Smackdown's mascot. AJ and Owens get things going to really make the smarks happy. Neither can get anywhere so the fans start a STUPID IDIOT chant (Owens: "That's you!"). The fans get the tag to Jericho, who stops to hug Owens. Chris leaves so it's off to Rollins vs. Ambrose with neither being able to hit a finisher. Jericho comes back in and hits an enziguri for two on Dean.

Shane gets the tag and does his weird punching before elbowing Jericho in the jaw with the fans telling him he still has it. The boss gets beaten down as the announcers argue over which show had higher ratings. Not THE MATCH IN FRONT OF THEM, but the TV ratings. Roman comes in for the corner clotheslines but it's back to Ambrose vs. Owens. The Pop Up Powerbomb doesn't work and we get the big showdown instead, leaving Owens to do the BIG flip dive onto everyone else.

A bunch of people go after Braun, leaving the Shield and AJ in the ring. The Smackdown guys clear the ring but get in a brawl until Shane breaks it up. A kick to Dean's head allows Strowman to powerslam Ambrose for the elimination at 15:59. Strowman shrugs off the Smackdown attack again, including a SCARY looking toss to send AJ over the top and out to the floor.

We get the Bray vs. Braun showdown with Strowman dropkicking Bray down in a not horrible visual. Orton finally gets in the RKO onto the announcers' table and Shane adds the top rope elbow for the huge crash. AJ gets Shane back inside and Strowman is counted out at 21:12 because Ellsworth grabbed his foot. James bails up the ramp but gets caught (How can you not outrun BRAUN STROWMAN?) and thrown off the stage.

Shane is still in the ring to take another beating and the Lionsault connects, only to have Shane reverse into a small package for two. McMahon and Orton both take Codebreakers and of course Shane kicks out. Question for discussion: would any other member of Team Smackdown be allowed to kick out of a Lionsault and Codebreaker in the span of thirty seconds? Naturally Shane gets in a shot on Jericho and makes the tag off to AJ. They trade submission attempts and AJ decks Owens, who comes in with the List of Jericho for the DQ at 29:28. Jericho is distraught and gets RKO'd for the pin at 30:21.

We're down to Shane/Orton/Bray/AJ vs. Reigns/Rollins. It's Seth going in first and the numbers game has him in early trouble. A superplex gets two on Seth but Orton is banged up enough to allow a tag off to Reigns. The sitout powerbomb gets two on AJ but he blocks the Superman Punch and brings in Shane. A DDT puts Reigns down and something like a spinebuster does the same to Seth.

The spear goes into the post and Shane loads up the Coast to Coast, which is speared out of the air....for two. He's officially announced as eliminated a few seconds later, presumably due to injury. Shane looks really messed up and it wouldn't surprise me if that wasn't exactly how it was supposed to go. There's a good chance that he didn't mean to kick out but had no idea where he was.

Rollins gets the hot tag to clean house and hits his rolling superplex into the Falcon's Arrow for two on AJ. Reigns has to save Seth from the Elevated DDT on the floor but AJ breaks up a DoubleBomb. Cue Ambrose to go after AJ though and we get the Shield Reunion for a TripleBomb through the table. Seth pins AJ at 46:11 and it's down to two vs. two.

Orton and Wyatt circle the ring until Luke Harper shows up for a

distraction. As usual, NONE OF THIS IS A DQ because that's not what the script calls for. Rollins Sling Blades Wyatt and dives onto Harper to keep up the house cleaning. The superkick looks to set up the frog splash but Orton pulls him out of the air with an RKO for the elimination at 49:32.

So it's Orton/Wyatt vs. Reigns with Roman starting fast to do what he can. Reigns is sent into the barricade but scores with the apron dropkick on Bray. Harper gets a spear and the Superman Punch drops Bray. Orton shoves Bray out of the way of the spear though and Sister Abigail finishes Reigns at 52:57. JBL: "RAW WINS! RAW WINS!" Otunga: "Smackdown got one!" JBL: "RAW WINS IS WHAT EVERYONE WANTED TO SAY BUT SMACKDOWN LIVE WINS!"

**Rating:** A-. This was a lot messier than it could have been but they did exactly what they needed to do here by eating up A LOT of time (longest Survivor Series match on record and longer than multiple Royal Rumbles) and being very entertaining at the same time. Bray winning is a very, very good idea as it's now the biggest win of his career and hopefully (emphasis on that word) he can build on it. Orton taking the bullet was interesting though and that's going to mean something going forward. I had a blast with this and it's the big Survivor Series match I was hoping for, issues with eliminations aside.

We get the same Goldberg vs. Lesnar recap we've gotten for weeks now.

### Goldberg vs. Brock Lesnar

Lesnar drives him into the corner to start but Goldberg hits two spears in the first minute. The Jackhammer beats Lesnar in ONE MINUTE THIRTY SEVEN SECONDS!!!

SCREW YOU DEAN AMBROSE, RANDY ORTON, AND ANYONE ELSE THAT LESNAR HAS KILLED BECAUSE GOLDBERG JUST BEAT HIM IN A MINUTE AND A HALF!!!

The show goes off the air before 10:30 with nothing else happening.

**Overall Rating:** C-. The show ended about five minutes ago and I'm still in shock. HOW IN THE FREAKING WORLD DOES THIS HELP ANYONE OTHER THAN

GOLDBERG, WHO ISN'T EVEN STICKING AROUND??? Have Orton, Reigns, Wyatt, freaking Strowman or ANYONE else do that match. You have Orton get squashed at Summerslam and Ambrose get squashed at Wrestlemania but GOLDBERG gets to do this?

So in theory, this has something to do with Goldberg coming into the show injured. If that's the case, they knew this was going to be a short match. But they can't even give the other two Survivor Series matches twenty minutes? This is what you extended the show for another hour? Or you can't give anything else extra time?

I know I'm rambling here but this is one of the most astounding things I've ever seen. The money in Lesnar is gone for a long time, everything Lesnar has done in recent months and years feels like a total waste and Goldberg is probably gone until his Hall of Fame induction. Throw Luke Harper out there or Kane or ANYONE BUT LESNAR and it's fine. Unless there was a major contractual issue or something big backstage, I cannot understand why this happened.

The rest of the show was up and down with the great long match helping to save it but that main event is all anyone is going to be talking about for a long time. I really could have gone for the two earlier Survivor Series matches getting more time, especially in light of what's going on here. This is going to get a lot more talk in the upcoming days because I haven't been this shocked since.....probably Shane on Nitro.

### Results

Team Raw Women b. Team Smackdown Women – Bayley to Belly to Lynch

The Miz b. Sami Zayn – Rollup

Team Raw Tag Teams b. Team Smackdown Tag Teams – Sharpshooter to Jimmy Uso

Brian Kendrick b. Kalisto via DQ when Baron Corbin interfered

Team Smackdown Men b. Team Raw Men – Sister Abigail to Reigns

Goldberg b. Brock Lesnar – Jackhammer



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## Survivor Series 2016 Preview

For only the second time in history, WWE has a pay per view series reach thirty entries as we arrive at Survivor Series 2016. In what is the most important thing a Survivor Series can do, there's actually something on the line here, albeit just bragging rights, as Smackdown faces off with Raw in a series of three elimination tag matches. It's only a six match card (for now) so it should be interesting to see what they're doing with the show. Let's get to it.

We'll start with the ladies in the first Team Raw vs. Team Smackdown match. This looks almost completely one sided on paper as Smackdown has Becky Lynch and Nikki Bella, who are nowhere near enough to counter the combined forces of Sasha Banks, Charlotte, Bayley and Nia Jax. However, never underestimate the power of WWE pushing Bella to the moon and back, meaning she has a good chance of overcoming the odds. She's fearless you know.

That being said, I really can't imagine Raw has much to worry about here. No matter how you look at it, there's just too much talent on the red show, even if they have all their in fighting. This should be a glorified

layup as Carmella and Alexa Bliss are such liabilities for the Smackdown team that there's almost no way around their limitations. I'll go with Raw winning here in what shouldn't be much of a challenge for them.

On a side note since I don't have much material to talk about here with such a short card, is anyone else completely uninterested in seeing Bella vs. Charlotte treated as a huge showdown? We saw it last year and it was nothing special but now that Charlotte has become possibly the most successful women's wrestler ever and Bella was on the shelf for months, we're supposed to care? That doesn't make sense, though again, never underestimate the powers of a reality "star" in WWE.

Next up we have a title match as Cruiserweight Champion Brian Kendrick defends against Smackdown's Kalisto. This is a little bigger than your usual title match though as the winning brand gets the entire cruiserweight division. There isn't much to the feud as Kalisto was just named #1 contender a few weeks back on Smackdown.

I'm really hoping logic takes control here because there's not much of a reason to keep the title and the division as a whole over on Raw. Tuesday night has a little more open space and is better suited for an action based division than Raw, which is almost entirely storyline driven. Couple that with the upcoming 205 Live, which is being taped after Smackdown instead of Raw and there's really no reason for Kendrick to walk out with the title. If nothing else, maybe Kalisto can breathe some life into the title instead of being another mat based cruiserweight.

We'll go back to the elimination tags as we have the tag team version, featuring a staggering twenty wrestlers in one match. This kind of match hasn't been done at this level since 1988 and the previous incarnations were borderline classics and among the best Survivor Series matches of all time. I'm not sure the talent is there to pull that off this time but at least there's a great chance for some exciting action.

Picking an accurate winner here is a lot more complicated though as neither team really stands out. Raw probably has the better lineup from top to bottom but Smackdown has American Alpha and better continuity. Unfortunately Raw has to deal with the Shining Stars and the issues

between Cesaro and Sheamus. On the other hand, Heath Slater and Rhyno are playing WAY over their heads at the moment and I don't think they're going to be able to make that last against the Raw teams.

In a pick I'm not entirely confident in, I'm going to pick Smackdown to win here, if nothing else so there can be something on the line in the third match. Neither team looks great but I could certainly go for Cesaro/Sheamus vs. American Alpha with the technique vs. clubbing power formula. This should be a lot of fun if they do it right though and that's what matters in a match like this.

We'll go back to the title matches now with Miz defending the Intercontinental Title against Smackdown's Sami Zayn in another match where the title can switch brands. Miz won the belt back from Dolph Ziggler earlier this week and Ziggler not being on the card seems like a red flag.

At the end of the day though, I can't imagine Raw losing two titles and not having a midcard title to fall back on whatsoever. As much as I'd love to see Sami get a title, this doesn't really seem like the time to pull the trigger. Miz is a great Intercontinental Champion and can pick right back up where he left off after that pesky Ziggler run.

That leaves us with one Survivor Series match to go and this one is the biggest tossup of them all. I really don't know which one to pick as you would think Smackdown would be at a disadvantage with Shane McMahon on the team but he went thirty minutes with the Undertaker at Wrestlemania. The rest of the lineups pretty much cancel each other out though and that's rather influential in a match like this.

I'll go with Smackdown as WWE has a long history of putting the blue show over when the two of them go head to head. There's nothing on the line here so it's not like this is going to mean much either way, but the bragging rights are always worth a chuckle at worst. If nothing else we don't have to listen to Matt Striker shouting "IN YOUR FACE! IN YOUR FACE! IN YOUR FACE!" when someone wins.

That leaves us with the main event, which is only somewhat interesting but is the focal point of the show. Twelve and a half years ago, Goldberg

and Brock Lesnar had one of the worst major matches in wrestling history and for some reason we're supposed to forget all that and just enjoy them fighting again. It's also Goldberg's first match since that night and I'm not sure how bad this could really get.

Obviously I'll go with Lesnar, but neither guy is really a good option here. You don't have Lesnar set up as this unstoppable monster and then have him lose but at the same time, Lesnar beating Goldberg means as much as Hulk Hogan beating the Ultimate Warrior in 1998. Lesnar wins here after Goldberg doesn't do much besides throw spears. At least there should be some energy here and Goldberg will have a better chance than Dean Ambrose had.

Overall, Survivor Series has a lot of potential but it could be good or bad. If they let these matches have a lot of time (which they should given the four hour run time) and only add one more at most, they could have the time to build into something entertaining. Unfortunately they could also build into a disaster with the fans getting bored and matches that aren't the most interesting. I've been excited for this since it was announced though and I'm going to try to keep that optimism.

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# Smackdown – November 15, 2016: Out of Character Moments

## Smackdown

Date: November 15, 2016

Location: Mohegan Sun Arena, Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, David Otunga, John Bradshaw Layfield, Tom Phillips

It's the 900<sup>th</sup> episode and also the final show before Sunday's Survivor Series. That means there's a lot of potential for hijinks and shenanigans tonight, which could mean for a very entertaining show. If nothing else maybe they can do something other than having wacky partners who can't get along four times in one night. Let's get to it.

We open with a quick montage of great Smackdown moments before previewing tonight's show. It's always cool to see the older days and WWE knows how to pull those things off very well.

Daniel Bryan and Shane McMahon come out and welcome us to the show, mainly focusing on the big events before introducing the first match.

## Intercontinental Title: The Miz vs. Dolph Ziggler

Miz is challenging and the winner gets to defend against Sami Zayn on Sunday. After the Big Match Intros, Mauro starts in with the standard talking points about how awesome the Intercontinental Title is. Miz gets him to the ground to start but can't hit either finisher before we take an early break.

Back with both guys down before Miz hits the Reality Check for two. It's time to start in on the knees until Miz gets sent leg first into the buckle to give the champ a breather. The big elbow gets two for Ziggler and he grabs the sleeper, sending Miz straight to the ropes. The Fameasser (without much contact of course) gets two for Ziggler and we

take a second break.

We come back again with Miz mocking Bryan's YES pose before starting with the YES Kicks. A running knee to the face sets up the Skull Crushing Finale with Mauro falling victim to the "WELL THAT HAS TO BE IT" syndrome, guaranteeing that Zigler kicks out at two. The Zig Zag gets the same result for the champ (because WWE doesn't know many ways to do big matches) but here's the Spirit Squad for the distraction to set up the Figure Four. Zigler makes the ropes and grabs a small package, only to have Maryse shove it over so Miz can get the title back at 17:53.

**Rating:** B. This wasn't quite as good as the No Mercy match but that doesn't mean it wasn't entertaining. I'm a bit sick of the Spirit Squad interfering every single time as they really don't have much else to do with Zigler at this point. The same finish could have been done without them but I've seen worse ideas. At least Miz won and should be able to have a better match as a result.

We look back at the end of last night's show.

Clip of Steve Austin destroying the DX Express back in 2000.

Alexa Bliss presents her case for a rematch against Becky Lynch to Bryan, who gives it to her but won't give her a date. Cue Natalya with that freaking whistle but her inspirational message sends Bliss storming off.

### Kalisto vs. Oney Lorcan

Lorcan is from NXT and goes right after Kalisto with a knee to the head. A suplex gets two as JBL tries to convince us that Lorcan is similar to Brian Kendrick. The Salida Del Sol gives Kalisto the pin at 1:14.

Undertaker picks up his hat.

Clip of Rock vs. HHH from the first episode.

Quick montage of Rock's appearances on Smackdown.

The Smackdown tag team Survivor Series team is ready for Sunday. Heath Slater and Rhyno have brought in a motivational speaker: KING B00KAH!

Before he can read a proclamation, Breezango comes in to give Booker a ticket for his fashion sense. This turns him into Booker T. to yell at Breezango and hit the catchphrase. An ALL HAIL KING BOOKER chant breaks out. This was perfect for a quick cameo.

Clip of John Cena debuting against Kurt Angle in 2002.

### Nikki Bella vs. Carmella

Feeling out process to start with Carmella doing You Can't See Me. A snap suplex puts Carmella down and Nikki mostly botches a dropkick which barely grazes Carmella in the ribs. Carmella comes right back by slamming Nikki neck first onto the floor before ramming her face in for good measure.

Back in and Carmella grabs a chinlock, which actually makes sense for once. We hit the hair pulling but Carmella stops to dance for no apparent reason. The Bronco Buster misses...and here's Charlotte through the crowd to have a seat as we take a break. Back with a Disaster Kick sending Carmella outside and the big shout off between Bella and Charlotte. The brawl is on and it's a no contest at 11:34.

**Rating:** C. I really don't know why Nikki vs. Charlotte is supposed to be some big deal when we saw it about a year ago and it wasn't anything special. I know Nikki is the star of the Smackdown women's division but at least give us something a little more fresh. Either that or just put the title on Nikki already so we can hear how inspiring it is.

Team Raw comes in for the beatdown (including Bayley, which is pretty out of character for her) and Carmella joins in. Team Smackdown runs out for the save with Carmella celebrating with them, which is just stupid on all counts.

Renee Young previews Goldberg vs. Lesnar, which means she introduces a video package on the match.

### Headbangers/Ascension/Spirit Squad/Vaudevillains vs. Usos/Hype Bros/Breezango/American Alpha

The official Smackdown team take turns on Mikey to start but Jimmy tags

himself in, much to Jordan's annoyance. Gotch comes in and gets the same treatment as the fans want Slater. Well they have him, albeit on the floor as extra support. Rawley, in Zubaz pants, gets two off a running seated senton and it's off to Ryder vs. Viktor. Everyone heads to the floor and we take a break during the big shouting match.

Back with Ryder fighting out of the corner and making the hot tag off to Gable for some house cleaning. Everything breaks down with one team coming in to take out the next until only the Usos are left for a big double dive to take out about ten people. A slightly botched Grand Amplitude ends Thrasher at 10:40.

**Rating:** D+. There's only so much you can do in a match like this where no one is going to get any significant time and the whole thing is going to be a mess. It was fun enough though and they were smart to leave this at four teams each instead of adding the extra four people. Sunday's version should be fun with a little more drama and a chance for people to shine a bit more.

It's time for the Cutting Edge with the Smackdown team as special guests. Edge's hair has grown out a bit and he has a good sized beard, making him look a bit like Mick Foley. After a break, Edge talks about bleeding blue and brings out the team as a group. Edge shakes Ellsworth's hand because James has been such an inspiration for him. Ellsworth is stunned but manages to ask for a Five Second Pose. That's not cool with the champ though because it should be him getting the attention instead of James.

Instead, Edge asks Orton what's up with joining the Wyatt Family. Bray says the Randy that Edge once knew is dead because this Sunday, the world will see a more dangerous viper. Shane takes the mic and says they only have to get along for one night but AJ starts ripping into Ambrose. This turns into a promo for TLC but here's Undertaker to cut them off.

Undertaker actually praises Shane and tips his hat to him before saying he's here for two reasons. Wrestlemania will no longer define who he is because he's back to take souls and dig holes. Survivor Series was where he was born and Smackdown has always been his home. He says there's no reason for Smackdown to fail but if they do, they'll have reason to fear



the Deadman. Raw will Rest in Peace...and that's it.

**Overall Rating:** C. Undertaker's speech is continuing on the Network right? I mean, he came out and praised the Smackdown team and that's about it. That's really not something you would expect Undertaker to do and it felt out of place for him. At least Shane gets to stay on the team though and that's what matters for some reason.

This show wasn't great but it's miles ahead of Raw. Above all else it actually mixed things up a little bit and didn't drag all night long. They even made a new match for Sunday and built on some stuff that wasn't just about the three matches. Character logic issues aside, this was a perfectly fine go home show and that's all it needed to be.

As for a big anniversary show...yeah this was fine. They aired a few clips and then cut them off in the middle, as is so often the case with WWE. Booker's cameo was fine and it made sense to have Edge and Undertaker show up at the end as they were the biggest Smackdown exclusive stars. They were kind of handcuffed with a major pay per view to set up and that's understandable.

### Results

Miz b. Dolph Ziggler – Small package

Kalisto b. Oney Lorcan – Salida Del Sol

Nikki Bella vs. Carmella went to a no contest when Nikki started brawling with Charlotte

Usos/Hype Bros/American Alpha/Breezango b.

Headbangers/Ascension/Vaudevillains/Spirit Squad – Grand Amplitude to Thrasher

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# Smackdown – November 1, 2016: It's Not Like They Had Another Choice

## Smackdown

Date: November 1, 2016

Location: Prudential Center, Newark, New Jersey

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, John Bradshaw Layfield, David Otunga

Survivor Series is coming up soon and Raw has announced a lot of the participants on its teams for the promotion vs. promotion matches. As luck would have it, tonight we'll be getting most of the announcements for the Smackdown counterparts with the help of General Manager Daniel Bryan. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's James Ellsworth to tell us goodbye. He hasn't been able to eat and sleep since he cost Dean Ambrose that match last week. Dean comes out and calls Ellsworth his pal, whose head he's been thinking about ripping off. James begs for a chance to apologize and mentions beating AJ twice but Dean just tells him to stay out of his way from now on.

Cue AJ to say he was going to take it easy on Ellsworth but Dean kept convincing him to do more. Dean says Ellsworth doesn't take the cheap way out like AJ, which means Ellsworth has to break up a fight. AJ shoves Ellsworth into Dean and kicks Ambrose in the head. The Phenomenal Forearm

leaves Dean laying.

We look back at Randy Orton seemingly joining the Wyatt Family last week.

Ellsworth is near tears trying to apologize to Dean. Bryan says Dean gets AJ again tonight and if he wins, he's the new #1 contender but it's his last chance no matter what. On top of that, Ellsworth is banned from ringside.

### Randy Orton vs. Kane

No DQ. Orton is in his regular gear but doesn't do his pose. Randy takes it start to the floor and has a chair less than fifteen seconds in. Kane takes it away and hits Orton in the ribs and back. It's almost time for a chokeslam but here are the Wyatts for a distraction. The RKO doesn't work and Kane boots Orton down. Bray and Luke pull Kane to the floor but he knocks the slightly smaller monsters away. Now the RKO connects and puts Kane away at 2:08.

Post match Harper gives Kane the discus lariat and Orton shoves Kane into Sister Abigail. Now Orton does the signature pose.

Baron Corbin vignette.

### Becky Lynch/Nikki Bella vs. Alexa Bliss/Carmella

Nikki seems to have dyed her hair black. Carmella hides from Nikki to start so it's off to Alexa, who is quickly shoved down. Stereo baseball slides have the good ones in control as we take a break. Back with Bliss getting caught in a reverse DDT but Carmella distracts the referee. A quick rake of the eyes and a DDT gives Bliss the pin on Lynch at 5:54.

Post match Carmella and Alexa brag about how awesome they're going to be in the Survivor Series match. Oh and Alexa is going to win the title next week in Glasgow. Bliss has those evil eyes that get you to notice her and it makes her seem so much better as a villain.

Bryan and Shame put Naomi on the Survivor Series team, which is officially comprised of her and the four in the tag match. Naomi leaves and Natalya comes in to say she would be a perfect leader so Bryan makes

her the coach.

### Survivor Series Qualifying Match: Spirit Squad vs. American Alpha

Gable gets slammed down to start and Mikey gets two off a moonsault. We hit a chinlock before a double headbutt puts both guys down. Kenny misses the guillotine legdrop and it's off to Jordan to clean house until he misses the shoulder in the corner. The blind tag brings Gable back in though and it's Grand Amplitude for the pin on Mikey at 2:03.

Video on Goldberg's appearance last night (with the slip edited out of course).

It's time for MizTV with special guest Daniel Bryan. Daniel gets straight to the point and announces the Survivor Series team: Randy Orton, Bray Wyatt, Baron Corbin, Dean Ambrose and AJ Styles. Miz isn't pleased and asks if he was even considered. Bryan says no, but eventually changes gears and says Miz was considered until Daniel realized Miz didn't want to fight.

If he did, he would have taken up Dolph Ziggler's challenge for an Intercontinental Title shot. Miz rants against Bryan for not wanting to fight. That's enough for Daniel who turns the set over and says Miz should stick to talking while Ziggler has an open challenge for the title right now.

### Intercontinental Title: Dolph Ziggler vs. ???

It's Curt Hawkins answering the challenge and he gets the city wrong on the way to the ring. Bell, superkick, Ziggler retains in seven seconds.

Ziggler issues an open challenge for any wrestler on Raw to come get a title shot, presumably for Survivor Series. Miz freaks out.

The new interviewer asks Ambrose if he's confident now that James Ellis is banned from ringside. Dean corrects her but has to talk to Ellsworth. James begs to be at ringside but Dean says no way because he's done enough already.

Bray says someone like Orton is welcome in the Wyatt Family. Harper

doesn't look pleased as Orton says he's done trying to fight the devil whispering in his ear. Orton's eyes light up in a bad looking effect.

### Survivor Series Qualifying Match: Usos vs. Headbangers

Jimmy punches Thrasher in the face before the bell and of course the referee is fine with this. A Samoan drop gets two early on and we hit the choke. It's off to Mosh vs. Jey with a Downward Spiral planting Jey for two. Not that it matters as Jimmy rolls Mosh up and grabs the skirt for the pin at 1:25.

AJ isn't worried.

Dean has Ellsworth leave the arena.

### AJ Styles vs. Dean Ambrose

Non-title. If Dean wins, he's #1 contender for a match at some point in the future. Dean knocks him outside at the bell and sends AJ face first into the announcers' table. Back in and a small package gets two on AJ and it's off to a Texas Cloverleaf. A butterfly superplex gets two on AJ but he grabs the Calf Crusher to change momentum in a hurry.

That goes nowhere either so Dean takes him outside again for a crotching on the barricade. Back in and Dean misses a Blockbuster of all things, resulting in a bad knee. We come back from a break with Dean breaking up a springboard to knock AJ outside. The top rope elbow to the floor has Styles in more trouble but he suplexes Dean into the corner to get a breather. Both guys are down so here's Ellsworth at ringside.

The distraction lets AJ get in a Pele for two as Otunga wants James to take his chin and go home. Cue security to go chase Ellsworth through the crowd as the inverted DDT is countered into Dirty Deeds which is countered into the Calf Crusher. The rope is grabbed but here's Ellsworth AGAIN so AJ finally runs him over. The Phenomenal Forearm is countered into Dirty Deeds and Dean gets the pin and the title shot at 13:57.

**Rating:** B. Ellsworth aside, this was a fun match which set up the right ending while also giving us some amusing JBL ranting about Ellsworth being annoying. It wasn't the cleanest finish in the world either and

none of this matters if AJ retains the title. Dean getting the belt back wouldn't be the worst thing in the world either and we probably get a big TV main event out of it sometime soon. Good match too.

Ellsworth is dragged away with a very satisfied look on his face. Dean hugs him before leaving.

**Overall Rating:** B-. This is a harder one to grade as there's only the main event to talk about. That being said, they covered a lot of stuff and added a lot of names to Survivor Series, which is something they have to do with only a few weeks to go. I'm more interested in where things are going now and we have a new title match coming up in the near future. Good show here as they continue to get things done when they need to.

### Results

Randy Orton b. Kane – RK0

Alexa Bliss/Carmella b. Becky Lynch/Nikki Bella – DDT to Lynch

American Alpha b. Spirit Squad – Grand Amplitude to Mikey

Dolph Ziggler b. Curt Hawkins – Superkick

Usos b. Headbangers – Rollup with a handful of trunks

Dean Ambrose b. AJ Styles – Dirty Deeds

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# Smackdown – October 25, 2016: Just Like Rip and Randy

## Smackdown

Date: October 25, 2016

Location: Resch Center, Green Bay, Wisconsin

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, John Bradshaw Layfield, David Otunga

It's another big week as we have a pay per view rematch from Backlash with AJ Styles facing Dean Ambrose in a non-title match. If Ambrose wins, he gets a title shot at some point in the future. There's a good chance James Ellsworth will get involved to possibly wrap up his story. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week's AJ Styles vs. James Ellsworth title match with Ellsworth winning via DQ. After the match, Daniel Bryan made Styles vs. Dean Ambrose for this week.

Ambrose is in the back talking about his match with Styles. Ellsworth comes up and offers to help but Dean thinks it's better for him to stay in the back.

## Kane vs. Bray Wyatt

No DQ. They trade big uppercuts and clotheslines to start until Kane takes it outside and whips Bray into the steps. The chokeslam through the announcers' table is loaded up but Luke Harper appears and gives Kane the discus lariat. Back from a break with Kane fighting out of a chinlock (I thought these guys were different.) and stopping a charge with a big boot. Harper saves his boss from the chokeslam and Bray's release Rock Bottom gets two. Harper gets involved again so here's Randy Orton.....to RKO Kane and freak the heck out of Wyatt. Bray covers Kane for the pin at 10:37.

**Rating:** C-. This was much more of an angle than a match but again, the difference from Raw is this is interesting. I'm curious to see where this is going while most of the stuff on Monday comes and goes with little interest. My guess is Orton trying to get into Wyatt's head instead of a heel turn, which works for me as I've always liked Orton vs. Kane matches.

Styles is ready to take care of Dean and warns Ellsworth to stay away. AJ also says Ellsworth looks like an action figure that melted in a microwave. That's about as accurate as you're going to get with him.

Becky Lynch makes her return from injury but is immediately cut off by Alexa Bliss. She accuses Becky of leaving out of fear of losing her precious title. The Cinderella story is ending soon and Bliss will get the title that she deserves. The fight is on but Bliss lays her out and grabs a conveniently placed can of spray paint. A yellow streak goes up the champ's back and Bliss smirks as she leaves.

#### Survivor Series Qualifying Match: Ascension vs. Hype Bros

The winners are on the Survivor Series team along with Heath Slater and Rhyno, who were granted an automatic spot. Mojo, a former Green Bay Packer, is VERY popular here as he starts with Viktor. Ryder is quickly in for a dropkick to knock Konnor off the apron, only to have Ascension take over with some double teaming. Too much trash talking allows Ryder to get in a jawbreaker but a spinebuster stops a hot tag. A middle rope elbow misses though and the hot tag brings in Rawley for his corner splashes. Viktor misses a charge and the Hype Ryder sends the Bros to Survivor Series at 3:50.

**Rating:** C. Well were you really expecting anything else? Ascension might have won one tag match in a year (on Superstars in February over Fandango and Damien Sandow) so it's kind of hard to buy that they're going to win here, or anywhere for that matter. The Hype Bros are already more successful than I was expecting and that's cool to see.

Orton says if you can't beat them, join them.

Bryan is talking about the need for strong team captains when Natalya



comes in. She's been thinking about the Raw women's team and thinks she should be captain. Daniel isn't sure but makes Natalya's match against Nikki Bella for the captain's spot. However, the loser is off the team entirely.

#### Survivor Series Qualifying Match: Nikki Bella vs. Natalya

Nikki actually tries an Oklahoma roll to start but makes the mistake of going outside, allowing Nattie By Nature to get two. An abdominal stretch and some stomps to the ribs set up the Sharpshooter but Nikki dives over to the ropes. Natalya misses a legdrop and something like the Beautiful Disaster gets two. The surfboard goes on but Nikki powers out and grabs an STF (prepare to hear about her being a great submission wrestler) for the tap out at 6:07.

**Rating:** D+. I wasn't feeling this one but there's really no way around Nikki being the captain. Natalya is just there while Bella has been one of the top stars in the division for a long time now. The STF is a nice change of pace for Nikki and she even added a little twist by hooking the foot and chin at the same time.

Carmella attacks Nikki after the match and gives her a Bella Buster.

Ambrose is ready to win because karma is a bad thing.

Here are Miz, Maryse and the Spirit Squad to talk about the Intercontinental Title. Miz feels sorry for the legends that fought to make the Intercontinental Title so important. As Miz talks about Pat Patterson, here comes Dolph Ziggler to say he wants to fight. The Squad is ready so Heath Slater and Rhyno come out to even the odds. Maryse gets in the way and insults are exchanged. Miz suggests that the Spirit Squad get a Tag Team Title shot but thinks Heath is too scared. Rhyno accepts for the team and we're got a title match.

#### Tag Team Titles: Spirit Squad vs. Heath Slater/Rhyno

Miz and Ziggler are on commentary. Slater and Rhyno are defending and this is joined in progress with Slater caught in a chinlock. The comeback is cut off and we hit another chinlock to keep the champs in trouble.

Slater fights up and dives over for the tag as everything breaks down. The commentators get in the expected argument and it's Mikey being knocked off the apron onto Miz. A Gore to Kenny retains the titles at 4:03.

**Rating:** C-. This was fine and a basic tag match with Slater and Rhyno beating yet another team. I don't think anyone really considers them to be great champions but they could have been a joke and are turning into perfectly acceptable champions. Also, by having them win matches like this one, it's going to mean more when they lose the belts. It's putting in effort early for a later payoff, which is a lost art in wrestling.

Hell in a Cell preview.

Ambrose is on the way to the ring when he runs into Ellsworth. Dean: "Didn't I tell you to stay in the back and sulk?" James begs to be in Dean's corner and Ambrose eventually relents, much to the audience's delight.

#### AJ Styles vs. Dean Ambrose

Non-title with Ellsworth in the corner and a win makes Dean #1 contender. Ambrose starts fast and stomps away in the corner but AJ comes right back with some shots of his own. With a look towards Ellsworth, AJ scores with the slingshot dive to take us to a break. Back with Dean hitting the suicide dive and grabbing a Fujiwara armbar of all things. AJ rolls out but gets caught in a Texas cloverleaf, sending him crawling over to the ropes. Back up and they fight over a suplex off the apron, only to have AJ suplex him out to the floor for a crash.

We come back from another break with Dean fighting up and hitting the top rope standing elbow drop. AJ's strike rush is countered into a swinging neckbreaker but he scores with the springboard into the reverse DDT. The Styles Clash is countered into a rollup for two and the rebound lariat drops both guys. AJ comes right back with the Calf Crusher but Dean grabs the champ's head and slams it into the mat for a break.

The hold goes on again but the power of Ellsworth makes Dean crawl to the ropes, just like Randy saved Rip in No Holds Barred. That's enough for AJ

who takes James out with a baseball slide. The Pele looks to set up the Styles Clash but Dean backdrops AJ to the floor. Ellsworth superkicks Styles.....and that's a DQ at 19:57 with Dean nearly losing his mind.

**Rating:** B. Good match here and the ending makes sense. I'm not sure where this leads and you have to imagine that Ambrose will get a title shot somehow down the road anyway. Above all else, Ambrose can only blame himself as he invited Ellsworth to come out to ringside. It's also a good way to protect both guys, which you also don't see enough.

**Overall Rating:** B-. This felt like another NXT show with Smackdown banners. The wrestling wasn't great at times but they advanced almost every story and treated them all like big deals. I'm curious to see where Orton and the Wyatts go, as well as finding out what's next for AJ and Dean. I don't get those feelings on Raw and that's a big reason why Smackdown is better.

### Results

Bray Wyatt b. Kane – Pin after an RKO from Randy Orton

Hype Bros b. Ascension – Hype Ryder to Viktor

Nikki Bella b. Natalya – STF

Heath Slater/Rhyno b. Spirit Squad – Gore to Kenny

AJ Styles b. Dean Ambrose via DQ when James Ellsworth interfered

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