

# Main Event – December 16, 2016: Making My Christmas Merry

## Main Event

Date: December 15, 2016

Location: Wells Fargo Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Byron Saxton, Michael Cole, Corey Graves

The dates on these shows continue to be all over the place as you hear about the show being on Friday but it's already available, making me wonder why I care about these things in the first place. It's been firmly established that this show has been taken over by the unstoppable force that is Darren Young vs. Jinder Mahal. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

SWEET! IT'S ANOTHER SPECIAL EPISODE! I'm assuming nothing was taped due to 205 Live being moved to Monday this week as Tuesday was Tribute to the Troops.

We'll start with a match from Raw.

### TJ Perkins vs. Brian Kendrick

An early wristlock doesn't get Kendrick very far and he has to bail from the kneebar. The Wrecking Ball dropkick knocks Brian outside and we take a break. Back with Perkins hitting a jumping spin kick to the head and a springboard missile dropkick for two. The Captain's Hook is countered into the kneebar so Kendrick dives over to the ropes. Back up and Sliced Bread #2 gives Kendrick the pin at 8:24.

**Rating:** C-. So flash back to any time these two have fought in the last few months and update the details as necessary. This wasn't interesting because neither of the wrestlers are interesting. The triple threat has some potential but for the life of me I never need to see these two fight again.

Our first flashback shows Kane and Daniel Bryan exchanging presents. Bryan gets a Slammy and Kane gets....a puppy! Kane: "Thanks. I'm

starving!" Bryan: "NO! NO! NO!" I miss these two together.

And now, Ebenezer Piper. Oh this could be glorious. Jacob Marley comes to visit and tells him that three guests will be visiting the rotten Piper tonight. First up is the Ghost of Christmas Past and Piper makes jokes about his shoes. This goes nowhere so the Ghost of Christmas Present shows Piper how bad the Cratchits have things this year. Piper won't give up his Scotch tape (it doesn't make much more sense in context) so the Ghost leaves.

Finally we have the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come (Piper: "You don't shave under your arms do you?") and of course he shows Piper his grave. Roddy throws him out and that's it. This really wasn't funny and it's just the standard Christmas Carol with Piper doing some of his standard jokes.

Long video on Sasha Banks vs. Charlotte.

We go back to December 2001 with the Rock in the ring talking about Test. Rock likes Test so much that he's going to sing a little rendition of the 12 Days of Christmas. He lists off some things that Test is going to go through, including five seconds of the people chanting the Rock's name. This was really fast but I'd completely buy Rock doing this off the cuff.

Back in 2012, Alberto Del Rio hit Santa with his car. This set up Cena vs. Del Rio in a Miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> Street Fight and I think you can get the idea. During the match, Santa took a turn for the worse but, with his heart rate monitor to the beat of Jingle Bells, he came out to help Cena get the win. It turned out that Santa had a sock in his belt and a certain Mandible Claw was used.

Back in 1990, Bobby Heenan gave Gorilla Monsoon a banana. Heenan got some tools, which he used to break the janitor's present. It turns out he got things a bit backwards though and broke his own present: a Rolex. Cue the wah wah wah music.

In 1997, a kid told Santa he wasn't real so Steve Austin came out and Stunned the imposter for not knowing what Austin wanted when he was six. Jim Cornette: "He cracked Kris' Kringle!"

We see the last ten seconds of New Day's first triple threat win, plus the events that set up the main event. Only the last few minutes of the main event airs but New Day breaks the record. We also get the post match spear to Kevin Owens.

A rundown of Sunday's card wraps up the show.

**Overall Rating:** D+. This is a situation where your individual tastes will vary wildly. This show wasn't about much other than filling in time because they didn't tape anything new. I'd much rather see something like this than just Raw matches though and it's always cool to crack open the video library. Other than that pretty bad Piper thing, all of the clips were either short enough to not be bad or funny enough on their own. Good show this week and instantly more entertaining than two jobbers having a dull match.

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# 205 Live – December 13, 2016: You Can Feel the Vince

## 205 Live

Date: December 14, 2016

Location: Wells Fargo Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, Corey Graves, Austin Aries

This is turning into a more traditional WWE show week by week. Tonight's main event is focusing on setting up Sunday's triple threat match for the Cruiserweight Title instead of tonight's match

standing on its own. The main event here is Rich Swann vs. TJ Perkins in a non-title match so let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week's main event where Swann defeated Brian Kendrick to retain the title. Perkins was on commentary during the match and got into it with Swann to end the show.

The announcers preview tonight's main event and Sunday's title match.

#### Jack Gallagher vs. Drew Gulak

Gulak accepts the handshake and they hit the mat to start, meaning Gallagher can do his handstand to escape a headlock. After rolling around for some near falls, Gulak gets tied up in the Windsor Knot for the running kick to the back of the trunks. Drew's answer is to kick Jack in the jaw and then start in on the bad knee. Jack will have none of that though and blasts Gulak with that headbutt. The running dropkick in the corner puts Gulak away at 5:52.

**Rating:** C. I know Gallagher does the same stuff almost every match but he's just so darn likeable. How can you not smile when you see someone this into his gimmick? Pushing him towards the title and putting him in a feud with someone whose personality he can bounce off of will be a great springboard for his character. Good enough here though and that's all it needs to be.

Perkins tells Swann that the luck is about to run out.

Tajiri is coming.

Gallagher is talking about his victory when Ariya Daivari comes up. Jack is willing to call it even but Daivari says no way and starts speaking his native language before leaving.

#### Mustafa Ali vs. Lince Dorado

Ali says he won't be defined by our ignorance. A great looking springboard hurricanrana takes Ali down to start but a hard kick to the head puts Dorado down. We're already in a chinlock before a dropkick sends Ali into the corner. They're certainly moving out there. A Tajiri handspring into a Stunner...uh, stuns Ali and Dorado sends him outside. An Asai moonsault crushes Ali again and both guys are down long enough for the double countout at 3:35.

**Rating:** C+. Now that was more like it with a standard cruiserweight style. It's cool to have Gallagher and Gulak doing their mat work

but sometimes you need two guys to fly around and look impressive. I liked this more than I was expecting to and it's a good idea to establish as much talent as they can.

Ali goes for a post match cheap shot but gets kicked out to the floor.

Noam Dar hits on Alicia Fox but she isn't interested.

Long video on TJ Perkins.

### Rich Swann vs. TJ Perkins

Non-title and as you might expect, Kendrick comes out to join commentary. They trade wristlocks to start with both guys flipping out of the others offense. A double dropkick means a double miss into a double nip up and a standoff. Swann finally kicks him in the jaw to take over but Perkins tosses the champ outside for a slingshot dropkick.

Back in and Swann scores with Rolling Thunder for two but another trip to the floor sees Swann tweak his knee. Perkins is no fool and dropkicks the knee out for a near fall of his own. A kick to the head puts TJ down but the knee is too banged up for Swann to capitalize. Perkins' Detonation Kick is countered into a tiger bomb for two, only to have the knee give out again. The kneebar makes Swann tap at 10:01.

**Rating:** B-. It's a good sign that these guys are showing themselves capable of wrestling a match instead of just doing a few minutes of high spots. Perkins needed a big win heading into the pay per view but I can't imagine they would actually change the title. Swann was fine here and while I'm rarely a fan of champions losing, the knee injury gives him an out.

Kendrick comes to the ring but eats a superkick.

**Overall Rating:** C+. This was better and having something to build towards is a really positive step. However, the same problem as last week persists: I don't know how long they can keep this show going with just one set of talent. It works in NXT with a revolving door but this is a bit more limited and it's going to start showing in a hurry. Still though, they're in the very early days and this was an entertaining way to spend about forty minutes.

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new book, KB's Complete Monday Nitro and Thunder Reviews Volume V at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

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# 205 Live – December 6, 2016: How Appropriate That I Forgot to Post This

## **205 Live**

Date: December 6, 2016

Location: Toyota Center, Houston, Texas

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, Corey Graves, Austin Aries

It's the second week of the show after a pretty strong debut episode. The main event is the same as it was last week with Rich Swann facing Brian Kendrick for the Cruiserweight Title, though time it's Swann putting the title on the line. Other than that it's hard to say what we'll be getting but some more debuts are likely. Let's get to it.

Rich Swann talks about his family passing away, leaving him with only wrestling. It took him a long time to get here but now he's cruiserweight champion. That's a simple story but it works no matter how many times it's done.

Opening sequence.

Noam Dar vs. Cedric Alexander

Before the match, Alexander gets a kiss on the cheek from Alicia Fox. They get technical to start with Dar working on an armbar until

a dropkick puts him on the floor. Back in and Dar stays on the arm while driving his knuckles into Cedric's shoulder. They're sticking with a basic story so far and that's a good idea.

Speaking of telling a story, it's really kind of amazing how different the commentary here is. You have the announcers talking about how Alexander has good genetics and Dar is more about strategy with Aries getting himself over as a huge heel who could take this show by storm once he's healthy. In other words: it sounds like wrestling commentary instead of the usual WWE nonsense.

The arm work continues with Aries talking about how hard it is to wrestle without one limb, "unless you're Zack Gowen of course." Alexander fights back with the good arm and a springboard crossbody gets two. Dar kicks him square in the arm and grabs a Fujiwara armbar. The rope is grabbed of course so Dar kicks him in the face for the pin at 10:29.

**Rating:** C. The arm work here was fine for a story and the match was perfectly watchable. I'm not sure about having Alexander lose here but Dar could be a valuable asset for the division going forward. Cedric is already over with the audience but the Fox thing feels a little forced. Maybe it'll be ok going forward though.

Post match Dar dedicates the win to Fox, meaning we have a heel turn and a likely rematch.

Mustafa Ali video.

TJ Perkins wishes Swann luck but suggests that it was the same luck that gave Swann the win last night.

#### Ariya Daivari vs. Jack Gallagher

Rematch from last night with Jack coming in with a limp due to Daivari's post match attack. They shake hands to start though Jack isn't convinced. So he's smart and gallant. Daivari works on a leglock to start so Jack does some rapid fire kicks to the leg (from his back of course) and grabs one of his own.

It's right back to Gallagher's knee with the leg going into the LED board (because that's what wrestling rings are made of these days) and then the LED post (because...well you get the idea). A leglock keeps Jack in trouble until he remembers that he's Jack Gallagher and spins out. The big headbutt to the chest gets two but another kick to the knee drops Jack again. A frog splash puts Gallagher away

at 6:30.

**Rating:** C+. This was only a little better than the opener but it didn't have the same spirit to the previous Gallagher matches. It's almost like taking away his speed and athleticism via a knee injury is a really bad idea. On top of that, Daivari might as well be wearing a VILLAIN shirt so he's only going to get so far.

Lince Dorado video.

TJ Perkins comes out for commentary on the main event.

Brian Kendrick says he's ready this week because a lot of the stress is gone. He's dedicating his win to himself.

Cruiserweight Title: Rich Swann vs. Brian Kendrick

Swann is defending. Perkins and Aries bicker to start as Kendrick works on the arm. A loud dropkick gives the champ two as it seems they have a lot of time to work with here. Brian bails to the floor but catches Rich with Sliced Bread on the outside. That means a banged up knee though as we combine the first two matches' stories into one main event.

Back in and a dragon suplex sets up the Captain's Hook. Swann isn't about to tap to a chinlock though so he grabs the rope and completely misses the spinning kick in the corner. Thankfully Kendrick falls outside from the collision instead of the kick, allowing Swann to hit a corkscrew dive.

Not that it matters as the fans are cheering for Aries. Swann's standing 450 (Why does that have to be in the corner?) is countered into a rollup for two and they both go down from kicks to the head. The Captain's Hook is countered again as Ranallo tries to figure out how to counter the hold. Dude it's a chinlock. Stop acting like it's an Inverted Chikara Special.

A long Captain's Hook stays on the neck until Swann makes the ropes again (of course). Kendrick knocks him off the apron and out to the floor, only to have Swann send Brian into Perkins. The distraction is enough for Swann to nail the spinning kick to the head for the pin at 12:37.

**Rating:** B-. Good but nowhere near as good as what they did last week. That being said this was more about setting up something with Perkins involved, which is a better idea from a storytelling perspective. Swann winning clean via pin is a good idea too as you

don't want him winning off a countout or something like that, especially this early in his reign.

Post match, Kendrick goes after Perkins and Swann inadvertently collides with TJ to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. And that might be about it for my interest in 205 Live. The wrestling was fine, the storytelling was fine and that's the only word to describe the whole thing: fine. There's nothing on here that makes me feel like I need to see this again and that's not good for a recurring series. It's fine at the start but this feels like a show that doesn't have the longest lifespan and that's a problem two weeks in.

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# 205 Live – November 29, 2016 (Debut Episode): It's All About the Presentation

## 205 Live

Date: November 29, 2016

Location: Colonial Life Arena, Columbia, South Carolina

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, Austin Aries, Corey Graves

Remember the Cruiserweight Classic being all awesome? Now do you remember the cruiserweights being equally awesome on Monday Night Raw? Odds are you don't, because the division has floundered on Monday nights and it's already time for the show to have its own show on the WWE Network. This debut episode could range from good to a mess so let's get to it.

Also, these are probably not going to be done on Tuesday nights. I'll have them up as soon as possible every week though.

The opening sequence says tonight it's time to defy expectations. There are very few clips from Raw here with almost everything coming from the tournament. I'm as shocked as you are.

Opening sequence.

It should be interesting to see how the crowd looks as this was taped after Smackdown went off the air.

Austin Aries, currently out with an eye injury, is a surprise commentator. He teases winning the title once he's healthy.

The roster (or at least tonight's roster) is on stage for introductions. We have Rich Swann, TJ Perkins, Jack Gallagher (SWEET), Hoho Lun, the Bollywood Boyz, Noam Dar, Tony Nese, Drew Gulak, Ariya Daivari, Cedric Alexander, Lince Dorado, Akira Tozawa, Mustafa Ali, Gran Metalik and Brian Kendrick. This minute long series of introductions is already more than we got on Monday Night Raw and gives me some hope.

Video on the Bollywood Boyz, Harv and Gurv Sirah. They grew up watching Bret Hart and want to bring the Indian culture to America. Again, HUGE improvement over what we got on Mondays.

Bollywood Boyz vs. Drew Gulak/Tony Nese

The Boyz do a lot of dancing and are clearly the faces here. The fact that they're fighting heels was your second clue. Aries doesn't get the point of the handshakes and I still can't disagree. Gurv (who is in trunks instead of tights like his brother) works on Drew's arm to start before it's off to Harv for more of the same.

Drew takes Harv's head off with a running dropkick as Ranallo is, say it with me, a big improvement over what we've had in recent weeks. Harv gets taken down into the corner with Gulak working over his leg like a technical mat wrestler should do. Nese's chinlock doesn't last long and a neckbreaker gets Harv over to the corner for the hot tag to his brother.

Everything breaks down and we get the eternally stupid spot with Gulak being thrown into Nese, who DDT's his partner because he's incapable of letting go of his partner's head. Harv springboards into a crossbody to take Gulak down outside but Nese slams Gurv to take over again. Back in and a DDT sends Nese outside, setting up a double superkick to pin Gulak at 7:04.

**Rating:** C+. Let's see: characters, good action, defined faces and heels and a better reaction from the crowd. This is how you start a show and introduce some new talent, which seems to be more over with the crowd than almost anyone else has accomplished in the last few months.

Gulak and Nese say the Dancing with the Stars rejects won because of greasy ropes. That sounds like the start of a story, which again puts this one up on Raw.

Video on Noam Dar.

Kendrick says you should gamble on him tonight because he's going to capitalize on Swann's mistakes. Perkins comes in and wants his rematch so he wishes Kendrick luck.

Video on Gran Metalik. These are a bit long but you only have to air them once and people will catch on in a hurry.

### Ariya Daivari vs. Jack Gallagher

Gallagher is a wrestling gentleman and got a very strong reaction in his Cruiserweight Classic run. Jack does his fancy spin to counter a wristlock before bending both arms around in ways other than nature intended. Even Graves has to appreciate how awesome Gallagher really is.

Gallagher handstands his way out of a headlock by walking on his

hands. Another headstand in the corner has Aries freaked out and it's time to tie Daviari's limbs up in so much of a knot that Gallagher stands off to the side and smiles at him. A running kick to the back of the trunks annoys Aries because it wasn't great.

Daivari comes back with some basic wrestling, including a neckbreaker and chinlock, which finally slows Jack down. Some dropkicks have Daivari in trouble again and a headbutt knocks him into the corner. One of the hardest running dropkicks I've ever seen puts Daivari away at 5:28. Even Aries calls it impressive, partially because that's one of his signature moves.

**Rating:** B-. Here's the simple point: Gallagher works because he's unlike anyone else on the roster. As I've said for a long time: if you do the same thing over and over again with the only difference being the name attached, no one is going to notice. If you do something completely different, people are going to notice. That's what Gallagher did here and that's why people will be talking about him.

Ranallo: "Austin, what do you think of 205 Live so far?" Aries: "Well I'm here so it's great."

Lince Dorado video. He's your standard masked luchador.

Video on Rich Swann, who lost his parents young and has traveled the world wrestling anyone he can.

#### Cruiserweight Title: Rich Swann vs. Brian Kendrick

Swann, billed as outlandish for some reason, is challenging and they're absolutely insane if they don't change the title here. We're ready to go after the Big Match Intros and the standard handshake. They trade wristlocks to start before it's time to speed things up, including a hard dropkick for two on the champ. A tiger bomb drops Kendrick again and he bails to the floor for a breather.

Back in and the champ snaps off a hard belly to back suplex but it's too early for the Captain's Hook to really work. A similar suplex does the same to Kendrick but Swann takes too long going up and gets caught in a neckbreaker onto the buckle. Kendrick has a target now

and a bridging dragon suplex makes things even worse. It's off to a straitjacket hold for a bit, only to have Swann grab something like a Michinoku Driver.

Brian's eyes are bugging out (great visual) but he gets the knees up to block the standing 450. The long form Captain's Hook gives us the dramatic crawl to the ropes and Kendrick's frustration continues. It only gets worse when Sliced Bread #2 gets two, allowing Swann to hit three straight spinning kicks to the head for the pin and the title at 13:31.

**Rating:** B. This felt like a big title change and that's exactly what it needed to be. There's no other way to put it: Brian Kendrick is one of the least interesting heels in a very long time. He was on a great nostalgia run in the tournament and the big idea was to turn him heel because...well I have no idea actually. Swann as the new face champion has potential and whoever beats him can actually be the big bad that this division needs. Good match here, which is what they needed.

Swann dedicates the win to his mother and Kendrick says you shouldn't get used to this.

A replay of the title change ends the show.

**Overall Rating:** B. As Paul Heyman said, it's all about the presentation. On Raw, the cruiserweights are wedged in on a show where they don't fit in the slightest. It's basically the new Divas match so people can go get nachos (Hopefully with barbecue sauce. Try it.) and that's not worth keeping around.

This show actually felt like it mattered and even if it's just a low level show for the sake of validating the talent being signed, it's WAY better than giving them ten minutes in front of a crowd that doesn't want to see them. On top of that, the talent was actually introduced to the fans so we can get to know them a bit.

Look at what we had here: two guys from India who like movies, a British wrestling gentleman and a fun guy who loves to dance winning the title. In other words, something other than a bunch of guys

doing a similar style with no charisma (Perkins and Kendrick for example, meaning the top two names in the division.

I don't think this show is going to blow the doors off of anything but giving them their own show is the only possible option if they want the division to be a success. It's not a great show or anything but it's different enough to be entertaining and that's the important thing. I liked what I saw here as it felt like a weekly episode of the Cruiserweight Classic. If they just have to keep the division on Raw for awhile so be it, but their best bet is right here.

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# Survivor Series 2016 Preview

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

it.

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

That being said, I really can't imagine Raw has much to worry about here. No matter how you look at it, there's just too much talent on the red show, even if they have all their in fighting. This should be a glorified layup as Carmella and Alexa Bliss are such liabilities for the Smackdown team that there's almost no way around their limitations. I'll go with Raw winning here in what shouldn't be much of a challenge for them.

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

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

I'm really hoping logic takes control here because there's not much of a reason to keep the title and the division as a whole over on Raw. Tuesday night has a little more open space and is better suited for an action based division than Raw, which is almost entirely storyline driven. Couple that with the upcoming 205 Live, which is being taped after Smackdown instead of Raw and there's really no

reason for Kendrick to walk out with the title. If nothing else, maybe Kalisto can breathe some life into the title instead of being another mat based cruiserweight.

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

Picking an accurate winner here is a lot more complicated though as neither team really stands out. Raw probably has the better lineup from top to bottom but Smackdown has American Alpha and better continuity. Unfortunately Raw has to deal with the Shining Stars and the issues between Cesaro and Sheamus. On the other hand, Heath Slater and Rhyno are playing WAY over their heads at the moment and I don't think they're going to be able to make that last against the Raw teams.

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

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

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

pesky Ziggler run.

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

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

That leaves us with the main event, which is only somewhat interesting but is the focal point of the show. Twelve and a half years ago, Goldberg and Brock Lesnar had one of the worst major matches in wrestling history and for some reason we're supposed to forget all that and just enjoy them fighting again. It's also Goldberg's first match since that night and I'm not sure how bad this could really get.

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

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

been excited for this since it was announced though and I'm going to try to keep that optimism.

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# Monday Night Raw – October 31, 2016: Storytelling In A Night

## Monday Night Raw

Date: October 31, 2016

Location: XL Center, Hartford, Connecticut

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

We're past the Cell but since it's a holiday, tonight might feel like an even more important show that we saw last night. In this case, that might be due to Goldberg appearing as we're now less than three weeks away from his showdown with Brock Lesnar at Survivor Series 2016. Let's get to it.

We open with Goldberg, who gets the full walking entrance. Before he can say much though, Paul Heyman interrupts. Heyman knows he isn't a physical threat to Goldberg but he's willing to get inside the ring. There's no way he would get into this ring without significant backup because Brock wants to fight tonight.

Goldberg is more than happy with this and takes off the jacket (that man just has the look that suggests he could fight anybody) as Lesnar's music starts up. Of course that's not happening tonight but Heyman realizes this could go badly for him. Cue Rusev of all people to praise Goldberg before challenging him to a fight. A few knees to the ribs and a Jackhammer later, Rusev is down. A weak spear takes Heyman down as well and Goldberg gets to pose.

We look at last night's Universal Title match.

#### Enzo Amore vs. Luke Gallows

This is a Trick or Street Fight, meaning there are a bunch of Halloween themed weapons at ringside. Enzo and Cass come out as Buzz Lightyear and Woody because the world is smiling on us tonight. The pre-match speech hears Enzo say that Cass has a friend in him the beating will last to infinity and beyond. Cass: "There's a snake in my boot!" Gallows throws him to the floor to start but gets beaten with a plastic skeleton. A trip to the bucket of apples has Gallows in trouble and we take a break.

Back with Gallows shoving pumpkin in Enzo's face and throwing jack o'lanterns at him for fun. A few orange kendo stick shots and a bulldog have Gallows in trouble and a pie to the face blinds Anderson. Cass kicks him through a table and puts a pumpkin (mostly) on Gallows' head. The DDG sends Gallows chest first into a pumpkin (his head might have been a foot away from the mat) for the pin at 8:00.

**Rating:** B. Yeah the ending was horrible but this was exactly what this match should have been. The Buzz Lightyear stuff had me rolling and the ending being that botched actually kind of worked in something like this. It's not like this match means anything so just turn your brain off and have fun with it.

Heyman leaves in an ambulance.

#### Cruiserweight Title: TJ Perkins vs. Brian Kendrick

Kendrick is defending and Roman Reigns says this is being pushed too hard. Before the match, Kendrick says he taught everyone that he doesn't need help to win. Kendrick: "That's psychology." Last night he played on TJ's emotions so tonight, TJ better have a plan to get the title back. Perkins starts fast with the fireman's carry enziguri for two and we take an early break.

Back with Kendrick losing control of a chinlock and getting dropkicked in the back of the head. The first kneebar sends Kendrick over to the ropes. I might buy that as a possible ending if it wasn't done in EVERY TJ PERKINS MATCH. A hurricanrana off the apron out to the floor sends both guys crashing outside...where Kendrick takes the countout at 6:30.

**Rating:** D+. OH MY GOODNESS STOP DOING THIS STUPID MATCH. No one cared the first time, fewer people cared the second time, and then the last two matches have been some of the least interesting things I've ever seen. This division has been so horribly botched and now it looks like we're getting ready for Perkins vs. Kendrick V. My goodness this isn't even funny anymore.

Perkins gives Kendrick the kneebar on the floor.

Mick Foley thinks Negan got the idea for Lucille from Cactus Jack. Braun Strowman comes up and says he wants to be part of Team Raw at Survivor Series. He's tired of these lame handicap matches and now he wants real competition. Mick: "Is that a threat? Because if it is....it's working." Foley puts Braun in a battle royal for a spot on the team. That seems to please the monster for now.

Here's Foley to talk about last night's show with a focus on the Universal Title match. Everything that Owens and Jericho did last night was legal but it all left a bad taste in Foley's mouth. Jericho and Owens come out to brag about getting into the Cell last night and walking out with the title.

That win means they should be anchoring the Survivor Series team because they're the top two guys on Raw. They laugh at Foley and bring up him losing the Cell match against HHH right here in Hartford, Connecticut. Foley gets in Owens' face to yell about how much talent he has but Jericho keeps interfering. Jericho was standing there with a key around his finger and that's what people are going to see on the WWE Network in eighteen years. Jericho: "Lock it in man."

That's enough for Foley, who says Stephanie only wanted Owens for Raw. However, Foley is going to put them both on the team along with another guy he can trust. That wouldn't be just any guy, but rather THE guy. Reigns comes out and praises Foley's pumpkin shirt while saying Owens and Jericho look like Spongebob and Patrick.

Roman was going to dress up like a stupid idiot but the store was

out of Jericho costumes. Jericho teases putting someone on the List but NO ONE GOES ON THE LIST TONIGHT. Chris doesn't like anyone here in the United States but he would still be a better US Champion than Reigns. That sounds good to Foley so the title match is made. To be fair that's the only title Jericho has never won.

Package on Charlotte vs. Sasha Banks.

### Battle Royal

Sami Zayn, Braun Strowman, Darren Young, Curtis Axel, Bo Dallas, Titus O'Neil, R-Truth, Jinder Mahal, Goldust, Cesaro, Sheamus, Neville

The winner is on Team Raw with Reigns, Jericho and Owens. A bunch of people go after Strowman to start but he quickly eliminates Truth and Dallas. Neville and Sheamus start double teaming but the Brogue Kick knocks Braun through the ropes instead of over them and we take a break.

Back with several names having been eliminated during the break. Sheamus gets rid of Young and Sami kicks Titus out. Cesaro throws Sheamus out but gets eliminated by Strowman. Braun throws Neville out as well and it's down to Strowman and Sami. Some strikes have Braun in trouble but he throws Sami onto his shoulders. We get the Benoit/Big Show choke on the ropes with Brayn being pulled over the ropes, only to easily power Sami up and throw him out for the final elimination at 8:20.

**Rating:** D. This was exactly what it needed to be with Sami putting up a fight but Strowman cleaning house and basically dominating as he should have. They've done a great job of making Strowman out to be someone special and even if it's just to be fed to another monster (like Brock), it still does its job. Bad match, good storytelling.

Emmalina video.

It's New Day costume time...and all three are different variations of Charles Wright (Big E. as Kama, Woods as Papa Shango and Kofi as Godfather). They're looking ahead to the future because they're officially the captains of the Raw Survivor Series tag team. That means the power of positivity vs. the power of cheese and crackers. They're not sure about the rest of their opponents because Shane and Bryan haven't announced the rest of the lineup. Woods is a bit

scared of American Alpha and they can't actually come up with any insults for them. Not that it matters because New Day ROCKS.

### Rich Swann/Lince Dorado/Cedric Alexander vs. Ariya Daivari/Tony Nese/Drew Gulak

Daivari gets his arm worked over to start before it's quickly off to Nese vs. Alexander with Cedric being slammed face first into the barricade. A chinlock doesn't last long and the hot tag brings in Rich to clean house. Swann's rolling splash gets two and everyone winds up on the floor for a double dive. Rich kicks Nese in the face and a jackknife cover gets the pin at 6:31.

**Rating:** D+. I'm out of ways to complain about the same problems so go read one of the old ratings and meet me at the next segment.

We look back at the opening segment.

Here's Charlotte for her address as champion. She calls the fans peasants and promises to lead the women's team to victory against Team Smackdown and its captain Nikki Bella. Charlotte is ready to take on all of the Smackdown women but thinks there's a weak link on her team and her name is Bayley.

Cue Bayley, who says she's glad Charlotte called her out here. Seeing last night's main event choked her up and she wants to congratulate Charlotte on her win. Unfortunately she's also become the biggest jerk and the kind of champion Bayley never wants to be. Charlotte says this isn't NXT anymore and she sees a glorified fan looking back at her. Therefore, tonight Bayley has a match with one of her teammates.

### Bayley vs. Nia Jax

Charlotte is on commentary. Nia starts fast with a shoulder breaker and throws Bayley around a bit before grabbing a bearhug. Bayley reverses into the guillotine but Nia is a learning monster and drives her into the buckle for the break. Some kicks to the legs and a few dropkicks stagger Jax, only to have the standing Vader splash crush Bayley. Instead of the legdrop, Nia goes to the middle rope, only to have to fight out of a super Bayley to Belly. Bayley comes up holding her knee and a ram into the barricade makes it even worse. The knee seems to be fine as Nia hits the Samoan drop for the pin at 5:52.

**Rating:** C-. This was just a step ahead of a squash and another

example of how Raw looks completely dominant against Smackdown, assuming the power of being FEARLESS overcomes Nia. Seriously would that surprise you at this point? Anyway, not bad here and a good sign that Nia keeps dominating like this.

### Sheamus/Cesaro vs. Shining Stars

Epico is part of an early uppercut train as the fans call Sheamus a shame. The cousins start taking over on Cesaro with a dropkick and sunset flip for two. That means some PUERTO RICO chants...from the cousins but they do in fact exist. The tag brings in Sheamus to throw Primo to the floor and give Epico the ten forearms to the chest. The Cloverleaf makes Epico tap at 4:06.

**Rating:** D. In case you didn't get the idea, Sheamus and Cesaro can work together very well but they don't like each other too much. I don't know if they've explained that just yet because they've only done the same idea for a month now. At least they didn't just give them another shot at the titles right off the bat.

Earlier today, Golden Truth went to a haunted house and shenanigans ensue.

Jericho and Owens talk about the US Title match with Chris suggesting that Kevin be out there for some help. Owens is cool with the idea and thinks they can go get.....IT.

### US Title: Chris Jericho vs. Roman Reigns

Reigns is defending and we get some Big Match Intros. Feeling out process to start until Jericho gets in a shot off the middle rope. They head outside with Owens throwing the weakened champ into the post as we take a break. Back with Jericho in control until he misses a charge in the corner.

Roman hits his string of clotheslines but the Superman Punch misses. The Lionsault hits knees so Jericho opts for the Walls in the middle of the ring. Roman powers out of that (duh) and grabs a sitout powerbomb for two more. Owens' distraction doesn't work and now the Superman Punch connects. The spear looks to finish but Owens comes in for the DQ at 14:50.

**Rating:** C. This was fine, though the ending wasn't exactly a secret. You knew they weren't going to change the title the night after Reigns successfully defended inside the Cell but at least Jericho gave him a good match. Owens being out there telegraphed the ending

but we didn't get a clean ending and that's the right call.

Post match the beatdown is on until Seth Rollins comes out for the save. Rollins and Reigns share a staredown so maybe they'll get back together for Survivor Series.

**Overall Rating:** C-. I always forget how absolutely draining these post pay per view Raw's are. That's over seven hours of TV in two days, not even counting Smackdown tomorrow night. The good thing is the show wasn't really that bad and set up most of the Raw teams before we get to Survivor Series. I liked some of the matches to go with the storytelling and that's what matters at the end of the day. Not bad but more proof that the show needs to be shorter.

### Results

Enzo Amore b. Luke Gallows – DDG

TJ Perkins b. Brian Kendrick via countout

Braun Strowman won a battle royal last eliminating Sami Zayn

Rich Swann/Lince Dorado/Cedric Alexander b. Ariya Daivari/Tony Nese/Drew Gulak – Spinning kick to Nese's head

Nia Jax b. Bayley – Samoan drop

Sheamus/Cesaro b. Shining Stars – Cloverleaf to Epico

Roman Reigns b. Chris Jericho via DQ when Kevin Owens interfered

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# Hell in a Cell 2016: This Isn't Even Purgatory

## Hell in a Cell 2016

Date: October 30, 2016

Location: TD Garden, Boston, Massachusetts

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

It's the annual "scary" show as we have three matches inside the Cell. In this case we've got Rusev challenging Roman Reigns for the

US Title, Kevin Owens defending the Raw World Title against Seth Rollins and, possibly, a main event of Charlotte going after Sasha Banks' Women's Title. If that's true, it's the biggest match in the history of women's wrestling. Let's get to it.

Pre-Show: Lince Dorado/Cedric Alexander/Sin Cara vs. Drew Gulak/Tony Nese/Ariya Daivari

Rematch from Superstars. Cara and Nese start things off and Dorado looks so much like Cara that Mauro Ranallo gets them confused. A couple of backbreakers have Nese's partners in trouble as we get a Sin Cara chant. Cara moonsaults onto Daivari to set up a double tag to Dorado and Nese with the former cleaning house off a variety of kicks. A shooting star press gets two on Nese and everything breaks down. Nese throws Dorado onto Cara and Cedric to send us to a break. Back (after that freaky Ziggler vs. Miz chicken ad) with Daivari kneeing Dorado in the face and the fans not going along with Nese's pleas for a DAIVARI chant. Nese trips Dorado and springboards into a Lionsault which barely grazes Lince but gets two anyway. The hot tag brings in Alexander to a very nice reaction. A triple dive takes the heels out and everything breaks down with a series of strikes and slams all around. Cedric stomps on Gulak and gives him the Lumbar Check for the pin at 9:37.

**Rating:** C. This is the kind of match you have these guys around for: it's entertaining, there's little reason for it to be taking place and the fans freak out because of all the high spots. These guys are great for popping a crowd but it all falls apart when they're trying to do something serious, which is a problem for a division like this.

The opening video features the Ouija board theme before talking about the three main matches and all the violence that will ensue.

US Title: Roman Reigns vs. Rusev

Cole says this is the 34<sup>th</sup> time the Cell has been lowered, which really doesn't have the same ring to it anymore. Reigns is defending and slugs away to start before heading outside for some failed rams

into the cage. Rusev gets knocked off the apron and into the cage before being whipped into the cage. A kick to the head gets Rusev out of trouble and he takes Reigns back inside to start working on the arm.

Rusev misses a charge though and gets clotheslined in the corner, followed by a boot to the face. That just earns Reigns a whip into the steps before Rusev changes the pace a bit by hitting the champ in the face with the steps. They head back inside with Reigns slingshotting into a dropkick through the ropes to send Rusev into the cage again.

It's already time for a kendo stick and a table as the champ pounds away on Rusev's back. They head inside again and Rusev gets the cane away before tying Reigns up. Some hard shots to the chest have Reigns in trouble until a spear gets a quick near fall. The Superman Punch connects for two but the second spear is blocked by a loud superkick.

Rusev sends him face first into the steps (on the top rope) for two more and frustration is setting in. The Accolade goes on with Reigns' shoulders nearly being pulled out of socket. The champ gets out again so Rusev opts for a chain, which is quickly knocked out of his hands. We actually get dueling Rusev chants as he loads the steps back into the ring. Rusev's kick to the face gets two more and it's back to the Accolade with Reigns on the steps with the chain in his mouth. Naturally Roman powers out of it into a Samoan drop onto the steps. Rusev stands up and gets speared off the steps for the pin at 24:31.

**Rating:** B+. And so much for Rusev and the Accolade at the moment. This was reaching Cena levels of taking a beating and surviving over and over no matter what happens, though at least it's in a match designed to be that barbaric. The other problem is who fights Reigns next. It's not like there's anyone really ready to face him on the Raw roster but at least they can just put him on the Survivor Series roster to buy themselves a month.

We look at Seth Rollins winning the triple threat on Monday.

Owens isn't impressed at Rollins beating him for three seconds out of a match that lasted about 600. Then he powerbombed Rollins onto the apron, just like he did to John Cena. Tonight Rollins wants to get inside a Cell to become Universal Champion to prove he's the man. That won't be happening because Owens is going to do in the Cell will make what we just saw look like a cakewalk. After the match tonight, it won't be clear what Rollins will be but Owens will be the man.

#### Bayley vs. Dana Brooke

Rematch from a few weeks ago on Raw where Dana won, albeit with the ending looking a bit botched. Bayley gets in a few kicks to the ribs but Dana takes her into the corner to pull on the bad shoulder. Some knees to the should have Bayley in trouble, though I'm not sure why Dana keeps screaming before each knee drop. Dana loads up the ram into the post that won her the first match but gets blocked, only to have Bayley's bad arm draped across the top rope. A quick suplex from Bayley and a basement clothesline set up the middle rope elbow to the jaw. The Bayley to Belly gets the pin at 6:27.

**Rating:** C-. Not much to this one but the right person won and that's the important idea here. Dana is fine for a gatekeeper heel, especially when the division is as weak as it is at the moment. Bayley is probably in line for a title feud at this point and the good thing is there's enough history for her to go face vs. face with Sasha if she retains tonight.

Mick Foley and Stephanie McMahon play Exposition Theater about Survivor Series when Chris Jericho comes in to ask why he's not on Team Raw. This leads into a discussion of Foley being put on the List for a third time, a trinity, a triumvirate or tres tiempos. Foley isn't intimidated by threats of getting IT ("That's the stupidest thing I've ever heard.") so Jericho gets back to the point: he and Kevin Owens should be the captains of Team Raw. Stephanie doesn't think so because Owens has a title defense to worry about.

#### Enzo Amore/Big Cass vs. Anderson and Gallows

Before the match, Enzo has a message for Andy and the Big Gal. Enzo: "You are like Times New Roman s going to go upside Luke's head like Big Papi. Enzo thinks that after tonight, he's going to have to start calling Cass Woody because he's going to have Andy all over the bottom of his boot (if I have to explain that reference to you.....yeah I've got nothing).

Enzo cross bodies Anderson to start and it's already off to Cass for some shots in the corner. The bald guys are taken to the floor where Gallows clotheslines Enzo's head off to take over. It's a short form beating though as Enzo shoves Anderson off the top and hits his middle rope DDT. That means a hot tag off to Cass to clean house with Karl being sent out to the floor. The Empire Elbow gets two on Anderson but Cass misses the big boot. Enzo tags himself in for a high crossbody and the dancing jabs. Gallows comes right back with a superkick and the Magic Killer puts Enzo away at 6:45.

**Rating:** D+. Again, not much to this one but this isn't the match that people are watching the show to see. Enzo and Cass are likely losing here to set up a big road to redemption where they FINALLY win the titles sometime in the new year and there's nothing wrong with that at all. Anderson and Gallows needed a win or two to get them back on track and this is as good of an option as they had.

We recap Kevin Owens vs. Seth Rollins. Owens won the title a few months back in a fourway with Owens receiving a bit of help from HHH. Rollins then had the title won last month until the referee was taken out and Rollins' pin wasn't counted. Seth claimed conspiracy so the solution was to put them inside the Cell.

#### Raw World Title: Kevin Owens vs. Seth Rollins

This means the women are indeed main eventing tonight. Rollins is challenging and is coming in with a bad back thanks to a powerbomb on the apron to end Raw. That means more kinesio tape, which I'm convinced is some kind of product placement. Owens immediately goes for the weapons on the floor but gets chopped for his efforts.

Back inside and Rollins gets two off the Sling Blade before shouting that he's the man around here. Owens: "Shut up." A Blockbuster gets

two more and it's already table time. That takes too long though and the bad back is sent into the corner, setting up a backslash to make things even worse.

Seth is sent into the cage and Owens rips off the tape, which Cole seems to think would hurt worse than the steel. Back in and Seth fires off more chops but Owens sends him through the ropes and face first into the cage. The slow beating continues as the Cannonball sends Seth back outside. That's fine with Owens as he hits a second Cannonball up against the cage but it's still too early for the Pop Up Powerbomb.

Instead they trade superkicks, followed by an enziguri to Owens and a BIG clothesline to Rollins as both guys drop. Owens is up first and grabs another table, which he puts on the apron and wedges into the Cell wall at an angle with the original table set up underneath it. Rollins is up with something like a Falcon's Arrow onto the apron, followed by back to back suicide dives to send Kevin into the steel.

Owens busts out a fire extinguisher but sprays the referee for some reason. The fans want Jericho and here he comes as the original referee is taken out, likely due to a bad case of being cold. Jericho locks himself inside along with a second referee and the key. Rollins knocks Chris into the cage but walks into the package side slam for two more. Fans: "STUPID IDIOT!"

The springboard knee to the face sets up the Pedigree but Jericho makes the save and takes it instead. Rollins powerbombs Owens (after muscling him up) through the double tables and the fans lose it. The frog splash looks to finish but Jericho pulls the referee out to keep things going. That's enough for Seth who powerbombs Jericho into the Cell, only to walk into the Pop Up Powerbomb for a very close two.

The Canadians start double teaming Rollins with Jericho handing the champ a chair to unload on Rollins' back. Jericho tries to bring in a second chair and the results are as expected with Seth taking it away and cleaning house. Kevin chairs Seth down again and sets up

the two chairs for a big old powerbomb to retain the titles at 23:19.

**Rating:** B. This was a better story with the good guy fighting through the overwhelming odds until he just couldn't hang in there anymore. It keeps Rollins looking strong and gives Owens a win, which thankfully he didn't need HHH to help him earn. It's still nothing great but at least it was the right ending with no interference from someone who wasn't involved in the story.

Post match Jericho gives Rollins a Codebreaker.

Pre-show recap.

#### Cruiserweight Title: Brian Kendrick vs. TJ Perkins

Perkins is defending and Kendrick is getting desperate to keep his career going. They trade rollups to start until Kendrick charges into a hiptoss. A slingshot hilo sends Brian outside but it's too early for the Wrecking Ball dropkick. Kendrick tries to tie TJ to the ropes using the athletic tape but the champ is right back with another dropkick. A belly to back suplex looks to set up something off the top, only to have TJ dive into a dropkick for two.

The fireman's carry enziguri sets up the Wrecking Ball but a rollup is countered into the Captain's Hook. TJ grabs the rope and Brian does the same to escape the kneebar. Brian loads up Sliced Bread #2 but tweaks his knee. Of course he's gold bricking and, after waiting around for about a minute, TJ goes over to him and gets headbutted into the Captain's Hook to give Kendrick the title at 10:33.

**Rating:** D. GAH this was so boring. I've tried to care about the cruiserweights but does ANYONE want to see these two and their stupid issues with Kendrick's mid-life crisis and TJ spouting off video game references? The match was fine but I was just so bored through the whole thing and there's no way around that.

Cesaro and Sheamus have a bonding moment and say they're ready to team together after hating each others guts. As expected, this turns into an argument, this time over rental cars.

#### Tag Team Titles: New Day vs. Cesaro/Sheamus

New Day is defending and say Cesaro is on the verge of some major endorsement deals, including shoes. This turns into a discussion of Kofi wearing Rob Gronkowski shoes to start a Patriots chant. Sheamus will get some deals of his own, but only on things like trashcans. The one thing you'll never see Sheamus around is these titles because NEW DAY ROCKS.

Sheamus clubs on Woods (odd to not have Kofi defending the titles) to start and it's off to Cesaro for some uppercuts. The Irish Curse gets two but Sheamus charges into some boots in the corner for the hot tag off to Big E. Woods dives onto Cesaro and Sheamus' Brogue Kick is countered into a sitout powerbomb for two.

White Noise gets the same on Woods but Sheamus misses a charge and gets caught by the springboard elbow. Cesaro Swings Woods but Big E. remembers that he's in this match and makes the save. The Midnight Hour is broken up and Sheamus Brogue Kicks Cesaro by mistake. That's only good for two as well and the champs are sent outside.

Sheamus goes up top (Byron: "Where is Sheamus going?" Cole: "To the top.") and dives onto all of New Day for a big crash. The legal Woods and Cesaro are thrown inside and Xavier gets caught in the Sharpshooter in the middle of the ring. Sheamus hits Big E. with the trombone and gets hit with Trouble in Paradise for the DQ at 10:23. As you might guess, Woods taps at the exact same time as the DQ.

**Rating:** C. This was better than I was expecting and the right call. If they just have to go with Cesaro and Sheamus as the eventual champions then so be it, but at least let us get through the record. Otherwise, why bother keeping the titles on New Day for the last several months in the first place? The match was fine and I bought some of the near falls so it could have been a lot worse.

Video on Goldberg vs. Lesnar for no other purpose but to extend the show because that needs to happen.

We recap Charlotte vs. Sasha Banks, which is culminating in the first ever women's pay per view main event and the first ever women's match inside the Cell.

## Women's Title: Sasha Banks vs. Charlotte

Charlotte is challenging and comes out being carried on a throne. Sasha repeats her Takeover: Brooklyn entrance by being driven out in an Escalade and having four people escort her to the ring. We hit the Big Match Intros and then the Cell is lowered. Charlotte jumps the champ before the Cell reaches the ground so they can fight on the floor and extend the show even more.

The Cell is on the ground and Sasha loads up the announcers' table...but they both climb the wall. Charlotte drops down and hits a wicked powerbomb through the table. Sasha tries to get up but falls back down and EMTs are called. She's put on a stretcher and Charlotte is announced as the new champion but Sasha gets up and goes inside to start the match (At 10:52 because screw you if you have a job and need to get up early. If you're going to watch a WWE show, you better be committed.).

Sasha goes right at her to start but gets monkey flipped into the cage wall. A throw over the top sends Sasha's back into the apron but she pops back up for a baseball slide as Charlotte gets a chair. Back in and Charlotte chops her down in the corner but stops to set up the chair. That means she's going to go face first into the steel, only to have Charlotte drop her back first onto the chair.

They head outside with Sasha climbing the cage wall and hitting the double knees to the chest to put both women down again. Back in and Three Amigos set up a frog splash on Charlotte for the big near fall. There's the Bank Statement but Charlotte powers out and fires off a few kicks. Sasha is right back up to lay her on the corner for the double knees onto the chest onto a chair for a loud crash. Charlotte comes right back by pulling Banks to the floor and sending her face first into the steps.

For the third time tonight we have a table set up at ringside and Sasha kicks Charlotte off the apron for a very weak bump. Thankfully they load up another table, which Charlotte pushes into Sasha's chest to drive her into the Cell again. The Figure Eight goes on but Sasha grabs a chair and blasts Charlotte for the break. Two

backbreakers into a side slam get two on Sasha and Charlotte loads her onto the table for the moonsault. It's still too early for that though and Sasha crotches her on top, only to collapse when trying a running powerbomb. Natural Selection gives Charlotte the title back at 22:49.

**Rating:** B. That was quite the anticlimactic ending but it was quite the violent brawl up to that point. I'm really not sure about putting the title back on Charlotte as there's only Bayley next and it's probably a stretch to have Bayley win one pay per view match and then move up to the title challenger. Still though, really good, match (weak spots aside) and certainly historic, but the ending wasn't great.

**Overall Rating:** B. The big matches all delivered but everything else belonged on Raw or in a dumpster somewhere. I'm really glad the women went on last though as it saves this from being a nothing show that isn't going to be remembered in more than a week or two. I know people seem to think I'm ridiculous for this but I still can't stand the overrun and this was the best example of why.

Look at some of the stuff on here to extend the show from the Goldberg promo to various Network ads to the buildup to the main event taking nearly ten minutes. It's just adding to an already long show and doesn't help anything. That aside, it's entertaining and a good pay per view and that's the best thing you can have most of the time.

### Results

Roman Reigns b. Rusev – Accolade

Bayley b. Dana Brooke – Bayley to Belly

Anderson and Gallows b. Enzo Amore and Big Cass – Magic Killer to Amore

Kevin Owens b. Seth Rollins – Powerbomb through two chairs

Brian Kendrick b. TJ Perkins – Captain's Hook

Cesaro/Sheamus b. New Day via DQ when Kofi Kingston interfered

Charlotte b. Sasha Banks – Natural Selection

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## **Hell in a Cell 2016 Preview**

It's time, once again, for that Halloween spectacle where WWE takes one of their biggest concepts and does it three times in one night before wondering why the thrill and mystique left so very long ago. It's time for "Hell in a Cell 2016" with three matches taking place inside the Cell, plus a handful of other matches that don't mean quite as much. Let's get to it.

We'll start on the Kickoff Show with Lince Dorado/Cedric Alexander/Sin Cara vs. Tony Nese/Ariya Daivari/Drew Gulak in a rematch from this week's "Superstars". Yeah the Kickoff Show is now copying the D show that only airs on the Network. The first match was something that indeed happened and I can't seem to remember anything else about it despite watching the match yesterday. My guess is that's due to the lack of personalities, characters or almost anything interesting about any of the six. I'll take Alexander and company to win on the grounds of a coin flip as there's not much to care about here.

We might as well get rid of the cruiserweights here with Cruiserweight Champion TJ Perkins defending against Brian Kendrick

in the third match in a series that I don't think most people needed to see go to a second match. They've traded wins to set up Kendrick's second shot at the title, which is becoming less and less important every single week. I'll go with Kendrick getting the belt here as he already lost to Rich Swann, which would seem to set up Swann as the first challenger to the new champion. That makes enough sense, assuming you think having the cruiserweights around on the main roster still makes sense.

Let's go to something a little more fun as Enzo Amore/Big Cass face Anderson and Gallows. This is an interesting one as you have the highly entertaining and incredibly popular Amore and Cass, who have yet to actually win a regular tag match on pay per view while Anderson and Gallows came in hot and have floundered since the Draft. The question here is which one actually breaks through and wins something.

I think I'll take Anderson and Gallows winning here as the whole idea of Anderson and Gallows wanting to crush the silliness out of the division makes sense if you're building towards Amore and Cass winning the titles at "Wrestlemania XXXIII". However, the idea of giving a team a new gimmick has never stopped WWE from having them lose on pay per view right out of the gate.

Anderson and Gallows seem to be more gatekeepers than contenders, which is kind of a shame on one hand but at the same time Amore and Cass eventually winning the titles is a better story. I'll go with the bald guys here with the promise of a bigger payoff for the popular guys later.

Let's go to one of the biggest matches as we step inside of the Cell for the first time with Roman Reigns defending the United States Title against Rusev. Once you get past the idea that Reigns has been the heel for most of this feud by doing stuff like attacking Rusev's wife and beating on a defenseless Rusev with a chair, there's been a very physical feud in there with both guys beating the heck out of each other.

I don't know why, but I think Rusev wins here. It's nothing but pure

instinct, but I think they'll give the title back to the Bulgarian here and let Reigns move on up to the World Title scene again. Keeping in mind that my gut instincts are almost never right, take this one with a barrel or two of salt. However, I'm going to stick with that idea and say Rusev actually gets the belt back here, despite how little sense it would make in either the small or grand scheme of things.

Next up we'll look at something a bit less intense as Dana Brooke faces Bayley. This is another confusing one as Brooke won their most recent match, though it seemed to be a somewhat botched ending. Aside from that, Bayley hasn't exactly been on fire since she debuted on the main roster as the crowd is still behind her but there's not much of a spark to her.

I'll still take Bayley to win though as she has more potential as a challenger to whoever walks out of the Women's Title match with the belt. Brooke isn't the most interesting thing in the world and is a good obstacle for Bayley to overcome. I really can't imagine a scenario of Brooke challenging for the title and unless Nia Jax is reappearing on "Monday Night Raw" to go after the title, this is Bayley's match to lose and there's no real reason to go any other direction.

We'll clear out the last non-Cell match with New Day defending the Tag Team Titles against Cesaro and Sheamus. Several people, including myself, have gone on several rants about how stupid it is to just throw Cesaro and Sheamus together after all those weeks of them fighting each other but ok, whatever. They're getting the title shot here.

That being said, there isn't the greatest case for new champions here. Sure New Day has gotten a little more stale over the last month or so, but they've held the titles for well over a year and are about six weeks away from setting the all time record. If WWE just MUST go with Cesaro and Sheamus as a team and wants them in the title picture, let New Day break the record and then go with the new champions sometime around Christmas. New Day should keep the belts

here, not defend them at "Survivor Series 2016", and then lose them at some point in the future.

Now we'll move on to the two major matches, starting with Sasha Banks defending the Women's Title against Charlotte inside the Cell. This is the first time any women have participated in this particular match and on top of that it's in Banks' hometown of Boston. Why they didn't just wait until this show to do the title change isn't clear but the match being inside the Cell is a huge milestone for women's wrestling. If this match closes the show (more on that later), it's the biggest match in the women's wrestling history.

This is where I get scared of WWE as there's always a chance that they'll have the biggest layup imaginable and screw it up. Banks retaining here should be an easy concept but WWE seems to have no problem crippling their stars' hometown fans. If Banks loses and this doesn't go on last, I have no idea how they expect the fans to care about the main event.

But yeah, Banks wins here and goes on to feud with either Bayley or Jax in the first part of the new year as we somehow get to the Four Horsewomen in a match at "Wrestlemania XXXIII". Charlotte will be fine as she regroups and fights someone else (I'm not sure who though.) but Banks should go over here.

That leaves us with the Raw World Title match as Kevin Owens defends against Seth Rollins. Where do you even start with this one? Owens is being overshadowed by Chris Jericho who doesn't have a role on this show and Rollins is being overshadowed by HHH, who may or may not show up tomorrow night for the sake of a slight advancement in this glacial paced story which seems to be setting up Rollins vs. HHH because that's the rub Rollins needs.

Rollins has even come close to saying that winning the title isn't the point here because it's all about impressing or showing up the Authority, which is the real title on this brand. Owens has been completely forgotten as champion as he was handed the belt as part of the HHH vs. Rollins feud and has since been turned into a

glorified Jericho lackey. But somehow, this is one of the pay per view's main events.

I'll go with Owens retaining via HHH interference because you have to have some kind of cheating in a major match like this because that's how pay per view main events work. Rollins can go on to feud with HHH while Owens and Jericho probably get into it over the title, assuming Jericho is going to be sticking around and not going on tour with Fozzy instead. Owens wins here and is probably a lot worse off as a result because the title means that little anymore.

That leaves us with the big question: what goes on last? There have been stories all over the place about whether Rollins vs. Owens or Banks vs. Charlotte is the main event with "Monday Night Raw" General Manager Mick Foley officially saying it would be the women but then backtracking with the lame excuse of there can be multiple main events.

Here's the thing: Banks vs. Charlotte main eventing is a major story and a first time ever moment that makes WWE look like they're trying to do something special. If Owens vs. Rollins goes on last, it's just not that interesting. They're in a lame feud and it's not going to matter to have them go on last. Just let the women, in Banks' hometown, do something historic for a change so the fans can have some fun.

Overall, this is a moderately interesting show on paper but I'm much more interested in the upcoming "Survivor Series 2016", which has left this one feeling pretty unimportant. Having three Cell matches waters the concept down but at least there's going to be a big feeling with something this big taking place...at least the first time they do it.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/heres-latest-whether-sashacharlotte-will-main-event-hell-cell/>

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# Monday Night Raw – October 24, 2016: Who Needs Sunday and a Cell?

## Monday Night Raw

Date: October 24, 2016

Location: Target Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, Corey Graves

The Beast is back tonight as Brock Lesnar is here for his first comments about his upcoming match with Goldberg. In addition to that we have two big matches including Sheamus and Cesaro vs. New Day in a non-title match and Chris Jericho vs. Seth Rollins vs. Kevin Owens in a triple threat. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's Jericho to open things up with some terrible news: tonight's triple threat match has been canceled until further notice. The fans aren't happy with that one but Jericho says it's because SOMEONE HAS STOLEN THE LIST OF JERICH0. Fans: "NO! NO! NO!" Jericho isn't leaving until the List is returned but here's Owens to interrupt. Owens doesn't care who has the List but he'll help Jericho find it once they get rid of Rollins.

Jericho says there's no triple threat match tonight but here's Stephanie McMahon to interrupt. She explains the idea of the triple threat (because Stephanie thinks all fans are idiots) and here's

Rollins with the List. Jericho freaks out and Stephanie goes all screechy to say give it back.

Seth sees Stephanie mentioned as a stupid idiot but at the very bottom is Jericho's former best friend, Kevin Owens. Rollins wants to start a new list about Owens, who has no idea how it is inside the Cell. He'll also kick Owens' teeth down his throat and break his face with a Pedigree so he can teach HHH and Stephanie a lesson (because that's what really matters in this whole thing).

This segment showed how horribly uninteresting this whole thing is when Jericho isn't talking. Owens barely got to say anything and Rollins wants to win the title to show up HHH and Stephanie. Some main event feud. Also, did Stephanie need to be here? Like at all? She came out, told Jericho to do the main event (which Owens had already done) and was insulted that she was on the list (like Owens a few seconds later).

Post break Stephanie tells Rollins to give the List back because the fans were promised a triple threat. Rollins vents about Stephanie's real intentions and says the List is in the locker room.

#### Enzo Amore vs. Karl Anderson

Anderson and Gallows have cut off Enzo's mic so he and the crowd do it with pure vocal power. Enzo fires off rights and lefts in the corner but dives into a spinebuster as we take an early break. Back with Enzo getting kicked in the face but stopping a charge in the corner. A rollup is broken up but Cass kicks Karl in the face to give Enzo the pin at 7:39.

**Rating:** D+. I almost had this whole match written from the opening bell because this was exactly what you would have expected these two to do. It's fine to set up the tag match and thank goodness we didn't hear any of Anderson and Gallows trying to be funny. Enzo and Cass need to win on Sunday as it's not like Anderson and Gallows can go much further into the hole.

Rusev says he slept like a baby last night because he gets his hands on Roman Reigns inside the Cell this Sunday. Reigns has done a lot

of horrible things but now it's Rusev's chance to crush him for good. Simple and to the point here, as it should be.

### New Day vs. Cesaro/Sheamus

Non-title. Before the match, New Day praises Cesaro but says Sheamus shames us because no one wants to see him. Woods is the odd man out here, which is kind of surprising as they're normally defending the titles. Cesaro's backbreaker gets two on Kofi and a double back elbows shows that Cesaro and Sheamus can actually work together. New Day quickly gets it together and takes Sheamus into the corner for the Unicorn Stampede.

Back from a break with Kofi in trouble and taking the ten forearms to the chest. Cesaro misses a charge into the post and the hot tag brings in Big E. to deal with Sheamus. The Irish Curse gets two on Big E. and Cesaro's vertical suplex gets the same. The Midnight Hour is broken up but Kofi is launched straight into the uppercut. Sheamus Brogue Kicks Big E. for the pin at 11:45.

**Rating:** C+. Let's see. Yeah I'm checking here. Maybe...almost...nah I still don't care about Sheamus and Cesaro. They're still the same uninteresting pair that have been around since before Summerslam and still are little more than a rehash of the League of Nations having problems against New Day back in the spring. New Day needs to roll over them and give us the record in December. If you just have to give these two the belts after that then so be it but don't mess with the year plus run for this stupid idea.

We look back at Goldberg's return.

Jericho frantically looks for the List but runs into Titus O'Neil, the Shining Stars and Jinder Mahal, all of whom have something for him other than the List (Titus Brand, travel brochures and a breathing exercise).

### Bayley vs. Dana Brooke

Bayley has a taped up shoulder after last week. Dana says not so fast because she doesn't like the idea of last week's win being called an upset. Tonight there's going to be another match but this

time it's arm wrestling. Dana easily wins so Bayley offers to go left handed. Bayley starts to win and of course Dana decks her and turns the table over for the beatdown. A Bayley to Belly sends Dana running and thankfully cuts off the BORING chants. Can you blame the fans for not being impressed here?

Jericho is freaking out over the List when he runs into Stephanie, who isn't interested in helping him. Stephanie lists off everything she has going on and says Jericho is in the match, List or not. Chris says no List and no match, ya dig? That's not cool with the boss, who says Jericho wrestles or gets suspended.

### Curtis Axel vs. Bo Dallas

Before the match, Axel does a really good speech about his Minnesota roots and being Curt Hennig's son. Bo starts fast but the Roll of the Dice is countered into a PerfectPlex for two. I bought that for a second. A running forearm drops Curtis and we hit the chinlock. Axel fights out and hits the running neck snap for two and that's it for his offense as Dallas grabs a rollup for the pin at 2:58. I've said Axel should be pushed as a face for years and this was more evidence that I'm right. It's also more evidence that WWE gets way too much pleasure out of having people lose in their hometown.

Video on Rich Swann.

Jericho is about to leave when a guy comes up to say he saw the List. Chris finds....Braun Strowman looking at it and asks for it back. Braun: "Say please." Strowman doesn't see Sami Zayn's name on the List but gives it back anyway. Jericho says it's on page four and since Braun touched his personal property, HE JUST MADE THE LIST!

Roman Reigns talks about being in the Cell, which Rusev hasn't experienced. Reigns takes this personally and is ready to do anything to keep the title on Sunday.

We run down the card for Sunday's show.

### Golden Truth vs. Shining Stars

Mark Henry is with Golden Truth and Titus is with the Stars, which

makes me feel a bit better about their earlier segment. It's really nice to have them actually have a reason to be in the back instead of just showing up for a cameo. I love little things like that. Corey is reading a brochure as the Stars come out to the ring as he needs to get his mom a birthday gift.

Primo is dropped by Goldust to start but some double teaming puts him down. The snap powerslam puts Epico down and everything breaks down with Titus low bridging Truth to the floor. Henry shoves Titus into the ropes to crotch Epico, setting up a flapjack into Little Jimmy for the pin at 4:02.

**Rating:** D. Can someone take this show behind the barn and shoot it already? I'll actually give this match a little credit: they're trying to build something out of nothing and it could be a lot worse. I mean, there's at least something there and a moderate attempt to be interesting. It's not really working and the match feels like a nacho break but I'll take what I can get.

Mick Foley is in the ring for the contract signing between Sasha Banks and Charlotte. They talk about how big of a moment this is going to be, only to have Foley go into his annual rant about how evil the Cell is. Charlotte calls Sasha an entitled second rate talent who will learn respect from the Queen this Sunday. Sasha is ready to crawl up the ramp broken and bloodied as long as she has the Women's Title. They trade insults but Foley cuts them both off to say he's their future. Dude if the Cell is going to turn them into 6'4 men with long beards, maybe we should cancel the match.

As expected, the fans chant for Foley, thereby completely missing the point of this segment. Foley met Charlotte as a child and his kids gave Sasha their signed photo of Eddie Guerrero. More insults and a double signing FINALLY wrap this up. Charlotte vs. Sasha in a major gimmick match is fine but no one, like NO ONE, buys that the match is going to be all violent and career threatening like Foley is pushing and that kills the idea.

Emmalina video.

Brian Kendrick vs. Rich Swann

TJ Perkins is on commentary. As Kendrick makes his entrance, we see clips of his run from seven to ten years ago. It's very sad that the #1 contender to a title doesn't even have enough video from his current run for a highlight reel. In case you didn't know, Perkins runs down his history with Kendrick (Brian was his mentor) for the millionth or so time.

Swann flips over Brian and hits a good looking dropkick. A spinning dive to the floor takes Kendrick down and we head to a break. Back with Swann fighting out of a chinlock and snapping off a top rope hurricanrana. What looks like a victory roll is broken up but Swann slips out of the Captain's Hook and grabs a cradle for the pin at 9:14.

**Rating:** C. So Swann, who looked a lot better here, pins the #1 contender for a title that has no heat going into a pay per view title match. I get that Swann is likely the next challenger but they're ruining this division more week by week. I'll spare you another list of problems and just say Swann looked good here and go on.

Owens promises violence on Sunday but he's the only one coming back.

#### Braun Strowman vs. Sami Zayn

This has the potential to be good so let's see how they can screw it up. Before the bell, Strowman says he wants competition but he doesn't see that in front of him. Strowman shoves him away but Sami low bridges him to the floor. This goes badly for Sami as he dives at Braun, only to get thrown into the barricade. Strowman walks away and there's no match.

Kendrick comes in to see Perkins and says the clock is ticking on his career. If TJ loses on Sunday, he'll bounce back. If Brian loses, that's it for feeding his family. TJ walks away.

Here are Brock Lesnar and Paul Heyman with something to say. Heyman does his usual schtick about how Lesnar will smash Goldberg, only to have the Goldberg chants cut him off. Heyman calls out the fan that started them and says they're getting on Brock's nerves. After their

match, all of the chants in the world won't be able to put Goldberg back together again. Suplexes are promised and the fans go back and forth with SUPLEX CITY/GOLDBERG chants. Heyman rips on them and the chant turns into GOLDBERG SUCKS....to wrap this up. Ok then. There was NOTHING here and it didn't need Brock at all.

Owens and Jericho have a meeting before the triple threat with Chris asking if their friendship means as much as the title. Kevin smiles it off and doesn't really answer. Jericho says they'll still be best friends no matter what but Kevin looks concerned.

### Seth Rollins vs. Chris Jericho vs. Kevin Owens

Non-title. They play keep away to start until Owens gets kicked out to the floor. A Blockbuster gets two on Jericho but Owens pulls Seth outside. The champ is sent into the barricade but Jericho throws Seth into the crowd. Back in and Owens scores with a clothesline, only to have Rollins avoid the Cannonball. The Pedigree doesn't work on either Canadian but the Lionsault hits Seth's knees.

Owens saves his buddy from a Pedigree and it's time for the double teaming. The handicap portion continues until Owens is low bridged to the floor. Jericho eats the low superkick and Rollins dives onto Kevin. Seth misses the frog splash and eats a Codebreaker for two. Owens comes back in and slaps Rollins a lot as the STUPID IDIOT chants kick in. Rollins escapes a double superplex and pins both guys at the same time with a double rollup at 10:00.

**Rating:** C+. The match was fun but it's WAY too late in the night to really matter. Rollins pinning the champ is appropriate as Owens has been a huge afterthought in this entire story. That also makes four straight times that Rollins has pinned Jericho so you certainly can't say he's getting too many wins.

Post match Owens and Jericho destroy Rollins by sending him hard into the steps. We're still not done though as Rollins runs up the ramp and dives at Owens, only to get beaten down again. Owens gives him the Apron Bomb and walks back up the ramp to get his title so some posing can end the show.

**Overall Rating:** D-. What a dog of a show this was. There was no effort here and their best idea was to say “Raw Exclusive Pay Per View” over and over as many times as they could. This was every lame idea they could come up with in three hours with almost no one really trying and the show feeling even longer than usual. The worst part is the show wasn’t even the worst. What it was was lacking energy and that’s as bad as it’s going to get. Horrible stuff here and little more than making me want to get to Survivor Series instead of caring about Sunday.

### Results

Enzo Amore b. Karl Anderson – Rollup

Cesaro and Sheamus b. New Day – Brogue Kick to Big E.

Bo Dallas b. Curtis Axel – Rollup

Golden Truth b. Shining Stars – Flapjack into Little Jimmy to Epico

Rich Swann b. Brian Kendrick – Oklahoma Roll

Seth Rollins b. Kevin Owens and Chris Jericho – Double rollup

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# Monday Night Raw – October 10, 2016: What's The Story?

## Monday Night Raw

Date: October 10, 2016

Location: Oracle Arena, Oakland, California

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

We're less than three weeks away from Hell in a Cell and only one of the namesake matches has been set up so far. The interesting question is what will be the second (if not the third): Seth Rollins vs. Kevin Owens or Charlotte vs. Sasha Banks. Both have been announced for the show but neither has officially been announced as taking place inside the Cell. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's Sasha Banks to get things going. Sasha says she's on top of the world right now and wishes Eddie Guerrero a happy birthday. She spent years watching Eddie lie, cheat and steal his way to the top. Last week she was in the main event of Raw, just like Trish Stratus and Lita were all those years ago. Sasha knows the rematch is coming at Hell in a Cell so let's put it inside the Cell for the first time ever.

Cue Charlotte but Rusev (now with sideburns) and Lana of all people come out to interrupt. Rusev says no one cares about this women's revolution but Charlotte takes the mic from him and, with Stephanie style tones, asks Rusev who he thinks he is. The match with Sasha is on inside the Cell.

Rusev takes the mic back and says good for you but he wasn't done. This time it's Sasha taking the mic away and throwing it to the mat. Lana says Sasha and Charlotte need to learn their place because they're whining like little girls. That earns Lana a shove down and Rusev gets dropkicked out to the floor. Roman Reigns comes out to prevent the male on female violence. The match really doesn't need to be inside the Cell from a storyline perspective but this is the

next logical step for the women being treated as equals and there's nothing wrong with that.

Here's New Day to talk about the history of sports in Oakland, including the Splash Brothers and the Bash Brothers. That brings them to the most famous friends though: Danny Tanner and Uncle Jesse. See, there's about to be a full house because New Day is three of a kind and they're about to deal with a pair in Cesaro and Sheamus. Kofi has a hot garbage sign to describe Sheamus and Woods says the title match at the pay per view will prove that New Day rocks.

### Cesaro vs. Kofi Kingston

Cesaro shoulders him down to start as we hear about Demolition's record again. Apparently Sheamus is on Facebook while he's sitting on the steps, not watching the match. They head outside for a staredown as we take a break. Back with Kofi getting two off a middle rope crossbody as Sheamus is still on Facebook. Trouble in Paradise misses and it's time for the Uppercut Train. Kofi escapes a Sharpshooter attempt but tweaks his leg on a springboard attempt. Sheamus decides to go after Francesca and the distraction lets Kofi small package Cesaro for the pin at 7:45.

**Rating:** C. This was more about advancing the story than the match itself and that worries me. The announcers kept talking about how Cesaro and Sheamus have no chance to win the titles, making me think that's exactly what's going to happen. New Day has gone on WAY too long to let this thrown together team beat them for the belts two months before they break a nearly thirty year old record.

Tonight it's Charlotte/Rusev vs. Reigns/Banks. Am I missing something or did Charlotte dropkick Rusev earlier tonight?

We see Goldberg's comments on "Sportscenter", where he said he'd love to face Brock Lesnar again.

### Bayley vs. Cami Fields

Cami starts fast with some shoulders in the corner and stomps her way out of a sunset flip attempt. That's about it though as the

Bayley to Belly finishes Fields at 2:19.

Dana Brooke jumps Bayley post match.

Chris Jericho is on the phone with someone and says he wants a pay day. R-Truth comes up and offers him a Payday candy bar. I'll take it if Jericho doesn't want it.

#### Drew Gulak/Tony Nese vs. Sin Cara/Lince Dorado

You knew Cara would be involved in this sometime. Gulak and Dorado start things off but an early headscissors means it's off to Nese. Dorado gets taken into the wrong corner as the fans are dying by the second. A Gory Special has Dorado in trouble and it's back to Nese for a chinlock. It's back to Cara for a moonsault to both villains and a springboard crossbody for two on Gulak. Everything breaks down and Cara suicide dives onto Nese. Dorado hits a shooting star press to pin Gulak at 3:17.

**Rating:** C+. The best thing they could do here is get them out of the ring quickly. This division isn't working and there's really no hiding that anymore. Would it really kill them to let some of these guys talk about something other than being athletes and wanting to prove that they're the best in the world? Like, giving them some characters etc?

Stephanie McMahon invites herself to join Mick Foley's Cell address. Here are the bosses with Stephanie making fun of Foley's red flannel suit. In what sounds like a Home Shopping Network ad, Foley and Stephanie talk about the Women's Title match being inside the Cell and confirm it for a second time tonight. But wait: there's more. In a THIRD Cell match, Seth Rollins will be challenging for Kevin Owens' Raw World Title as well.

This brings out Chris Jericho and Kevin Owens to say Mick has outdone himself this week. Owens doesn't want to be in the Cell because he doesn't want to be an old, broken down man like Foley. Jericho wants to know if he and Kevin can have their own private jet if Mick is just throwing out presents. The recklessness involved in putting Owens in the Cell means FOLEY JUST MADE THE LIST! Foley: "I

started the List.” Jericho: “YOU JUST MADE THE LIST AGAIN!”

Stephanie tells Jericho to show Foley respect (MAKE UP YOUR FREAKING MIND ALREADY STEPHANIE!!! TWO WEEKS AGO YOU TREATED FOLEY LIKE A THREE YEAR OLD AND NOW JERICHO NEEDS TO RESPECT HIM???) so she has an idea: if Jericho can beat Rollins tonight, he’s in the title match as a triple threat. Because Raw needs to top Smackdown’s triple threat!

Rollins says Stephanie loves to pull strings and is always five moves ahead. Tonight though, he’s going to ruin those plans by beating Jericho. Rollins wants to know what Owens is thinking though because Jericho might go into business for himself.

#### Curtis Axel/Bo Dallas vs. Enzo Amore/Big Cass

And never mind as Anderson and Gallows jump Enzo and Cass from behind before the match starts. No match.

After a break, Axel and Dallas say they want a tag match.

#### Curtis Axel/Bo Dallas vs. Sami Zayn/Neville

Bo beats on Sami in the corner to start as we hear about Foley making three Cell matches. Well given that they were all challenges issues by wrestlers, that’s not the most impressive things in the world. Axel takes over on Sami and hits a good looking dropkick. Not that it matters as an exploder suplex sets up the Helluva Kick and the Red Arrow for the easy pin on Axel at 2:28.

Lana comes into Charlotte’s locker room and snipe at each other a bit.

#### R-Truth vs. Titus O’Neil

Apparently Titus is mad about Truth getting the commercial for Payday earlier tonight. Titus throws Truth around to start as Graves plugs the Titus Brand. Goldust gets on the steps for a distraction and Truth grabs a rollup (with Titus’ feet in the ropes) for the pin at 2:12. That’s the second distraction finish tonight.

TJ Perkins comes in to see Brian Kendrick and talks about how Kendrick deserves another shot at the title. They shake hands but

Kendrick goes after him, earning a right hand from the champ.

#### Braun Strowman vs. Splash Brothers

The Brothers are Steven and Clay. Strowman treats them like you would expect and splashes Steven while Clay is on Braun's back. A double dropkick puts the Brothers down and it's a running powerslam for Clay. Steven is reversed chokeslammed onto his brother for the pin at 59 seconds.

Braun still wants better competition. In other words: nothing changed this week and the writers get to stretch it out even more.

Roman Reigns and Sasha talk strategy.

Of all things, we get the Rumble by the Numbers video. Tickets go on sale soon it seems.

#### Charlotte/Rusev vs. Roman Reigns/Sasha Banks

The genders have to match so we start with multiple tags before any contact. Rusev punches Reigns to start and a clothesline gets two. Reigns starts a comeback as the fans want Sasha. The villains are knocked to the floor and we take a break. Back with Reigns caught in a chinlock and more WE WANT SASHA chants. A Superman Punch allows the tag to Charlotte, meaning it's off to Sasha to clean house. Wouldn't it have been smarter to not have Rusev tag so the advantage isn't lost? The double knees in the corner get two on Charlotte and the Bank Statement makes her tap at 9:48.

**Rating:** D+. Well that happened and it was nowhere near as amazing as the announcers tried to make it seem. The fans really didn't seem to care about Rusev vs. Reigns as there's almost no way Rusev is getting the title back and everyone knows it. There was nothing to the match anyway and the sudden ending didn't help things.

Tom Phillips asks Jericho and Owens about the possible change to the title match at the pay per view. Jericho: "That's a stupid idiom." Jericho says if one of them is champion, both of them are champion. Owens throws Phillips out but since Tom doesn't get out fast enough, HE MAKES THE LIST, under the name Felipe Thomastein.

We see the Goldberg clip again.

Here's Paul Heyman to discuss said Goldberg comments but first we get another WWE2K17 video, this time of Lesnar vs. Goldberg. Heyman has heard people whispering about Goldberg returning for years now because they want one more spear and Jackhammer. You still hear the chants today and there they go again.

Everyone that got in the same ring as Goldberg was conquered while he was running parallel to Brock Lesnar. It keeps Heyman up at night that Goldberg is one up on Brock so as of tonight, Goldberg is officially challenged to a fight any place anytime. Goldberg can either live in the past or step in this ring and be conquered. In Suplex City, Goldberg is next.

Emmalina video.

#### TJ Perkins vs. Ariya Daivari

Non-title with Brian Kendrick on commentary. Daivari has to go to the ropes to get out of an early kneebar and we hit the chinlock on Perkins. A neckbreaker gets two on TJ but he comes right back with one of his own. The slingshot dropkick sets up the kneebar to make Daivari tap at 5:14.

**Rating:** D+. This might have been my breaking point for the division. These matches aren't interesting and having random people who happened to be in the tournament job to Perkins isn't helping things. It's just a total misfit on this show and nothing they're doing is making it any better. Either make it interesting or scrap the thing already.

Jericho and Stephanie run into each other with Chris saying he thought about putting her on the list. Stephanie is cool with that though, as long as the Raw triple threat beats Smackdown's triple threat. Jericho needs to remember that Stephanie can't help him inside the Cell. Not that Jericho asked about it but Stephanie seems to think everyone needs her help. Owens comes up and asks what that was about but Jericho just says friendship.

Hispanic Heritage Month video on Tito Santana. It's nice to have it be about a wrestler again.

A Tweet from Goldberg says he'll be on Raw next week.

### Seth Rollins vs. Chris Jericho

If Jericho wins, the Universal Title match becomes a triple threat. Rollins doesn't care for having a toothpick thrown in his face so he smacks Jericho around. A Blockbuster gets two for Seth and Jericho bails to the floor, only to get caught by a slingshot dropkick. Cue Owens for a distraction so Jericho can take over and we take a break.

Back with Jericho kicking Rollins off the top and slapping on an abdominal stretch. Rollins sends him face first into the middle turnbuckle and gets two off a Sling Blade (which Jericho called loudly). Seth goes up top and slams Jericho off, only to have his crossbody dropkicked out of the air. The low superkick gets two on Jericho but Owens offers a distraction, allowing Jericho to grab the Walls.

A belt shot from Owens gets the same and Rollins takes him down with a suicide dive. The springboard knee to the head gets two on Jericho but he avoids the frog splash. A Lionsault gives Jericho a near fall of his own but he misses a high crossbody. Jericho reverses the Pedigree into another Walls attempt, only to get small packaged for the pin at 19:14.

**Rating:** B-. The ending was more of a relief than anything else as I really, really didn't need to sit through another triple threat title match, especially inside the Cell. Rollins vs. Owens isn't the most interesting thing in the world but Jericho can go and do something else instead of trying to salvage this upper midcard feud. Post match Owens and Jericho beat on Seth but Rollins fights back and gives Jericho a Pedigree as Owens bails to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** D. What is the top story on Raw right now? Is it the Lesnar vs. Goldberg? Jericho/Owens vs. Rollins? One half of Raw vs. Smackdown? Charlotte vs. Sasha? The problem is nothing is standing out right now and it's hard to care about a bunch of stories that feel like they belong in the upper midcard. I can't even blame it on

Stephanie this week (though her defending Foley had my jaw dropping) because it's a recurring problem. Owens has had his legs cut off as he's really just an afterthought at the moment in what feels like multiple feuds.

There's too much stuff going on near the top and the LONG list of midcard and lower card feuds and stories don't help things. Tonight you had two cruiserweight matches, that stupid Titus Brand stuff, the random tag feuds and Braun Strowman and I'm probably forgetting some. They need to trim some of this stuff down and stop trying to throw so much bad, unfocused stuff at us at the same time.

### Results

Kofi Kingston b. Cesaro – Small package

Bayley b. Cami Fields – Bayley to Belly

Sin Cara/Lince Dorado b. Drew Gulak/Tony Nese – Shooting star press to Nese

Sami Zayn/Neville b. Curtis Axel/Bo Dallas – Red Arrow to Axel

R-Truth b. Titus O'Neil – Rollup

Braun Strowman b. Splash Brothers – Reverse chokeslam to Steven

Sasha Banks/Roman Reigns b. Rusev/Charlotte – Bank Statement to Charlotte

TJ Perkins b. Ariya Daivari – Kneebar

Seth Rollins b. Chris Jericho – Small package

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