

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/>

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 RK0 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 Rhino 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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Main Event – November 22,

2016: Please Let It Be Here To Stay

Main Event

Date: November 22, 2016

Location: Air Canada Centre, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Commentators: Tom Phillips, David Otunga

I'm hoping that being past Survivor Series isn't going to change this show's rather entertaining run. A lot of acts weren't on Smackdown this week so it should be interesting to see what we get for original content. The tag teams almost all performed on the big show, which doesn't leave me with the best options. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

We open with...Cathy Kelly in the studios. This isn't going to be the normal Main Event is it?

We see the last few minutes of Seth Rollins vs. Kevin Owens on Monday.

Charlotte is thankful for all her peasants.

With the Gobbledy Gooker walking behind Kelly, she throws us to a clip from the Thanksgiving Smackdown from November 23, 2000 with William Regal ripping on Thanksgiving for being everything wrong with America. Cue the Rock, who is back home here in Fort Lauderdale. Rock sees nothing wrong with unbuttoning your pants after eating Thanksgiving dinner and thinks Regal is something censored. After telling Regal that it doesn't matter if he's being besmirched, Rock offers to stick a drumstick in a certain place to wrap this up. This was basically "I'm the Rock and I'm awesome."

Package on Brock Lesnar vs. Goldberg.

Here's Goldberg's opening speech from Monday.

Here's Goldberg getting the full entrance to open things up. Goldberg thanks the fans for letting him be Goldberg again. He also thanks his

wife and son for putting up with him and he got to be a star again one more time. Last night he ran into Stephanie McMahon who said he did have one more spear and Jackhammer in him (three spears and two Jackhammers if you're counting) but the question is does he have one more title run left in him. The fans go NUTS over that prospect and Goldberg says he's in the Royal Rumble.

Bayley is thankful for the hugs, her best friend Sasha Banks, being on Raw, her New Day sweater and all the fans. She's just so freaking adorable.

Back to Prime Time Wrestling for Thanksgiving 1986 with Gorilla Monsoon on his own...and here's Bobby Heenan as a pilgrim. Heenan, with a graphic listing him as John Smith, talks about planning a Thanksgiving party but Gorilla brings in a turkey named Tommy. Bobby (er...John) is quickly chased off.

Video on the debut of the Gobbledy Gooker, which I believe first aired on an episode of Countdown. After the video, Cathy keeps talking about the Gooker and you can still see him in the control room behind her.

Video on various Thanksgiving feasts over the years and their associated food fights.

Alexa Bliss vs. Naomi

Bliss gets in her face to start and can't believe Naomi would shove her down. That earns her another takedown and Naomi grabs a front facelock. Bliss gets knocked to the floor and kicked in the face, only to have a trip take Naomi down as we take a break. Back with Bliss standing on the yellow/green hair before stomping away for a bit.

The moonsault double knees get two and we get Alexa's crazy eyes. Alexa runs into some boots in the corner and we get the high speed comeback. Those dancing kicks set up a high crossbody for two on Bliss but she sends Naomi very hard into the buckle. A DDT sets up Twisted Bliss for the pin at 12:05.

Rating: C-. The crowd wasn't all that interested but this was actually

taped after Smackdown went off the air so there's a good chance that a lot of the fans were leaving. I'd be curious to see if that's the case going forward with the impending debut of 205 Live. Bliss is great at being a villain and has a ton of charisma but there's only so much you can do in front of an uninterested crowd.

Overall Rating: B. I really, really hope this is how Main Event starts going as I had a great time with the old school segments. WWE has such an amazing video vault and it's really annoying when they roll out the same handful of clips over and over without changing a thing.

You can do more than the same Gobbledy Gooker and various Survivor Series clips and that's what they actually did here. Have some fun instead of just taking the easy way out over and over again. Hopefully this is how things keep going in the future because it was a lot of fun.

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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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Smackdown – November 9, 2016: What's Scottish for Average?

I apologize for the delay but my internet was out for a few hours during the middle of the show.

Smackdown

Date: November 8, 2016

Location: SSE Hydro, Glasgow, Scotland

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

It's another night in the same building as Smackdown is in Scotland. Tonight actually has a major match announced as Becky Lynch will be defending the Women's Title against Alexa Bliss in a match that was scheduled for No Mercy but was postponed due to an injury. Other than that we're likely going to see more announced for Survivor Series. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's AJ Styles to open things up. AJ isn't in a good mood tonight and doesn't want to hear the booing or see the tweets. He wants to talk about last week's travesty, which saw that mutant turtle James Ellsworth cost him a match against Dean Ambrose. If Ambrose wanted to be champion again so badly, he never would have lost his title in the first place. That brings AJ to Survivor Series, where he doesn't need Dean's help to win.

AJ wants to bring the Survivor Series team down but Baron Corbin interrupts. Baron says he'll deliver, but not to AJ's team. Cue the Wyatts, which now includes Randy Orton. Before anything can happen, here's Dean to bring out James Ellsworth (JBL: "HOW DID YOU GET THAT THING THROUGH CUSTOMS???"), who AJ wants thrown in Loch Ness. Styles suggests that Dean and Ellsworth are outnumbered but Corbin walks out.

Cue Shane (who I wasn't sure was still alive) to talk to team blue. He wants to see the best in the world beat Raw and thinks it's going to be a clean sweep. Ellsworth has an idea: he can be the official mascot! Shane agrees and a six man tag is made for later tonight with the Wyatts vs. Ambrose/Corbin/Ellsworth.

Survivor Series Qualifying Match: Breezango vs. Vaudevillains

Breezango are dressed as cops for no apparent reason. Gotch immediately gives Breeze a Regal Roll and the Swanton gives English two. Everything breaks down and Fandango gives English a falcon's arrow for the pin at 1:23. That was quick.

Natalya vs. Naomi

Coach Natalya now has a whistle. Nikki Bella is on commentary and Naomi is very yellow. Natalya takes her down to start before walking into a sitout jawbreaker. There's a double crossbody to put both women down but cue Carmella to talk some trash. Natalya busts out her whistle to try and restore order but it just lets Nikki forearm Carmella. The distraction lets Naomi grab a small package for the pin at 2:02.

Corbin has walked out of the six man tag (assuming he was ever officially announced in the first place as it wasn't clear) but will face Kalisto tonight.

Ellsworth gets on Dean's nerves until Daniel Bryan comes up. Daniel has a replacement partner for them and it's....Kane. Ellsworth: "So....what's the strategy tonight?" Kane: "Don't. Tag. In."

Baron Corbin vs. Kalisto

We actually get a flashback to their feud from three months ago that never went anywhere. Corbin jumps him before the bell and lays Kalisto out. Kalisto is sent outside but Baron slips off the apron and messes up his knee. With Corbin begging off, Kalisto dropkicks the bad knee into the steps. Corbin is in agony as referees come out to check on him. Kalisto even adds a frog splash to the bad leg. No match.

Video on Alexa Bliss vs. Becky Lynch.

Baron Corbin is officially off the Smackdown team due to the knee injury.

So at this point in the show my cable went out and didn't come back on until right before the end of Crews vs. Hawkins. I saw the rest later but there was a big gap in the middle.

Women's Title: Alexa Bliss vs. Becky Lynch

Becky is defending and this is billed as the main event, halfway through the show. A lockup goes nowhere to start and the Disarm-Her sends Alexa bailing to the ropes. They trade some rollups for two each before a dropkick sends Alexa into the corner. That goes badly for the champ though as she misses a charge into the post and it's off to the armbarr. More armbarring is countered into a sitout powerbomb to put both women down as we take a break.

Back with Becky starting a comeback and getting two off a Bex Plex. Bliss avoids a guillotine legdrop though and hits a backflip into double knees to the ribs. The champ pops back up and crotches Alexa on top, only to get shoved right back down. They trade rollups but the Disarm-Her goes on to make Bliss tap at 14:50....with Alexa's foot on the ropes.

Rating: C+. This was more long than good but it also keeps them set up for another title match down the line. Becky is a good option as the first champion and they made Alexa feel like a bigger deal as she won a lot of matches coming up to this title shot. The match itself was just kind of there though with the basic arm work but the big fight feel helped a lot.

Bryan promises Shane to have a replacement chosen tonight. Miz and Maryse come in to set up some exposition. In exchange for Sami Zayn getting an Intercontinental Title shot, Brian Kendrick will be defending the Cruiserweight Title against Kalisto, and if he wins the cruiserweights come to Smackdown. As a bonus, Miz gets an Intercontinental Title shot next week.

Curt Hawkins vs. Apollo Crews

Hawkins starts fast with a jumping knee to the face and we're in the

chinlock about forty seconds into the match. Crews throws him down again though and goes up top, only to miss a high crossbody. An Oklahoma roll gives Hawkins the pin at 1:50.

Dolph Ziggler can't wait to defend the Intercontinental Title against the Miz next week on the way to facing Sami Zayn at Survivor Series.

Wyatt Family vs. James Ellsworth/Kane/Dean Ambrose

AJ is on commentary, giving us a FIVE PERSON BOOTH. My goodness people, think this nonsense through. Kane and Harper do the big power showdown to start with a backdrop sending Harper flying. It's off to Dean vs. Bray with the latter running him over with a shoulder. Orton comes in and runs Dean over before stomping on the fingers. A side slam from Kane has Orton in trouble and the fans want Ellsworth.

That just earns James a throat slit, followed by Orton breaking up a chokeslam attempt on Luke. We hit the stomping for a bit before Bray nails the backplash for two. The stomping continues and we take a break. Back with the Ellsworth chants continuing, only to have Harper cut them off by dropkicking Kane. Orton grabs a headlock followed by a dropkick but Harper gets DDT'd.

The hot tag brings in Ambrose to clothesline Wyatt, only to have the top rope elbow knocked out of the air. Sister Abigail is broken countered into a rollup for two and there go Kane and Harper to the back. A double clothesline puts both guys down so Ellsworth tags himself in. No Chin Music is loaded up (JBL: "Shawn Michaels is rolling over in his grave and he's not even dead!") but Bray easily reverses into Sister Abigail for the pin at 12:55.

Rating: C-. The ending helped this a lot as there was no reason for it to be anything other than Ellsworth getting run over. It's similar to the old Dungeon of Doom matches where the opponents had to keep the Giant out of the ring because he was going to destroy anyone who got in the ring with him. This was all that made sense and that's fine for what they had here.

The Wyatts swarm Ellsworth but Shane runs out for the save. Before

anything else can happen, Daniel comes out and says he can name anyone he wants to the Survivor Series team. Therefore, he picks.....Shane. Well of course he does because Heaven forbid a McMahon isn't involved so we can have it be about the wrestlers. This is nothing more than a way to have Shane vs. Stephanie, which is what this whole mess is all about in the first place. This actually ticks me off and that doesn't happen often on Smackdown.

Overall Rating: C+. This was fine, albeit a little forgettable. The bigger matches worked fine but I can't get over Shane getting the final spot on the team. Unless that gets changed, that's one heck of a stupid way to go for the sake of a surprise or whatever they're going for. I'm sick of the McMahons and all of the forced drama, but they're the stars of the show and that's all that matters.

Results

Breezango b. Vaudevillains – Falcon's arrow to English

Naomi b. Natalya – Small package

Becky Lynch b. Alexa Bliss – Disarm-Her

Curt Hawkins b. Apollo Crews – Oklahoma roll

Wyatt Family b. James Ellsworth/Kane/Dean Ambrose – Sister Abigail to Ellsworth

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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 – RKO

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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Smackdown – October 18, 2016: The Chin Who Got The Win(s)

Smackdown

Date: October 18, 2016

Location: Pepsi Center, Denver, Colorado

Commentators: John Bradshaw Layfield, David Otunga, Mauro Ranallo

This is an interesting time for Smackdown as they don't really have anything to do for the next month until Survivor Series. That means some upgraded TV shows, including tonight as James Ellsworth (The Chin Who Got The Pin) challenges AJ Styles for the Smackdown World Title. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week's Ellsworth vs. Styles match to set up the title rematch.

Dean Ambrose gives Ellsworth a pep talk and his own shirt, which you can really buy at WWEshop.com.

Here's Randy Orton to open things up. Orton praises Bray Wyatt for being far more evil than Randy expected. Escaping Wyatt is like trying to get out of quicksand: the more you pull, the tighter it becomes. Bray appears on screen from inside a coffin and says he's having so much fun messing with Orton. By the way, he's here.

Randy Orton vs. Luke Harper

Harper shoves him outside to start but his suicide dive is broken up with a forearm. Back in and Luke goes up, earning himself a superplex back down. There go the lights though and we've got Bray being brought to the ring in his coffin, carried by druids in sheep masks. We come back from a break with Orton on the floor and Bray walking around near the casket. A Michinoku Driver gets two for Harper but he can't put Orton in the

casket. Instead, Orton comes back with his clothesline and powerslam but Wyatt comes in for the DQ at 7:48. Too much was spent on Bray's entrance and the commercial to rate, though it was just angle advancement.

The Wyatts load up the casket but Kane is inside. Orton and Kane clean house but the lights go out again and the Wyatts disappear. Now this is the kind of thing I can go with: the Wyatts using their supernatural powers to mess with people and stay a step or two ahead of their opponents. We don't see that enough.

AJ Styles is worried because Dean Ambrose is lurking around tonight. This could wind up being just like in WCW when David Arquette became WCW World Champion. If Ambrose tries something, AJ will find him anywhere he goes.

Naomi vs. Alexa Bliss

Alexa has Nightmare on Elm Street style attire. Naomi starts fast with right hands and those dancing kicks. Back up and Bliss eats a springboard clothesline, followed by a legdrop for two. Bliss gets sent into the buckle and heads outside as we go to a break. Back with Naomi scoring off a backbreaker and jawbreaker, only to be sent hard into the corner again. A quick Twisted Bliss gives Alexa the pin at 10:49.

Rating: D+. So what in the world was the point in having Naomi go over at the pay per view? Like really, what did that accomplish? Alexa just comes right back and wins on Smackdown like the No Mercy match never happened. This is the kind of thing that you never see on Smackdown and feels like it belongs on Raw.

Bliss says Becky's fairy tale ends in three weeks when she becomes the champion, just like the fairest of them all.

We look back at Miz beating down Dolph Ziggler last week until Heath Slater and Rhyno made the save.

Curt Hawkins vs. Apollo Crews

Hawkins' theme music is him reciting his Curt Facts. After he wins tonight, Apollo is going to have to change his last name to LOSE. Apollo hits him in the face and that's enough for Curt, who walks out before the

bell. No match.

Here's Carmella for a talk about Nikki Bella. Two months ago she was basking in the glow of her first pay per view match but heard Nikki Bella's music. Before she can get much further though, here's a ticked off Nikki. Carmella says she's stealing the spotlight again but that's not surprising since Nikki's boyfriend is John Cena. Nikki doesn't think that's much of a surprise since the relationship is featured on two TV shows and all over the internet. She's right actually.

Carmella shows us clips from Total Divas and Total Bellas with Nikki being some....well being a big bunch of stuff ranging from annoying to needy to talkative to nothing out of the ordinary. The graphic says Total Need-Freak but Nikki says she wears the pants in her relationship and fights her own battles. It's all about being fearless and all the fans know she's not afraid of anything, including a Boss, a Queen or a Princess from Staten Island. Carmella: "Did John help you come up with that?" She accuses Nikki of using her looks and relationship to become famous but leaves before Nikki can do anything.

Ellsworth can't believe this is happening and starts crying over the idea of telling his grandkids about this.

Miz/Spirit Squad vs. Dolph Ziggler/Heath Slater/Rhyno

Rhyno clotheslines Mikey down to start as Otunga talks about the Spirit Squad coaching high school cheerleading. Slater and Ziggler take turns on Mikey as Miz looks on. Mikey finally gets in a few shots on Dolph and brings him into the corner for the tag off to Miz. The threat of a superkick sends Miz outside though and we take a break.

Back with Miz in control of Ziggler and handing it back to Kenny for two off a legdrop. The fans want Slater but have to settle for Dolph suplexing Mikey. Miz comes in and knocks Rhyno off the apron, only to walk into the superkick from Dolph. The big diving tag brings in Slater as everything breaks down. Rhyno Gores Mikey and Slater rolls Kenny up for two. A right hand from Miz gives Kenny the pin on Slater at 9:25.

Rating: C. This was fine and I guess sets up the Spirit Squad as the next

challengers for the Tag Team Titles. It's not exactly the Usos or American Alpha but when you have all of five teams (since Breezango has disappeared), adding in another is hardly the worst thing you can do. At least Ziggler didn't get pinned.

Natalya comes in to see Daniel Bryan and offers her services on the Survivor Series women's team. Bryan isn't sure, even though there are only five women active at the moment. Natalya: "Are you following my cat on Instagram?"

Jack Swagger vs. Baron Corbin

Corbin says this is for everyone who says WE THE PEOPLE. A shoulder block knocks Swagger off the apron and into the barricade so Corbin can drive in a bunch of forearms to the back of the head. End of Days wraps Swagger up at 1:40.

Natalya is still showing Bryan her cats when Ambrose comes in wearing a referee shirt. Bryan says thanks but no thanks. If Dean wants to, he can be timekeeper, ring announcers or whatever. Dean: "I'll do that."

Smackdown World Title: AJ Styles vs. James Ellsworth

AJ is defending and Ambrose is at ringside to do a variety of jobs. Ambrose handles ring announcing and introduces Ellsworth as weighing about 160 or 170 and as Rocky II, III and IV rolled into one. After ringing the bell about 50 times, Ambrose grabs the mic and says to stop the match because we have to take a break. Back with AJ hammering away in the corner as JBL loses his mind about Ellsworth being in a title match.

AJ starts taking his time but Dean says someone has left the lights on in their Corolla. With some frustration setting in, AJ throws James outside but Dean throws him back in. This is repeated about five times and the distraction lets Ellsworth get in a superkick. JBL: "DON'T DO IT! DON'T DO IT!" Otunga: "He hit him with No Chin Music!" The fans start getting behind Ellsworth....until he charges into a spinebuster. AJ hammers away in the corner....and that's a DQ at 13:15. Dean: "The loser of this match: AJ Styles!"

Rating: C. Obviously the wrestling wasn't the point here but I liked the idea. Would you rather have them advance Dean vs. AJ with the same stuff they've run into the ground for years now or with something fresh for a change? The last two weeks have been fun for a change and that's exactly the point. It's advancing the story in a different way, which is far better than seeing AJ and Dean with tag partners for a one off match.

Dean gives AJ Dirty Deeds and announces Ellsworth as the man who has more victories over Styles than John Cena. Ellsworth can't stand up to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. The storytelling around here continues to feel fresh as we're getting a lot of the same stuff presented in different ways. I don't feel bored throughout this show and there's nothing as stupid as Titus Brand Rolexes. This actually works as a wrestling show and they're building to some good stuff coming up. Good little show here with a fun main event and that's all you need.

Results

Randy Orton b. Luke Harper via DQ when Bray Wyatt interfered

Alexa Bliss b. Naomi – Twisted Bliss

Miz/Spirit Squad b. Dolph Ziggler/Heath Slater/Rhyno – Rollup to Slater

Baron Corbin b. Jack Swagger – End of Days

James Ellsworth b. AJ Styles via DQ when Styles wouldn't stop attacking in the corner

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No Mercy 2016: The Same Old Surprises

No Mercy 2016

Date: October 9, 2016

Location: Golden 1 Center, Sacramento, California

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, John Bradshaw Layfield, David Otunga

It's the second Smackdown exclusive show and things have already been shaken up a bit. As announced by WWE.com, the Smackdown World Title match will open the show, presumably to avoid direct competition with the second US Presidential Debate. Why someone couldn't watch both at once isn't clear. Let's get to it.

On the pre-show, Curt Hawkins comes out, says hello to San Francisco, and then leaves because he only said he was stepping in the ring. Ok that's funny. His first match is Tuesday.

Pre-Show: American Alpha/Hype Bros vs. Ascension/Vaudevillains

Bonus match and PLEASE let this be the only pre-show match. Gable and English get things going and it's already time for an NXT chant. Both Vaudevillains are thrown into the corner and English takes a double hiptoss. Viktor and Ryder come in and guess which one the fans like best. It's off to Mojo for some dancing and again, WHY DOES JBL LIKE HIM SO MUCH??? Ryder tags himself in and everything breaks down so a quadruple clothesline can put the bad guys on the floor.

Back from a break with Ryder in trouble with English grabbing a chinlock. They head outside with Konor being sent into the barricade and then missing a charge into the post, allowing the hot tag to Jordan.

Everything breaks down again and the Grand Amplitude ends English at 9:13.

Rating: C. Nothing we haven't seen a bunch of times before but it's a good choice for a pre-show match. Just let the guys go nuts with Alpha doing their stuff to hype up the crowd as a glorified dark match should. Above that though: they kept it relatively short and didn't try to do anything more than they needed to. It's better than Corbin vs. Swagger at least.

The opening video features a voice asking for mercy for the sins about to take place.

Smackdown World Title: Dean Ambrose vs. John Cena vs. AJ Styles

AJ is defending and the fans do not like Cena in northern California. For a change of pace, we get a recap video after all three guys have their entrances. Short version: AJ has beaten them both and we're having a triple threat because TRIPLE THREATS RULE! It's a big jawing session to start before all three fail at their finishers in the first minute. Ambrose takes over with some of his brawling and takes AJ outside for a few rams into the announcers' table.

Cena follows them out but walks into a slingshot Phenomenal Forearm (that looked great). Back in and Cena German suplexes both of them at the same time (Mauro: "MAMA MIA!") but AJ flips out of the AA and Pele's Cena down. AJ moonsaults into the reverse DDT on Ambrose and grabs a regular version on Cena for a bonus. Ambrose is tossed outside and hits the steps, leaving Cena to grab a Code Red for two on the champ.

In something you don't often see in a triple threat, AJ and Cena trade sleepers but Ambrose comes in and grabs one of his own. That goes nowhere so Cena initiates his finishing sequence on Ambrose until Styles makes the save with another German suplex. The finishers don't work again so Ambrose and Styles suplex each other, leaving Cena to come in and pick up the pieces.

A Ten Knuckle Shuffle doesn't appear to do much damage because it's just a fist drop so Cena goes with an AA and STF on Ambrose. Styles makes the

save and gets two on Ambrose with the springboard 450. The Styles Clash takes Ambrose out but Cena grabs the STF on the champ. Ambrose saves that so Cena picks them both up for the AA at the same time. I know it's been done before and it's been done with bigger people but THAT IS NOT NORMAL!

Neither guy gets flipped though as AJ escapes and Dean clotheslines Cena down. The Calf Crusher has Cena in trouble but Ambrose makes the save. Dean puts AJ in the Calf Crusher while Cena gets an STF, making AJ tap at 19:27. That doesn't count though because it's a double submission so the match continues. Dean gets two off Dirty Deeds with AJ pulling the referee out. Cena comes right back with the super AA but Styles blasts Cena with a chair to retain at 21:39.

Rating: B+. The match was great but can someone explain the false finish to me? Somehow Ambrose is the only one here who didn't lose but AJ is the one leaving with the title. AJ winning is the only logical winner here as Ambrose had his one title reign and is much more interesting chasing the belt anyway. Cena can win the big one at Wrestlemania and that's all that matters in the long run.

We recap Bray Wyatt vs. Randy Orton. Wyatt targeted Orton for whatever reason (like he has logical reasons) and they were scheduled to fight last month but Orton's injuries prevented it from happening. Their big showdown is tonight and there's a possibility that Sister Abigail is lurking.

Carmella vs. Nikki Bella

Standard "you're famous but I'm better than you" feud. Carmella goes right after her to start but gets thrown outside. Nikki follows her out and is tossed into the LED board to mess her neck up all over again. Back in and we hit the chinlock on Nikki, followed by the moonwalk into the Bronco Buster for two. Carmella cranks on the neck even more before just pulling on the hair.

A quick Bella Buster and small package get two each on Carmella but she grabs the Code of Silence. Nikki isn't about to sell a neck hold though and powers up, followed by the big forearm. Another Code of Silence sends Nikki to the ropes and the Rack Attack 2.0 (TKO, which isn't a move out

of a rack) is enough to pin Carmella at 8:05.

Rating: C-. Now come on. You knew Nikki wasn't about to lose her first singles match when she can get out of a finishing move twice and prove that she's the real fearless star in a match. Carmella will be back, though hopefully nowhere near Nikki in the future. The build to this was good but Nikki winning the way she did made my eyes roll.

Miz comes up to the bosses and says Daniel Bryan and Ziggler will have a lot in common after tonight. Miz: "Maryse, say adieu." Maryse (looking insanelly good here): "Adieu."

Tag Team Titles: Heath Slater/Rhyno vs. Usos

Usos are challenging. Jimmy pops Slater in the face to start so the fans remind Jimmy that SLATER HAS KIDS. Jey comes in and lets us know that he has kids too. An early chinlock doesn't last long and it's off to Rhyno for a running shoulder to the ribs. The running Umaga attack puts Rhyno down for two as the fans aren't exactly thrilled with this so far. Rhyno fights out of a chinlock but gets dragged into the Uso corner to keep him in trouble. The twins keep taking turns on Rhyno until Jimmy runs into an elbow in the corner.

That's enough for a hot tag as Slater comes in to clean house but the fans still aren't getting into it. Everything breaks down and the fans get behind the champs as Jimmy punches Slater in the face. Heath is right back up though and powerslams Jimmy off the top for two (cool little spot). It's time to go after Heath's leg but Rhyno breaks up the Tequila Sunrise. Rhyno Gores Jey to retain at 10:17 in what I'd call a big surprise.

Rating: C. This got better by the end and the ending was a surprise but it didn't get off the ground for the most part. I'm not sure I get the booking here but maybe the Usos get the titles back in the next few weeks on TV. Not a bad match though the lackluster crowd reactions didn't help things here.

Bray Wyatt speaks in tongues before shifting to He's Got The Whole World In His Hands.

Quick recap of Baron Corbin vs. Jack Swagger. Corbin lost to Swagger via submission but claimed he was reaching for the ropes instead of tapping out, which the video seems to back up. It's nice to have a rematch over something that makes sense instead of just having one after someone wins clean.

Baron Corbin vs. Jack Swagger

Corbin goes right after him to start and sends Swagger outside to crush his hand between the steps and the post. Back in and Swagger starts wrenching at the bad hand before getting two off a hard clothesline. Swagger drops him close to onto the post but the hand keeps Jack from following up. Something like a belly to belly plants Corbin, who comes right back with a Deep Six for two more. One heck of a clothesline drops Corbin and it's off to the Patriot Lock. This time Corbin makes the rope and pokes Swagger in the eyes, setting up End of Days for the pin at 7:27.

Rating: D+. This show needs a charge soon as it's starting to lose a lot of steam. This wasn't the best match in the first place but at least the story made sense. Swagger coming over to Smackdown is fine as he's only there to be a jobber. Hopefully this leads to Corbin climbing the ranks as he has all the tools, save for the experience. Wins like this help, but Swagger doesn't have the most value in the world.

We recap Ziggler vs. Miz. Ziggler has lost two straight title shots and is on a major losing streak. He has to win one big match though and is willing to put up his career for one more shot.

Intercontinental Title: The Miz vs. Dolph Ziggler

Ziggler is challenging and has his career on the line. Dolph tries to take it to the mat to start but opts for a pair of dropkicks instead. Miz comes back with with a double underhook crank before doing Daniel Bryan's YES double knee stomp. The Reality Check gets two but Ziggler comes back with another dropkick. The Fameasser is countered into a slingshot sitout powerbomb and a rollup with a handful of tights gets two on Ziggler.

Miz changes gears by going after the knee with a dropkick to the back of

the leg. That means the Figure Four goes on and it's time for the long screaming session from Ziggler. A rope is grabbed and Ziggler comes back with a Rough Ryder of all things for two. The drama is really starting to take hold here and it's working way better than I was expecting.

Ziggler is sent head first into an exposed buckle, setting up another slingshot sitout powerbomb for two. Miz is so furious that he gets caught in the Zig Zag for a VERY close near fall. The Skull Crushing Finale is countered into a rollup for two more so it's off to a sleeper on the champ. Miz gets the ropes and hits the Skull Crushing Finale, only to have Ziggler get his boot on the ropes.

Miz rips Ziggler's boot off and walks into a superkick but Ziggler's injured leg delays the cover. Cue the Spirit Squad for a distraction so Ziggler superkicks Mikey down. The Skull Crushing Finale gets one of the closest near falls I've seen in a long time and Miz is ticked. The referee finally ejects everyone from ringside and it's a superkick from Ziggler for the pin and the title at 19:33.

Rating: A-. It says a lot when I was begging for Ziggler to lose and was still getting into the near falls. They might have overdone it a bit with the Spirit Squad (Maryse could have done the same thing) but the drama was insane here because it felt like something was on the line. Miz's reign made the Intercontinental Title feel like the most important thing in the world at times and that means Ziggler winning the title is important. Now, I have no faith in him to keep things going this strong because Miz is that much better than Ziggler and we've been here WAY too many times before, but very well done on the moment.

Randy Orton's reflection distorts in a mirror.

Pre-Show recap.

Alexa Bliss vs. Naomi

Naomi is replacing an injured Becky Lynch, who will defend against Bliss on November 8 from Glasgow, Scotland. Bliss goes after her to start but gets dropped into the corner for the split legged moonsault. Naomi kicks Bliss away but gets her arm cranked to put Alexa in control. Bliss: "I

DON'T LIKE YOU!" A dropkick knocks Bliss away and the Rear View gets two. Alexa grabs a cross armbreaker but gets rolled up for the completely clean pin at 5:01.

Rating: D+. Regretting this immediately, can someone explain the thinking here? Unless they're setting up a triple threat (which is what they're probably doing), this is another really head scratching result because Bliss should be rolling over everyone to set up the title shot. Instead she gets pinned by a replacement to....I have no idea actually.

Hell in a Cell ad.

We recap Orton vs. Wyatt again, this time focusing on Wyatt tormenting Orton and playing mind games.

Randy Orton vs. Bray Wyatt

Bray laughs throughout Orton's entrance. An early lockup sends Bray outside for a bit before it's time to slug it out. The threat of Sister Abigail sends the fight outside again with Orton being thrown over the announcers' table. Bray sends him into the steps and does the Orton pose before taking him back in for the running backplash.

The slow beating continues with more clotheslines and a chinlock. Bray takes his sweet time going to the middle rope and misses the backplash, which would have missed by two feet even if Orton hadn't rolled away. Some forearms don't have much effect for Orton so he goes with clotheslines because that's how you make comebacks in WWE.

The snap powerslam gets two on Bray but the RKO is countered into Sister Abigail which is countered into a rollup for two more. Bray plants him with the release Rock Bottom and it's back to the floor, only to have Bray miss another backplash onto the steps. A belly to back suplex onto the barricade sets up Orton's elevated DDT....and there go the lights. Luke Harper shows up in the ring for a distraction and it's Sister Abigail for the pin on Orton at 15:37.

Rating: B. So in other words it's the old standard for Bray: the Family has to come in and help him out because Heaven forbid he does anything on

his own. At least Bray won a pay per view singles match (first time since Battleground 2015) and it seems that we're waiting on the Orton vs. Styles title feud that seems to be inevitable. It's a good main event but this wasn't going to follow Miz vs. Ziggler.

Overall Rating: B. The three main matches all nailed it but the rest of the show was pretty dreadful. They still don't have enough to warrant three hour pay per view but at least the top of the card worked. Having the World Title match go on first was stupid and the Intercontinental Title match would have been a better main event, though at least the matches were good. This show really isn't memorable aside from Miz vs. Ziggler but at least it was entertaining and went off the air early enough. Good show but it's going to fall through the cracks.

Results

AJ Styles b. John Cena and Dean Ambrose – Chair shot to Cena

Nikki Bella b. Carmella – Rack Attack 2.0

Heath Slater/Rhyno b. Usos – Gore to Jey

Baron Corbin b. Jack Swagger – End of Days

Dolph Ziggler b. The Miz – Superkick

Naomi b. Alexa Bliss – Rollup

Bray Wyatt b. Randy Orton – Sister Abigail

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No Mercy 2016 Preview

We're already at the second Smackdown only pay per view and the card is already stronger than the "Backlash 2016" offering. If nothing else they already have more matches set up for this show, meaning we probably won't have to sit through a ten minute opening segment and no team is going to have to work twice. Let's get to it.

Pre-Show: Jack Swagger vs. Baron Corbin

We'll start with this rematch from earlier in the week on "Smackdown Live" where Swagger won via submission. However, it's not quite that simple as it sounds. In the first match, Corbin claimed to be reaching for the ropes instead of tapping out so there's a much more logical reason for a rematch. It's much better than having a rematch for the sake of having a rematch after one of the people wins completely clean.

I'm going with Corbin here as there's really no reason to have Swagger win. Swagger is on "Smackdown Live" to lose matches to upcoming names, as he's been stuck doing for years. Corbin is the kind of guy you could throw out there as a midcard title challenger at the drop of a hat so there's no reason to have him lose to someone like Swagger in a spot like this. Odds are there will be a third match but hopefully this wraps up their mini feud.

Curt Hawkins vs. ???

This is the easiest call on the card as you don't bring in someone for the sake of having them lose. Hawkins has had some entertaining vignettes but I don't really see him doing much on the roster. There's nothing wrong with filling the show with warm bodies though and a quick run for Hawkins isn't the worst idea in the world. The opponent doesn't really

matter here because he's going to lose to Hawkins in about five minutes.

Tag Team Titles: Heath Slater/Rhyno vs. Usos

Here we have another case where there isn't a ton of suspense. Slater and Rhyno were never meant to be a long term solution at the top of the division so we can get to the big Usos vs. American Alpha showdown for the belts. The thing to remember is that Slater has already gotten his contract and done his big story so they can switch the titles and everything will be fine.

In case it's not clear, I'm going with the Usos to win the belts. There's no logical reason to keep the belts on the makeshift team when Alpha is waiting in the wings after having beaten the Usos in such quick fashion in the tournament. Slater and Rhyno don't need to team together anymore after this as Rhyno can go off to be a politician while Slater can be a loveable goofball.

Nikki Bella vs. Carmella

It's the first of two women's matches as we have an actual grudge match for a change. In this case, Carmella has been tormenting Bella since she returned from injury, even calling her a Kardashian wannabe, which somehow didn't seem to offend Bella in the slightest. This has been an actually well set up feud with Bella making Carmella look way better than she has any right to.

That being said, I think I'm going to go with Bella here as she hasn't had a big win since here comeback. I'm not sure you can call beating Carmella a big win but at least there's been a story to set this up. Carmella has already gotten a big boost from this feud and will be fine going forward. It would make more sense to have Carmella win here but I'll go with Bella, who just hasn't had enough publicity lately.

Women's Title: Becky Lynch vs. Alexa Bliss

We might as well cover the other women's match here as Lynch is having her first title defense after winning the title last month. Bliss still isn't great but the Harley Quinn look has done wonders for her and she's

gotten even better than she was at the start. Lynch is on a roll too and looks like the star of the division.

I'll stick with the champion keeping the title here though as Bliss just isn't ready to be the face of the division. It's pretty clear we're getting ready for a Lynch vs. Bella showdown over the belt and there's just no reason to switch the belt in Lynch's first title defense. The match should be fine and they did a good job of setting things up on Tuesday so this should be entertaining, albeit a bit predictable.

Bray Wyatt vs. Randy Orton

That leaves us with the big matches and we'll start with the non-title entry. This was supposed to happen last month but Orton was still out due to injury, leaving us with an uninspired yet necessary Kane vs. Wyatt match. Orton is healthy now and that means we have an interesting match to look forward to.

As much as it pains me, I'll go with Orton here, partially due to a lack of anyone else to go after the World Title after this show. With rumors of John Cena and Dean Ambrose taking time off, odds are AJ Styles retains the title (excuse me for jumping ahead of myself) and needs an opponent. There really isn't anyone left other than Orton, meaning he has to win here. I'm sure Wyatt will be fine as he loses so often that he has to be used to it by now. Even with the potential debut of Sister Abigail, Wyatt loses here and that's a shame in many ways.

Intercontinental Title: The Miz vs. Dolph Ziggler

It's more than a title defense for Miz as Ziggler is putting up his career. I'm not going to waste your time with any sort of pretense here: I'm a big Miz fan and I wouldn't mind if Ziggler got lost at sea and turned into the king of a small island where he oversold poi burgers and coconut shakes. I'd love for Miz to win here and go on to a big story away from Ziggler and his "IT JUST MEANS SO MUCH TO ME AND I NEED TO WIN ONE MORE TIME" schtick which he's been stuck with for months now.

That being said, I think they'll actually do it here and have Ziggler lose in a big surprise. There's nothing left for Ziggler to do in WWE and

I really wouldn't mind to see him leave for good. Miz has been on fire in the last few months and doesn't deserve to lose to someone as stale as Ziggler. The story has been told well but Ziggler sucks the life out of me and I have no interest in seeing him do anything at all.

World Title: AJ Styles vs. Dean Ambrose vs. John Cena

Styles is defending and we've already covered the result earlier on. There's no logical reason to have Cena and/or Ambrose take the title from Styles here and if both of them are leaving for a bit, it would make even less sense. Styles has been the most consistent performer in WWE for a LONG time now and he deserves to keep the title for several months. There's not much more to this one as the ending is pretty clear and the best case scenario all around.

Overall "No Mercy 2016" is just there, though I have some optimism for the show. I'm not wild on the idea of having another pay per view this soon but at least the card looks solid. If nothing else they have eight matches this time around and "Smackdown Live" has shown the ability to set up an entertaining show. My guess is this will be a perfectly acceptable use of three hours (Repeat: THREE HOURS. Not three hours and another fifteen minutes. Three hours AT MOST.). The wrestling will be fine and they'll use the Smackdown style of setting up simple stories but paying them off well.

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