

# Thought of the Day: Wrestlemania XXXI Didn't Mean Much

Think about it: what from that show still matters less than two months removed?

Other than Rollins and Cena winning their titles, almost nothing that happened there matters.

Bryan – Vacated his title

Kidd/Cesaro – Lost the titles they were defending

Sting – Hasn't been mentioned

Lesnar – Appeared once

Undertaker – Hasn't been mentioned

Wyatt – Basically no sold the loss

AJ/Paige – Both gone

Bellas – Now faces

Big Show – Nothing changed after winning the battle royal

Cena is still feuding with Rusev and Rollins is still feuding with Orton. Other than that, it's almost like Wrestlemania just came and went.

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# Thought of the Day: I Feel My Temperature Rising (KB Babbles About Raw)

And that's a good thing. Looking back at last night, we saw one of the things that you can't plan but it's the best thing in the world to have: acts are starting to get hot.

New Day is on fire right now and the fans are having a great time booing them. Cesaro/Kidd are one of the most polished teams I've seen in years and are giving me flashbacks to the Harts and the Bulldogs. Ambrose is exactly the spark that the main event needed. This open challenge thing is one of the most exciting parts of the show every week. Sami Zayn, the Lucha Dragons and Neville are showing what happens when NXT stars get the chance to shine. Barrett is PERFECT for the king role. Lana could be the biggest Diva in the world if she has any skill in the ring.

I really hope this doesn't jinx it, but we could be in for one heck of a summer if WWE doesn't screw this up. Things are getting hot in a hurry and they could knock it out of the park if they don't do their usual.

A few things that could kill the roll:

Jobbing New Day/Cesaro/Kidd. They're hot, the fans want to see them do their thing, and they're all nailing it. Don't have them be cannon fodder for one off teams like Orton and

Reigns.

Don't have Barrett lose five matches in a row and then win once to prove he's still good. It hasn't worked before and it won't work now.

No more 20 minute opening promos, especially from HHH/Stephanie. That fake smugness about "we love the fans and just want what's best for them" has been done so many times and it's completely overdone. Just have them be evil. And don't let Stephanie keep cutting balls off. Or at least let her get some comeuppance. HHH isn't even that bad these days. If he keeps it relatively short he's fine. He's just been stuck in horrible stories.

Don't give us Rollins vs. Kane on pay per view. Just don't.

Keep Big Show in the midcard. The main event stuff was long, dull and didn't work. Yeah the blowoff match was good, but in no way was it good enough to make up for how bad it was. Get Kane and Big Show out of their spots and put Sheamus/Barrett in there instead.

Last night in the Live Discussion I do every week on Raw (WrestleZone Forums. Check it out), I said something like this:

"Either Sami's arm injury is fake or he's the most amazing wrestler of all time."

It seems the latter is closer to the truth as he really did jack up his shoulder during his entrance. Still though, great stuff.

If it's not clear, I really liked Raw last night and I'm hoping it keeps going, but I have a feeling they're going to botch it. As they almost always do.

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# In Case You're Not Watching Pacquiao vs. Mayweather

Like you're not thinking about the fight tonight. Here are a few examples of boxing matches in wrestling companies. From Wrestlemania II.

## Roddy Piper vs. Mr. T.

This is a boxing match with ten three minute rounds. T has Joe Frazier as his trainer and the Haiti Kid to counter Orton. Piper is the aggressor to start as Vince calls T's defensive stance a peek-a-boo style. Roddy grabs on the ropes and T fires away some body shots. These rounds might only be two minutes rounds. Piper takes him into the corner but T bobs and weaves before popping Roddy in the face a few times. It turns into another brawl on the ropes for the last thirty seconds or so of the round.

Everyone comes in to break up the brawl and we take a break between rounds. T gets in a few shots to the face to open round 2 but Piper apparently has a bunch of goo on his face. There's an Orton/Piper joke in there somewhere. After the face gets cleaned off Piper starts pounding away and T is in trouble. I'll change the numbers again because the rounds are indeed three minutes long. Piper gets him into the corner and pounds away, dropping him with a pair of shots to the head after about seven shots that missed BADLY. That gets an eight count and round 2 ends with T going down just after the bell.

Piper gets in a few cheap shots after the bell because that's the kind of guy he is. We start round 3 with T firing away but they're clearly getting tired. Piper goes down in his corner but pulls himself up before the count. T pounds him right back

down in the corner and this time gets a seven count. This turns into move of a shoving match until T gets in a right hand to knock Piper out of the ring and out to the floor. Round 3 ends with nothing of note going on.

T talks trash in between rounds so Piper throws his stool across the ring as round 4 begins. They slug it out with T finally taking over. Piper DRILLS him with a right hand that knocks T's mouthpiece out. T comes back with the same kind of a punch...and then Piper shoves the referee down and slams T for the DQ.

**Rating:** D. This was one of those things that everyone knew was going to be a disaster and the best chance they had was to make it goofy. Thankfully we're talking about Roddy Piper in the 80s so you know he can bring the goofy. There were some decent punches in here but like all other wrestling boxing matches, you knew it would end with some sort of a DQ. This was pretty much it for Mr. T in the WWF other than a few cameos later on.

Off to WCW at Clash of the Champions XXI.

### Johnny B. Badd vs. Scotty Flamingo

This is a boxing match with three two minute rounds. Scotty is a relatively generic smart aleck who would soon move to the WWF as Johnny Polo and then ECW as Raven. Johnny was an amateur boxing champion so he easily snaps off a string of jabs to send Flamingo to the floor. Back in and a nice combination with a right hand to the head puts Scotty down again. Vinnie Vegas offers a distraction and Flamingo rakes the eyes and puts Badd down with a clothesline.

Scotty hammers away with punches but Johnny just waits him out and pounds on Flamingo, knocking him down again at the bell. Scotty is saved by the bell and dragged to the corner. During the break, Page fills Flamingo's glove with water. Flamingo get hammered again until Page offers a distraction, allowing

Scotty to knock Badd silly with the loaded glove for the win. Not long enough to rate but this was your usual wrestling boxing shenanigans.

Ever heard of Butterbean/ He's a big fat "boxer", so here he is against Marc Mero at In Your House: D-Generation X.

### Marc Mero vs. Butterbean

Butterbean is a legitimate boxer who weighed over 300lbs so this is fixed to prevent Mero from being killed. There are four two minute rounds and Mero runs a lot to start round one. He hides in the ropes and Butterbean gets annoyed so he knocks Mero off the apron with a big right hand. Back in and they keep feeling each other out with nothing of note until the end of the round. A brawl breaks out between the rounds but again it goes nowhere.

Mero chokes away in the corner to start round two before pounding away with rights and lefts. Nothing of note happens until the end of the round when Mero dropkicks Butterbean into the corner. Round three is all Butterbean with Mero getting pounded into the corner and being knocked silly by a huge right hand to end the round. Butterbean doesn't want it to end that way though so he pours water on Mero to wake him up. Round four begins with another huge right hand to drop Mero so he hits Butterbean low for the DQ.

**Rating:** F. Considering the fans were chanting boring before the match started and were almost silent other than for the big punches, what else would you expect me to think of this? This kind of stuff has never worked and almost never will because of one simple reason: wrestling fans want to watch wrestling, not boxing. If they wanted to watch boxing, they'd buy a boxing show. It really is that simple.

From Wrestlemania XV, when the WWF was REALLY stupid.

### Bart Gunn vs. Butterbean

The guest referee is Vinnie Pazienza, former world Middleweight Champion. The judges are boxing trainer Kevin Rooney, Chuck Wepner and Gorilla Monsoon, who would be dead soon after this. He looks AWFUL here as he's lost about 200lbs due to illness. This would be his final public appearance. Bart is introduced as being from western Kentucky. That's probably accurate as there aren't many large towns over there so pinning it down to one single town is hardly an option.

I'd explain the rules and scoring here, but Butterbean DESTROYS Bart and knocks him down twice in 35 seconds. The second is as brutal of a punch as you'll ever see. For the life of me I have NO IDEA what they were thinking here. I could watch Bart Gunn get knocked out like that for hours.

And from Bash at the Beach 1999, also involving Roddy Piper oddly enough.

#### Roddy Piper vs. Buff Bagwell

Big time boxing referee Mills Lane is referee here to try to make people care. In case you've never seen him, just picture Mr. Strickland from Back to the Future. Piper has Flair in his corner. Buff's gloves are actually labeled "Buff's Left" and "Buff's Right". Bagwell sees Flair in Piper's corner, so he has someone to have his back: HIS MOM, "Judge Judy" Bagwell. And I give up. Seriously it was bad enough when this was boxing instead of Piper just doing a freaking job for Bagwell like he should be doing, but now BUFF'S MOM IS HERE???

Flair gives Bagwell a chance to leave but Buff reminds him of the pin off the Blockbuster a few weeks back. You know, when Flair put Bagwell over in the middle of the ring in the whole point of this entire story. The rounds are two minutes long here. Piper sticks his chin out to start until Buff hammers him into the corner. The fans are dead at this point if you couldn't guess. Bagwell tees off on Piper (well, as much as he can BECAUSE HE ISN'T A BOXER) to end the first round.

Flair sprays something on Piper's gloves in between the rounds as this continues to fall apart. Piper hits a few jabs to the face and Bagwell's eyes are burning. He gets punched down in the corner as Judy brings over a sponge to try and clean Buff's eyes out. Back up and Piper wildly swings until Buff knocks Piper down in the corner in an identical sequence from Piper vs. Mr. T. thirteen years ago, because that's what this is supposed to be...a tribute to I suppose? Piper gets up as round two ends.

I'm going to pause for a second here and give you a bit of context to what is about to happen. Fifteen months ago, WCW was still in control of the Monday Night Wars and hadn't lost a night in the ratings in nearly two years. Their last win was about nine months before this. Yeah they were in trouble, but it's not like they were so desperate for something good to happen that they had to go insane. A few weeks back, Buff Bagwell hit his finishing move and pinned Ric Flair in the middle of the ring on Nitro, which should have been the start of a huge push for him. After all that, I give you the third round of this boxing match.

Piper jumps Bagwell in the corner and attacks Bagwell early, so his mother Judy gets in the ring and bites Piper's ear. She then dumps the spit bucket over Piper's head as Buff punches Flair off the apron. Buff goes up and hits the Blockbuster on Piper as Judy holds Flair on the apron, allowing Buff to pin Piper for the win. Judy chases the President of WCW around the ring after the match.

**Rating:** G. As in below an F and for GOOD FREAKING GRIEF THEY REALLY COULDN'T COME UP WITH ANYTHING BETTER THAN THIS??? Piper wasn't capable of doing a five minute match and doing a job for Bagwell? Does WCW really think that it's important enough to protect him from taking a fall in a wrestling match that they'll let him take a fall in a boxing match? Read that sentence back and see how insane it sounds. Now throw in Judy Bagwell and more hijinks than an episode of Looney Tunes and



you see what happened to WCW in the summer of 1999.

Finally.....well what else would it be? From Wrestlemania XXIV.

### Floyd Mayweather Jr. vs. Big Show

You can by pin, submission or knockout. Other than that anything goes. Floyd is in gloves which would seem to be a disadvantage for him but whatever. He bobs and weaves a lot before firing off some nice punches to Big Show. Mayweather stops for a drink from a chalice (seriously) and Show beats up Mayweather's team a bit. Show grabs an incoming punch and tries to stomp on Floyd's hand. Smart strategy.

Show lifts him up for a chokeslam but that lets Floyd get on even level with Show's head. Some rights to the face stagger show but Mayweather tries to choke him out, which actually works for a bit. Show finally flips him over and steps on Floyd's left hand. The guys on the floor FREAK and say that's not allowed before Show chops Mayweather in the corner. Show stands on Floyd's back before putting him down with a side slam.

A headbutt stops Floyd's comeback bid and there's an elbow drop for good measure. Mayweather tries to bail but Big Show chases the team down, beats them up, and throws Floyd back in the ring. Show loads up the chokeslam but a handler hits Show with a chair. He gets chokeslammed down but Mayweather gets the chair and blasts Show with it a few times. A low blow and three chair shots to the head sets up a brass knuckle right hand to Show's jaw for the knockout (and Show was on his knees at 9).

**Rating:** C+. This is one of those matches where all you can say is "well what else were you expecting?" Again though, who was I supposed to cheer for? The giant bully, or the loud bragging guy who used chairs and brass knuckles to win? Like I said,

the story was head scratch inducing, but this was tremendous fun.

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And check out my Amazon author page with wrestling books for under \$4 at:

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

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# Extreme Rules 2015: Extremely... Something

## Extreme Rules 2015

Date: April 26, 2015

Location: Allstate Arena, Rosemont, Illinois

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, John Bradshaw Layfield

It's time for the night of Wrestlemania rematches, which often makes for a very entertaining card. The main event will see Seth Rollins defending the World Title against Randy Orton inside a cage with the RK0 banned and Kane guarding the door. We also have Roman Reigns vs. Big Show in a last man standing match and Rusev vs. Cena III in a Russian chain match. Let's get to it.

Here's Bad News Barrett on the pre-show to tell us that Daniel Bryan isn't here tonight to defend the Intercontinental Title. Since Bryan can't be here, let's bring out Neville for a replacement so he can take the Bullhammer destined to go upside Bryan's head.

## Bad News Barrett vs. Neville

The fans are entirely behind Neville as Barrett grabs a headlock to start. Neville takes him to the mat and hooks a nice rollup for two before the front flips have Barrett even more confused. A dropkick sends him to the floor but Barrett trips Neville up to take over. Back from a break with Barrett holding a chinlock before throwing Neville into the air for a kick to the ribs and two. A big boot to the face gets the same on Neville and Barrett follows up with a nice slingshot backbreaker.

The second chinlock doesn't last as long, allowing Neville to fire off some kicks to the ribs to send Barrett outside, setting up the big spinning dive from Neville. Back in and Barrett catches him going up before planting Neville with Winds of Change for two. Wasteland gets a VERY close two but the Bullhammer misses, allowing Neville to hit an enziguri. The Red Arrow is broken up but Barrett misses another Bullhammer. A second kick to the head sets up the Red Arrow from (Cole: "Adrian") Neville for the pin at 10:40.

**Rating:** C+. Well that's a surprise. Neville getting the win is a big deal as it's his biggest pin ever, even if everyone and their mother pin Barrett. In theory this sets up a feud between the two of them over who gets the title shot whenever Bryan comes back, if he does at all.

The opening video talks about how this is the most extreme night of the year and focuses on Rusev vs. Cena and Rollins vs. Orton. Again, it makes sense to add gimmicks so it's not just the same show as last month without the big stage.

## Luke Harper vs. Dean Ambrose

Street fight, meaning the fall must take place in the ring. Dean takes over to start and knocks Harper to the floor for a suicide dive. Back in and we get the kendo sticks to Harper's back, followed by a chair being thrown inside. Dean sits down and licks his lips until Harper comes back and suplexes him through the chair. Luke starts going after the knee with the kendo stick before wedging a chair in the corner.

In a unique spot, Harper LAUNCHES Dean face first into the chair for two

as the fans stay behind Ambrose. Back up and a tornado DDT gives Dean a breather as the fans want tables. Luke counters Dirty Deeds and the rebound clothesline before they head back to the floor. Dean's suicide dive is countered with a shove, so Dean does a kind of 619 and comes back with a clothesline in a cool spot.

They fight to the back with Luke being rammed into various things. Luke goes behind a wall and the camera has to run around to find him. THANK YOU! I can't remember the last time that happened but it drives me absolutely insane when there's a camera waiting on them. Harper and Dean get inside a car.....and drive away with the referee in the back. So I'm guessing the match is still going and continues later in the night?

HHH tells Kane to find that car before those two hurt someone. Rollins comes in and tells them to calm down because this is a big night. Kane goes off on Rollins and calls him a punk, but HHH wants things calm head into the main event. Kane better not screw up though. The fans could be heard calling this boring and I can't say I disagree. Don't put this stuff on the pay per view. We know the story is boring by now so don't make it even worse.

### Dolph Ziggler vs. Sheamus

The winner has to kiss the winner's....uh yeah. Sheamus shoves him away to start but Ziggler comes back with forearms to the face. A dropkick staggers the big man and they fight to the floor. Ziggler is thrown at the steps but jumps on top of them for the slingshot DDT to stun Sheamus even more. Back in and Sheamus hits something like a Brogue Knee to take over. We hit the chinlock for a bit before Dolph fights up with another dropkick, only to get caught in a sitout powerbomb for two more.

Sheamus starts talking trash and follows it up with another devastating, yes DEVASTATING I say, chinlock. It's not devastating enough to prevent Ziggler from fighting up with right hands and a splash in the corner. The neckbreaker is countered and Sheamus nails a running ax handle, only to walk into a superkick for two. Sheamus plants him with a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker as they're trading big shots here. The Brogue Kick misses and Ziggler rolls him up for two before a rolling cradle is enough to pin

Sheamus at 9:25.

**Rating:** C+. This was just a TV match with a quick ending but the two worked pretty well together. The idea here was to have Ziggler bounce off Sheamus and make all the power moves look good, which he excels at. Solid enough match here, even if the gimmick was really stupid.

Post match Sheamus takes nearly five minutes to do what he's supposed to do but of course he hits Ziggler low and gives him a Brogue Kick before making Ziggler kiss up to him like a heel should.

Long video on what's coming on the Network.

#### Tag Team Titles: New Day vs. Tyson Kidd/Cesaro

Kidd/Cesaro are defending and are the default heels here. Cole says that it's Kofi and Big E. Langston for the New Day. Kofi takes Kidd to the mat to start but Tyson wraps the arm around the ropes to take over. Off to Big E. vs. Cesaro with Cesaro catching Big E.'s leapfrog in midair and throwing him into the corner. It's back to Kidd as the champions stomp Big E. to the tune of New Day Sucks in an awesome moment. Tyson sends both challengers to the floor for a suicide cannonball dive on Kofi, only to have Big E. clothesline him down. Fans: "NEW DAY! SUCKS!" Woods: "WHAT DID WE DO??? WE'RE WINNING!"

Back in and Kofi hits a basement dropkick in the corner before we hit the chinlock. Big E. misses the splash and gets low bridged to the floor, allowing for the hot tag to Cesaro. The Swing is teased but it's a catapult into the corner, where Kofi jumps to the top for a spinning cross body, but Cesaro catches him in mid air for a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker for two. Cesaro's apron superplex sets up the springboard elbow from Kidd for two, only to have Big E. dive through the ropes to spear Kidd down.

Back in and the Midnight Hour gets two on Kidd with Cesaro making the save. Kofi gets caught in the Sharpshooter and this time it's E.'s turn to make the save. There's the Swing into the dropkick but Woods gets on the apron for a distraction, only to be taken out by Natalya. Kofi uses the distraction to slide in with a rollup and a handful of trunks for the

pin and the titles at 9:37.

**Rating:** B+. I had a really good time with this as Cesaro and Kidd are one of the most polished teams for such a short amount of time together as you'll ever see. Hopefully these teams have several more matches together as they've got great chemistry and work together really well. Awesome match here and I'd love to see more of it.

The pre-show panel chats for a bit and talks about Neville vs. Barrett.

New Day celebrates their win as Ambrose and Harper return. They fight back to the arena and throw a bunch of weapons into the ring. Harper hits a quick powerbomb onto the chairs for two but takes too long putting Dean under the chairs, allowing Ambrose to toss him onto the steel. Dirty Deeds connects for the pin at somewhere around 59:00.

**Rating:** D+. So uh...what the heck was the point of this? If they had done something like Mankind vs. HHH at In Your House XVI where they kept fighting all throughout the night this would have been fun but instead it was three fourths of a match, then a 50 minute break, then a quick finish. Were they just five minutes short or something?

Long recap of Cena vs. Rusev. They traded wins at the previous two pay per views but tonight Cena is defending the US Title in a Russian chain match.

#### US Title: John Cena vs. Rusev

Russian chain match of the four corners variety, meaning forward momentum has to be maintained or your streak of corners is erased. They start with a tug of war and Cena gets three quick buckles, followed by Rusev getting two of his own. Rusev sends him to the floor and suplexes him over the ropes for two buckles but Cena hits him with the chain to break it up. They head outside with Rusev being pulled into the post, knocking him half silly in the process.

Cena gets two buckles but Rusev wraps his legs around the ropes for the save. Rusev scores with the spinwheel kick and chains Cena in the back a few times but can only get two buckles. For some reason Rusev goes up

top, only to get pulled down onto the chain. Cena starts his finishing sequence but gets caught in the fall away slam, setting up the jumping superkick. The fans want Lana so she gets on the apron, only to be ejected by Rusev. Cena hits his usual stuff but the AA is countered into the Alabama Slam.

The Accolade is reversed into the STF and the rope Rusev grabs means nothing. Rusev pulls him down and hooks the Accolade so Cena gets to his feet and drives Rusev into two corners. He collapses from the hold though and Rusev hits the third, only to walk into the AA to break the streak. Back up and they both quickly get three, setting up a tug of war over the fourth. Rusev rushes for it but Cena pulls him into the AA and slaps the fourth to retain at 13:35.

**Rating:** C. I'm actually surprised but they did find a different way to end the thing. That being said, these matches can only be so good as the gimmick gets in the way of the match. Other than the match being called a Russian chain match, there's no distinct advantage here for Rusev and it makes for a pretty average match. Not bad or anything, but I'll never want to watch this again.

Roman Reigns talks about how he'll keep getting up and win the last man standing match tonight.

#### Divas Title: Nikki Bella vs. Naomi

Nikki is defending and Naomi got the shot after attacking Paige, who had won a battle royal to earn the title match. Naomi has new music, stupid looking glasses and shoes that light up. Nikki puts on an armbar to start but gets suplexed down for two. The shoes are already really distracting as Naomi hooks a chinlock. Back up and Nikki avoids the Rear View but Naomi stops to dance a bit.

Naomi charges into an elbow in the corner and the Alabama Slam gets two. Back up and Naomi gets the same off a falling reverse DDT. A quick Bubba Bomb into a rollup gets the same but Nikki comes back with something like a Beautiful Disaster from the middle rope for two. Brie gets in a cheap shot on Naomi, setting up the Rack Attack to retain the title at 7:17. Those are our new heroes?

**Rating:** C. The Bellas (they're a collective entity in my mind at this point) are acceptable in the ring and improving, but they're far too annoying to make me ever care about/like them, especially with the one not in the match shouting COME ON \*insert other sister's name here\* a dozen times a match. It also doesn't help that they might be the worst written characters I've seen in years with the stories starting and stopping and them suddenly being faces with no reason given. Also their Total Divas personas haven't done them any favors. Somehow this is going to wind up as the Funkadactyls vs. Bellas isn't it?

Rusev yells at Lana and storms off. Lana hangs her head and walks into the Authority's locker room. That's something I guess and the fans gasped when they saw whose room it was.

We recap Reigns vs. Big Show, which exists to prove that there is a devil and his name is Vince McMahon.

#### Roman Reigns vs. Big Show

Last man standing. They slug it out to start and Reigns knocks Show to the floor before getting an early table. Big Show shoves it back under the ring so Reigns posts him, setting up the apron kick for five. The table reappears and is set up at ringside but Big Show breaks it with his fists so Reigns can't put him through it.

Reigns opts for a kendo stick and nails Show with it a few times, only to have Show break it apart, saying he's a giant. Thanks for pointing that out. Show goes into his slow offense and the fans chant BORING, so Reigns gets a chair and blasts Show about ten times to put him down. A DDT on the chair stuns Show and allows Reigns to get two tables. The delay lets Show get back up for the KO Punch though, sending Reigns down for eight.

Show is annoyed so Roman hits a Samoan drop through the table. Back up and Big Show hits a spear, followed by the most polite, least impactful Vader Bomb you'll ever see. Reigns gets to his feet so Show goes up, only to get slammed down for almost no reaction. Two Superman Punches connect but Show catches the third and chokeslams Roman over the top and through the two tables Reigns set up earlier.



Naturally it only gets nine so Big Show leaves Reigns alone as he sets up the announcers' table. In a funny bit, Show sees the announcers' notes that say he needs to lose weight and yells at JBL. Back in and Reigns avoids a charge through a table in the corner, setting up a spear for eight.

Show rolls outside so Reigns spears him through the barricade for a spot we've seen before. It doesn't help that Show was motionless at seven and on his feet at nine. Show loads up a chokeslam on the table but Reigns escapes and runs the tables to spear Show through the Spanish table for eight. Reigns finally buries Show under the table for the win at 19:43.

**Rating:** C+. The worst part? The match wasn't really even that bad. Just too long though and the ending didn't do what they were hoping. Why did they need to have the table cover him when they could have done the spear for the win? In other words, it was a table that kept Show down instead of Reigns. Great way to make your next big star look awesome there guys. This could have been WAY worse, but the lack of crowd interest had them dead on arrival.

Randy Orton tells Kane that the Authority will turn on him.

We look at some Tough Enough applications.

Here's Bo Dallas, who wants to know why Chicago is the Second City when they're clearly #1! That would be #1 at rejecting someone trying to make their lives better. The people here shouldn't worry about how extreme the rules get because they should be worrying about bo-lieving. Cue Ryback and the obvious happens.

Rusev is annoyed about the loss when Lana comes in and says it's done. There will be one more match between Cena and Rusev at Payback and it's I Quit.

WWE World Title: Randy Orton vs. Seth Rollins

In a cage with Rollins defending, the RK0 banned and Kane guarding the cage door. Pinfall, submission or escape to win. Rollins goes for the cage twice early and Randy pulls him down on the second attempt. A third

attempt goes just as badly so Rollins climbs one more time and sends Orton into the cage to take over for a change. Seth gets reversed into the cage again and the chase is on up the cage wall with Orton making a save.

Rollins almost escapes again and this time the Stooges come out to help, only to have Orton superplex him off the top for a big crash and two. Kane yells at the Stooges as Orton can't follow up. To change up the pace of the escape counters, Orton crotches him on the top rope instead. The Elevated DDT plants Rollins and Lawler is already proclaiming Orton the next champion.

Orton loads up the RK0 but opts for a decent looking Pedigree for two instead. The fans chant YES as Orton loads up the Punt but Rollins ducks to the side and hits a quick enziguri. Kane is told to open the door and obeys the champ but Randy is right there with the backbreaker to stop Rollins again.

The door stays open so Orton stops to think about it, but the threat of Kane sends him back. That threat proves to be well founded as Kane slams the door when Orton tries to leave. Randy does the smart thing by kicking the door at Kane before it turns into a fight to escape. Kane slams the door on both men and takes off his jacket, so the Stooges send Kane into the cage. The monster chokeslams both guys and loads up a tombstone on Orton, only to have Randy escape and RK0 Kane. Seth uses the distraction to RK0 Orton, allowing him to escape and retain at 20:50.

**Rating:** C. This wasn't terrible but it took longer than it should have and ended with a pretty lame surprise. They were treating the RK0 from Rollins like Austin siding with Vince when it was really just a technicality. The match was good enough but the gimmick continues to drag things down. Some of the early escape attempts were good though.

**Overall Rating:** C+. I liked this more than I thought I would but it still wasn't a blow away show. Unfortunately we seem to be heading for round 3 of multiple feuds at Payback, despite there being very little left for these people to fight over. Definitely a watchable show, but can we please get some fresh ideas on top? Like, even adding someone else to

Orton vs. Rollins and no Kane doesn't count. Better than I was expecting but still not great.

### Results

Dolph Ziggler b. Sheamus – Rolling cradle

New Day b. Cesaro/Tyson Kidd – Rollup with a handful of trunks

Dean Ambrose b. Luke Harper – Dirty Deeds

John Cena b. Rusev – Cena touched the fourth buckle

Nikki Bella b. Naomi – Rack Attack

Roman Reigns b. Big Show – Show couldn't answer the ten count

Seth Rollins b. Randy Orton – Rollins escaped the cage

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## **Extreme Rules 2015 Preview**

This isn't going to be the longest one in the world as NorCal and I already did the full podcast preview for this show. In case you didn't listen to that show for some reason (and you should. Check it and the other episodes here <http://mightynorcal.podbean.com/>), here's a shorter than normal version.

On the pre-show, I'll take Cesaro and Kidd to retain the Tag Team Titles. Cesaro and Kidd have been on fire with the belts and there's no real need to give the belts to New Day, who can stay over as heels for six months on that clap alone. I like New Day, but they don't need the belts yet.

Rollins over Orton in the Kane Show with Orton and Rollins as the backup players. I'm almost sure Orton will hit an RKO or two but Kane will somehow screw him over, because NO ONE would see a swerve like that coming because the Authority is just so much smarter than we all are. My interest in this match fell through the floor when Kane became involved and that's not how you want your first title defense to go.

Cena retains of course in probably the most brutal match on the show. Those two are going to beat the fire out of each other and probably go on to have yet another match, which will only make Rusev look all the lamer. It's a shame too as the guy has shown he can hang in there with the top guys, but since we NEED a tetralogy instead of just the regular trilogy. Also, can we please find a different way to end the match instead of Cena following him around?

I don't think Bryan is going to be able to go, meaning it should be Neville getting the shot. Who will it be though? Probably Truth or Ryder or one of the other designated losers. Barrett walks out with the belt either way, but my goodness do they really have to wait until the day of the show to announce that Bryan is hurt? Barring a shocker, they've known for a week and should just announce it instead of jerking the fans around with their "well he MIGHT be there!"

Sheamus beats Ziggler in the stupidest gimmick of the night that I'd assume only Vince and Dunn find funny.

Nikki retains the Divas Title. All hail the Bellas and forever praise be their names, even if it defeats the purpose of turning Naomi heel, which defeats the purpose of common sense as she wrestles the natural face style but they decided to turn all the Divas heel for some reason.

Reigns over Big Show to FINALLY END THIS STUPID STUPID FEUD THAT WAS DEAD FIVE MONTHS AGO BUT LET'S JUST KEEP THEM FIGHTING BECAUSE BIG SHOW IS BIG AND THAT MEANS FANS WANT TO SEE REIGNS BEAT HIM UP EVEN THOUGH SHOW BEAT

HIM FOR THE FIRST TIME IN WWE BECAUSE HE'S BIG AND THEREFORE INTERESTING!

And Ambrose over Harper in what should be a hot opener.

Overall this show doesn't have me all that fired up, but it's usually a sleeper hit. If they let the violence get cranked up, they can overcome the lame build but it's going to take some work. As usual, this is the Wrestlemania rematch show and you almost have to have the gimmicks to keep it from being Wrestlemania Part II.

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## **Reviewing the Review: Monday Night Raw – April 13, 2015**

Maybe I can start getting these things done before the next show starts. We're firmly into the Extreme Rules build now, and by firmly into I mean we're almost to the show. Therefore we need some stipulations for the big matches but we're taped, meaning it's not likely to be the most thrilling show. Let's get to it.

Cena opened things up with the Open Challenge for the US Title and beat Bad News Barrett in a decent enough match. These two have fought so many times over the years that it's kind of hard to care anymore, but at least the Challenges are doing their job. I'd like to see someone from NXT

debut through one and hopefully they continue after Extreme Rules. Speaking of after, Rusev came out and blasted Cena with a chain to set up a Russian Chain match for the PPV. It makes sense given Rusev being involved but these matches have a high rate of suck more often than not.

Paige won a Divas Battle Royal for the #1 contendership to give the fans something to cheer. Naomi then turned heel and beat her down so Paige can go off to make a movie. They REALLY need to stop building people up and then send them away for six weeks to make a movie that 87 people might see. Or maybe they should stop with the bad movies and just do what they did before: pick a movie that is going to be seen and slap their name on it.

On top of that, as I went on about on Smackdown, who does this leave as a face Diva? Emma? Fox is acting like a heel and turns every four days anyway, the Bellas, Cameron and Naomi are confirmed heels and Paige is leaving. Are they really hoping that a returning Layla is going to be a big deal? Natalya is supposed to be a heel but wrestles like a face because her psychology is all messed up, but she's awesome. Right?

Bray Wyatt has a new target. Yeah whatever. Go win a big match already.

The Lucha Dragons beat up the Ascension because that's what they do. They did it in NXT and they're doing it on Raw. I still feel bad for Ascension but they were dead in the water months ago.

Roman Reigns came out and talked about going to Suplex City until Big Show came out to continue THE STUPIDEST FEUD IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD. Show beat him up on the props but Roman kept getting up. Indeed, it's for a last man standing match. Of all the things I'd love to grab Vince by the throat for and shout at him about, keeping Big Show in this spot is one of them. How can they possibly think that beating up Big Show over and over and over and over and over and over and I think you get the point by now, is going to help Reigns look like a big deal?

Orton beat Cesaro via DQ to earn the right to pick a stipulation, but then Kane came out to make sure the Tag Team Champions were hurt as much as they could and made Orton vs. both of them. As you would expect, Orton beat both of them in one match because he could. By this point, this show

was starting to make my head hurt.

Rollins yelled at Kane and teased getting him fired by the Authority. So yes, the two stories that are being built up are the Divas battle royal from last week and what seems like another Kane face turn. BECAUSE THAT CREATES RATINGS BECAUSE KANE IS BIG! LIKE BIG SHOW!!! Rollins wants Kane to lay down later. One last thing though: Rollins emasculates Kane and it seems like he's going to rise up because of it. Stephanie emasculates people and they get to stand there and take it.

Dean Ambrose beat Adam Rose to remind us that Dean Ambrose does in fact exist.

Big Show tried to talk Kane out of turning on the Authority. Bryan would do the opposite later, but Bryan brought up the Fingerpoke of Doom because we must make fun of WCW, despite a lot of the fans not even being alive for that moment. But hey, it makes Vince smile at his past accomplishments and that's what we need to do.

Fandango beat Stardust in a filler match which set up Fandango turning face and dumping Rosa. I highly doubt this is the big career saver he's needing.

Kane beat up Rollins and the Stooges before laying down for him. For the thousandth time, no one cares about Kane in this role.

Mizdow beat Miz in another short match to set up a big match later on, because that's how WWE works.

The Prime Time Players kept making fun of other tag teams. I've gone into this in depth elsewhere, but this is the best thing that has ever happened to these guys.

Ryback beat Luke Harper in yet another short match because we need time for Kane segments.

Naomi explains that she's tired of getting passed up for people like AJ. Thankfully it wasn't another IT'S ALL ABOUT ME character but my goodness this division is dying for faces. It's interesting that they keep mentioning AJ's name.

Dolph Ziggler beat Neville in another entertaining match. This is the Mighty Mouse gimmick that everyone who didn't think the thing through was terrified of.

Rollins and Orton announced that it's going to be a cage match with the RKO banned. Ok then. Seriously that was my reaction. A brawl ended the show.

This show pretty much just came and went. There's not much going on at the moment that makes me want to see the next show, but there's a difference between being horrible and just being dull. They really need to get past the Wrestlemania rematches, but we're likely getting ready for yet another round of these matches in May. Hopefully that means a strong start to the summer, but this was really nothing worth seeing. Neville is still a high spot though and could mean something big later on. Not much to see this week, except for the dozens and dozens of Kane and Big Show fans out there.

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# Monday Night Raw – April 13, 2015: Show and Tell

**Monday Night Raw**

Date: April 13, 2015

Location: O2 Arena, London, England



Commentators: Booker T., John Bradshaw Layfield, Booker T

We're taped from England tonight as the build to Extreme Rules continues. Coming off last week, we know Randy Orton is going to be challenging Seth Rollins for the World Title at the next pay per view but we don't have much more set up than that. The only match announced so far is a Divas battle royal for the title shot against Nikki Bella. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

We open with John Cena to a very loud JOHN CENA SUCKS to the tune of his music. Even Cena seems a bit blown away by how intense it is tonight. Cena brings up the London crowd not liking him all that much but it means they have more energy than any crowd WWE performs for.

He gets them on his side by saying London deserves Wrestlemania and has to pause for the YES chant. Those in charge have decided to wait for a London Wrestlemania, much like Rusev waiting to challenge for the US Title. The open challenge is on right now so here's Bad News Barrett to a nice reaction to accept. Why wait for his Intercontinental Title shot at Extreme Rules?

#### US Title: Bad News Barrett vs. John Cena

The fans are almost entirely behind Barrett as he shrugs off a headlock and kicks Cena to the floor. Back in and the champ puts on another headlock so Bad News kicks him in the face again. The knees to the head in the ropes have Cena in even more trouble and Barrett hits another big boot to knock Cena to the floor one more time. Cena comes back with a dropkick and a high cross body for two. He's been adding more moves lately and it's always nice to see.

Barrett rolls to the floor to avoid the Shuffle and sends Cena into the steps. A missed top rope elbow lets Cena hit the Shuffle this time but the AA is countered into Winds of Change for two. Cena grabs the STF out of nowhere but Barrett is too close to the ropes. A low superkick gets two for Bad News and both guys are down. Barrett throws him into the corner for another kick to the face, setting up Wasteland for another near fall.

The AA gets two (when was the last time the first one of those pinned someone not named Stardust?) and the Bull Hammer gets the same (when was the last time Cena didn't kick out of a finisher?), followed by the springboard Stunner into the second AA to retain Cena's title at 9:55.

**Rating:** C+. Not bad but it felt like they were going through the motions here more than having a naturally good match. It doesn't help that it's clear that Cena is retaining until Extreme Rules, but could you at least make it feel like Barrett has a better chance? Also, stop kicking out of the finisher and having the AA only get two. We get the concept now.

Post match Lana comes out to distract Cena so Rusev can come in and get a cheap shot with a chain. The rematch is officially a Russian chain match.

We recap Orton winning the triple threat last week to get the pay per view title shot.

Orton vs. Cesaro and Rollins vs. Ziggler tonight. If Rollins and/or Orton win, they get to pick the stipulations for Extreme Rules.

### Battle Royal

Rosa Mendes, Paige, Naomi, Natalya, Cameron, Summer Rae, Alicia Fox, Emma

Winner gets Nikki Bella at Extreme Rules and the Bellas are on commentary. Everyone pairs off and Rosa actually dropkicks Summer and Natalya, only to get dropkicked out a few seconds later. Another dropkick, this time from Fox, gets rid of Emma. Cameron and Alicia team up to go after Paige and get loudly booed, only to have Paige slide back in. A double Rear View puts Cameron down and Alicia gets rid of Paige, leaving her with Naomi as the final two. They fight to the apron with both coming close to elimination, only to have Paige avoid the Rear View, allowing her to superkick her to the floor at 3:50.

**Rating:** D-. Well that sucked, just like most Divas battle royals. The Bellas are great at getting on my nerves, but unfortunately they have to get in the ring at some point and that makes things even worse. They're more annoying than anything else and that's not what you want as the face of a division. Hopefully Naomi gets back in this as she belongs in the

title scene.

Post break Paige reminds us of her success in WWE so far but says nothing feels better than to win this match in England. She remembers getting paid five pounds for a match when she was wrestling in high school gyms but now she's in front of her family and friends on the biggest stage of them all. Naomi comes back in and lays out Paige before driving her into the barricade.

Bray talks about a certain someone he's becoming obsessed with and it's becoming a sin. Love can blind everything and whoever he's talking about is in luck. Bray has decided to reach inside himself and pull out the love that is growing like a cancer. Fear is stronger than any love can be because it can take away what you care about. Still no word on who he's talking about.

#### Lucha Dragons vs. Ascension

These teams just can't get away from each other. Ascension doesn't get an entrance but they do share an NXT chant. The big guys throw Cara around to start but a quick hot tag brings in Kalisto to hit his springboard twisting cross body. Cara hits Konnor with a suicide dive, setting up the Salida Del Sol and the Swanton Bomb to pin Viktor at 2:18.

Here's Roman Reigns for his first interview since Wrestlemania. The fans chant SUPLEX CITY and Reigns remembers going there. He busted Brock up though and gave the fans the fight he and Brock had promised them. This brings interviewer Booker T to Seth Rollins, who Reigns was about to face had it not been for Big Show. Reigns thinks Show has just been following Rollins around lately and the fans seem to agree.

This brings Big Show onto the screen to say he's loved making Reigns into the biggest failure in WWE history. He's going to turn him into a football league? It was his pleasure to stop Reigns every week and he's going to keep doing it every chance he gets. Reigns says Show should come out here and say that to his face so Reigns can shove the trophy down his throat.

Reigns goes to leave but Big Show jumps him, throwing Reigns into parts

of the set and against the door of the cab. He adds a chokeslam on top of the cab, which doesn't give way.

### Randy Orton vs. Cesaro

If Orton wins, he gets to pick a stipulation for the World Title match at Extreme Rules. Cesaro takes over with some European uppercuts in the corner and a double stomp for no cover. Kidd is enjoying the match so much that he's taken his headphones off. We hit the chinlock on Randy but Orton fights up and comes back, only to have Kidd grab his leg for the DQ at 2:19.

Post match Kane comes out and says he's still in charge because the Authority is back from vacation but don't want to be in London. He can't let this match end in a DQ so he's restarting it as a handicap match.

### Cesaro/Tyson Kidd vs. Randy Orton

Orton gets double teamed and we quickly take a break. Back with Cesaro hammering away in the corner before it's off to Kidd, who launches Orton into a European uppercut for two. Orton fights back but Cesaro pulls his partner to the floor to avoid an RKO. That's fine with Orton who drops Cesaro back first onto the barricade, only to eat Tyson's knee to the face. Back in and Kidd's springboard elbow (love that move) gets two, but Cesaro gets throw to the floor, allowing Orton to catch another springboard in an RKO for the pin on Kidd at 6:46.

**Rating:** D+. Well Cesaro and Kidd, it was nice while it lasted but you're now the victims of being Tag Team Champions. I have no idea why we needed to see Orton beat both of them at once, when having him beat either Cesaro or both of them in back to back singles matches would have accomplished the same basic result. But then again, why not have the champions look like losers if you can?

Rollins gets on Kane's back for Orton winning but Kane tells him to beat Ziggler tonight. Rollins thinks that's too dangerous, so he's facing Jamie Noble instead. Noble doesn't like the idea of laying down when Kane got them into this mess. Kane has another idea involving Jamie's testicles and a car battery. Rollins backs Noble up and says Kane's job

is to protect the title. Maybe Kane should be the one laying down tonight. If Kane doesn't like that, maybe they should just call HHH. Notice something here: Seth is emasculating Kane to set up a face turn. Stephanie emasculates people and we never see a comeback.

#### Adam Rose vs. Dean Ambrose

Ambrose goes right at him to start but Rose takes it to the mat for a chinlock. That goes nowhere as Dean fights back up with chops and punches before hitting some running forearms. He follows up with a suicide dive and Rose is in big trouble. Back inside and Rose knocks him into the ropes for the rebound clothesline, followed by Dirty Deeds for the pin at 2:08. Nothing match but when was the last time Ambrose won a match clean?

Big Show reminds Kane of Survivor Series where he turned on John Cena. He knows the Authority is the winning side and warns Kane about crossing the Authority. Kane understands and says he'll do what's best for business against Rollins.

#### Fandango vs. Stardust

Well this is....something. Stardust runs him over to start and tells the fans his name. Fandango goes up but Stardust rolls away and hits the Disaster Kick for the pin at 1:10.

Post match Fandango blames Rosa for the loss and dances on the table to his old music, sending the crowd into a HUGE Fandangoing dance. See, why do this after a loss? Why not have him beat like, Heath Slater without having Rosa out there and say that's why he hasn't been winning? Same result, no loss.

Daniel Bryan can't believe Kane is going to lay down and brings up the Fingerpoke of Doom of all things to say how stupid it was. Kane finally snaps but Bryan tells him to go out there and be a man. For goodness' sake STOP TALKING ABOUT WCW LIKE IT WAS TRASH. We get it: fourteen years ago you beat a show that wasn't even on the air six years. LET THE THING DIE ALREADY.

Rusev vs. Cena is officially a Russian chain match.

### Seth Rollins vs. Kane

If Rollins wins, he gets to pick a stipulation for the match vs. Rollins at Extreme Rules. Kane is out in a suit but starts disrobing after the bell rings. He gets in Seth's face but hears that it's best for business. Kane slowly lays down but stands up, drawing in the Stooges. They're both thrown to the floor so Rollins yells at him, only to get smacked in the face. Rollins tells him to lay down but eventually eats a chokeslam. Kane signals for the tombstone but stops mid throat slit. He lays down again and pulls Rollins on top of him for the pin at 4:35.

**Rating:** C+. Well they started slow but that second batch of staring was straight out of Funk vs. Brisco back in 68. Just great stuff there. Unfortunately it was downhill from there and the Stooges interfering ruined what was otherwise great stuff. Still though, that 18 seconds of staring made it work. Good enough match.

### Miz vs. Damien Mizdow

Mizdow has Summer Rae with him after kissing her on Smackdown. After spending a minute on the disrobing, Miz jumps Mizdow to get going. A quick Reality Check puts Miz down but neither can hit the Skull Crushing Finale. Instead, Mizdow rolls him up for the pin at 2:10.

This week, the Prime Time Players make fun of Los Matadores by pulling out a stuffed rainbow bear to represent Torito. Young: "Rainbow is my favorite color!" Titus asks why two guys from Puerto Rico are bullfighters. Cue the Millions of Dollars dance. These promos are nothing special, but man alive they've actually got me liking the Players a bit. Imagine that: you get to know a wrestler a bit better and you actually have a bit of a connection to them.

Cole calls the announcements of the stipulations the Extreme Decisions and says people have been calling it by that name tonight. WHO IS CALLING IT THAT COLE??? WHO BESIDES YOU HAS CALLED IT THAT IN THE LAST FIFTEEN MINUTES???

## Ryback vs. Luke Harper

Ryback hammers away to start but Harper shoves him out of the corner. A superkick drops Ryback though and it's Gator Roll time. Back up and Harper has to roll away from the Meat Hook so he heads outside, where he nails Ryback with a piece of the announcers' table for the DQ at 1:50.

Naomi is disappointed in herself for attacking Paige out there but cracks up and says she couldn't care less. See, it's all about her not being Divas Champion. Why did they have to have a battle royal tonight after she pinned Nikki twice? She was in the same season of NXT as AJ Lee but AJ is gone and Naomi hasn't had her chance yet. Why is AJ considered a legend already? It's time for her to get her shot. Thank goodness it wasn't another "it's all about me" character.

Dolph Ziggler questions Kane laying down for Rollins as being best for business. Tonight though, he wants to compete in this ring so it's open challenge time.

## Neville vs. Dolph Ziggler

Good pop for Neville, as usual. A quick wristdrag takes Dolph down and Neville flips into the corner. He takes Dolph down and hits a standing shooting star before slapping on a chinlock. The running DDT plants him for two though and we take a break. Back with Neville throwing Ziggler into the air for a big crash. Dolph makes the mistake of rolling to the floor for a HUGE springboard moonsault and it's all Neville so far.

Neville slides in but slides right back out, walks the barricade and hits a 450 onto Dolph to really get the crowd into things (with good reason. That looked GREAT). Back in and Neville hits a standing enziguri but charges into a superkick for two. Neville comes back with another kick but can't hit the Red Arrow. He misses a charge too and the Zig Zag gives Dolph the pin at 9:09.

**Rating:** B-. Neville is a great guy to have on the roster as he has a good look and can fly all over the place to pop the crowd. The key thing to him is that he doesn't wrestle like a small guy, but rather a guy who happens to be small. As long as they don't acknowledge his size too much,

it's never going to be a detriment against him.

Ziggler checks on Neville post match but gets run over by Sheamus. Neville takes a Brogue Kick but Ziggler fights back, only to be taken to the floor for a Brogue Kick of his own.

It's time for the announcement of the stipulations and Rollins has a La-Z-Boy. The Stooges have their own leather chairs but Orton isn't impressed. Orton wants to fight right now but Rollins would rather just announce his stipulation: at Extreme Rules, the RK0 is banned. Orton likes that thinking and wants to take away Rollins' best weapon as well. That's not his speed or intelligence, but rather the Authority. Therefore, it's a cage match at Extreme Rules, which takes away some of Rollins' smirk. Orton wants to fight now and cleans house but Rollins runs from a DDT attempt, leaving Mercury to take the RK0 to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. I liked this show and I'm really liking where things seem to be going at the moment. There's some questionable stuff for sure, but we're getting better motivation from wrestlers than we've had in a long time. The key to that change: they're telling us. If there are two things that drives me crazy in wrestling it's getting no explanation or being told we don't deserve one. Just something simple like "I don't like small people" or "I beat the champ twice and should be #1 contender" tell us more than enough to warrant a feud. Keep that up and things will get better every week.

## Results

John Cena b. Bad News Barrett – Attitude Adjustment

Paige won a battle royal last eliminating Naomi

Lucha Dragons b. Ascension – Swanton Bomb to Viktor

Randy Orton b. Cesaro via DQ when Tyson Kidd interfered

Randy Orton b. Cesaro/Tyson Kidd – RK0 to Kidd

Dean Ambrose b. Adam Rose – Dirty Deeds



Stardust b. Fandango – Disaster Kick

Seth Rollins b. Kane – Kane laid down

Damien Mizdow b. Miz – Rollup

Ryback b. Luke Harper via DQ when Harper hit Ryback with the announcers' table

Dolph Ziggler b. Neville – Zig Zag

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# Smackdown – April 9, 2015: He Really Is Awesome

## **Smackdown**

Date: April 9, 2015

Location: American Airlines Center, Dallas, Texas

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Byron Saxton, Tom Phillips

For the second week in a row, the advertised big match is Sheamus/Bad News Barrett vs. Dolph Ziggler/Daniel Bryan and that's really all there is to talk about here. Raw ended with Orton becoming #1 contender to Rollins' title after beating Ryback and Reigns in a triple threat.

Tonight we might see the Extreme Rules card take more shape as Smackdown

gets to announce a match every now and then. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's Daniel Bryan to open things up. He says it was one of the highlights of his career to climb that ladder and win the Intercontinental Title at Wrestlemania. However, the actions of the man make the title (which says Intercontinental Heavyweight Wrestling Champion. I bet Vince is FURIOUS at the belt over that), so Bryan wants to defend this title against anyone who wants a shot.

That's what he did after Wrestlemania against Dolph Ziggler, but Sheamus come out looking all stupid with a Brogue Kick to the face. So last week he fought Sheamus, but somewhere in the match he saw Wade (first time hearing that name in a while) Barrett...and now we all see Barrett on the ramp. He says he ended Bryan's magical week with a Bull Hammer, and the fiendish gleam on Barrett's face during that line is great. This brings out Sheamus to say he followed it up with a Brogue Kick.

Sheamus tolerates Barrett because he isn't a munchkin like Bryan, so the two of them should come down there and give Bryan a beating because they can. They get in the ring but Ziggler comes out to call Sheamus the offspring of Captain Jack Sparrow and Carrot Top. The fight is about to be on but here's Big Show because ruining main events just isn't enough for him anymore. Big Show wants in on this beatdown but here's Roman Reigns to even things up. A quick fight likely makes the tag match a six man. I'll take that over a spontaneous match. They've got something with this tag team feud with the title thrown in.

Tyson Kidd/Cesaro vs. New Day

Non-title with the New Day getting booed out of the building on the entrances. It's a good sign that WWE has quickly caught onto the reality that no one likes them and is already starting to turn them. There's an idea to the team but it's just working as presented. Big E. wants everyone to get up and clap along with them so that's exactly what they do, but with the SUCKS part added in. That makes Big E. think something has to change and that the fans have to love them. Woods is the odd man out here.

Kofi and Kidd get things going with Tyson taking him into the corner for some forearm before it's off to Cesaro. He mocks the clapping and gets the crowd going again as the champions are the default good guys here. Kofi low bridges Cesaro to the floor and Big E. launches Kofi to the floor to take out the champs as we take a break. Back with Big E. suplexing Kidd but needing a tag. Cesaro breaks up a tag though and rag dolls Big E. into a gutwrench suplex. That's scary strength.

Back to Tyson for some knees to the back as Lawler is talking more than I've heard him do in months. Big E. finally shoves Cesaro off but misses a charge into the post for two. There's the Cesaro Swing into the dropkick from Tyson for two more with Kofi making the save. E. knocks Cesaro out of the air and makes the hot tag so Kofi can clean house with dropkicks and shots to the head. The Boom Drop sets up more clapping and sucking as everything breaks down. Kidd grabs a fisherman's neckbreaker for the pin on Kofi at 10:00.

**Rating:** C. Not much to see here but it could have been far worse. They need to turn New Day soon and thankfully we seem well on the way to that point. Cesaro and Kidd are starting to establish themselves as a really good heel team, which is something we haven't seen in a long time.

Recap of Monday's triple threat and the events that led up to it.

Free Network month shill. Remember when you had to pay for that?

### Curtis Axel vs. Neville

In case you didn't get enough of it the first time ten days ago. Axel wants to know what Neville is going to do when Axelmania runs wild on him. Neville flips around to start and grabs an armdrag but gets caught with a knee to the ribs. Neville's front flips lead to Axel charging into a boot in the corner, followed by a running forearm. The spinning dive over the ropes takes Axel out again and it's a slam followed by the Red Arrow for the pin at 2:17. That's the same match they had on Raw after Wrestlemania.

Natalya, Cameron and Alicia Fox insist they didn't try to con Kane into the Divas battle royal on Raw. Naomi deserves the shot and all but

Cameron says she's going to win. Alicia asks how long Cameron has been here and it's been THREE YEARS??? She's this bad after THREE YEARS??? Alicia and Natalya get in a fight.

### Alicia Fox vs. Natalya

Cameron is guest referee so we can see her be horrible at something besides wrestling. To her credit, she found a referee's cut off top and changed in the span of a commercial. It's a catfight to start and they trade slaps until Cameron breaks up a fight next to the ropes. Natalya does her step over into the dropkick spot for two but Fox hits something like the Helluva Kick to take over. Fox's northern lights suplex gets the same and we hit the chinlock. Back up and a cross body gets two for Natalya and the Sharpshooter gets the win at 3:41.

**Rating:** D+. As you may have noticed, there was a lot of play by play here. Here's the reason why: these people have no characters. Cameron is close with the stuck up chick who only cares about herself, but Alicia is just Alicia and Natalya is just a veteran and serious wrestler. There's nowhere to go with those characters as there's nothing that stands out about them. The same is true for most of the Divas. Even Summer is just there as the dancing stuff is gone. I'm not saying we need to go back to the days of GLOW, but something would be nice.

Cameron lays both of them out with DDTs post match.

Bray Wyatt narrates a video about Erick Rowan, who was a child in a man's world. How could society do what they've done to him? They took away Rowan's innocence and we're all guilty, even though we don't know it. Bray has fixed him and now Rowan is free. We might have seen this video when the Family split up last year. If nothing else it's cool to see a video like this to set up the matches later. What happened to the days of promos to set stuff up? It doesn't have to have high production values. Just a quick promo from backstage would be fine.

Here's Bray in the ring for his match but first he talks about remembering the days when Erick Rowan was lost. Society saw all of Rowan's flaws but Bray saw possibilities. "Yes Erick, you too can job to Big Show." The fans give Bray the WHAT treatment as he talks about being

Rowan's brother. He fixed Erick like you fix a broken toy and then set him free. Society has returned Rowan to Bray and he's broken all over again. Tonight Bray is going to teach Rowan one last lesson: no matter what, trust no one because evil is inside of us all. If he'll destroy someone he called his brother, imagine what he'll do to you.

### Bray Wyatt vs. Erick Rowan

Bray tells him to bring it on to start so Erick runs over him to knock Wyatt outside. Back in and Bray grabs him by the beard but you don't do that to a former genius. What you do instead is send Rowan into the post and then knock him off the apron and into the barricade as we take a break.

Back with Rowan fighting out of a chinlock but the backplash hits knees. Rowan hits some running splashes in the corner for two but Bray rolls outside when Erick goes up top. That works better for Bray as he takes Rowan's head off with a clothesline and follows up with the backplash. The Rock Bottom doesn't work but Wyatt takes him down with the flying body block. Sister Abigail ends Erick at 9:34.

**Rating:** D+. Just a squash here for the most part but I like that they're giving the Wyatts what seems to be some closure. Either that or they're repackaging Rowan into something else. I was interested in the genius gimmick but that was sacrificed on the alter of Big Show, next to Hideo Itami. Bray needs something to do now that the Undertaker match is over. I'd love to see him actually win a feud against a top name for a change too.

Bray cradles Rowan's head post match.

It's time for a special movie edition of MizTV. We see the trailer for Marine 4 but before Miz can get anywhere else, his co-star Summer Rae cuts him off. They get in an argument over who was the real star of the movie with Summer calling him a co-star and Miz calling her a featured extra. Summer brings up Mizdow eliminating him from the battle royal and the fans chant his name.

Miz asks if the fans know the backstory of Damien Sandow. He was fired

twice until Miz saved his career and gave him a purpose. Cue Mizdow but Miz cuts him off and says Mizdow is going to go on a steep decline. These people can't get him on track but Miz is capable and willing to because he's a charitable person. He'll do it for an apology and everything can go back to the way it was.

All Mizdow has to do to get everything back is shake Miz's hand and apologize. Hey now, quit adding things to the rules. Miz asks whose hands Mizdow wants his career in, because the people will drop him in a heartbeat. Damien apologizes....for not doing this earlier and the beating is on. Miz leaves so Mizdow kisses Summer, who seems to like it.

Video on WWE taking over the Bay Area for Wrestlemania weekend.

Daniel Bryan/Roman Reigns/Dolph Ziggler vs. Big Show/Sheamus/Bad News Barrett

I guess because the original four needed star power to carry them? Sheamus and Ziggler get things going with the Irishman taking Dolph into the corner for a right hand to the ribs from Big Show. A big chop puts Ziggler down as Dolph is firmly into his standard style. Dolph dropkicks the knee out and gets two off the running DDT, only to get chopped out of the corner. Barrett comes in for the first time and slaps on a chinlock but the fans are already cheering for Dolph to get out.

Winds of Change gets two but Ziggler flips over Sheamus and dives into the tag to Bryan. The YES Kicks have Sheamus in trouble and Daniel backdrops him to the floor for the Flying Goat. They're moving in this one so far. As Bryan throws Sheamus back in, Barrett gets up and kicks Daniel in the head as we take a break. Back with Bryan getting slammed by Big Show and a huge elbow getting two. Barrett comes in for another chinlock as the fans sound like they want Roman.

Show breaks up a hot tag attempt but his chokeslam is countered into the YES Lock. This time it's Sheamus making the save and trying a superplex, only to get knocked off by Bryan. Daniel's cross body is caught but he spins into a DDT and makes the hot tag to Reigns. Roman cleans house with Superman Punches as everything breaks down. Ziggler and Sheamus go to the floor and Bryan hits Show with the running knee. The spear out of the

corner gives Reigns the pin on Barrett at 15:18.

**Rating:** B-. Pretty good match here with everyone moving quickly and putting in some efforts. It's interesting to see that Reigns is back to his old style and looking cool after not having the Wrestlemania main event looming over him. I think people are going to like him better when he's not out there against the most popular guy in the company and now that he's been able to give us something to connect to. Now if only they could get him completely away from Big Show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. This was a pretty basic but well done show with decent wrestling and some midcard storyline development. That's about all you can ask for from Smackdown these days as the illusion of the move back to Thursdays making the show matter is long gone. I do like that tag feud revolving around the Intercontinental Title though as it's something that could go somewhere if they let it get interesting. Not bad this week but nothing great.

### Results

Cesaro/Tyson Kidd b. New Day – Fisherman's neckbreaker to Kingston

Neville b. Curtis Axel – Red Arrow

Natalya b. Alicia Fox – Sharpshooter

Bray Wyatt b. Erick Rowan – Sister Abigail

Roman Reigns/Daniel Bryan/Dolph Ziggler b. Sheamus/Big Show/Bad News Barrett – Spear to Barrett

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# NXT – April 8, 2015: Let's Go Hideo!

## **NXT**

Date: April 8, 2015

Location: San Jose Convention Center, San Jose, California

Commentators: Rich Brennan, Corey Graves

We're on the road again with some matches taped for this year's Wrestlemania Axxess weekend. For at least the last two years, there has been a ring set up on the Axxess floor for live matches, including some title defenses. Tonight we're going to see some of those matches and maybe some from the well received house show the same weekend. Let's get to it.

The main story tonight is a tournament for a spot in the Andre the Giant Memorial Battle Royal at Wrestlemania XXXI. Here are the brackets.

Finn Balor

Baron Corbin

Bull Dempsey

Tyler Breeze

Hideo Itami

Jason Jordan

Kalisto

Adrian Neville



Video of Wrestlemania's impact on the area, which I believe was shown on both Raw and Smackdown.

We get a quick recap of the first round to give us the final four.

Balor rolled up Corbin to advance, Breeze beat Dempsey with a Beauty Shot, Itami's running kick to the face knocked Jordan out and the Red Arrow advanced Neville.

Here are the updated brackets.

Finn Balor

Tyler Breeze

Hideo Itami

Adrian Neville

Battle Royal Qualifying Tournament Semi-Finals: Hideo Itami vs. Adrian Neville

Neither guy gets an entrance. The crowd is very small, maybe about 200, as the ring is just tucked away in a corner of the convention center. They fight over a wristlock to start with Neville taking him down to the mat but Itami counters into an arm crank for a near fall of his own. The fans boo something off camera as the guys have a staredown and Neville teases going after whoever it was.

We hit the dueling chants as Neville grabs a headlock. That goes nowhere so Hideo hits a running kick to the chest and clotheslines Neville out to the floor. Neville makes it back in at nine and the fans don't seem thrilled with him. Some shots to the chest and a big back elbow get two on Hideo but he comes back with his three clotheslines (of course) and the tornado neck snap across the top rope.

The top rope clothesline gets two and Itami follows up with a sleeper (Fans: "GO TO SLEEP!") before switching off to a dragon sleeper. The GTS is countered and Neville blasts him with a superkick for two. Neville has to bail out of a shooting star and gets caught by the running dropkick in

the corner. The Shotgun Kick sends Itami to the finals at 11:16.

**Rating:** C+. Good enough but Itami really needs to open up the offense. First it was nothing but kicks and now it's primarily clotheslines. Star throwing in some more submissions or throws or whatever, but stop using one or two moves over and over. Neville was working heel here and it was kind of odd to see. Not bad or anything but just a sharp change from his usual style.

### Battle Royal Qualifying Tournament Semi-Finals: Finn Balor vs. Tyler Breeze

Balor gets an entrance. Breeze poses on the corner to start so Balor dropkicks him in the face and poses exactly the same. More kicks to the chest get two on Breeze but he takes Balor down and puts on a chinlock (Tyler: "ASK HIM PLEASE!"). Balor quickly rolls through and hits a basement dropkick, followed by even more kicks to the face and chest for two. We definitely have a theme in this match. Breeze finally mixes it up with some forearms but charges into the Sling Blade. The Coup de Grace ends Breeze at 5:22.

**Rating:** C+. It's very telling how much more of a presence Balor has in half the time that Itami had. The guy is just awesome in the ring and has the full package. Even though the match was nothing special and Breeze was basically getting squashed for five minutes, it felt more entertaining than the previous match.

Dana Brooke debuts next week and calls herself the Total Diva.

Video package on the NXT house show from Wrestlemania weekend and it looks like a big Ring of Honor show, just with HHH in the ring. It really is amazing that WWE basically has their own in house indy company. This show looks like a blast.

Sami Zayn vs. Rhyno next week.

### Battle Royal Qualifying Tournament Final: Hideo Itami vs. Finn Balor

We get a wide shot of the arena to show several hundred more people on the hard camera side. The fans are behind Balor as the guys do a

wrestling sequence, ending with a standoff. Balor takes him down and cranks on the arm before a dropkick gets two. Itami comes back with some kicks to the chest and puts on a chinlock. That goes as far as a chinlock can take you and Finn rolls out for another basement dropkick.

An enziguri in the corner knocks Hideo off the top for two but he comes back with the top rope clothesline. The GTS is teased again but Balor escapes into the Pele to put both guys down again. Back up and Hideo wins a strike off, followed by a running basement dropkick in the corner. The Sling Blade out of nowhere drops Itami but he crotches Finn to break up the Coup de Grace. Yet another GTS attempt is countered and the Shotgun Kick sends Hideo to Wrestlemania at 8:15.

**Rating:** C. I wasn't feeling this one as much as they built up the GTS through the match but they still didn't let it hit. I'm glad Hideo won though as having Balor in his spot at Wrestlemania would have been a waste of him. All the kicks are getting annoying too and it's really hard to care when it's the same stuff all show long. Good enough match but it didn't have the time to get anywhere.

They shake hands post match.

We get a cool video on Hideo Itami, dating back to his press conference in Osaka, announcing his signing with WWE. Then he debuted in NXT, then he beat Balor in the match from earlier on this show. We see Itami going through the curtain to be greeted by the contingent of HHH, Tatsumi Fujinami and.....Hillbilly Jim?

Itami introduces us to his family and again, his English is fine. His language skills really aren't an excuse for his lack of promos. You can keep them short and get the point across well enough. Also included is a clip of Itami hitting the GTS on Breeze at the house show and how people freaked out online. Naturally, Stephanie is RIGHT THERE to comment on the impact on social media.

Itami is in the battle royal. We see him warming up backstage and all his friends praising him for making it this far this fast. He comes out to the crowd, Cole gives him a special introduction, he knocks out Dallas, and then Big Show treats him like any given jobber as Cole says "welcome

to the big leagues.” I’m SO glad we got to see him beaten down that fast. It just wouldn’t have been complete without seeing Big Show looking dominant. Hideo cries once he gets backstage and a bunch of people congratulate him. Even Big Show says he looks forward to working with Itami again. His kids hug him to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. This is a hard one to grade as it’s mainly a theme show with some wrestling included. The stuff on Itami is a really cool feature (Big Show dominance aside) and made him look like a big deal. Above all else though, I want to focus on that house show. On the Rise and Fall of ECW, Paul Heyman talks about wanting to make his shows into a big party where the fans say “WOW! I want to go there! I want to buy my ticket and be right there in the middle of all that.”

That’s the feeling I got watching that house show. It looked like a blast and something I’d love to get to see. It’s the feeling you don’t get on Raw because NXT feels far more fan friendly and built on excitement. Like I said, it’s basically an in house indy company with very little connection to the main roster. This is a special promotion and it’s going to keep going for a long time at this pace.

### Results

Hideo Itami b. Adrian Neville – Shotgun Kick

Finn Balor b. Tyler Breeze – Coup de Grace

Hideo Itami b. Finn Balor – Shotgun Kick

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# Monday Night Raw – April 6, 2015: The Three Headed Killing Machines

## Monday Night Raw

Date: April 6, 2015

Location: Frank Erwin Center, Austin, Texas

Commentators: Byron Saxton, Booker T., John Bradshaw Layfield

It's back to the regular style shows this week with Wrestlemania season wrapped up. The big story coming out of last week was Brock Lesnar's suspension, meaning we're not likely to see him again for a few months. In the meantime, we have Randy Orton challenging for the World Title at Extreme Rules, which is likely the focus of tonight's show. We also find out who is answering this week's open challenge for the US Title. Let's get to it.

Saxton is in for Cole on commentary.

We look at some stills of HHH vs. Sting.

The Authority is in the ring minus HHH and Stephanie. Rollins is booted out of the building but Big Show says the champion is trying to talk. Seth says the Authority is on vacation tonight before bragging about the attendance record, the number of people watching and the number of times they trended worldwide. That last part sounded so stupid. HHH put the final nail in WCW's coffin because the Authority always win. Big Show is officially the best giant of all time and Kane....well Kane was there too!

Show says everyone on this roster is under his shadow but the important thing is Wrestlemania ended with a new, honorable champion. Rollins again fails at coming up with something Kane did at Wrestlemania but before Kane can give his answer, here's Randy Orton to interrupt. Randy

congratulates him on having his Wrestlemania moment. Of course it happened after a huge RKO took him out earlier in the night.

Rollins calls that complaining but Orton says he wants another shot, this time for the title. I'm pretty sure that match was already confirmed on Smackdown, or at least heavily implied. Orton asks Kane for the shot, and even asks if Kane needs to call mommy and daddy for permission. Kane demands respect and makes a three way match for the #1 contendership tonight between Orton, Reigns and Ryback. As usual, I had that typed before Kane even started because WWE is that predictable these days. However, Kane mixes things up a bit by saying all three of them have to compete in singles matches first.

### Kane vs. Randy Orton

Randy gets to the middle rope to start and drives in some forearms to the chest, only to get caught by an uppercut to knock him to the floor. Back from a break with Kane stomping away but getting caught in the elevated DDT. They head outside with Orton nailing a clothesline, only to take a chair to the ribs for the DQ at 6:58. Not enough shown to rate but it was just a way to get to the storyline ending.

Post match Kane tries a chokeslam on the chair but Orton counters into an RKO attempt, sending Kane running.

The announcers bring up AJ retiring and show a tweet of her boots.

Brad Maddox is in Kane's office when Rollins comes in to yell at Kane. The priority is to protect Rollins, but for some reason Kane doesn't get that. Kane takes credit for Rollins winning Money in the Bank, so Rollins says Kane is going to have to answer to the Authority. That's fine with Kane, as he puts Rollins in a match tonight. For those of you counting, that would be five matches made during the show.

Cole is considering legal actions against Lesnar. JBL had to have emergency surgery for a torn abdomen wall and Booker wants Lesnar fired. Yay! Legal ramifications!

We look back at Lesnar's path of rage last week.

The WWE Network is free for April. That's the third free month out of six.

### Seth Rollins vs. Neville

Non-title and Rollins is suddenly far less nervous. He grabs a mic and talks some trash to Neville, saying Neville must be terrified to be out here. Rollins has been there before too and offers the pipsqueak a chance to sit this one out. Neville kicks him in the ribs and we're ready to go. A quick armdrag puts the champ down but he stomps Neville in the corner to take over. Neville does his front flip out of the corner and hurricanranas Seth to the floor, setting up a big flip dive. He slides back in to avoid the Stooges and we take a break. Back with Neville being sent face first into the middle buckle and Seth dropping knees to the face.

We hit the chinlock for a bit before Rollins picks him up for some knees to the ribs. Seth is toying with him as he drives some elbows into the head before putting on another chinlock. A running clothesline flips Neville inside out but he counters the buckle bomb with a hurricanrana. It's Red Arrow time but Mercury offers a distraction so Noble can break it up. Instead it's a quick rollup for two on Seth, who counters another hurricanrana into the buckle bomb. Curb Stomp ends Neville at 11:39.

**Rating:** C+. Let's get this out of the way right now: Neville is not buried, isn't being buried, and doesn't even have any dirt on him. If you need an explanation for why, I've failed at teaching you anything. This was a good showcase for Neville but there was no other logical way this could end without interference. The fact that Neville is in this spot two weeks in is a great sign for the future.

Rollins gives him another Curb Stomp after the match.

Here's Cena for this week's open challenge. The city of Austin has declared this WWE Day so Cena is extra fired up. A lot of fans want him to come out and lose the title already, but this title is a symbol of opportunity. Someone can come out here and have a chance to put their name in the history books. Take Rusev for example. He wants his rematch

for the title, but for some reason he wants to wait until Extreme Rules. Why not have the match tonight in Austin? Anyway, someone can come out here right now and step up to get stepped on.

### US Title: John Cena vs. Stardust

Cena grabs a headlock to start and throws Stardust to the ropes, only to have him skin the cat. Back in and Cena drops some elbows as the announcers talk about Back to the Future for no logical reason. A delayed suplex gets two for the champ as Cena is mixing things up this week. The chinlock doesn't last long as Stardust bails to the floor and we take a break. Back with Cena diving into a dropkick and Stardust hitting something like Diamond Dust for two.

What looks to be a springboard hurricanrana is countered into a powerbomb to give Cena a near fall of his own. The AA doesn't work so Stardust hooks an Alabama Slam for another two count. Cross Rhodes is countered as well and Cena plants him with a kind of sitout powerslam. The ProtoBomb looks to set up the Shuffle but Stardust kicks him in the head and gets another close cover off a DDT.

A moonsault press gets the same and Cena is in some trouble. It's not enough trouble though as he trips Stardust into the STF. Stardust is close to the ropes though and hits a quick Cross Rhodes for two. That's enough for Cena as he hits the springboard Stunner and the AA retains the title at 13:10.

**Rating:** C+. This is exactly what the open challenge should be doing: giving someone you don't usually see in a spot like this getting a chance to showcase themselves. Good match here with Stardust getting to show off a bit but ultimately coming up short. What I liked best about this match though: it was fresh. I'll take a match with an obvious ending over a match we've seen 19 times before almost every time.

### Naomi/Paige vs. Bella Twins

The Bella Twins' name graphic now lists them both as Divas Champion. I know it's not intentional but it's probably more accurate than they intended. Brie takes Paige into the ropes to start and sends her to the



floor for a hard shot from Nikki. The BRIE MODE knee gets two and we hit the chinlock.

Off to Nikki for a bodyscissors for a bit before Nikki misses a charge in the corner, allowing the hot tag to Naomi. She botches a spinning headscissors before kicking Nikki in the face before slipping on a landing out of the corner. The Rear View gets two with Brie making the save, only to have Paige kick Nikki down. The headscissors driver gets zero reaction but it's enough to pin Nikki at 5:00.

**Rating:** D-. Sweet Christmas the Bellas are dull in the ring. They're just not interesting no matter how you look at them and there's nothing in the ring that makes me want to watch them. It didn't help that Naomi was botching almost everything she was doing here and looked more like Cameron than anyone else. Horrible match that gave me flashbacks to the dark days of the division.

The announcers talk about Miz vs. Mizdow but we go to the Prime Time Players ripping on New Day with the same insults from Smackdown. They switch over to making fun of Ascension with some home made spiked shoulder pads that keep breaking. Ascension can't read either and they hit the Millions of Dollars dance. I've heard of worse gimmicks.

### Luke Harper vs. Ryback

Harper nails a quick dropkick to start and a big boot sends Ryback to the floor. After teasing loading up the announcers' table, Harper takes him back inside for a Boss Man Slam and something like a crossface. Ryback gets the rope, avoids a charge to send Harper into the post and hits Shell Shock out of nowhere for the pin at 2:48. That was his only significant move of the match.

The New Day is hurt and disappointed by the crowd thinking they suck, but they won't find disappointment in their dancing. They clap or they snap. Big E. says he was eating at the airport yesterday when a kid came up and asked him (with Big E. doing a kid's voice) to sign a breakfast menu for his brother. Of course he could, because he claps. It really doesn't make more sense in context.

### New Day vs. Lucha Dragons

Kofi is on the floor this time but his slapping of the apron makes the fans chant NEW DAYS SUCKS in time. Big E. runs Cara over to start and both he and Woods take turns stomping away in the corner.

Cesaro/Kidd/Natalya are watching in the back as Woods gives up the hot tag to Kalisto. Things speed way up with Kalisto snapping off the hurricanrana but Big E. makes the save. Cara low bridges Big E. to the floor but Kofi gets in a cheap shot from the floor to give Woods two on Kalisto. Woods like the cheating but the Dragons make a blind tag, allowing the Salida Del Sol to set up the Swanton from Cara to pin Woods at 2:59.

### Big Show vs. Roman Reigns

Because, uh, reasons! They slug it out to start with Show taking him into the corner for some chops. Show throws him across the ring by the vest and stands on his back on the ropes. They head outside with Show slowly plodding around and throwing Reigns into the barricade. Reigns comes back with a running apron kick but Show spears him down as we take a break. Back with Big Show still dominating because, uh, reasons!

Show charges into a boot in the corner and gets staggered by some clotheslines, only to catch Reigns in a side slam. The bouncing Vader Bomb gets two more and Show baseball slides him into the barricade. Reigns comes up to the apron and hammers away before Stunning Show over the apron. The Superman Punch from the floor sets up another in the ring. The third sets up the spear for the pin at 10:39.

**Rating:** D. I did not like this match. I am ceasing this rating description for reasons as an exercise in anger management due to a desire to not die at the age of 43, which is also Big Show's current age, which is usually when wrestlers retire but he's still out there getting to dominate people and for some reason WWE doesn't get that we don't care.

Kane is on the phone when a bunch of Divas come in to hit on him. They bring up the "Give Divas A Chance movement" (Alicia's finger quotes, not mine) and ask for a #1 contenders battle royal. Kane makes the match for

next week to get rid of them.

Reigns says watch what he does next.

Here's Sheamus to say he looks like a real man. The fans tell him that he looks stupid but he says the grown up is talking now. He's a warrior who belongs here, unlike the go getters who just won't go away. People like Dolph Ziggler are insects who need to be crushed. Sheamus is told to pick on people his size, but there aren't too many his size. Cue his opponent.

### Sheamus vs. Mark Henry

Henry is the hometown boy. Sheamus goes to leave but gets pulled back into the ring to start the fight. The bell rings and Henry blocks a kick with a right hand to the face. A top wristlock goes badly for Sheamus as he's shoved to the floor. Back up and Sheamus can't finish the ten forearm as Henry elbows him in the face, only to have Sheamus nail some knee lifts on the apron. The World's Strongest Slam is countered and Sheamus nails the Brogue Kick for the pin at 2:33. Booker calls Sheamus a viking for no apparent reason.

We look at the big talking segment from Wrestlemania.

Bray Wyatt shows up on screen and says someone's entire life revolves around dedication. However dedicated you are, you can't compete with the forces of nature. You can't compete against fear either, for it is not your drive for success that motivates you. What motivates you is fear and it holds the key to your undoing. Does he have your attention now? Behold the new face of fear.

Ryback is hungry for the WWE World Title.

### Damien Mizdow vs. Miz

We get a battle of sunglasses removal to start but Mizdow knocks him to the floor before taking his off. Back in and Mizdow chokes him in the corner but eats a big boot to the face. Mizdow shoves him to the corner but doesn't seem that comfortable on offense. A snap suplex and knee drop keep Miz in trouble. Mizdow scores with an electric chair and headbutt, followed by the Reality Check for no cover. Miz tries a low blow but gets

taken down and punched in the face. A quick rollup with a handful of trunks is enough to pin Mizdow at 5:03.

**Rating:** D+. This show is going WAY too long and it's starting to drag horribly. It's pretty clear that this match was designed to set up a gimmick rematch, maybe for the rights to the name and the music, at Extreme Rules. Nothing much to see here though, other than Mizdow looking awkward on offense at times.

Orton has nothing against his opponents but he's winning tonight.

### Ryback vs. Roman Reigns vs. Randy Orton

Winner gets the title shot at Extreme Rules. Ryback tries to Shell Shock Reigns seconds in but gets taken down by Orton's backbreaker for two. A clothesline gets the same on Reigns but Ryback throws Orton to the floor. Cue the Authority on the stage, where they can see Ryback powerslam Reigns. Roman breaks up the elevated DDT on Ryback before clotheslining him in the corner. There's a Superman Punch to Orton but Ryback plants Reigns with a spinebuster.

The Meat Hook puts Reigns down again but Ryback has to stop Orton with a spinebuster as well. Reigns breaks up Shell Shock on Orton with a spear and all three are down. Now the Authority starts coming to the ring but Reigns dives on all of them. Show KO Punches him though, only to have Rollins go after Orton. Cue the Stooges to go after Orton but Ryback beats them up. The RKO on Ryback sends Orton to Extreme Rules at 5:18.

**Rating:** C. This didn't have time to go anywhere but it wasn't bad while it lasted. I'm getting back into Ryback but there was almost no way Orton didn't win here. Unfortunately it really seems that they're setting up Reigns vs. Big Show again, despite the interest just not being there. That never stopped them before though.

Rollins hits a Curb Stomp before we can hear what the voices do in Orton's head.

**Overall Rating:** C-. This show was more good than bad but it really started dragging at about 10:30. At the end of the day, three hours is

just too long for a single wrestling show every week. It doesn't help that a lot of the talent was working twice tonight and we had more than one Divas segments. The stuff with the new guys or the new characters was good, but they really need to get away from Big Show and the Bellas. Those three are just crippling whatever scenes they're in and the fans aren't going to lighten up on them anytime soon. Watchable show this week but it needed to be half an hour shorter.

## Results

Randy Orton b. Kane via DQ when Kane used a chair

Seth Rollins b. Neville – Curb Stomp

John Cena b. Stardust – Attitude Adjustment

Naomi/Paige b. Bella Twins – Headscissors driver to Nikki

Ryback b. Luke Harper – Shell Shock

Lucha Dragons b. New Day – Swanton Bomb to Woods

Roman Reigns b. Big Show – Spear

Sheamus b. Mark Henry – Brogue Kick

Miz b. Damien Mizdow – Rollup with a handful of trunks

Randy Orton b. Ryback and Roman Reigns – RKO to Ryback

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