

Monday Night Raw – April 24, 2017: I Should Be Paid Back For This Show

Monday Night Raw

Date: April 24, 2017

Location: Sprint Center, Kansas City, Missouri

Commentators: Michael Cole, Booker T., Corey Graves

It's the go home show for Payback and that means we're getting closer to knowing how the Superstar Shakeup will really be going. Last week we saw Braun Strowman break the ring when he superplexed Big Show and tonight he's facing Kalisto in a dumpster match. I'm not sure that makes sense either but let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of Braun Strowman destroying things for the last two weeks.

Opening sequence.

Here's Chris Jericho for the Highlight Reel. Jericho says this is the last Highlight Reel on Raw because he's winning the US Title and moving over to Smackdown. It doesn't matter if it's Raw, Smackdown or Southpaw Regional though because these people are the friends of Jericho and they'll cheer him on man. Tonight's guest is a real star and that would be....Chris Jericho! Cue Miz and Maryse to interrupt though with the former saying this show is about the it couple. Jericho says they better watch.....it couple.

Miz gets to the point and says MizTV is replacing the Highlight Reel, meaning it's time to replace the set. Now it's Dean Ambrose, who turns this into the Ambrose Asylum with all three as his guests. Dean wants Jericho to win on Sunday, despite their checkered past. Jericho broke a potted plant over his head and Dean broke his light up jacket. Jericho brings up the \$15,000 but Dean has a gift: a home made light up jacket! Dean says he should try it on man but Miz cuts them off.

We get a good rant about how Miz should be the only one getting gifts, which earns him Dirty Deeds. Dean leaves so Jericho asks what happens when you're married to a stupid idiot like Miz. After putting her on the list, Jericho leaves, wearing the new jacket (which is a sport coat with Christmas lights wrapped around).

Sheamus vs. Matt Hardy

Matt starts fast with a neckbreaker and three straight legdrops for two. The ten forearms are broken up and Matt hits the Side Effect on the apron as we take an early break. Back with the forearms working this time, only to have Sheamus miss a charge into the post. Matt's bulldog and a middle rope elbow get two but Matt gets sent outside. Sheamus follows and goes after Jeff, allowing Matt to hit the Twist of Fate for the clean pin at 10:02.

Rating: C-. I'm not sure how wise it is to have the Hardys wrestle singles matches as they really don't have the same fire that the tag matches do. The match wasn't much to see but there's only so much they can do in less than seven minutes of actual TV time. It's too early to take the belts off of them but I'd keep Matt out of a singles role.

Post match tempers seem to flare but they all shake hands.

Miz and Maryse cut off Kurt Angle's phone call to yell about Ambrose and Jericho. Angle doesn't want to hear about it and makes a tag match with Miz getting to pick his own partner.

Neville/TJ Perkins vs. Austin Aries/Jack Gallagher

The good guys clear the ring and we take a break before the opening bell. We're joined in progress with Gallagher in trouble until he slips over for the hot tag to Aries. Everything breaks down in a hurry with Aries cleaning house, including clapping his hands around Neville's ears. Both villains are sent outside for a double suicide dive and it's Perkins getting caught in the Last Chancery. Gallagher comes in to take care of Neville and it's a discus Fivearm to put Perkins away at 3:06 shown.

Rating: D+. The time factor caught up with them again but it's a

good idea to build Aries up more and more as he gets closer to his title shot. Perkins is a good choice for Neville's buddy and I could see him getting the title back down the line. Gallagher....dang what happened to him? They just stopped featuring him and let him be that guy who does the same collection of spots over and over, which is quite the shame.

Braun Strowman vs. Kalisto

It's a dumpster match, which means you have to put them inside but don't have to close the lid. Before the match, Braun says everyone here is trash and putting Kalisto in the dumpster will be like putting everyone in there too, including Roman Reigns. In the back, Kalisto tells Angle he has to fight like a man.

Kalisto starts with some kicks but his flip dive is caught in a suplex, only to have Strowman throw him across the ring. A front facelock over the ropes has Strowman in some trouble but he throws Kalisto down again. Strowman loads up a press slam but Kalisto slips out and dropkicks him into the dumpster for the win at 6:13.

Rating: F. I know WWE's official line is that wins and losses don't matter but you're trying to build Strowman up as an opponent for Lesnar. Two weeks ago, Strowman absolutely destroyed Reigns in one of the coolest segments in years. In the two weeks since, he's gone to a draw with Big Show (But he stood up and that makes up for it!) and now he's lost to Kalisto. He'll probably beat Reigns on Sunday and that's supposed to make up for this right? I'm sure no one will EVER reference this loss again and Strowman will be forever awesome.

Post match Strowman destroys Kalisto and puts him in the dumpster. He locks it shut and pushes the dumpster off the stage for what must have been a full two and a half foot fall. If this is how they want to build up Strowman, they have a LONG way to go.

After a break, Kalisto is stretchered out.

Video on Roman Reigns.

Bray Wyatt wants to make Randy Orton suffer.

Dana Brooke vs. Alicia Fox

This is over Emma stirring up some issues between them. Cue Emma less than thirty seconds in as Dana's cartwheel splash hits knees. Fox misses the ax kick though and a Samoan Driver ends Alicia at 1:12.

Emma hugs Dana, who shoves her away.

We run down the pay per view card and get the first details on the House of Horrors match: the match will start in the House of Horrors and end in the ring. That's a lot more than we knew before.

Samoa Joe and Anderson and Gallows are ready to torture Enzo Amore/Big Cass and Seth Rollins.

Enzo Amore/Big Cass/Seth Rollins vs. Samoa Joe/Anderson and Gallows

Enzo does his full entrance but the villains jump him from the crowd. Rollins runs out for the save but Enzo is laid out as we go to a break. Back with Angle announcing a replacement for the injured Enzo.

Finn Balor/Big Cass/Seth Rollins vs. Samoa Joe/Anderson and Gallows

It's a big brawl to start (of course) with Balor kicking Anderson in the head a few times before it's off to Joe for the heavy forearms. Anderson comes back in for an armbar and a side slam. Gallows comes in and kicks Cass off the apron but misses an elbow drop. The hot tag brings in Rollins for the Sling Blade and everyone is knocked to the floor.

Seth loads up the springboard knee to Anderson but Joe kicks him in the knee. Cue Balor to take care of Joe, leaving Rollins to hit a springboard clothesline on Anderson. Seth loads up the Pedigree but opts for a hammerlock jumping knee to the face (think the Rainmaker) for the pin at 5:58.

Rating: C. The Club loses again and I can't say I'm all that surprised. Ever since they split from AJ Styles last year it's been one horrible loss after another, even when they won the Tag Team Titles. I'm not sure what Balor is going to do next but Rollins vs. Joe has serious potential, especially if Rollins has dropped the Pedigree for good.

Sheamus and Cesaro aren't willing to team with Miz.

Here's Alexa Bliss to talk about how people come out here to talk. Some of them want to become a champion but some of them talk about how much they want to become a WWE superstar. It's all sunshine and rainbows and she nearly vomits in her mouth a bit. She's here to fight so here's Bayley to call Bliss out for talking about people behind their backs. Bayley holds up the title and says she'll do whatever it takes to walk out of her hometown with the title on Sunday.

Bliss loves the idea of beating Bayley up in front of her father but has another question: has Bayley ever even kissed a boy? Not that it matters as Bliss can't wait to destroy her. Cue Sasha Banks with Bliss saying it's time for part 3000 of the Banks and Bayley side show. Bliss asks if Banks puts love letters in the lunches she makes for Bayley. Banks is ready to shut Bliss up but Alexa says not now because Banks is unhinged. That earns her a punch to the face and it seems that the match is on.

Sasha Banks vs. Alexa Bliss

Bayley is on commentary and is immediately grilled about how she keeps coming close to losing the title. Banks forearm Bliss to start but can't hit the double knees in the corner. Bliss stomps away but gets sent into the corner again. That's enough for Alexa as she walks out at 2:38.

Bayley goes after Bliss but Alexa runs away, only to turn around and get in a cheap shot. Sasha chases her off.

Ambrose tries to mend fences with Jericho and asks if he can be taken off the list. That's too far for Jericho because it's in pen. The \$15,000 is brought up again so Dean shows off the replacement jacket. Jericho also brings up the powerbomb onto the tacks but Dean says he wouldn't do it again. He likes the jacket though and Dean JUST UNMADE THE LIST! Dean is fired up and slaps Jericho on the back, earning him another spot on the list.

Heath Slater and Curtis Axel are ready to talk about being in Marine

5 when Miz and Maryse show up (good thing there were two extra chairs there). Neither want to be his partner so Miz says they'll never work in this town again. Axel: "Kansas City?" Miz gets a note delivered and apparently he has a partner, who he describes as awesome.

Curt Hawkins issues an open challenge to his "Star Factory".

Curt Hawkins vs. Apollo Crews

Crews is looking bigger tonight. They trade some shots to start until Crews hits a running boot to the face. A jumping clothesline sets up an enziguri, followed by the Toss Powerbomb for the pin on Hawkins at 2:09.

Titus O'Neil comes out to celebrate with Crews and Apollo seems a bit more interested this week.

We look back at Kalisto and Strowman. Kalisto has suffered hip and cervical trauma.

Roman Reigns has issued a statement saying he's banged up but he'll fight.

Long video on Strowman vs. Reigns.

Austin Aries pitches an idea to Angle for the main event of 205 Live. Kurt says he'll think about it so Aries gives him a banana. The Drifter walks by and Kurt makes sure to point out that he's not the partner.

Dean Ambrose/Chris Jericho vs. The Miz/???

And it's....someone who has some issues with being on time as he's not here. Miz says the match is canceled and goes to leave but here's Angle to say the match is on. Jericho takes off the replacement jacket and chops Miz in the corner, setting up some double teaming. Miz gets clotheslined out to the floor and we take a break.

The match is joined in progress with Miz still alone and Jericho's arrogant cover getting one. Ambrose comes in and Miz begs off, earning himself a chase on the floor. Maryse offers a distraction

though and Miz gets in a boot to the face to take over for the first time. Back in and the Reality Check gets two but the YES Kick is countered into a rollup. Jericho comes in with the Lionsault but the Codebreaker is blocked.

Miz goes to leave so Ambrose follows him up the ramp. Dirty Deeds is loaded up on the stage but here's Bray Wyatt to knock Dean off. Sister Abigail sends Dean into the wall and a second one plants Jericho in the ring. Miz poses with Wyatt...and takes Sister Abigail as well. Bray kneels down to end the show and we'll say the match was thrown out at about 8:30.

Rating: D. So that happened. I'm assuming this was just a way to set up Orton vs. Wyatt as Miz and Ambrose have nothing to do on Sunday, save for hosting a talking segment on the Kickoff Show. Wyatt is an interesting choice for a partner and it's nice to have him actually show up but....yeah this didn't work.

Overall Rating: F+. I'm trying to think of a highlight tonight and the best I've got is Alexa's promo about how Bayley made her sick. Other than that, this was one heck of a bomb with Strowman's loss and the ridiculous dumpster thing being the low point. I don't know if creative was told to punt until after Payback or what but this REALLY didn't work and I haven't been left scratching my head so many times over the course of a night since probably something TNA did. This was really, really bad and that's about as nice as I can go with it.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the NXT: The Full Sail Years Volumes I and II, now in PAPERBACK. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/03/24/kbs-history-of-nxt-volumes-1-and-2-now-available-in-paperback/>

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

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

Main Event – April 20, 2017: The Main Event Brand

Main Event

Date: April 20, 2017

Location: Schottenstein Center, Columbus, Ohio

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

We're back to the recap show with wrestling attached and odds are that means more Titus O'Neil. Now that one of the main players on this show is now #1 contender to the Smackdown World Title, maybe now O'Neil is ready to take his place. You can almost guess what's going to be on this show so let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Curtis Axel vs. Titus O'Neil

Axel gets thrown into the corner but comes right back out and unloads with right hands and forearms. That earns him a big chop to the chest for two and Titus grabs a chinlock. Curtis makes his comeback including a dropkick and the Hennig necksnap for two, only to get caught in a quick Clash of the Titus for the pin at 4:23.

Rating: D. This is the new reality people: Titus O'Neil is being treated as a star on this show. I really don't know why they're pushing this schnook when it's pretty clear that we've reached the apex of his potential, which really wasn't all that good in the first place. Axel continues to languish and that makes me rather sad as he had so much potential.

From Raw.

Here are Miz and Maryse for MizTV. Miz starts talking about the Superstar Shakeup but gets cut off by Dean Ambrose, the scheduled guest, before he can get very far. Ambrose sucks up to the Ohio crowd before ripping on Miz's gear. Miz doesn't want to hear it because he's done everything he can to make the people in that locker room look like superstars while Ambrose makes them look like

regular wrestlers.

It doesn't matter though because people love Ambrose, who was #1 pick in the Draft and was WWE Champion at Summerslam. Then Dean wasted all that momentum when he was on the Kickoff Show six months later. Ambrose doesn't care what he looks like because he loves coming out here in front of twenty people or a hundred thousand.

That's why he's the Intercontinental Champion, which he beat Miz for in the first place. Maryse says the title doesn't make the man so Dean asks her to hold the mic. As Miz goes on another rant, Dean empties his pockets and takes his jacket off before hammering Miz down. Dirty Deeds doesn't work though and Miz and Maryse run.

Again with the Raw.

Sasha Banks vs. Nia Jax vs. Alexa Bliss vs. Mickie James

Winner gets Bayley at Payback. Nia cleans house to start but Bliss bails to the floor, allowing Mickie and Sasha to dropkick Nia outside. Sasha gets the better of it and sends Mickie outside for a dive onto all three as we take a break. Back with Alexa in control until she charges into a slam from Nia.

Jax slams all three on top of each other before swinging Mickie around in a cobra clutch. It's off to a bearhug on Banks with Nia easily suplexing her way out of Sasha's guillotine counter. Mickie armbars her way out of a choke but Nia throws her at Sasha in the corner. Alexa goes up top to try a dropkick but thinks twice when Nia stares her down. A missed charge sends Nia into the post, allowing everyone else to hammer on each other.

The double knees in the corner get two on Bliss with Nia making the save. Mickie gets pulled outside as well and it's down to Sasha vs. Alexa. James has to break up a Bank Statement but here's Nia to knock Mickie off the top. The Samoan drop plants Banks but Bliss runs in for the 13:44.

Rating: C+. The time brings this one down a bit though it was a lot of fun until the end. Bliss winning, especially in her hometown, is a nice touch though they need to stop having Jax get THIS close, only to slip up after dominating everything in sight. It's the right call though as Banks vs. Bayley is still going to be a major showdown one day in the future.

Gran Metalik/Lince Dorado vs. Tony Nese/Ariya Daivari

Dorado climbs over Ariya to start and grabs a sunset flip for two before it's off to both partners. Metalik does his rope walking into a top rope elbow for two of his own, only to get taken down and sent into the barricade. Back from a break with Metalik in trouble off a neck crank.

Metalik fights up and grabs a tornado DDT to set up the hot tag. Daivari cuts Dorado off with a spinebuster but eats a handspring Stunner. The masked ones get creative with stereo moonsaults to the floor, dropping Nese and Daivari in a big crash. Back in and Dorado is shoved off the top, setting up the hammerlock clothesline to give Daivari the pin at 10:11.

Rating: C. Pretty standard cruiserweight tag which is all you can expect around here. Some combination of about six cruiserweights are always filling in the second match on this show and that gets very tiring. At least the matches are usually entertaining, which is more than you can say for a lot of the Main Event stuff.

We look back at Braun Strowman's amazing destruction of Roman Reigns, including the ambulance spot.

We wrap it up with the end of Strowman vs. Big Show with the ring imploding.

Overall Rating: C-. Very skippable show here as the Superstar Shakeup is just starting to take effect. As is the case 90% of the time, the Raw highlights mean far more than the wrestling, which really needs a shakeup of its own. A few weeks back we had New Day and then Big Cass on some shows. Would it really kill them to let a midcard act show up every week or two? It can't be that hard. Anyway, pretty standard Main Event this week, which could mean different things for different viewers.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the NXT: The Full Sail Years Volumes I and II, now in PAPERBACK. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/03/24/kbs-history-of-nxt-volumes-1-and-2-now-available-in-paperback/>

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

Monday Night Raw – April 17, 2017: That Ambulance Died in Vain

Monday Night Raw

Date: April 17, 2017

Location: Schottenstein Center, Columbus, Ohio

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Booker T.

Just in case we haven't had enough going on of late, this is kind of a relaunch for Raw as we have a fresh roster at full strength for the first time. In addition to all the new names, the interesting question is will Roman Reigns be here. After Braun Strowman basically killed him last week, it should be interesting to see if he'll be here tonight. If so, WWE is missing a major opportunity. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Strowman destroying Reigns last week, turning himself into the biggest unintentional face on the roster as a result.

Here's Strowman to open things up. Strowman is proud of the beating he gave Roman last week, which saw Reigns have a separated shoulder and cracked ribs. Reigns will NOT be here tonight and that earns one heck of a YES chant. Strowman says he's ready to tear through the locker room but here's General Manager Kurt Angle to interrupt. The boss gets right to the point and makes Strowman vs. Reigns for Payback. As for tonight, Strowman has the night off but Braun wants more competition. That sounds like a threat.

Samoa Joe vs. Chris Jericho

Seth Rollins, who faces Joe at Payback, is on commentary. Joe goes right after Jericho to start but gets dropkicked out to the floor as we take an early break. Back with Joe in control and hitting his

chop to the shoulder blades. We hit the nerve hold for a bit, followed by the scoop powerslam for two. The crowd sounds rather energized tonight, which I'm sure has nothing to do with the lack of Reigns and Stephanie tonight.

Joe misses a middle rope backplash (though his leg landed on the back of Jericho's head), allowing Chris to grab the Walls. That doesn't last long though as Jericho escapes and grabs the Koquina Clutch. Jericho tries the Bret Hart/Roddy Piper counter but Joe turns over and keeps the hold for the tap out at 9:08.

Rating: C+. They're making Joe out to be a killer and that's a great sign for his future. The fact that he just beat Jericho clean by submission shows that there's something to him and WWE knows it. I'd love to see Joe vs. Lesnar way down the line and they've built him as the kind of guy who could give him a run for his money.

Post match Joe says he remembers the night he debuts and the noise the fans made. Joe worked for HHH and since he cares about his clients, he'll take care of Seth at Payback. Seth says of course it was personal and Joe is going to learn that Payback is a b****.

Anderson and Gallows are on the way to the ring when they pass by the Drifter playing his guitar. They'll be facing Golden Truth tonight but Strowman runs Golden Truth over and beats the heck out of them.

Strowman won't leave.

Anderson and Gallows are in the ring with Anderson saying Golden Truth just got the United Airlines treatment. They came here for a fight so get someone out here.

Anderson and Gallows vs. Enzo Amore/Big Cass

After Enzo calls this the realest night of the week, Cass hammers on Anderson with a right hand to the ribs putting Karl down. Cass keeps things up by throwing Enzo at both bald guys as we take a break. Back with Enzo in trouble (some things never change), including a DDT on the arm and an armbar from Gallows. A spinebuster makes things even worse but Enzo comes off the middle rope with the jumping DDT.

Cass comes in and cleans house with the usual, including a big boot to knock Gallows outside. It takes Cass outside as well though, leaving Enzo to try another jumping DDT. Anderson is ready this time

though and catches him in midair before throwing him knees first at the top rope. That's some rather unique offense but it's enough to put Enzo away at 10:48.

Rating: C-. Well Anderson and Gallows certainly needed the win, especially with Wilder (and presumably the Revival as a whole) on the shelf for a few months. The match was good enough though that ending was a big odd. You would expect Anderson to use that as a setup for the finish but it got the pin so it doesn't make a huge difference.

Video on Mickie James.

Video on Nia Jax.

Here are Miz and Maryse for MizTV. Miz starts talking about the Superstar Shakeup but gets cut off by Dean Ambrose, the scheduled guest, before he can get very far. Ambrose sucks up to the Ohio crowd before ripping on Miz's gear. Miz doesn't want to hear it because he's done everything he can to make the people in that locker room look like superstars while Ambrose makes them look like regular wrestlers.

It doesn't matter though because people love Ambrose, who was #1 pick in the Draft and was WWE Champion at Summerslam. Then Dean wasted all that momentum when he was on the Kickoff Show six months later. Ambrose doesn't care what he looks like because he loves coming out here in front of twenty people or a hundred thousand.

That's why he's the Intercontinental Champion, which he beat Miz for in the first place. Maryse says the title doesn't make the man so Dean asks her to hold the mic. As Miz goes on another rant, Dean empties his pockets and takes his jacket off before hammering Miz down. Dirty Deeds doesn't work though and Miz and Maryse run.

Strowman drags Kalisto through the back and throws him in a trashcan. Big Show runs Strowman over and says pick on someone your own size.

TJ Perkins vs. Jack Gallagher

Neville comes out to watch in what is billed as a special appearance. This brings out Austin Aries for "an even more special appearance". They trade wristlocks to start with Gallagher taking him to the mat and cranking on both arms at the same time. Perkins does a bit of dabbing but can't handle the fact that Gallagher pops

up. William III is sent to the floor to Gallagher's dismay but he misses a charge to the floor for a heck of a crash.

Back from a break with Gallagher flipping out of a suplex and grabbing a t-bone suplex of his own. The headbutt sends Perkins outside but it allows Jack to reclaim his trusty umbrella. That means the Mary Poppins dive but Perkins throws Gallagher into Aries. Austin is about to go inside, only to have Neville break it up. The distraction lets TJ kick the rope into Gallagher, setting up the Detonation Kick for the pin at 9:56.

Rating: C+. This is what 205 Live had needed to do for months now: build up some other stop stars aside from just the champion and his #1 contender. Odds are this sets up a tag match, which should be rather entertaining if it's given enough time to go somewhere. I liked this match more than I was expecting to and I'm glad they're giving Perkins more of a push.

Titus O'Neil congratulates Apollo Crews on his impending fatherhood but Titus wants to know how Apollo is going to make an impact. The best idea Titus has is joining the Titus Brand. Maybe Crews could get into travel with the Apollo Cruise where they'll dance to Apollo Blues. If that goes badly, they can go to the new law firm: Apollo Sues. Titus gives him a card but Crews doesn't seem convinced.

The Hardys are glad to be back and look forward to working with the new talent. Sheamus and Cesaro come up to talk about how much they respect the Hardys but it'll be an honor to win the titles from such legends.

Sasha Banks vs. Nia Jax vs. Alexa Bliss vs. Mickie James

Winner gets Bayley at Payback. Nia cleans house to start but Bliss bails to the floor, allowing Mickie and Sasha to dropkick Nia outside. Sasha gets the better of it and sends Mickie outside for a dive onto all three as we take a break. Back with Alexa in control until she charges into a slam from Nia.

Jax slams all three on top of each other before swinging Mickie around in a cobra clutch. It's off to a bearhug on Banks with Nia easily suplexing her way out of Sasha's guillotine counter. Mickie armbars her way out of a choke but Nia throws her at Sasha in the corner. Alexa goes up top to try a dropkick but thinks twice when Nia stares her down. A missed charge sends Nia into the post, allowing everyone else to hammer on each other.

The double knees in the corner get two on Bliss with Nia making the save. Mickie gets pulled outside as well and it's down to Sasha vs. Alexa. James has to break up a Bank Statement but here's Nia to knock Mickie off the top. The Samoan drop plants Banks but Bliss runs in for the 13:44.

Rating: C+. The time brings this one down a bit though it was a lot of fun until the end. Bliss winning, especially in her hometown, is a nice touch though they need to stop having Jax get THIS close, only to slip up after dominating everything in sight. It's the right call though as Banks vs. Bayley is still going to be a major showdown one day in the future.

Show says he'll beat up Strowman.

Finn Balor vs. Curt Hawkins

Coup de Grace finishes Hawkins in 36 seconds. Balor isn't even sweating.

Chris Jericho can't stop thinking about his rematch with Kevin Owens and thinks America deserves a better face. If he wins the title back he heads to Smackdown, but it doesn't matter if it's Smackdown, Velocity, Sunday Night Heat or Nitro: the Friends of Jericho will follow him anywhere. Chris: "You hear them Tom?" Mike Rome: "It's Mike, Chris." We get the Bugs Bunny/Daffy Duck routine as Mike forgets his own name. Chris: "You know what happens when you don't know your own name?" Elias Samson wanders up and plays his guitar so Jericho lets Mike/Tom off the list and puts Samson on instead.

Bray Wyatt asks what we're afraid of. Maybe the unknown? The dark? Or the monster underneath our bed. Fear lives in his house and we hear about how much Bray wants to hear Randy Orton scream. I love Bray but these things are getting really tiresome as there's no reason to believe he has a chance of winning and he'll just keep plugging along like the loss means nothing.

Alicia Fox and Dana Brooke are watching clips from 205 Live when Emma comes up to say Dana was laughing at Alicia getting powder thrown in her face all week long. Fox doesn't want to be Dana's friend anymore. Dana calls Emma out for lying but Emma says that's what she gets for standing on her own two feet.

Jeff Hardy vs. Cesaro

Cesaro takes him down to start but gets sent to the floor for a

clothesline from the apron. Jeff seems to be banged up on the floor and gets caught with the running uppercut. Back from a break with Cesaro getting two and having his chinlock broken in a hurry. Jeff's knee seems to be fine but Cesaro nails him with the springboard corkscrew elbow for two.

Jeff fights up and gets the same off the Whisper in the Wind, followed by the Twisting Stunner, which isn't the Twist of Fate but you can't expect the announcers to be able to really call the moves properly. I mean, it might run them afoul of JBL and that just sounds scary. Anyway, the Swanton is good for the pin at 13:01.

Rating: C. They billed this as a dream match which is quite the stretch, though I do appreciate WWE treating Jeff like a legend. I know it's been nearly ten years but Jeff is a former three time World Champion. You have to treat someone like that as something special and it's a good sign that WWE is doing just that.

Golden Truth and Kalisto are injured but here are Heath Slater and Rhyno, the latter of whom is eating cheese whiz and crackers. Slater is VERY excited about being back on Raw but they both hide when Strowman comes by. Rhyno even dropped his crackers!

Big Show vs. Braun Strowman

The brawl starts in the aisle with Strowman tossing him into the barricade. Show sends him into it as well and we actually start the match. A baseball slide of all things puts Strowman on the floor but he comes back with a running dropkick of his own. Strowman gets in a suplex and drops an elbow as they're moving in very slow motion here.

Show escapes the powerslam and hits a splash in the corner. The chokeslam gets two and Strowman's powerslam is good for the same. Braun gets crotched on top but knocks Show away, only to dive into the KO Punch for two. With nothing else working, Show goes up top but gets superplexed down.....and they break the ring for the no contest 12:36.

Rating: D. Nope. I know the ring breaking spot is going to get a lot of attention but this COMPLETELY missed the point of the match and did nothing to push Strowman. You know who looked good here? Show, who hung move for move with a guy who TURNED OVER AN AMBULANCE LAST WEEK.

We've already established that Strowman, who didn't even win here, can beat Show and be the bigger monster but that wasn't even shown here. No, what we saw was Big Show getting to prove that he's on equal footing with Strowman, which doesn't make Strowman look unique. That makes Strowman look like he has an equal, which completely misses the point.

Strowman gets up and poses, which I guess is WWE's version of a follow up, to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. This was a bit of a rough one as they certainly did a lot of stuff but the Strowman stuff felt really bad. Beating up Kalisto and Golden Truth and then going to a draw with Big Show doesn't exactly make me think he can beat Reigns or Brock Lesnar (the guy that regularly destroys Show).

The wrestling wasn't great but the show definitely felt like it was moving around at a faster pace, which is an upgrade over some weeks. There's good stuff to be seen here, but Payback is really holding things up. You have one of the new Raw guys being stuck waiting to face the Smackdown Champion in a match he has almost no chance of winning and Jericho teasing going to Smackdown while losing to Joe.

There's enough stuff on here to make me look forward to the pay per view but I'm not wild on some of the directions. Strowman's booking made my head hurt and Hardy vs. Cesaro wasn't the most thrilling thing in the world but I like Bliss getting the title shot and Joe being treated like a monster. Overall though, Strowman was the focus here and that REALLY bombed, but at least Big Show looks like an equal to the unstoppable monster.

Results

Samoa Joe b. Chris Jericho – Koquina Clutch

Anderson and Gallows b. Enzo Amore/Big Cass – Anderson threw Amore knees first into the corner

TJ Perkins b. Jack Gallagher – Devastation Kick

Alexa Bliss b. Nia Jax, Mickie James and Sasha Banks – Samoan Drop to James

Finn Balor b. Curt Hawkins – Coup de Grace

Jeff Hardy b. Cesaro – Swanton Bomb

Big Show vs. Braun Strowman went to a no contest when the ring broke

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the NXT: The Full Sail Years Volumes I and II, now in PAPERBACK. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/03/24/kbs-history-of-nxt-volumes-1-and-2-now-available-in-paperback/>

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

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

Main Event – April 13, 2017: The Hometown Version

Main Event

Date: April 13, 2017

Location: Nassau Coliseum, Uniondale, New York

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

I've spent months asking for some kind of a shakeup around here and now that the rosters have been tossed around, WWE might actually have to offer us something fresh around here. It should be interesting to see who replaces Jinder Mahal, who was one of the Main Event regulars. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Big Cass vs. Titus O'Neil

Please don't let Titus be the new guy. Enzo does a big entrance, talking about how he and Cass came here from New Jersey by way of some New York roads. Titus goes straight for him and gets tossed to

the floor off a fall away slam. A right hand staggers Enzo and Titus follows up with some running splashes in the corner. We're already in the chinlock before Cass pops up, hits the Empire Elbow and kicks Titus in the face for the pin at 3:22.

Rating: D+. The match was nothing to see but it was a really smart idea to have Enzo and Cass out there to start the night. The fans are going to go nuts for them every week but putting them out there in front of their hometown crowd is the best thing they could have done. Cass getting a singles win is nice too as that's probably his future.

First Raw moment.

Here's Seth Rollins for a chat. He didn't know if he would ever be in this ring again because he gave everything he had to get ready for Wrestlemania. Last week he woke up after a war with HHH and his knee had never been in so much pain. All he knew was that he had never felt so good because at Wrestlemania, he slayed the King.

There are a lot of things Rollins wants to do around here ("The name Samoa Joe comes to mind."), including wanting to get his hands on the Universal Title. However, something happened at Wrestlemania that might prevent it from happening. We see a clip of Stephanie being knocked through a table, which means she'll be out for a while. Then she'll be back though and Rollins becomes public enemy #1. Therefore, it's probably easier for him to go to Smackdown. That's not what's going to happen though as Seth took the easy way out once and he's not doing it again.

Cue Angle to say that yes, Stephanie made it clear she wants him gone. Angle watched Wrestlemania though and saw Seth win a fight on one leg. Stephanie's opinion aside, as long as Angle is in charge, Seth has a home here on Raw. Angle goes to leave but Samoa Joe comes in for the fight. Rollins superkicks him to the floor though and Joe bails.

To Raw again.

In the back, Michael Cole has a sitdown interview with Roman Reigns.

Roman says the win over Undertaker was the biggest win of his career but it was bittersweet. He's had great guidance but he's not sure how you retire someone you respect so much. Braun Strowman comes in and the fight is on with Reigns being destroyed.

Reigns gets powerslammed onto an anvil case and Braun crushes him by wheeling another case into Reigns' head. Fans: "THANK YOU STROWMAN!" Reigns is taken out on a stretcher. Fans: "YOU DESERVE IT!" Strowman shoves the stretcher down a flight of stairs, drawing the pop of the night. Reigns is wheeled into the ambulance. Braun: "I'M NOT THROUGH WITH YOU YET BOY!" Strowman beats him up even more and TURNS THE AMBULANCE OVER with Reigns inside.

Post break Reigns is loaded into a new ambulance and finally gets to leave.

Gran Metlik/Lince Dorado vs. Drew Gulak/Tony Nese

Nese gets a very nice pop from his hometown crowd. Metalik does all of his flips on Gulak to start before getting pulled down into a dragon sleeper with a bodyscissors (Remember when that was a dangerous move in the Cruiserweight Classic?). We hit some dives before it's off to an early break.

Back with Gulak and Metalik trading chops in the corner until a springboard elbow drops Gulak. The hot tag brings in Dorado and everything breaks down. Dorado grabs a handspring double Stunner (cool), leaving Metalik to walk the top rope for a moonsault onto Gulak. Nese crotches Dorado on top though and the running knee to the jaw is enough for the pin at 8:42.

Rating: C. Totally average cruiserweight tag here and that doesn't mean much. I still really like Metalik and the whole King of the Ropes thing has potential, though he's stuck here because of one botch and there's not much changing that. Nese continues to be just one step away from being awesome but I'm not sure what that step is. We'll wrap it up with this.

Dean Ambrose vs. Kevin Owens

Non-title. An early Dirty Deeds attempt sends Owens bailing to the

floor but Dean whips him into the barricade. Dean scores with a dive and we take a break. Back with Dean caught in a chinlock. Owens: "I could do this all night baby!" Dean fights up and gets sent outside in a crash, followed by a ram into the post. Back in and Ambrose gets in a good shot to knock Owens outside, setting up a suicide dive.

That's not enough for Dirty Deeds though but Owens misses a Cannonball. Dean clotheslines him down but Kevin bails outside. That's fine with Dean, who hits the top rope elbow. Back in and Owens hits the package piledriver slam for two as the fans want Jericho. The Pop Up Powerbomb is countered but Owens escapes Dirty Deeds as well. A superkick blocks the rebound lariat but Dean rolls through into Dirty Deeds for the clean pin at 14:15.

Rating: B. Lack of caring from the crowd aside (yeah fans aren't that interested in a match with nothing on the line after a three and a half hour taping and no story in sight), this was a good back and forth fight between two people with underrated chemistry. I liked it more than I was expecting to but it was missing something to take it to the next level.

Post match Chris Jericho comes out to hit Owens with a Codebreaker to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. This show had the Braun Strowman segment and that alone makes it amazing. If WWE somehow doesn't capitalize on what they did with that, they're actually more of a mess than I thought they were. On top of that, if Reigns is seen on TV at any point before Payback (and even then), they're fools. Good show this week, though it's mainly due to the Raw stuff.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the NXT: The Full Sail Years Volumes I and II, now in PAPERBACK. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/03/24/kbs-history-of-nxt-volumes-1-and-2-now-available-in-paperback/>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling

books at:

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

Monday Night Raw – April 10, 2017: Shake Shake Shake

Monday Night Raw

Date: April 10, 2017

Location: Nassau Coliseum, Uniondale, New York

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

In case last week's post-Wrestlemania show wasn't enough for you, this week we have the first half of the Superstar Shakeup, which will see various talents going to the other shows. In other words, it's whatever they can call the Draft this time around. We're also less than three weeks away from Payback so let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here are Miz and Maryse as Cena and Nikki for their return to Raw. Miz knows they said they were going to Hollywood but it turns out they sucked as actors. So what better way to revamp their careers than come back here? Cue Dean Ambrose, who is so glad to see John and Nikki and congratulates them on their engagement.

Miz tries to explain this to him but Dean cuts them off and congratulates them on beating the horrible Miz and Maryse at Wrestlemania. Dean loved Cena's commercial as an elephant but warns against doing something stupid like making Marine 5. Miz reveals their real identities...and gets taken down by Dirty Deeds.

Kurt Angle is on the phone when Sami Zayn comes in to ask if he's going to Smackdown. Does being here tonight mean he's staying on Raw? Angle cuts him off and says there's a lot of interest from

Smackdown, which Sami asks him to quantify. Miz and Maryse come in to cut him off to trigger an argument, which sets up a match between the two. Angle looks like he's about to snap after being here two weeks.

New Day vs. Revival

Woods and Big E. here as Kofi is out after Revival severely hurt his ankle. Not to worry though as Big E. has a Kofi blowup doll as a replacement. Revival mocks Kofi's injury via some custom t-shirts and are quickly taken down for their efforts. New Day works on Wilder until we take an early break. Back with Dawson working on Woods' ribs as we hear more about Kofi's ankle injury and subsequent surgery. The hot tag brings in Big E. to clean house with belly to bellies and a Warrior splash on Wilder.

Dawson gets in a cheap shot to give Dash two, only to have Woods hit a ridiculous springboard elbow (who was less than a foot from the opposite rope) for two on Scott. Revival makes a blind tag and breaks up the Midnight Hour, only to have Woods dive right into the Shatter Machine for the pin at 7:56.

Rating: B-. The last two weeks have been EXACTLY how Revival should have been debuted. Revival has beaten an all time great team twice in a row and it's not like New Day is going to lose anything as a result. They've been bulletproof for a long time now so putting Revival over like this isn't going to cause them any harm.

Neville isn't worried about facing Austin Aries again when TJ Perkins comes up. TJ threatens to make Neville eat his words but Neville calls him a joke. Perkins won the Cruiserweight Classic but once 205 Live debuted, TJ's career has gone nowhere. Now all of TJ's opportunities are being taken by people like Aries. The only person with any respect for Perkins is Neville, which seems to get TJ's attention. Cue Aries to say he's earned all these opportunities but TJ doesn't seem to buy it.

Curt Hawkins is here to call himself the biggest acquisition since the Louisiana Purchase. This brings out Big Show to knock him out with one punch. For some reason this makes Cole speculate that Big

Show is going to Smackdown.

Austin Aries vs. TJ Perkins

Aries' title shot will officially come at Payback. Neville is on commentary and Cole asks if he can play journalist for a minute. Neville: "Nope." Perkins takes Aries down with a headscissors but stops to check his hair and dab a bit. They run the ropes with Aries cartwheeling away and catching Perkins with a basement dropkick.

That earns Aries a quick rest on top and some mocking of Perkins' taunting. TJ misses his pendulum dropkick and gets taken down by a neckbreaker across the middle rope. Aries dives off the top and that's too much for Neville, who comes down the ramp for a staredown. The distraction lets Perkins grab a small package for the pin at 3:36.

Rating: C. This has me interested as Aries vs. Neville II sounds good but Perkins is one of the only names that could hang on their level if he's on top of his game. If nothing else it could mean Perkins turning heel, which he should have done about six months ago. Good enough match here but the angle is more important.

Aries stares Neville down but Perkins comes in and gives Aries the Detonation Kick, seemingly turning full heel.

Here's Seth Rollins for a chat. He didn't know if he would ever be in this ring again because he gave everything he had to get ready for Wrestlemania. Last week he woke up after a war with HHH and his knee had never been in so much pain. All he knew was that he had never felt so good because at Wrestlemania, he slayed the King.

There are a lot of things Rollins wants to do around here ("The name Samoa Joe comes to mind."), including wanting to get his hands on the Universal Title. However, something happened at Wrestlemania that might prevent it from happening. We see a clip of Stephanie being knocked through a table, which means she'll be out for a while. Then she'll be back though and Rollins becomes public enemy #1. Therefore, it's probably easier for him to go to Smackdown. That's not what's going to happen though as Seth took the easy way

out once and he's not doing it again.

Cue Angle to say that yes, Stephanie made it clear she wants him gone. Angle watched Wrestlemania though and saw Seth win a fight on one leg. Stephanie's opinion aside, as long as Angle is in charge, Seth has a home here on Raw. Angle goes to leave but Samoa Joe comes in for the fight. Rollins superkicks him to the floor though and Joe bails.

Kevin Owens doesn't care about the Superstar Shakeup because he'll be on top of either brand. He says go find Chris Jericho and ask him about the Shakeup because he'd love to go to Smackdown and find some success. Owens is the top champion on Raw and doesn't want to hear about Dean Ambrose.

Charlotte vs. Nia Jax

Nia runs her over to start and scores with a shoulder breaker to really take over. Some elbows to the back have Charlotte reeling and it's off to a chinlock. The fans look at something in the crowd as Nia throws Charlotte down but some shots to the ribs give Charlotte an opening. A chop block sets up Natural Selection for two and Nia goes shoulder first into the post. Charlotte hits the moonsault to the floor with her boot hitting Nia square in the head. Nia barely makes it back inside and the Figure Four is easily blocked. A Samoan Drop crushes Charlotte for the pin at 5:58.

Rating: C. This was sloppy at times but it completely got the point across. Nia looks like a much bigger deal now as beating Charlotte is still a huge accomplishment with only a handful of people being able to do it on occasion. Jax still needs experience but once she gets that under her belt, she's going to be something very special.

Video on Finn Balor.

Jinder Mahal vs. Finn Balor

Balor starts fast with some kicks until Mahal blasts him with a forearm to the jaw. Not that it matters as he kicks Mahal in the head and scores with the Sling Blade. The running corner dropkick sets up the Coup de Grace to put Jinder away at 2:48.

With Balor still in the ring, Bray Wyatt pops up on screen to say he's here on Raw. In three weeks, the entire world will be able to see him torture Randy Orton at Payback in a House of Horrors match. On the other hand, Balor needs to watch himself because Bray will be watching him.

We look back at the opening sequence.

Apollo Crews, Kalisto, Heath Slater and Rhyno are all coming to Raw.

The Miz vs. Sami Zayn

Sami does his springboard leapfrog to set up the armdrags, followed by a clothesline to send Miz outside. Miz hides behind Maryse to prevent the dive though and we take a break. Back with Sami fighting out of a chinlock but getting caught in a DDT for two. Miz does the YES Kicks but Sami reverses into the Blue Thunder Bomb for its traditional near fall. Maryse makes the save by pulling Miz away from the Helluva Kick but Sami grabs a rollup for the pin at 7:39.

Rating: C+. Not bad here and it's always nice to see Sami get a win like this. I'd still like to see Sami head over to Smackdown and now he might even go over with some fresh momentum. At the moment, Smackdown is running very low on talent so hopefully someone goes over to the blue show to balance things out a bit.

In the back, Michael Cole has a sitdown interview with Roman Reigns. Roman says the win over Undertaker was the biggest win of his career but it was bittersweet. He's had great guidance but he's not sure how you retire someone you respect so much. Braun Strowman comes in and the fight is on with Reigns being destroyed.

Reigns gets powerlsammed onto an anvil case and Braun crushes him by wheeling another case into Reigns' head. Fans: "THANK YOU STROWMAN!" Reigns is taken out on a stretcher. Fans: "YOU DESERVE IT!" Strowman shoves the stretcher down a flight of stairs, drawing the pop of the night. Reigns is wheeled into the ambulance. Braun: "I'M NOT THROUGH WITH YOU YET BOY!" Strowman beats him up even more and TURNS THE AMBULANCE OVER with Reigns inside.

Post break Reigns is loaded into a new ambulance, which

unfortunately isn't being driven by Strowman.

Hardys/Sheamus/Cesaro vs. Shining Stars/Anderson and Gallows

Before the bell, Elias Samson wanders out onto the stage, sending Graves through the roof due to his long standing hatred of all things Samson. Anderson gets taken down to start with Sheamus dropping a knee. Back from a break with Cesaro in trouble and Sheamus having to make a save. That earns him a Backstabber from Primo but allows Cesaro to dive over for the hot tag to Matt. Everything breaks down and Gallows breaks up a Side Effect. Sheamus and Cesaro send Anderson and Gallows to the floor, leaving Jeff to hit a Poetry in Motion flip dive onto the floor. Back inside, Primo takes the Twist and Swanton for the pin at 7:48.

Rating: C-. This match had no chance of following the Strowman and Reigns segment and I think everyone knew it. The Hardys are still a great nostalgia act but if they're just Matt and Jeff, I'm not sure how long they're going to be able to last at this level. Then again, I'm not sure how long they're supposed to last.

The winners pose for a good while.

Dana Brooke is reading "How to Be Your Own Protege" when Emma comes in. She seems to think Dana still works for her but Dana says that was last year and things have changed.

Here's Sasha Banks to introduce Bayley for a chat. Bayley thanks everyone for their support because she's still the same 12 year old girl that loved this so much. Sasha congratulates Bayley for her win but now she wants a title shot of her own. Cue Alexa Bliss to say the two of them are nauseating.

She's the two time Smackdown Women's Champion and now wants to add the Raw Women's Title. This brings out Mickie James to say Bayley's nightmare is just beginning. Before she can go any further, here's Nia Jax to run her over. Bliss pushes Banks into Nia, who sends her outside. Bayley gets planted with the Samoan drop and Nia says the title is hers.

Reigns has cracked ribs, internal injuries and a possible separated

shoulder.

Dean Ambrose vs. Kevin Owens

Non-title. An early Dirty Deeds attempt sends Owens bailing to the floor but Dean whips him into the barricade. Dean scores with a dive and we take a break. Back with Dean caught in a chinlock. Owens: "I could do this all night baby!" Dean fights up and gets sent outside in a crash, followed by a ram into the post. Back in and Ambrose gets in a good shot to knock Owens outside, setting up a suicide dive.

That's not enough for Dirty Deeds though but Owens misses a Cannonball. Dean clotheslines him down but Kevin bails outside. That's fine with Dean, who hits the top rope elbow. Back in and Owens hits the package piledriver slam for two as the fans want Jericho. The Pop Up Powerbomb is countered but Owens escapes Dirty Deeds as well. A superkick blocks the rebound lariat but Dean rolls through into Dirty Deeds for the clean pin at 14:15.

Rating: B. Lack of caring from the crowd aside (yeah fans aren't that interested in a match with nothing on the line after a three and a half hour taping and no story in sight), this was a good back and forth fight between two people with underrated chemistry. I liked it more than I was expecting to but it was missing something to take it to the next level.

Post match Chris Jericho comes out to hit Owens with a Codebreaker to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. The wrestling was much better than usual here and they added some big names to the Raw roster, which should really freshen things up a lot. They still need to get rid of some of the excess names because the roster is rather bloated (getting rid of the Cruiserweights would be a good place to start) and I'm sure five or six names will be heading to Smackdown otherwise. Good show here as they kept the energy up, complete with some hilariously unintentional comedy (I think?) with Strowman vs. Reigns.

Results

Revival b. New Day – Shatter Machine to Woods

TJ Perkins b. Austin Aries – Small package

Nia Jax b. Charlotte – Samoan Drop

Finn Balor b. Jinder Mahal – Coup de Grace

Sami Zayn b. The Miz – Rollup

Hardys/Sheamus/Cesaro b. Anderson and Gallows/Shining Stars – Swanton Bomb to Primo

Dean Ambrose b. Kevin Owens – Codebreaker

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the NXT: The Full Sail Years Volumes I and II, now in PAPERBACK. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/03/24/kbs-history-of-nxt-volumes-1-and-2-now-available-in-paperback/>

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

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

Main Event – April 6, 2017: I'm Sorry Curtis

Main Event

Date: April 6, 2017

Location: Amway Center, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Byron Saxton

Can the Wrestlemania edition of this show be an upgrade? Am I asking too much for something like that? Yeah probably, as this is almost bound to be the same people having the same dark matches because that's how this show works. At least Raw was fun this week so the

highlights should be good. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Akira Tozawa vs. Drew Gulak

Gulak has been trying to move 205 Live and the cruiserweights closer to a mat based style in recent weeks. They do go to the mat to start but it involves a kick to Drew's chest and a backsplash for two. Drew bails for a breather and hides on the ramp to avoid a big dive, which just earns him a series of chops and a right hand to the face. A baseball slide drops Tozawa and a backbreaker sets up a chinlock. Tozawa shouts a lot, fights up, and grabs the snap German suplex for the pin at 4:34.

Rating: C+. This was better than I was expecting as Tozawa continues to look like a machine out there almost every time. There's a good chance he'll get a title match in the near future, especially if Neville retains over Aries again. Gulak has something with this anti-205 Live stuff if he can get a few people to side with him.

From Raw for the first time.

Here's Vince for the start of the second hour. Naturally the fans sing his song, drawing a big grin from the boss. A ROMAN SUCKS chant starts up but Vince talks over it (and it goes away), thanking the fans for being so passionate. Wrestlemania may be over but next week we're having a Superstar Shake Up because it's time to shake things up. We have some very sad footage from last night, which shows Stephanie going through a table.

That's going to put Stephanie out for awhile and since we have no General Manager, it's time to hire someone new. The new GM was inducted into the Hall of Fame over the weekend...and here's Teddy Long. Teddy starts dancing until Vince shouts that it's not him. Vince: "TEDDY STOP DANCING!" It's not you!" Teddy: "It's not me?" Vince: "It's not you!" Teddy: "Well...my bad! Holla holla holla!" It's Kurt Angle of course and that's as good of an option as they really had. Angle hits the catchphrase and is already out.

Raw Part Two!

Here are Paul Heyman and Brock Lesnar for a chat. Brock is a little happier than normal tonight and has allowed Heyman to tell us a bedtime story that both of their children hear. There once was a superhero named Goldberg who stood for honor and valor and all that

good stuff. Then he took the Universal Title but went on a little side trip through south central Suplex City where the Beast beat him up and took his title. The happy ending: there's no more Goldberg around here ever again. Fans: "THANK YOU BROCK!"

That means Brock needs new challengers. Fans: "FINN! FINN! FINN!" Heyman suggests Seth Rollins, either Hardys or even both Hardys but let's talk about the 2 in 23-2. Yes he means Roman Reigns and history says that these two must meet. If Reigns is the big dog then Lesnar is animal cruelty. Heyman wants to do it tonight but here's Braun Strowman instead to not much of a reaction (not that surprising). Strowman wants Lesnar's attention because Brock already has his. Lesnar lays the title down in front of Strowman and says bring it but Strowman leaves instead.

Titus O'Neil vs. Curtis Axel

Of all the people you can add to the Main Event regulars, freaking TITUS??? O'Neil runs him over to start but won't do the dog bark here in Florida. A clothesline puts Titus on the floor and we take an early break. Back with Axel's comeback being stopped via a hard whip into the corner. That means it's bearhug time, followed by a suplex for two. Axel fights back with right hands and a running knee for two of his own. The PerfectPlex is easily countered though and the Clash of the Titus is good for the pin at 8:02.

Rating: C-. That's one of Axel's better matches ever, which is really depressing. You would think that someone would get better just by being around wrestling for so many years but it's not the case here. Axel is trying as hard as he can but it's rather hard to run with an anchor tied around your legs.

We wrap it up with a very shortened version of Finn Balor/Seth Rollins vs. Samoa Joe/Kevin Owens.

Overall Rating: C. Like I said, thank goodness Raw was there to bail this one out. There's only so much you can do when your main event features Titus O'Neil and this show didn't know the way around that problem. There's only so much you're going to get out of this show and this week's episode was all the proof you need.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the NXT: The Full Sail Years Volumes I and II, now in PAPERBACK. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/03/24/kbs-history-of-nxt-volumes-1-and-2-now-available-in-paperback/>

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

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

Wrestlemania XXXIII

Preview: Andre the Giant Memorial Battle Royal

All aboard!

This one belongs on the pre-show, for the sake of the entrances taking up too much time alone. At the moment there are a ton of jobbers filling out a lot of the spots, meaning this is about what you would expect from this kind of thing. At the moment there are twenty five entrants, though you can almost guarantee five more being added at minimum. As is so often the case, only a handful of them are realistic options.

For my money (and almost everyone else's), those options are Big Show, Braun Strowman and Sami Zayn, but I'll throw in Mojo Rawley and the recently added Killian Dain. There's a real chance to make someone in this battle royal and they've been pushing the heck out of Rawley on TV as of late. Throw in how cool he was at Axxess and I'd love to see him go somewhere, especially in a match that doesn't have to be some big game changer if they don't want it to be. The rest of the field will be pure filler, but it could be really interesting to see what surprises they might throw out.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the NXT: The Full Sail Years Volumes I and II, now in

PAPERBACK. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/03/24/kbs-history-of-nxt-volumes-1-and-2-now-available-in-paperback/>

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

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

Main Event – March 23, 2017: The Main Event Musketeers

Main Event

Date: March 23, 2017

Location: Barclays Center, New York Center, New York

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Byron Saxton

You would think this show might pick up a little bit with Wrestlemania just around the corner but odds are we're looking at some combination of Jinder Mahal, Bo Dallas and Curtis Axel in the first match, followed by a cruiserweight tag. At least the Raw highlights are quick but I'm not sure how long the already limited interest is going to last. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Jinder Mahal vs. Curtis Axel

Of course. Axel calls himself the Ax-Man and elbows Mahal in the back of the neck to start. A quick trip to the floor clears Mahal's head and he comes back with a hot shot for two of his own. We hit the chinlock for a bit before the SHAH right hands in the corner have Mahal reeling. The Hennig necksnap and a clothesline get two but Mahal grabs his cobra clutch slam for the pin at 3:46.

Rating: D. I've seen these guys so many times that I can almost figure out the matches before they happen. That's really not good and makes the show feel pretty worthless. WWE has a huge roster and these two (plus Dallas) are on here almost every week. Get R-Truth or Goldust or someone from NXT up here. Just freshen things up a little bit and it'll be easier to watch.

Quick look at two weeks ago when Mick Foley suggested Stephanie McMahon be fired, setting up a brawl between HHH and Seth Rollins.

From Raw!

Here's Mick Foley to get things going but he has to read a speech off some cards, thanking HHH and Stephanie for giving him his job. He talks about the end of last week's show and how stupid it was. Foley says he's taking a leave of absence but goes on a rant about how he was given these stupid cards ten minutes before the show started. He's been in this business for thirty one years and this is how he's treated. Foley: "I'M MICK FREAKING FOLEY!" The mic gets cut off and here's Stephanie to a rousing chorus of boos. Stephanie rips on Foley for not being able to do anything right and finally fires him.

Also from Raw!

Here's an in-ring sitdown interview with HHH. The boss talks over the CM Punk chants and explains how people like Mick Foley started listening to the fans, just like Seth Rollins. HHH talks about the end of last week's show and we see it again (third time tonight). HHH: "That's on you!" He finds it funny that the crutch had to use a crutch to come to the ring last week and it was the crutch that cost him in the end. He's done with Rollins because Seth won't be able to fight at Wrestlemania.

HHH has pulled some tickets for Rollins and hands them to Cole before going to leave. Not so fast though as HHH thinks we might need to get this over with once and for all. Everyone wants to see this fight so he'll draw up a release saying Seth can't sue HHH for ending his career. If Rollins is the man he thinks he is, he'll show up next week and sign the paperwork so they can have the match.

Jack Gallagher/Gran Metalik vs. Ariya Daivari/Noam Dar

Dar and Gallagher start things off and it's an early exchange of headlocks. A trip gives Gallagher two but he's driven into the

corner for the tag off to Daivari. That's fine as Gallagher gets over to Metalik for the springboard wristdrag. Metalik moonsaults onto the villains and we take a break.

Back with Metalik in control but getting tripped off the ropes to change control. Dar gets in a few forearms to the back and it's time to start in on the ribs. That goes nowhere so let's try variety of chinlocks. Metalik is sent into the corner but counters by walking from one middle rope to another, setting up a missile dropkick. It's off to Gallagher as everything breaks down, allowing Metalik to dive onto Ariya. The headbutt into the corner dropkick ends Dar at 9:48.

Rating: D+. I like everyone here but Daivari so this was entertaining enough. There's something so easy about just having people go out there and fly around a bit, which is almost exactly what Metalik is around for. The other guys were more than fine and the match was watchable, though nothing we haven't seen time after time.

We'll wrap it up here.

Roman Reigns vs. Braun Strowman

Reigns starts fast and knocks Strowman to the floor but the apron dropkick is broken up with one heck of a clothesline. Back in and a hard whip sends Reigns into the buckle before we hit a very big chinlock. Reigns fights up with some clotheslines before avoiding a charge in the corner.

That means more clotheslines but he has to escape a chokeslam. The Samoan drop (with some effort) gets two and the apron dropkick makes things even worse for Braun. Not that it matters as Reigns is whipped hard into the steps, which are then thrown into the ring. Roman Superman Punches them out of his hand though and escapes the powerslam. Another Superman Punch drops Braun and Reigns loads the spear, only to have Undertaker appear in the ring. Undertaker actually chokeslams Strowman, winces a lot and turns around for the spear. We'll say the match is a no contest at about 9:00.

Rating: C-. These two work well together and I'm glad there's no finish as Reigns pinning Strowman didn't need to happen again (nor did it really need to happen in the first place but that's a different story). Reigns vs. Undertaker will be fine, assuming Undertaker can keep going physically.

Reigns leaves and Undertaker sits up about thirty seconds later, which Graves says should shake Reigns' confidence.

Overall Rating: D. Standard Main Event here, but how much of the focus is on Stephanie vs. Foley, when they're not even announced for Wrestlemania? It's like there's a major Raw angle but it's a TV exclusive, which is a really weird way to go about doing things at this time of the year. The exclusives here were really repetitive, but it's not like they're the important parts of the show anyway.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the NXT: The Full Sail Years Volumes I and II, now in PAPERBACK. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/03/24/kbs-history-of-nxt-volumes-1-and-2-now-available-in-paperback/>

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

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

Monday Night Raw – March 20, 2017: The Wrestlemania Reds (Because Smackdown is Blue)

Monday Night Raw

Date: March 20, 2017

Location: Barclays Center, New York Center, New York

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, Corey Graves

WE WANT PAIGE! Sorry just thought I'd get you used to those tonight

as the New York crowd is going to let you know about it all night long. We're less than two weeks away from Wrestlemania and there's a good chance tonight is going to be all about the big push towards the show. Already announced tonight is Roman Reigns vs. Braun Strowman and Kevin Owens on the Highlight Reel. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of the end of last week's show with Mick Foley being told he had to fire someone and getting in a fight with HHH as a result. This led to Seth Rollins coming out and brawling with HHH as well until a crutch to the knee took Rollins down to end the show.

Here's Mick Foley to get things going but he has to read a speech off some cards, thanking HHH and Stephanie for giving him his job. He talks about the end of last week's show and how stupid it was. Foley says he's taking a leave of absence but goes on a rant about how he was given these stupid cards ten minutes before the show started. He's been in this business for thirty one years and this is how he's treated. Foley: "I'M MICK FREAKING FOLEY!" The mic gets cut off and here's Stephanie to a rousing chorus of boos.

Stephanie rips on Foley for not being able to do anything right and finally fires him. Cue Sami Zayn of all people to say that Foley has had more integrity in the last nine months than she's had in her whole life. Sami rips on her but she laughs him off and says Sami isn't worthy to speak to her at all, let alone like this. She tells him to get out of here but Sami says he's going to stay here and do the right thing. Cue Samoa Joe (with Stephanie talking over his music) and we've got a match. Sami hits a big flip dive before a break or the bell.

Sami Zayn vs. Samoa Joe

Joined in progress with Sami firing off some forearms until a hard elbow to the face puts him down. Joe's big kneedrop gets two and the powerslam gets the same as Corey sums up Joe in a single line: "Beating will continue until morality improves." That's an old Craig Pittman line (don't bother looking it up) and one of my favorites ever. The Muscle Buster is broken up so Joe knocks him outside for

the suicide elbow.

Back from a break with Sami caught in a bow and arrow and shaking his head rather hard. Sami gets up and hits one heck of a clothesline to sent Joe outside but Joe is right there to break up the suicide dive. Joe gets posted and the diving DDT through the ropes crushes Joe, only to have Sami comes up holding his arm. Back in and the Helluva Kick is countered into the Rock Bottom out of the corner. The Koquina Clutch ends Sami at 12:20.

Rating: B-. Good, hard hitting match here and more entertaining than their pay per view match at Fastlane. Joe is being treated like a killer and is already as effective as he was down in NXT. I had a fun time with this one as Sami is one of the best ever at taking a stiff beating, especially from someone as good as Joe.

We look back at Braun Strowman attacking Roman Reigns at the Royal Rumble.

Post break Foley is talking to Sami, who thanks him for everything and says it's a rare instance where it's ok to meet his hero. Sheamus and Cesaro thank Foley for believing in them and hugs abound. Speaking of hugs, Foley runs into Bayley for another hug but turns around to see HHH, who tells him to have a nice day. Foley leaves, without his luggage for some reason.

We look back at Rollins vs. HHH from last week.

Video of Rollins' rehab.

We get a talk with a doctor, who says Seth's knee has been re-aggravated and only the brace saved it from being horrible. It's going to be several MONTHS before Rollins is ready to compete but there's a big reason to believe he'll be at Wrestlemania anyway. No doctor will clear him in time.

Charlotte vs. Dana Brooke

Fallout from Charlotte turning on Dana last week. Dana waistlocks her to the mat and hammers away in the corner, sending Charlotte out to the floor for a breather. Back in and Dana gets two off a clothesline followed by an elbow drop. Charlotte looks stunned as a

WE WANT PAIGE (to the NEW DAY ROCKS beat) starts up. A quick big boot takes Dana's head off for the pin at 3:40. That was Charlotte's only major offensive move.

Rating: C-. This was a way to push Dana a bit and it worked to a certain degree. The roster could always use some fresh blood so pushing Dana is a good idea and I can see why they didn't put her over Charlotte in her first match. Not bad though. The ending was really sudden though and it hurt things a lot.

Bayley questions Stephanie's actions so she makes Nia Jax vs. Bayley for later tonight. If Nia wins, the Women's Title match at Wrestlemania is a fatal four way. We'll throw in a bonus by making it No DQ.

Here's Jericho for the Highlight Reel. Jericho wants to talk about the REAL Kevin Owens but first has to acknowledge the Friends of Jericho, who he'd like to "CHEER ME ON MAN!" Chris gets back to the point and shows us a picture of Owens at 16 years old in a Y2J shirt, doing a Jericho pose.

That looks like a fan of Jericho and "he was marking out man!". Then he was signed to WWE in 2014 and actually sent Jericho a DM on Twitter (which we see) where he asked if Jericho had any advice. At the end, Owens said he'd be there if Jericho needed anything. That brings us to Fastlane, where Owens was terrified when Jericho came out.

See, the truth is that Jericho isn't Owens' friend because he's Owens' idol. At Wrestlemania, Owens is facing his hero and idol, the best in the world, the Ayatollah, Chris Jericho man! Do you know what happen when you stab Chris Jericho in the back? Cue Samoa Joe for a distraction so Owens can jump Jericho from behind. Owens gives him the Pop Up Powerbomb and RIPS UP THE LIST!

We look at Strowman and Reigns' contract signing from last month.

TJ Perkins vs. Brian Kendrick

Perkins sends him outside for the slingshot dropkick, followed by a high crossbody for two. Not that it matters as Perkins gets caught

in Sliced Bread #2 for the pin at 1:25.

Post match Kendrick talks about Akira Tozawa not being in the country and pulls out Tozawa's passport. So how did he leave the country?

Roman Reigns says this is his yard.

Long video on Goldberg vs. Lesnar, focusing on Goldberg's rise and their Wrestlemania XX match.

Stephanie makes Cesaro/Sheamus vs. Enzo/Big Cass/Gallows/Anderson. If Sheamus and Cesaro lose, they're out of the triple threat.

Nia Jax vs. Bayley

Non-title and No DQ. Bayley goes right after her to start but gets knocked outside with Nia throwing her around like she's not even there. The running hip attack hits the steps though and we take a break. Back with Nia holding a chinlock before dropping some big elbows. With that not going anywhere, Nia takes her outside and swings Bayley into the barricade a few times. It's chair time but Bayley baseball slides it into her face. The fans are doing the Wave and chanting for Sasha as Bayley gets in a high crossbody for two. Now it's off to the CM Punk chants as the Samoan drop ends Bayley at 10:10.

Rating: D. "We put Bayley in backstage segments with Bayley. If she can't overcome all these losses and times where she's treated like nothing, that's just her fault." That's pretty clearly the mentality around here because WWE has no idea what made Bayley work in NXT and thinks she can be treated like anyone else. BUT DID I MENTION SHE'S BEEN IN SEGMENTS WITH STEPHANIE??? Oh and there was no reason for this to be No DQ. Bayley could have hit a regular baseball slide and it would change nothing.

Women's History Month video on Mae Young.

Here's an in-ring sitdown interview with HHH. The boss talks over the CM Punk chants and explains how people like Mick Foley started listening to the fans, just like Seth Rollins. HHH talks about the end of last week's show and we see it again (third time tonight).

HHH: "That's on you!" He finds it funny that the crutch had to use a crutch to come to the ring last week and it was the crutch that cost him in the end. He's done with Rollins because Seth won't be able to fight at Wrestlemania.

HHH has pulled some tickets for Rollins and hands them to Cole before going to leave. Not so fast though as HHH thinks we might need to get this over with once and for all. Everyone wants to see this fight so he'll draw up a release saying Seth can't sue HHH for ending his career. If Rollins is the man he thinks he is, he'll show up next week and sign the paperwork so they can have the match.

Clip of Reigns beating Strowman at Fastlane.

Cesaro/Sheamus vs. Enzo Amore/Big Cass/Anderson and Gallows

Enzo and Cass do their thing before the match and get in a fight with Anderson and Gallows. The distraction sets up a Brogue Kick on Gallows for the pin at 36 seconds.

Enzo and Cass beat up the champs again post match.

New Day is in the back and Big E. asks if Woods has anything to tell him about. That would be Wrestlemania actually as the trio talks about the bigger matches. Big E. is really, really excited for Goldberg vs. Brock Lesnar. They even act out a little bit of the buildup.

Austin Aries vs. Tony Nese

Aries claps his hands around Nese's ears to start but gets forearmed in the face as we take an early break. Back with Nese holding him in a torture rack but missing a springboard moonsault. Aries comes back with a suplex and the very popular Pendulum Elbow. A missile dropkick sets up the discus five-arm (dang it Terry Taylor) for the pin at 7:55.

Rating: C-. This was just a way to show you that Aries is indeed awesome and ready to face Neville at Wrestlemania. I can go for Aries getting a good push before his title match as he needs to get back in ring shape. Aries is already better than most of the division so a few wins like this are a good idea.

Post match Neville comes out and Aries is more than ready to go. Neville says he's not wasting his time going to the ring because Aries is beneath him. Aries sees a man who knows he has to face the greatest man who ever lived. Over the next thirteen days, Neville needs to enjoy the title while it lasts because it's time for the title to go to the A-Double Level.

Emma is coming soon.

Video on Goldberg vs. Lesnar over the last few months.

Strowman says he's going to destroy Reigns.

Roman Reigns vs. Braun Strowman

Reigns starts fast and knocks Strowman to the floor but the apron dropkick is broken up with one heck of a clothesline. Back in and a hard whip sends Reigns into the buckle before we hit a very big chinlock. Reigns fights up with some clotheslines before avoiding a charge in the corner.

That means more clotheslines but he has to escape a chokeslam. The Samoan drop (with some effort) gets two and the apron dropkick makes things even worse for Braun. Not that it matters as Reigns is whipped hard into the steps, which are then thrown into the ring. Roman Superman Punches them out of his hand though and escapes the powerslam. Another Superman Punch drops Braun and Reigns loads the spear, only to have Undertaker appear in the ring. Undertaker actually chokeslams Strowman, winces a lot and turns around for the spear. We'll say the match is a no contest at about 9:00.

Rating: C-. These two work well together and I'm glad there's no finish as Reigns pinning Strowman didn't need to happen again (nor did it really need to happen in the first place but that's a different story). Reigns vs. Undertaker will be fine, assuming Undertaker can keep going physically.

Reigns leaves and Undertaker sits up about thirty seconds later, which Graves says should shake Reigns' confidence.

Overall Rating: D. Yeah this wasn't much, especially due to the lack of wrestling. I mean, it's no surprise that it's happening as we're

two weeks away from Wrestlemania and the card is mostly set in stone but it doesn't make this the easiest show in the world to sit through. I'm not interested in the Stephanie story (though I rarely am) but she mostly disappeared in the second half of the show. This wasn't a great week but it was almost exactly what I was expecting. Next week is going to be about the same, if not even worse and you should just prepare for it now.

Results

Samoa Joe b. Sami Zayn – Koquina Clutch

Charlotte b. Dana Brooke – Big boot

Brian Kendrick b. TJ Perkins – Sliced Bread #2

Nia Jax b. Bayley – Samoan drop

Cesaro/Sheamus b. Enzo Amore/Big Cass/Anderson and Gallows – Brogue Kick to Gallows

Austin Aries b. Tony Nese – Discus Five Arm

Roman Reigns vs. Braun Strowman went to a no contest when Undertaker interfered

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the History of the WWE's Big Four Pay Per Views, now in PAPERBACK. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/01/27/kbs-reviews-now-available-in-paperback/>

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

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

KB's Review: Reviewing the Review – Fastlane 2017

Dusting off one of my old ideas this week.

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-reviewing-review-fastlane-2017/>