

Smackdown – February 7, 2020: Gotcha! I'm Not Sure Why But Gotcha!



IMG Credit: WWE

Smackdown

Date: February 7, 2020

Location: SAP Center, San Jose, California

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves

We're less than three weeks away from Super ShowDown and that means it's time to line up some major guest starts. We'll likely start that tonight as Goldberg is here and is going to need a match. I'm not sure who that is going to be but I'm hoping we might get to see him face the Fiend. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

The opening video looks at Goldberg returning.

Opening sequence.

Here are Miz and Morrison for the return of the Dirt Sheet.

Morrison: "My name is John Morrison. My shirt has buttons but I don't use them." In honor of the Academy Awards, we see a clip of Once Upon A Time On The Dirt Sheet, a film which is guaranteed to win all the Slammys (it's also rated A for AWESOME). We see a trailer featuring various cameos, including Miz's dad, Lance Storm

and Johnny Ace. Basically Miz needs to prove himself again, Morrison is back and the two of them want to show they're better than New Day. This is all in a Once Upon A Time In Hollywood style and words aren't doing it justice.

Back in the ring, Morrison talks about how interesting it is that people want to talk to them now that they're the cool kids again. Cue New Day, with popcorn buckets, to talk about how awesome the trailer was. They saw the amazing athlete in Mr. Miz and your trivia for the night: Kofi is Mr. Miz's favorite superstar. Kofi: "That's a shoot."

It had comedy too, like the idea that Miz and Morrison could win the Tag Team Titles. Cue the Usos to say Miz and Morrison never beat them so welcome to the Uso Penitentiary. That sounds like an interesting match so here are Dolph Ziggler and Robert Roode because we were this close to having some fun and that's not what Ziggler and Roode are all about. Miz and Morrison jump New Day and the match is next.

Usos vs. Dolph Ziggler/Robert Roode

Well yeah of course it's this match. What else was it going to be? Roode and Jimmy exchange chops to start until it's Jey coming in to chop as well. Ziggler gets the tag and hits a dropkick, followed by the Fameasser for two. The Zig Zag/spinebuster combination gets two on Jimmy as Jey makes the save. Jey hits an enziguri and goes up, only to have Ziggler offer a distraction so Jey can get knocked off the top in a crash.

Back from a break with Roode stomping Jey down in the corner but Ziggler gets punched in the face a few times. A kick to the jaw allows the hot tag to Jimmy as the pace picks up. The Samoan drop hits Ziggler and Roode, the latter of whom is right back with a powerslam. Ziggler takes too long loading up the superkick though and it's Jimmy hitting one to each of them. The Superfly Splash hits knees and Ziggler gets two off a small package. The double superkick hits Roode though and now the Superfly Splash can connect for the pin at 12:33.

Rating: C+. They're both good teams (or great in the Usos' case) but the lack of interest that hits as soon as Zigler's music hits is astounding. I don't need to see him do anything else ever again but more importantly, I don't need to hear anything associated with the Roman Reigns vs. King Corbin feud again and this was a spinoff of that feud, meaning I'm good with not watching them associate in any way.

Nikki Cross and Alexa Bliss are ready for Bliss' chance to become #1 contender.

We look back at Corbin getting covered with dog food last week.

Corbin storms into the production truck and the out the guy who played the tape. Agents prevent further violence.

Here's Elias for a song. He's facing Cesaro tonight and needs all the support he can get, so this song is called Third Time's The Charm. After two words, here's Cesaro to cut him off, with Sami Zayn as a bonus. Elias points out that he always gets interrupted but Sami goes on a rant about how Elias laughed when Shinsuke Nakamura lost the Intercontinental Title. Therefore, it's time to learn a lesson.

Elias vs. Cesaro

Joined in progress with Corey's microphone not working and Cesaro hammering away against the ropes. A Sami distraction cuts Elias off and we hit the chinlock. An elbow gets two and there's a gutwrench suplex to keep Elias down. The chinlock goes on again but this time Elias gets up for a jumping knee to the face.

Elias' top rope elbow is broken up with a running uppercut and the apron superplex gives Cesaro two. Elias gets fired up and stomps away in the corner, which is a lot more offense than you usually see from him. A slam sets up the top rope elbow for the completely clean pin at 7:33.

Rating: D+. Elias is such a weird case as I'm still not sure how he should be used. His character is fine and the songs will keep him around for years, but the wrestling just isn't there. He can be

passable in the ring but that's about his ceiling, which isn't going to get him very far. Then there's Cesaro losing clean and...are you really surprised? Even to Elias?

We're ready to talk to Goldberg but here's King Corbin to interrupt. Everyone should respect him because last week was an abomination. Roman Reigns should have lost last week, just like the 49ers lost to his Kansas City Chiefs. Reigns can't do anything without his lapdogs because the Usos had to bail him out again.

If Reigns was as tough as he says he is, he would have fought one on one at the Royal Rumble. Then Corbin would have won and been the one headlining Wrestlemania. Corbin demands one more match with Reigns and pours a drink over a fan's head. Cue Reigns with a Superman Punch and Corbin runs off. Reigns accepts the match and they'll do it in a steel cage at some point. Reigns makes sure to talk to the fan who got the drink on his head.

Goldberg joins us live via satellite from Texas and gets straight to the point: he watched the Royal Rumble and it gave him the itch again. Brock Lesnar is already dealing with Ricochet and Drew McIntyre, but what about the Fiend and the Universal Title? He never got a rematch, so here's some Breaking News from Firefly Fun House News. William Goldberg is considering challenging the Fiend and that's bad news for Billy, because he accepts.

Mercy the Buzzard gives us the weather report: it's going to be a cold day in h*** before the Fiend loses the Universal Title.

Goldberg says he won't be intimidated and the only thing he's taking is the Universal Title. The Fiend is next and the fans like that idea. Goldberg leaves and Bray says that wasn't very nice. Let him in. Bray: "Bye! See you Bill! Bye!"

Daniel Bryan is watching in the back when Heath Slater comes in. Slater recaps the Fiend going after Bryan...or maybe it was Miz. Heath reminds Bryan about the beating that he got from the Fiend and rambles on about how evil Fiend is. Bryan offers to face Slater right now and walks off, leaving Heath rather confused.

Video on Bryan vs. Fiend at the Rumble.

Daniel Bryan vs. Heath Slater

Slater is in street clothes. Running knee, suicide dive, missile dropkick, YES Kicks, another running knee, stomps to the head and the LeBell Lock for the win at 1:47. More of an angle of Bryan being more aggressive than the match. Commentary played up the idea of the Fiend changing Bryan.

We look at Braun Strowman winning the Intercontinental Title.

Here's Strowman for his first comments as champion. He can't believe this is happening because after everything he has done, he has never won a singles title. Cue Sami Zayn and Shinsuke Nakamura to demand a rematch, Strowman says they're on but that's not what Sami means. They're going to use their resources for as long as they can, so here is the Revival to jump Strowman from behind. The beatdown is on but Strowman fights them off with ease but he spends too much time going after Sami, allowing Nakamura to hit Kinshasa.

Tucker helps Otis get ready for his date with Mandy Rose, including exercise (situps into a bite of pizza), clothing advise (suit jacket with the sleeves ripped off) and table manners, which results in the table being turned over. Tucker: "You're ready."

Apollo Crews vs. Sheamus

Crews starts fast with the kicks to the head, only to miss a charge and get Brogue Kicked for the pin at 29 seconds. That's how it should have gone.

Post match Sheamus loads up another Brogue Kick so here's Shorty G. for the save. In this case, that means some chops before Sheamus Brogue Kicks him again. See, they needed Gable to get beaten up three times in a row because he's short and Sheamus is big and WWE doesn't want to leave ANY doubt about who is better.

Super Showdown rundown, with Reigns vs. Corbin added to the card.

Dana Brooke vs. Carmella vs. Naomi vs. Alexa Bliss

One fall to a finish and the winner gets a shot at Bayley (ringside). Only Naomi gets an entrance and they start fast with a series of rollups, followed by Carmella being taken into the corner.

Dana hits the handspring elbow and everyone goes to the floor, leaving Naomi to hit a corkscrew dive. Bayley holds up the title so Naomi shoves her down to trigger a brawl with Naomi being sent into the steps.

Back from a break with Naomi fighting back up and cleaning house, much to Bayley's annoyance. Bliss is back in to take Naomi down, leaving Carmella to hit the Bronco Buster on Brooke. Naomi is back up with the split legged moonsault as Dana has to make a save. Brooke tries a wheelbarrow to Naomi but gets caught with a Stunner for two.

Naomi's legdrop gets two on Bliss but she shoves Naomi off the top for two of her own. Brooke gets back on the apron so Naomi suplexes her in and hits the split legdrop for another near fall. Bliss sends Naomi into the corner but Twisted Bliss hits knees. The Rear View hits Bliss but Carmella is back in with a superkick to finish Naomi at 11:43.

Rating: D+. Is this Graves' February bonus or something? They did a good job of setting up Naomi as the obvious winner before pulling the surprise...but Carmella? Naomi was set up as the next challenger to Bayley last week and now it's just Carmella due to reasons of surprise. The match was your usual two in, two out for the most part and that has been played out for years. Carmella is the bigger deal here as she may be a fresh challenger, but she isn't the most logical one.

Bayley jumps Carmella to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. This was a weird one as I didn't mind a lot of it but by the ending I was wondering what was supposed to have been good on the show. Goldberg vs. Fiend is interesting for a short, one off match but other than that, I'm not sure what I'm supposed to cheer for. More Reigns vs. Corbin? Carmella getting a surprise title shot? An Elias match? The Dirt Sheet was the highlight of the show and then they were just gone for the sake of Roode and Ziggler. This wasn't a good show and I kept waiting on the good moment that never came. Hopefully they fix this soon because it didn't make me want to

watch next week.

Results

Usos b. Dolph Ziggler/Robert Roode – Superfly Splash to Roode

Elias b. Cesaro – Top rope elbow

Daniel Bryan b. Heath Slater – LeBell Lock

Sheamus b. Apollo Crews – Brogue Kick

Carmella b. Naomi, Alexa Bliss and Dana Brooke – Superkick to Naomi

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Smackdown – August 20, 2019: Safe And Steady Other Than That One Thing



IMG Credit: WWE

Smackdown

Date: August 20, 2019

Location: Denny Sanford Premier Center, Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Byron Saxton, David Otunga

It's Smackdown's turn to do King of the Ring as we're getting two more first round matches tonight. Last night's pair of matches were pretty good so maybe Smackdown can keep up the pace. Other than that we get to find out who was behind the attack on Roman Reigns, or at least who Daniel Bryan and Rowan say it is. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

Here's Randy Orton to open things up. After a clip from last night's attack on the New Day, Orton talks about Kofi cheating to get out of a fight with him at Summerslam. But Kofi isn't done yet because Kofi is stupid. Last night was fun but here's New Day's music, with Kofi sneaking in from behind with Trouble in Paradise to drop Orton. Kofi grabs a chair and wraps it around Orton's ankle but here's the Revival for the save. That's fine with Kofi, who cleans house with the chair as the villains run.

Long video on the Roman Reigns attacks. More on this tonight.

NXT to USA announcement. Why this was announced in an email this morning and not on TV last night still confuses me.

Kevin Owens comes in to see Shane McMahon, who wants to talk about the \$100,000 fine. He's had a week to think about it and now he knows how bad this is. They're not from the same background and

while \$100,000 is nothing to Shane, it means his kids' future. Shane will take it under advisement.

King of the Ring First Round: Andrade vs. Apollo Crews

Crews clotheslines him down at the bell to start (a trend in the tournament so far) but gets sent into the corner. The running knees in the corner rock Crews but he's fine enough to dropkick Andrade out of the air. They head outside with a hurricanrana sending Crews into the steps as we take a break.

Back with Apollo hitting a pop up uppercut and grabbing an Angle Slam for two. Andrade kicks him away but misses more running knees in the corner. An enziguri into the standing sets up a standing shooting star press for two. Crews goes to pull him away from the ropes but Vega grabs the leg, allowing Andrade to hit the spinning elbow to the head. The hammerlock DDT finishes Crews at 9:53.

Rating: C. Even WWE wasn't dumb enough to have Andrade go from being Rey Mysterio two straight falls to having him lose in the first round. Andrade is someone who could be a possible winner and Crews exists to put people over so what else were you expecting to see in this one?

Daniel Bryan and Rowan bring a man whose head is covered with a towel into a locker room. He's sat in a chair and told not to move under the threat of implied violence.

Elias is in the back and finds the disguised referee. A bit of a threat shows that Drake Maverick is hiding in a case, so Elias opens it up and grabs him by the throat. Elias makes him read a letter but grabs him by the throat. Drake: "To whom it may...do you mind?" Shane has suspended the 24/7 Rules for the night so Elias can win his King of the Ring match. Drake is placed back in the case but as Elias leaves, he pops out to say he just wants to consummate his marriage. It's time for A Moment of Bliss with Alexa saying that even though they're champions, the show will not change. It's still going to be the show for the downtrodden and people beneath them, because it's for everyone. Tonight's guest is Charlotte, who thinks she should be

sitting on the King of the Ring throne. Charlotte is the face of the Smackdown women's division, though Bliss thinks it might be Bayley. It's true that Bayley is champion but Charlotte is marketable. Can you imagine Bayley on a red carpet with her side ponytail? The division is an afterthought because Bayley is an afterthought.

Cue Bayley to say she's tired of hearing the same things. It sounds like a bunch of excuses coming from Charlotte because Bayley is still champion. That means she's better than Charlotte, which has to eat her up inside. Charlotte isn't buying it because her match with Trish Stratus was all anyone was talking about at Summerslam. Bayley accepts a challenge for Clash of Champions and shoves Charlotte out of the chair. Charlotte gives her shocked face.

Roman Reigns comes in to see Buddy Murphy and wants to know who he's lying to. Murphy says he's telling the truth about Rowan, so Reigns threatens him with violence if he's lying again.

Daniel Bryan vs. Buddy Murphy

Rowan is here with Bryan, meaning someone is just sitting back there quietly in a locker room. That's expecting some high levels of obedience. Hold on though as Bryan calls Buddy a liar and promises to show Murphy was involved in the attacks as well. Bryan knees him in the face for two at the bell but Bryan is back up with the kicks in the corner. A bite to the face keeps Murphy down and Bryan slaps him while calling him a liar. Murphy doesn't take kindly to that and sends Bryan to the floor for the big flip dive.

Back from a break with Murphy hitting a missile dropkick, followed by the top rope Meteora. Bryan is right back with the LeBell Lock, which he then switches into Rings of Saturn to make it even worse. The leg is pulled back but Murphy slips out and gets his foot in the rope for the break. The fans are behind Buddy here as Bryan kicks away and tells him to stay down.

As you might have guessed, the big one misses but Bryan ties him in the Tree of Woe for more kicks. Bryan scores with a running baseball slide and a belly to back superplex gets two. Buddy is right back with a Cheeky Nandos kick into a running sitout powerbomb for two of

his own. The running knee is countered into some strikes to Bryan's face and a brainbuster gets two. Murphy has to superkick Rowan off the apron before hitting the big knee, followed by Murphy's Law for the huge upset at 13:24.

Rating: B. My goodness it's like they remember how to pull the trigger on someone! This was a hard hitting back and forth match and they did something that could make a star in the end. At some point you have to make a new star and having Murphy get a clean pin on a former multiple time World Champion is a great way to do just that. I'm rather pleased here and Murphy winning actually means something for a change. The fans seemed into Buddy too so they might have something here.

Post break Murphy is about to be interviewed when Bryan and Rowan run up and attack him. Bryan keeps calling him a liar as Rowan crushes him with a boot.

Here's a banged up Revival for a match but first they yell about New Day being cowards just like everyone here is for cheering the beating. They know Xavier Woods is still limping out of Minnesota but they want a Smackdown Tag Team Title match. Cue their opponents.

Heavy Machinery vs. Revival

Tucker is smart by going with a bearhug on Wilder's injured ribs. Revival gets sent outside in a hurry and we take a break. Back with Tucker swinging his arms to get out of a chinlock but getting taken down again by Dawson. The middle rope elbow misses though and it's the hot tag off to Otis. House is cleaned with Otis dropping the Caterpillar on Dawson. Tucker gets the Thesz Press on Dawson but Wilder gets an Oklahoma Roll to pin Tucker at 6:04. Not enough shown to rate but Heavy Machinery is always worth a quick look.

Chad Gable is used to being an underdog in the tournament because he's been an underdog his entire life. As he is talking, Shelton Benjamin, his opponent in the first round next week, puts a sign on a door. Gable is ready to win next week and goes towards the locker room, with the sign saying "you must be this tall to participate in the King of the Ring Tournament." Gable: "Funny." No Chad, it isn't.

It's time for MizTV with Sami Zayn as guest. Sami says he doesn't care about the show because last night, he finally saw things clearly. Last night he found out why people like Miz always get caught up in the trap. It is the WWE trap of greed and the only path to redemption is to help other people. Yeah he's one of the greatest alive today but there are so many people who need his help. Miz: "Like who?" Sami brings out Shinsuke Nakamura of all people, giving Miz a look like he just drank some surprisingly sour lemonade.

Miz asks Nakamura what he can get out of this but Sami calls Miz out for asking him in English. Sami talks about Nakamura being an artist and a poet who is being held back. That's something Sami can understand and from here on out, Nakamura does not need to feel that pain. Miz asks Nakamura what is going on but Nakamura points to Sami. That's enough of a distraction for Nakamura to lay Miz out, setting up Kinshasa to leave Miz laying. Assuming it still counts, maybe throw in Ali for a four way at Clash?

Bryan and Rowan go in to see their mystery man and it's time to hear what he did. Or later apparently.

Owens comes in to see Shane again because Shane remembers what he needed to say earlier. It occurred to Shane that Owens had never apologized for attacking Elias so Owens apologizes. Shane is reconsidering the fine but if Owens ever puts his hands on another official, he is fired. Owens offers a handshake but Shane isn't there yet.

King of the Ring First Round: Elias vs. Kevin Owens

Non-title. Elias' music now has his catchphrase at the start and sounds like him singing. Owens doesn't waste time in clotheslining him out to the floor but Elias walks away before the big flip dive. A whip sends Owens into the barricade but he's right back with the Cannonball for two. Cue Shane to watch from ringside as we take a break. Back with Elias holding a chinlock and throwing in a rake to the eyes for a bonus. Owens fights up and gets caught with a jumping knee to the face for two.

The chinlock goes on again but Owens gets out even faster this time,

setting up a DDT. A middle rope dropkick sets up the backplash for a quick two. The pop up powerbomb is broken up and Elias hits an electric chair into a sitout powerbomb. Elias can't hit a superplex as Owens knocks him down but the Swanton hits knees. Owens is right back to knock Elias outside for a flip dive off the apron...and it's Shane pulling off his shirt to reveal a referee shirt. Shane slides in as Owens' Stunner is blocked, allowing Elias to grab a rollup with Shane counting a very fast pin at 13:12.

Rating: C. This story just won't end. I'm not sure why it needs to keep going, but WWE certainly sees value in having Shane do the same stuff he's done for months now. I'm sure we'll see a rematch, possibly all the way at Hell in a Cell for a rematch from two years ago. The match was just waiting around for Shane to reveal the shirt, because that's the only way it could have ended.

Reigns comes in to see Bryan and Rowan to find out who is under the hood. The hood comes off and it's...someone who looks like Rowan plus twenty years. Nothing is said to end the show. So I guess Murphy was confused and thought it was the Rowan lookalike, who we'll have explained to us later? That's certainly a different way to go with things.

Overall Rating: C+. The show went by very quickly with a lot of stuff happening but the ending left me scratching my head a bit. The wrestling was average to good and the stories were advanced, but a lot of it felt like going exactly where it seemed we would be going with nothing out of line. That doesn't make for a bad show, but it doesn't make for the most exciting show.

Results

Andrade b. Apollo Crews – Hammerlock DDT

Buddy Murphy b. Daniel Bryan – Murphy's Law

Revival b. Heavy Machinery – Oklahoma roll to Tucker

Elias b. Kevin Owens – Rollup with a fast count

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NXT – July 17, 2019: Oh That's Better



IMG Credit: WWE

NXT

Date: July 17, 2019

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Mauro Ranallo, Beth Phoenix

It's weird to say this but NXT is in a little bit of a funk. I don't know if it's the Breakout Tournament or Johnny Gargano vs. Adam Cole III not being the most inspiring story in the world, but the last few shows haven't been the most thrilling the world. They're not bad

by any stretch, but when your standards are this high, anything but great is jarring. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

Opening sequence.

Matt Riddle vs. Arturo Ruas

Ruas is formerly known as Adrian Jaoude, with Mauro mentioning that he has a new identity. They go into an MMA striking battle to start with Nigel listing off their stats. Riddle takes him to the mat and they trade waistlocks into a standoff. Ruas gets in a powerslam but can't get a full cross armbreaker. Instead Riddle tries his own but Ruas rolls out into another standoff. Back up and Riddle scores with a kick to the ribs so Ruas double legs him down. Another battle of kicks goes to Riddle and it's the Final Flash knee strike. Riddle pounces on him until the referee stops it at 3:41.

Rating: C. Uh, shouldn't pounding away with right hands until the referee calls it off be a DQ instead of a knockout? This was a nice change of pace between two people who know what they're doing so I can go for a little something different. Riddle needs some competition though and a story would help him go a long way. The charisma and skills are there so give him somewhere to go with them.

Post match Killian Dain runs in and wrecks Riddle, including sending him shoulder first into the post and slamming his head onto the floor. A backsplash to Riddle's back makes it even worse and Dain takes Riddle to the stage....for another running backsplash THROUGH the stage. Well that worked.

The Street Profits don't take kindly to the Undisputed Era thinking they deserve the titles more than the Profits. If the Profits aren't serious, why can't the Era just beat them? Come see how serious they are because they're going to keep the titles. Dawkins: "And that is undisputed." Ford's shocked face is great.

We look at Mia Yim attacking Marina Shafir in the parking lot last Saturday.

Breakout Tournament First Round: Dexter Lumis vs. Bronson Reed

Lumis is Samuel Shaw and Reed is Jonah Rock. Reed says he's from Australia and a usual night out for him is a fight at a pub. Why does no one talk about Australian strong style? Lumis frames his hands to look at Rock, who reaches his hand out at Lumis for a scene straight out of a character loading screen. The much bigger Reed runs him over but an elbow lets Lumis put him on the floor.

Lumis' running flip dive misses but he lands on his feet, leaving Reed to run him over. Back in and Lumis sends him throat first into the bottom rope and hammers away. The neck crank goes on for a bit until Reed is back up with forearms to the face. The announcers talk about Lumis enjoying pain as Reed gets two off a backplash (common move tonight). Lumis is right back up with a belly to back suplex and spinning legdrop, only to miss the Swanton. Reed slams him down and a top rope splash finishes Lumis at 5:52.

Rating: C. Lumis seems like someone who could be interesting if he was given some promo time and maybe a few vignettes. Reed is someone you get the idea of immediately and he looked good in the ring. I don't think I've ever seen him work before but there's some potential there and I was pleased with a short match here.

Here are the updated brackets:

Bronson Reed

Cameron Grimes

Angel Garza

Jordan Myles

Tyler Breeze thinks he might need some backup against the Undisputed Era. Cue the Forgotten Sons to say he's not a real man. Breeze: "Oh I'm a real man. Check out his beard." Breeze thinks Jaxson Ryker is Buddy Murphy and doesn't seem worried.

We look at the debut of evil Io Shirai last week, when she said she didn't need any friends.

Next week: Kacy Catanzaro vs. Io Shirai.

Kushida vs. Apollo Crews

Welcome home for Crews and he gets quite the reaction, even though he was never a big star in NXT. They shake hands to start with Kushida taking him to the mat and Gator Rollins him for two. Back up and they trade flips to dodge until Crews nails a dropkick to take over. Kushida slides to the floor and gets the chase going, allowing him to catch Crews with a handspring double heel to the face. Crews is fine enough to hit a pop up gutbuster and the chinlock is on. A Stinger Splash sets up a heck of an overhead belly to belly suplex for two on Kushida.

Back up and Kushida catches him with a kick to the arm in the corner as the setup for the Hoverboard Lock begins. The Tajiri handspring elbow connects and a basement dropkick has Crews in even more trouble. Crews powers out of an armbar attempt and some rolling German suplexes keep Kushida rocked.

He's fine enough to Downward Spiral Crews into the middle rope but Crews hits a jumping enziguri to put both guys down. Kushida catches him on top with another double heel shot to the head and pulls Crews down into a cross armbreaker. With that not working, Kushida rolls into the Sakuraba Lock for the tap at 10:45.

Rating: B. This worked quite well with Kushida getting to show off some more, though I can understand the criticisms from people saying he's not that interesting. So far all he's had are one off matches that get to showcase his skills, but he needs either some serious competition or something personal to challenge him. Crews is still very talented, assuming you don't expect him to have some kind of character behind him.

Post match Kushida offers Crews respect and we get another WELCOME BACK chant.

Keith Lee isn't happy with his tenure so far as he's had a lot of starts and stops. He has yet to see any of the opportunities that were promised to him and he's been passed by for all the new talents. Right now we're in the middle of a tournament with eight people fighting for a title shot. Now there's Damien Priest running around and getting all this attention so maybe he should change the

narrative. I fully support more Keith Lee.

Next week: Lee vs. Priest.

Here's Adam Cole for his first NXT Title defense but first, a chat. Cole talks about being on the Bay Bay Championship Tour as of late and he's been able to show the world what power is. It is now undisputed that there is a power switch happening in NXT. He's never said he won't be a fighting champion so let's have a title match right now, against this man. We see a clip of Johnny Gargano at his training school and showing a student the NXT Title. You know where this is going.

NXT Title: Adam Cole vs. Twan Tucker

Tucker is challenging and doesn't look nervous. Cole insists that he's alone here and it's one on one. Tucker didn't come alone though and here's Gargano to charge the ring and go after Cole. No match of course.

Gargano superkicks him to the floor and hits a dive to the floor. They go into the crowd with Gargano hammering away and whipping Cole through various things. Referees break it up and Cole holds up the title so Gargano dives on him again and hammers away. They get into the ring and it's the Gargano Escape to make Cole tap to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. Yeah this was way better than the previous weeks with some good wrestling and a few things being set up for later. The main thing here is trying to make Gargano vs. Cole feel more important...but I'm just not feeling it. We've done that so many times now and you could say this is their fifth match after three falls in the first one. That's quite a bit to take and NXT rarely goes there. They do seem to be setting up the Undisputed Era dominance, though I'm not sure how interesting that would be. At least we had something good here though and NXT feels back on track.

Results

Matt Riddle b. Arturo Ruas via referee stoppage

Bronson Reed b. Dexter Lumis – Top rope splash

Kushida b. Apollo Crews – Sakuraba Lock

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The Vince Announcement Was... .

Now stop me if you've heard this one before.

Vince opened this week's show and brought out Stephanie McMahon, Triple H and Shane McMahon, with the big announcement being that the four of them would be taking over both Monday Night Raw and SmackDown Live on a more permanent basis. While details weren't clear, they said that middle management would no longer be running the shows, which could mean having no General Manager on either show, though this wasn't confirmed. Baron Corbin attempted to become permanent General Manager again, but was defeated in a match with Corbin's authority on the line.

So yeah, it's more McMahons, more bosses, and more "matches we've never seen before". It sounds to me like we're going to be seeing something else to go with this and a Draft/a bunch of callups wouldn't shock me. The problem here though is that it's more of the same: a focus on the bosses

disguised as the focus being on the fans. The opening segment and match took more than thirty minutes and it didn't include anything concrete. It's too early to say how this is going to go, but how long do you think it'll be before we have a new GM style character? February? In a good world?

Mixed Match Challenge – December 11, 2018 (Season 2 Finale): There's No Avoiding It



IMG Credit: WWE

Mixed Match Challenge

Date: December 11, 2018

Location: T-Mobile Arena, Las Vegas, Nevada

Commentators: Renee Young, Vic Joseph, Michael Cole

We're finally at the finals as the winners of tonight's two matches are heading to TLC this Sunday. Unfortunately you can pretty clearly see who is winning based on what is already booked for the pay per view so there isn't much mystery, but at least we're finally done

with this thing. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

Raw Division Finals: Bayley/Apollo Crews vs. Jinder Mahal/Alicia Fox

Crews is the replacement for the ill Finn Balor, because we can't go a week on this show without a replacement. Mahal headlocks Crews to start until Crews comes out of it with a backslide for two. It's off to the women with Bayley rolling her up a few times for two each, sending Fox outside for some quality shouting. Back in and Fox's suplex is countered into a small package for two more and it's already back to the men. Well to be fair it's not like Bayley was pinning her. Crews jumps over Mahal in the corner and flips forward a bit until Mahal knees him in the face.

More knees keep Crews down and we hit the required chinlock. Apollo comes up with the jumping enziguri and it's back to the women to pick up the pace again. Everything breaks down and Bayley hits the Stunner over the middle rope for two with the Singh Brothers making the save. Fox and the Brothers take Bayley to Bellies but Mahal superkicks Crews. After the melee, Bayley goes outside to get Fox but walks into a big boot to give Fox the unlikely pin at 9:35.

Rating: D+. Well you knew that was coming and there was no way around it. As soon as Bayley and Balor made the Raw finals, there was no way Mahal and Fox were losing. It's the usual WWE idea: have a team that only they want to go on to win something win it, just because...whatever they see in Mahal. Anyway at least it's not exactly in an important match.

Mahal and Fox take credit for the win in their own unique ways. Asuka comes in and laughs at them a lot.

Smackdown Division: R-Truth/Carmella vs. The Miz/Asuka

Miz and Asuka argue over who should start until Asuka finally gets the nod. Now why couldn't Carmella or Truth start and make the decision for them? Miz demands to be tagged in so Asuka chops him for the tag. Truth shoulders him down and hops around in a circle, followed by the hip thrusting. With Miz on the floor, DANCE BREAK! Asuka even joins in on a second edition and since Miz is annoyed, Truth hammers away in the corner. That's finally enough for Miz, who kicks Truth down and slaps on a chinlock.

The announcers are so bored that they talk about Mike Chioda

refereeing. Miz's short DDT gets two and a heck of a clothesline takes Truth down again. Truth gets in a shot of his own though and the hot tag brings in Carmella. That means a lot of screaming as Asuka loads up a German suplex.

Some knees to the chest have Carmella in trouble but Truth comes in with a Lie Detector to Miz. Carmella loads up the superkick on Miz but he pulls Asuka in the way like a true jerk. The Little Jimmy gets two on Miz, who pops up and throws the good ones to the floor. Asuka isn't happy though and FINALLY snaps on the cheating Miz, kicking him in the head and walking away. An Unprettier gives Truth the pin at 11:38.

Rating: D+. Yeah this was obvious last week and there wasn't much doubt a few weeks back either. As soon as Asuka was announced for the TLC match, there was no way she was making it to the finals. I'm not a fan of the things but points to Truth and Carmella for getting some crazy mileage out of the dance breaks. It's gotten them a pay per view match, which is about 10,000x more than it should have done.

Overall Rating: D. And thank goodness it's over. The Mixed Match Challenge is something that can work, but PLEASE take it back to the format from the first season. This was a nightmare with a bunch of matches that didn't go anywhere because they had nothing to fight over and the two teams who only got into the playoffs on the last week making the finals. Just have things go the way that actually worked and things can be better, unlike this season.

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Main Event – September 13, 2018: The Work Pays Off



IMG Credit: WWE

Main Event

Date: September 13, 2018

Location: Smoothie King Center, New Orleans, Louisiana

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Nigel McGuinness, Percy Watson

It's the go home show for Hell in a Cell and that means some clips of the big pushes from Raw and Smackdown. This really is a week where they could just drop the original matches altogether but that doesn't exactly seem to be in the cards. You can probably guess what we're getting tonight but that makes for some interesting television at times. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

Opening sequence.

Ember Moon vs. Dana Brooke

Now remember: this is the IMPROVED Brooke. Dana takes her into the corner without much effort and a few rollups get a few near falls. A test of strength goes to Brooke until Moon fights up without much effort. Some shoulders in the corner set up a knee to the ribs for two.

More knees set up a bodyscissors but Moon fights up and nips into a

hurricanrana. That just earns her the handspring elbow in the corner and we hit the abdominal stretch, first on the mat and then the standing version. The springboard crossbody gets Moon out of trouble, only to have Brooke enziguri her into the corner. That means a roll into the buckle though and the Eclipse gives Moon the pin at 5:23.

Rating: D. Brooke just isn't very good and there's not much of a way around that anymore. She tries but it's a situation where she's not going to get any better being fed to these big names. The solution would be to send her down to NXT for a good while, but WWE isn't one to change course, even on someone as low on the totem pole as her.

Video on Rousey vs. Bliss.

From Raw.

Tag Team Titles: Dolph Ziggler/Drew McIntyre vs. B Team

The B Team is challenging. Ziggler and Dallas start things off with Bo hitting an early neckbreaker for two. Axel comes in and slugs away as we take a break. Back with McIntyre working on an armbar before stomping on Axel's hand. A superkick into a reverse Alabama Slam gives McIntyre two but Axel catapults Ziggler into the corner. Everything breaks down and Ziggler rakes Dallas' eyes, setting up the Zig Zag/Claymore combination to retain at 8:48.

Rating: D. The B Team are still comedy guys and there's still no reason to believe that Ziggler and McIntyre shouldn't slaughter them. They were fine for what they were as short form comedy goofs but they were designed to lose huge to a better team. There's nothing wrong with that, but this match should have been what the title change was: near if not complete and utter dominance.

Post match Ambrose and Rollins run in to beat down Ziggler and McIntyre, who bail before McIntyre can get Stomped.

Video on Charlotte vs. Lynch.

From Smackdown.

Brie Bella vs. Maryse

Brie now has the Seattle Seahawks colors too. Maryse bails to the floor at the bell and Miz gives her a good luck kiss. Back in and Maryse hides in the ropes before heading outside again. Brie grabs the mic and calls Maryse a coward. Feel the burn I guess. Miz

doesn't like this and talks about how Maryse gave birth just five months ago. This city doesn't deserve this match so Miz and Maryse are out. Brie chases Maryse down and sends her into the apron but Bryan going after Miz lets Maryse get in a kick to the head for two. The YES Lock has Maryse in trouble but Miz pulls Brie out for the DQ at 4:40.

Rating: N/A. I don't use that very often but this wasn't a match. They "wrestled" for about twenty seconds near the end of their angle and that's about it. I know WWE might be a little worried about the two of them wrestling, but if that's the case they shouldn't be in the main event of this show. Now we're going to have to hear even more about how much of a legend Brie is, but at last Nikki's match last night was a match as opposed to this angle that they tried to call a match.

Post match the brawl is on with Bryan running Brie over by mistake. Maryse sends Brie into the apron a few times but Brie comes back with her terrible punches. Bryan gets back in and takes Miz down with Brie punching him into a clothesline to the floor to end the show.

Zack Ryder vs. Apollo Crews

They shake hands before the feeling out process starts. Crews takes over with a wristlock but Ryder dropkicks him into the corner without much effort. Back up and Crews flips away in the corner, followed by a dropkick of his own to show Ryder who the better athlete is. A slingshot dive sets up a chinlock until Ryder jawbreaks his way to freedom. Stereo crossbodies give us a double knockdown with Crews getting up first.

Some clotheslines set up a powerslam to put Ryder in trouble again, followed by the nipup just to show off. A low bridge to the floor lets Ryder hit a dropkick from the apron though, followed by the Elbro for two. Ryder's neckbreaker looks to set up the Broski Boot but Crews is out of the way and Ryder is in trouble again. An enziguri sets up a frog splash to finish Ryder at 8:32.

Rating: C+. This is a good example of what can happen when you let talented performers work. How much input do you think the higher ups had in this match? Other than "Apollo you're going over with something from the top", do you really think an agent gave them many instructions? These are two talented guys and they had a very nice

match. It's not going to get them anywhere, but hopefully someone took some notice of the work they put in.

From Smackdown.

Samoa Joe reads a bedtime story (complete with book) about AJ Styles, who built a house but then forgot his friends who helped get him there. One of his friends promised to make things better by beating Styles up, which leads them to Sunday where AJ will get to go back to his family. After he wakes up of course. The last shot of the book is Joe as champion with Styles' family for a rather evil visual.

The rhyming here was a good idea as they've done some solid work with the promos leading up to the match. It's amazing how much you get out of switching up a few things like this. The best part is they can back it up in the ring, which is the part that lacks in so many of these well built feuds.

And from Raw.

Here's Strowman to call out Reigns. No one shows up and Strowman says Reigns won't be able to run on Sunday. Strowman will get his hands on Reigns and then hurt Foley far worse than Undertaker ever did. Reigns pops up on the announcers' table so Strowman goes after him, earning himself a Samoan drop off said table through part of the stage to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. Oh yeah this was WAY better and that's not exactly surprising. WWE is still high quality television when they cut out all their other nonsense and given how much nonsense there is to cut out, Main Event is often the best choice for a go home show. They covered all of the big stories in one swoop and gave us a snappy Crews vs. Ryder match too. Not bad at all.

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Main Event – August 10, 2017: The Chris Jericho Tribute Match

Main Event

Date: August 10, 2017

Location: Air Canada Center, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Corey Graves

The show heads north of the border this week and there are some options for this show. Monday's Raw didn't feature several names and since no one works twice around here, there's a good chance we could be seeing some bigger names around here. Oh and Curt Hawkins. Never forget Hawkins. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Apollo Crews vs. Curt Hawkins

See, I told you there would be a Hawkins sighting. They pose at each other to start but Crews pops off a dropkick to take over. Hawkins is smart enough to choke on the ropes and grabs a belly to back suplex for two. A regular suplex gets two and we hit the chinlock. Back up and Crews hits a running kick to the face, followed by the enziguri and standing moonsault for two. Hawkins comes back with an enziguri of his own but what looks like a running right hand is countered into the Toss Powerbomb to give Crews the pin at 4:29.

Rating: D+. As usual, the best thing about a Hawkins match is his awesome entrance. It's a shame that something so funny is being wasted on someone who is nothing but a jobber to the stars. Crews continues to be insanely athletic but he still needs charisma and a

character, which is only going to be done so well by Titus International.

From Raw, part one.

We start fast this week as Miz and company are in the ring for MizTV. Miz is tired of being blindsided on his own show so he wants Jason Jordan out here right now. It's Kurt Angle instead, who has his own guest for the show: Brock Lesnar. The place goes coconuts for Lesnar and Paul Heyman, but Miz cuts Paul off because this is his show. Miz talks about how it's almost a guarantee that Lesnar is losing the title because all three challengers are going to gang up on Lesnar. And remember, if Brock loses, he's gone for good. If Miz is a betting man, he's picking one of the challengers to leave as champion.

It's time for Heyman to talk and he gets straight to the point: "Do you and your wife ever role play?" Heyman loves the idea of role play so let's have Miz play Roman Reigns, Bo Dallas play Samoa Joe and Curtis Axel play Braun Strowman. Now let's preview Summerslam. Three F5's later, Lesnar calmly leaves.

And the sequel.

Here's Finn Balor for a chat. After some required TOO SWEET chanting, Balor talks about kicking Bray's teeth down his neck last week. If there's one thing Finn knows, it's that you have to kick fear in the face...and here's Wyatt to interrupt. Bray appears in the ring but Balor is on the top. They fight for a bit until Bray disappears, only to reappear on screen to say he enjoys Balor's bravery.

Before the next match, we're graced with a song from Elias about how horrible Canada is with all of its ugly citizens. Cue a well known Canadian for the save.

Elias vs. Kalisto

Kalisto says he wants to walk with Elias but settles for sending him outside for a hurricanrana off the apron. We take an early break and come back with Elias pulling Kalisto's arm down onto the apron,

earning them both a series of TEN counts. The arm goes into the apron again and it's time for an armbar.

Kalisto reverses into a rollup for a quick breather but Elias kicks him in the shoulder again. A hammerlock belly to back suplex gets two and we hit the third armbar. An armdrag gets Kalisto out of trouble and he rolls over to kick Elias in the head, only to have the Salida Del Sol reversed into Drift Away for the pin at 10:02.

Rating: D-. It's hard to find a really bad Main Event match but they pulled it off here. How in the world can you have a ten minute match with three armbars included? Elias is going to be used as something special in WWE though I still have no idea what that's going to be. Kalisto is a good jobber to the stars, though I still have no idea why he beat Braun Strowman earlier in the year.

Quick look at Bayley's injury.

Finally from Raw again.

Braun Strowman vs. Roman Reigns

Last Man Standing. Reigns meets him in the aisle but gets thrown from the floor into the ring. It's too early for a Samoan drop as Strowman pounds Reigns down for an early five count. Reigns is sent outside and we take a break. Back with Strowman throwing the steps inside but Reigns slugs away for a breather. A pair of big boots stagger Strowman and a shot with the steps puts Strowman on a knee.

Reigns hits him in the face with the steps and Strowman goes down, allowing Reigns to hit him in the chest with the steps over and over. Back up at seven and Strowman blocks the Superman Punch by sending Reigns into the corner. That spinning Big Ending gives Braun a breather but Roman gets in a quick Superman Punch to put both guys down. Strowman is back up with a dropkick of all things but he misses a charge and hits the post, knocking him out to the floor.

Reigns gets in the apron dropkick and it's table time. He takes too long with it though as Strowman clotheslines him down again and sets up the table in the ring. Again it takes too long though and Reigns hits a Samoan drop through the table, only to have Strowman roll

outside to get on his feet. Reigns goes after him so Strowman LAUNCHES the timekeeper's chair at him, knocking Reigns completely silly for nine. Great visual and if Strowman doesn't win, I have no idea why he didn't do it there.

They fight into the crowd and up to the announcers' table with Reigns hitting another running dropkick. Strowman is up again and throws Roman into the screen. The announcers' table is loaded up but Reigns gets to his feet for two Superman Punches. The spear is blocked with a big boot, only to have Reigns pop back up and hit the spear. Reigns pulls himself up...and Samoa Joe reaches out from the crowd to put Reigns in the Koquina Clutch. The THANK YOU JOE chant starts up and Strowman is up at nine for the win at 22:00.

Rating: B-. This got going once they brought the table in and I REALLY like that ending. Strowman wouldn't have gotten up without the delay in the count thanks to Joe and Joe himself looks like the real winner, which makes sense considering he wasn't even on the show so far. It's not a classic or anything but the ending was the perfect call, outside of MAYBE a double knockout.

Overall Rating: D. Pretty weak show this time around and that's not the biggest surprise in the world. MizTV was fun, the Last Man Standing match was brutal, the Balor segment was stupid and the original matches ranged from "we've seen this before" to a tribute to Chris Jericho's ARMBAR list. This was one of the worst shows they've done in a good while and that's hard to do for Main Event.

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KB's Review: Wrestling Prospectus

Who might be the stars of the future? Here are eleven of them. Why eleven? Eh no reason.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-wrestling-prospectus/>

Main Event – July 27, 2017: Worth the Wait

Main Event

Date: July 27, 2017

Location: Verizon Center, Washington D.C.

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Corey Graves

It's the nation's capital edition of the show and that means...well nothing of note really as we have the random assortment of matches which could go anywhere on this show. That's a good thing though and hopefully the Raw highlights are better than what they do around here at times. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Cedric Alexander vs. Tony Nese

Nese glares at him a bit and gets armdragged down for his efforts.

That earns Alexander a hot shot onto the top rope and the

springboard moonsault for good measure. It's off to the Tree of Woe

so Nese can work the abs (both Cedric's with the kicks and his own with the crunches) and it's off to a bodyscissors. Cedric fights back with some shots to the face though, followed by the great looking springboard clothesline for two. Nese gutbusters him to stay on the ribs, only to get kicked in the head. The Lumbar Check gives Cedric the pin at 5:28.

Rating: C+. They had something going here with the rib stuff and that's a lot more than you can ask for on a show like this. Alexander is one of the most consistently entertaining and polished performers on 205 Live...but it's still 205 Live. He hasn't been near the Cruiserweight Title and I have no idea why. Would Alexander vs. Neville really be the worst feud in the world?

From Raw!

Here's Kurt Angle to open things up. Angle talks about the weight being lifted off his shoulders since he's announced Jason Jordan as his son (Quick sidebar: why would having an illegitimate son from nearly thirty years ago cost him his family? Are Angle's wife and family so nuts that they can't accept him dating in college?).

As for the #1 contendership, Brock Lesnar will be defending against....someone we'll find out later as Braun Strowman interrupts to say he better be getting the title shot. Cue Samoa Joe to say he wants another shot at Lesnar because he knows he can finish him. Strowman and Reigns can finish each other but he better get his title shot. Roman comes out to say Joe and Strowman haven't done anything to earn a shot and lists off all of his accomplishments.

Angle changes his mind again and makes the four way for Summerslam. Joe isn't happy but the brawl breaks out anyway with Joe and Reigns hammering away on Strowman. That lasts all of thirty seconds before they start fighting each other. Strowman gets back up and beats on Reigns before dominating Angle's security. Joe gets the choke on Strowman until the locker room comes out for another failed save attempt. Reigns spears Strowman down but he pops right back up and sends Joe and Reigns outside.

And again!

Bayley vs. Sasha Banks

The winner gets Bliss, who sits in on commentary, at Summerslam. Feeling out process to start with Bayley grabbing a rollup but getting smacked in the face. Bayley gets in a kick and the charge in the corner, only to get knocked off the top as we take a break. Back with Bayley fighting out of a double arm crank and getting two off a facebuster. The Backstabber into the Bank Statement has Bayley in trouble until she flips over into a rollup for two.

They slap it out with Banks getting the better of it, only to miss the top rope knees. Bayley knees her in the head but gets caught with a Shining Wizard to put both of them down. A fired up Bayley gets more aggressive than she's been in a long time and slugs away, only to have a superplex broken up. Sasha hits a frog splash but Bayley reverses the cover into a rollup for the pin and the title shot at 13:14.

Rating: B-. Good match here as Bayley continues her short road to redemption. Having Bayley win the title on the big stage could be interesting but it's more likely that Banks turns on her to cost Bayley her chance. At least they're building up the card in a hurry though as this is the second match announced in about two hours.

Kalisto vs. Apollo Crews

Crews doesn't waste time and grabs a slam to start, followed by the good looking dropkick. He's certainly athletic. A headscissors sends him outside though, followed by a hurricanrana to stagger Crews even more. Kalisto gets kicked out of the air though and we take a break. Back with Crews getting two off a slingshot senton and Kalisto's sunset flip getting the same.

The masked one gets in his variety of kicks, including the rolling kick to the head. The hurricanrana driver looks to set up the Salida Del Sol but Kalisto has to settle for a tornado DDT for two instead. A moonsault misses though and Crews' Toss Powerbomb is good for the pin at 7:36.

Rating: C+. They were flying around well enough here and Kalisto

continues to look quite good. He's such a random former two time US Champion as this is about as high as he gets anymore. Well save for that time when he beat Braun Strowman for reasons that still aren't entirely clear.

Clips of Kurt Angle announcing Jason Jordan as his son.

And finally.

Dean Ambrose/Seth Rollins vs. Miz/Miztourage

Ambrose hammers on Axel to start and runs him over for some right hands and elbows to the head. Rollins comes in for a knee drop as we see Sheamus and Cesaro watching. That...could be interesting actually. Miz comes in and eats a Sling Blade, followed by the Miztourage being cleared out as we take a break. Back with Rollins in trouble as Miz cuts off a hot tag attempt.

Miz gets two off a neckbreaker and it's off to Axel for a dropkick (Axel: "HOW GOOD WAS THAT???"). Rollins fights off Dallas but it's still not enough as Miz grabs a DDT for two more. We hit the YES Kicks with Corey singing Miz's praises because he can. The good old double clothesline puts both Rollins and Miz down, followed by a quick roll over to Ambrose for the hot tag.

House is quickly cleaned, including a rebound lariat on Dallas. The top rope elbow is good for two as everything breaks down. Axel escapes Dirty Deeds and it's the Skull Crushing Finale for two on Ambrose. Stereo suicide dives put the Miztourage down though and it's Dirty Deeds to put Miz away at 17:47.

Rating: B-. They got along well enough but I can't imagine they'll put the Shield back together for real anytime soon. The match wasn't great or anything though it's not like this was supposed to be a classic of any kind. I liked the match and they did a good enough job of keeping the crowd going. I'm not sure where this is going at the end but it's got enough of my attention.

Post match Seth puts out the fist for the Shield pose but Ambrose leaves him hanging to end the show.

Opinion: B. One of the best shows they've had in a good while and

for the first time in a long time it's because of the original content. The two matches were energetic and felt interesting, even if they don't mean anything either way. It's a very entertaining show and that's a rather nice surprise, which you don't get to say around here, pretty much ever.

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Smackdown – February 28, 2017: That Was....A Lot

Smackdown

Date: February 28, 2017

Location: Xcel Energy Center, St. Paul Minnesota

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

It's a stacked card tonight and I assure you that has nothing to do with the President giving a speech to a joint session of Congress at the halfway point of the show. Tonight we have the fallout from AJ Styles and Luke Harper tying in a battle royal, a two out of three falls match between Becky Lynch and Mickie James and Dolph Ziggler vs. Apollo Crews in a chairs match. Let's get to it.

The bosses are in the back watching a clip of the ending of last week's battle royal. AJ comes in and laughs off the idea of having

to face Harper tonight because Harper looks like the hair that clogs the shower. Of course Harper is behind him so AJ bails, leaving Harper to thank the bosses.

Opening sequence.

Here are Miz and Maryse to open things up with MizTV. Miz gets right to the point and brings out his guest: John Cena. However he also cuts Cena's mic and rants about how Cena has cost him ten years of misery. Cena spends all his time manipulating everyone he can find and Miz is sick and tired of it. A brief Cena chant cuts things off before Miz says he isn't just the other guy.

Two weeks ago, Miz was primed to main event Wrestlemania but Cena manipulated him out of the spot. The reason being: Cena is jealous of him. A few years back Cena went toe to toe with the Rock and went off about how Rock had gone Hollywood but now with all the movies and TV shows, we can't see Cena. The fans get in a quick YOU SOLD OUT chant as Miz talks about how Cena is a parody of himself. Miz: "You're not Super Cena anymore. You're barely decent Cena!"

Miz is the one that's here doing the media and making sure Smackdown is must see. Then Cena just comes back and gets a title shot at the Royal Rumble for a spot in the history books. Cena took the glory away from Ric Flair (I'm still waiting on anyone to talk about Flair taking away Harley Race's glory by doubling the amount of title reigns he had. I doubt we'll be getting that though because NO ONE THINKS FLAIR TOOK ANYTHING AWAY FROM RACE, just like Cena took nothing from Flair.) and now it's time for Cena to talk.

John makes the jokes about how he's heard all of this before and held everyone back. Now it's time to prove Miz wrong though. If Cena was really this black arts manipulator, he would be standing toe to toe with the Undertaker. The fans really seem to like that idea but Cena talks about how half of this crowd, and sometimes more than half, is going to be chanting CENA SUCKS.

No matter what they chant though, everyone knows who Cena is. Miz is someone named Mike who shortened his name on the Real World because he thought it would steal Rock's electricity. Then he stole Chris Jericho's gimmick, Ric Flair's Figure Four Leglock (That was a gift!), Daniel Bryan's offense and the same thing that AJ Styles has been saying for the last six months. Miz is just someone playing someone playing someone playing someone else. If you ask any of the

greats, they're just themselves with the volume turned WAY up.

That's why so many believe that Miz is where he is: he's a trend hopping shell of a WWE superstar. Cena says the next time they talk, don't bring a knife to a gun fight because Miz isn't the Undertaker. If he presses Cena again though, he's a dead man. Cena goes to leave but Maryse cuts him off and gets in a slap. Cena starts laughing and says that was the biggest mistake of her life. Cue Nikki Bella to chase Miz and Maryse off. Cena kisses Nikki, which I believe is the first time he's ever acknowledged their relationship on TV.

That's the easy frontrunner for promo of the year and is likely going to be one of the favorites in December. However, odds are this ends with Nikki hitting whatever her finish is on Maryse and Cena hitting an AA on Miz for the stereo pins so Nikki can have her big moment, which is the whole point of this nonsense. With Cena going away again, Miz should get his big moment but no, because we need a Total Divas highlight. At least this was great though and more proof that Miz is one of the most underrated talkers ever.

Becky Lynch vs. Mickie James

2/3 falls. They trade arm work to start until Mickie is sent outside and into the barricade as we go to a break. Back with Mickie in control until she misses a legdrop. Not that it matters as the MickieDT gives James the first fall at 7:28. We take a second break and come back with Mickie getting two but missing something off the top, allowing Becky to roll her up and tie the score at 12:50 total.

The Bexploder has Mickie in more trouble but here's Alexa Bliss to watch at ringside. Mickie misses her spinning kick and gets slammed for no count as Alexa has the referee. Bliss gets kicked off the apron and Mickie grabs a rollup, only to be reversed into the Disarm-Her to give Becky the pin at 14:14.

Rating: C. I appreciated the idea of making this 2/3 falls but it really could have been any regular match. It also doesn't help that about half of the match was lost in the commercials, at least one of which could have been cut. Bliss vs. Lynch in the final blowoff could be a great Wrestlemania match but I can't imagine those two getting the spot on their own.

Harper is around the light bulbs and says after tonight, Bray is going to be very afraid.

Bray says may the best man win tonight. Later this evening, the whole world will hear what he has to say but they'll also hear from Randy Orton. Bray is the keeper of the Holy Grail, meaning the championship.

Alexa is in the back and doesn't want to be asked about Becky because she just became the first two time Women's Champion. After some Oscar references, Natalya comes in and says she's taking the title. Bliss' laughing face is rather amusing.

AJ says he'll win.

AJ Styles vs. Luke Harper

The winner goes to the main event of Wrestlemania. AJ speeds things up to start but eats a running dropkick (not a great one but it was fine for Harper) to put him outside. Harper goes after him and gets caught with a Pele, allowing Styles to start in on the knee. That goes nowhere though as Luke elbows him in the jaw and scores with a slingshot hilo of all things. Styles is sent outside for a suicide shove and the Phenomenal Blitz is broken up with a half dragon suplex.

Back from a break with Harper getting two off a sitout powerbomb. AJ pops right back up and hits the Phenomenal Forearm for the pin at 10:50...but here's Shane McMahon to say not so fast because Harper's foot was on the rope (it clearly was). Harper grabs a rollup for two and they head outside with Harper accidentally superkicking Shane. Back in and the springboard 450 ends Harper at 12:55.

Rating: B. Good match but we were all waiting for the angle stuff which is fine. It's pretty clear that they're going to change something later but I'm not sure if they have time to get everywhere they want to go in four and a half Smackdowns (remember that the go home show is likely to be from Axxess). The story could be interesting and if they manage to avoid AJ vs. Shane, things can get much better.

The decision seems to stand.

Nikki and Cena are in the back when Carmella and James Ellsworth come up. Carmella: "Are you going to let him talk to me like that?" Ellsworth: "Well he's standing right there." Carmella thinks the show should be called Total Phonies so a mixed tag is set for next week.

Dean Ambrose vs. Curt Hawkins

Ambrose charges to the ring and hits Dirty Deeds with no bell. No match of course.

Dean talks about rollerblading during happy hour and learning how burrito bowls and roller coasters don't mix. The most important lesson he's learned is that when you're pushed, you have to push back. That's why he wants to fight Baron Corbin right now. Corbin pops up on screen and says he's not going to do that right now. Dean wants him to hurry up because he only has fifteen minutes left on the parking meter. Baron talks about how Dean is just a speed bump and they'll fight soon.

Apollo Crews vs. Dolph Ziggler

Chairs match so there are a bunch of chairs at ringside. Crews jumps him from behind and takes over to start, followed by a moonsault off the apron. We take a break and come back with Crews hitting a clothesline and enziguri. A standing moonsault onto a chair onto Dolph gets two and Ziggler is sent into a chair in the corner. That's fine with Ziggler who gets in a chair shot to the throat, followed by a crotching onto the chair for the pin at 8:53.

Rating: D. Holy sweet giggling carrots no one cares about this feud and Ziggler doesn't really get anything out of this. Ziggler isn't anything interesting as a heel and I have no idea why I'm supposed to be impressed by a win over a guy like Crews. Apollo is fine enough but it's not like he's won anything of note. Nothing match and hopefully the end to a bad feud.

Here's Wyatt to talk about the title match. He really didn't care who it was because Wyatt is bringing the evil to Wrestlemania. Wyatt comes from a world of evil and that's where Randy Orton is right now. Orton pops up on screen to say he's been given the keys to the kingdom and that's where he is now.

A few months ago, he said he was going to join the Wyatts but now that he's closer to them, it's time to screw the Family. Orton is in Bray's barn and says Sister Abigail is buried underneath this floor. That means we see a bunch of worms and dirt and Orton is holding a pickaxe. Orton promises to burn Abigail's spirit and take away Bray's power.

The rocking chair next to Orton is swaying with no one in it until

he grabs its back...and pulls out a can of gasoline. Orton covers everything with gas and says he's coming for the title at Wrestlemania. He pours more gas into the hold (presumably Abigail's grave) as Bray seems to be near tears. Even more gas is poured out and Orton lights the house on fire. Bray freaks out and breaks down as Orton stares at the camera to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. That ending was a lot and I'm going to need some time to process things. Orton destroying Wyatt like that is certainly interesting and could make for a big Wrestlemania match but I'm not sure if it's the right idea to have Wyatt weakened so much before the biggest match of his life. AJ is of course the wildcard in the whole thing and I'm really, really hoping that the Shane match doesn't happen.

The rest of the show was great and I absolutely loved the opening promo. I know I'm one of its more vocal critics but if Cena and Miz are bringing the talking like that, I can live with hearing Nikki running her mouth about how she's worked SO hard and come SO far to finally make it. The wrestling wasn't the point tonight but you can tell they're setting up everything big for Wrestlemania and that's the most important thing they can do now. Good show, but not for the wrestling.

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