

# Summerslam Count-Up – 2003: They Were Chanting His Name

## Summerslam 2003

Date: August 24, 2003

Location: America West Arena, Phoenix, Arizona

Attendance: 16,113

Commentators: Jim Ross, Tazz, Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

Another year another Summerslam and yet again the company has changed. Tonight we have a double main event with a Wrestlemania rematch of Lesnar vs. Angle II for the Smackdown Title and an Elimination Chamber match for the Raw Title. 2003 was split down the middle in quality as Raw was atrocious and Smackdown was some of the best television in company history. It's always interesting to see the two shows come together. Let's get to it.

The US Marine Corps presents the American flag while Lillian sings the Star Spangled Banner.

The opening video talks about how there is evil in this world and the Chamber tonight will prove it.

## Raw Tag Titles: Dudley Boyz vs. La Resistance

The Dudleyz are challenging and the EVIL foreigners are Rene Dupree and Sylvain Grenier. Bubba of course comes out with an American flag to hammer in the face status. The whole patriotism thing was a big deal in this feud as the third member of La Resistance, an American named Rob Conway, pretended to be a soldier to sneak up on the Dudleyz. It's a brawl to start in the aisle with the challengers in full control.

D-Von chokes Dupree with the robe to start before armbarring Grenier down. A slam and a legdrop gets two on Sylvain and it's off to Bubba for the power brawling. He puts Grenier in the Tree of Woe and stands on his crotch to make the French guy scream. The Dudleys clear the ring but Grenier gets in a cheap shot to give the champions control on Bubba. A

double shoulder puts Bubba down for two as the USA chant starts up.

Back to Dupree for a bearhug, which isn't often a move you see on a fat man like Bubba. Some headbutts break up hold but Bubba walks into a spinebuster for two. Bubba punches his way over to the hot tag (four minutes into the match) and D-Von cleans house. A rollup gets two on Grenier as everything breaks down. D-Von walks into a double spinebuster for two but it's What's Up to Dupree. The 3D lays out Dupree but Grenier makes save. Now a cameraman lays out D-Von with a camera to the head to retain the titles. It's Rob Conway of course.

**Rating:** D+. That's a pretty lame choice for an opener. Not only did the fans not get what they wanted but the match sucked as well. This was a dark time for the tag team division and there was no reason at all for there to be two sets of titles at this point. At the end of the day there wasn't nearly enough depth and it made for lame matches like this. The Dudleys would get the belts next month.

Spike tries to run in for the save but Conway lays him out with the camera. Conway hasn't been named here but I think the spoiler is ok at this point.

Coach says La Resistance was clever so Bubba accuses him of being anti-American and vows to get the belts back.

Eric Bischoff is warming up when Intercontinental Champion Christian comes up. He wants to know why he isn't on the show but Bischoff blames Co-GM Steve Austin. Christian isn't pleased but offers to be in Eric's corner for his match later. Bischoff says he has his own plan and won't answer what happens in the bedroom with Linda. Eric says he'll tell everyone later.

We recap A-Train vs. Undertaker. A-Train (Tensai) is working for Vince who is in a semi-war with Taker, setting up tonight's match. This would evolve into a bigger war soon enough.

### Undertaker vs. A-Train

A-Train comes out with Vince's mistress Sable and Undertaker has bad

ribs. Feeling out process to start with A-Train grabbing a few headlocks for early control. Taker hits a quick Russian legsweep for two and he cranks on the arm to set up Old School. The second attempt works a bit better and Taker stays on the arm. A big boot misses and Taker falls out to the floor, reinjuring the ribs.

A-Train starts pounding away on the ribs and sends them into the barricade for two back in the ring. Taker gets in some shots to the ribs of his own for a breather but A-Train comes back with an impressive suplex to take him down. This is the kind of character A-Train was perfect as: a heavy who could do some impressive moves at times. A-Train fights out of a sleeper with a belly to back suplex but Taker hits a quick Snake Eyes to get a breather. A big boot misses the big bald head and a double clothesline puts each other down.

Taker wins a slugout after A-Train hung in there a lot longer than expected. Now the big boot sets up the legdrop (BROTHER) for two and another legdrop to the back of the head with A-Train on the apron has the bald one staggered. The Last Ride is easily broken up but the referee is bumped.

A-Train hits the Derailer (chokebomb) but the delayed count only gets two. Taker accidentally clotheslines the referee down again (the second match does NOT warrant two ref bumps) and A-Train brings in a chair, only to have it cracked over his own head for a near fall. A-Train escapes a tombstone but gets caught in a chokeslam for the pin.

**Rating:** D. What are you expecting out of this match? This was back when Taker was pretty bad in the ring due to being completely unmotivated and bored with the biker character. Thankfully he would be the Dead Man again by Wrestlemania and would eventually reignite his career around 2007.

Post match Sable tries to seduce Taker for some reason but Stephanie comes in to go after her, presumably setting up a mixed tag.

Coach polls some fans on who wins the Chamber.

We recap Shane McMahon vs. Eric Bischoff. Shane was feuding with Kane but Bischoff stopped them from fighting. Austin made Bischoff vs. Shane for

that night but Kane interfered and cost Shane the match (he later tied Shane to the steps and electrocuted his testicles. It was stupid back then and it's even worse now. This is what I had to deal with people).

Later, Bischoff caused JR to nearly be lit on fire, so Austin had to prevent a lawsuit by making Kane vs. Bischoff but Kane walked away for some reason, giving Bischoff the win by countout. This was a qualifying match for a Summerslam match with Kane, making our match tonight. Then Bischoff went to Linda's house and pinned her arm behind her back and kissed her against her will. Think that's enough to set up this match?

### Shane McMahon vs. Eric Bischoff

Before the match, Eric implies that he screwed Linda several times over that night. This brings out Shane to send Eric into the corner for a beating. Crossface punches send Bischoff to the floor but Shane clotheslines him in the back of the head. Back to ringside and Shane breaks the referee's count (sidebar: why doesn't that happen when both guys are on the floor and one guy slides back in at the last second?) before kicking away at Shane even more.

Bischoff is sent into the announce table and stomped down, only to have Coach come in with a chair and turning heel by helping Bischoff. The referee says ring the bell but Bischoff makes it No DQ and falls count anywhere. Shane is sent into the steps for two as Coach is playing the enforcer here. He holds Shane as Bischoff tells the production truck to turn off JR and King's microphones so Coach can do commentary.

Bischoff starts firing off kicks as Coach does the eternally annoying JR impersonation. This keeps going for awhile until Shane gets in a right hand, only to be dropped by a low blow from Coach. Cue Steve Austin who can't fight unless physically provoked. Shane shoves Coach into Austin which is enough for the beating to begin. Austin and Shane stomp Coach down in the corner and clear the ring. Austin has the mics turned back on as Shane grabs Eric's hand and uses it to slap Austin's face, meaning Austin can Stun Bischoff. That's not good enough for Shane so he puts Eric on the table for the big elbow for the pin.

**Rating:** N/A. This was a long segment instead of a match. Also to recap

how stupid things were at this point, we're supposed to be interested in Austin/Shane vs. Coach/Bischoff when Austin has equal power to Eric. We also have Stephanie vs. Sable, because EVERYONE wants to see the McMahons dominating the show. This is in addition to Evolution dragging Raw down the drain with the Kevin Nash and Goldberg feuds. See why 2003 is considered so bad?

Wrestlemania moment. Kind of an odd time for one of these but Shawn superkicking Bret was an awesome moment.

We see Kevin Nash getting ready. JR: "Nash is a street fighter at heart." I haven't laughed that hard in awhile.

Flair and HHH tell Orton to keep the title on the Game tonight and nothing more.

#### US Title: Eddie Guerrero vs. Chris Benoit vs. Tajiri vs. Rhyno

Eddie is defending and this is one fall to a finish. Eddie has ticked off all three challengers so they all want to take him out. The champion bails to the floor so everyone else can fight and we quickly get down to Rhyno vs. Benoit. Chris hooks a quick Crossface, drawing Eddie in for the save. Tajiri is back in as well but Eddie breaks up a cover. Everyone is in now and all three challengers go after Eddie at the same time.

Rhyno hits a running shoulder to Eddie's ribs in the corner and powerslams him down for two but Benoit comes back with a German suplex. A belly to back gets two on Tajiri but Eddie makes another save. Benoit is suplexed to the floor and Eddie is left alone with Tajiri, only to have the challenger monkey flip Eddie down for two. Rhyno comes back in and sends Tajiri to the floor but Benoit wants to beat up Eddie himself, triggering a brawl between challengers.

Rhyno gets control again and superplexes Eddie down for two but Tajiri kicks him in the back of the head. Tajiri snaps off the handspring elbow for two on Chris but Rhyno sends Tajiri to the floor, only to have Eddie headscissor him out to the floor. Eddie hurricanranas Benoit out of the corner for two and it's Tajiri in again for some hard kicks. Eddie hooks the Lasso From El Paso (Liontamer crossed with the Texas Cloverleaf) on

Tajiri but Benoit stops Rhyno from making the save with the Crossface.

Tajiri makes the ropes so Eddie turns around to dropkick Benoit in the head for the save. Benoit grabs the Crossface on Guerrero but Rhyno and Tajiri make the double save. Rhyno hits a spinebuster for two on Tajiri but Benoit knocks Rhyno to the floor. Chris rolls some Germans on Tajiri but Tajiri reverses into one of his own for two on Benoit.

Tajiri catches a charging Benoit in the Tarantula and the distraction lets Eddie get the US Title to shield himself from Rhyno's Gore. Tajiri breaks up the Frog Splash but gets caught in the Tree of Woe. Benoit Swan Dives Rhyno but Tajiri makes a last second save. Tajiri and Benoit fall to the floor and Eddie frog splashes Rhyno to retain.

**Rating:** B+. This was non-stop action for about eleven minutes and incredibly entertaining as a result. It's a great example of how wrestling and action can be so much more interesting than whatever drama the McMahons have going on at the moment. Watching these four make save after save is WAY more fun than hearing about Bischoff forcing himself on Linda or Stephanie being FURIOUS with Sable over whatever affair her dad is having this month.

We recap Brock Lesnar destroying Zack Gowen on Smackdown (good for him). Lesnar had him COVERED in blood and rubbed the blood on his own chest. Gowen had his leg broken in two places so he couldn't face Matt Hardy tonight. Matt declared himself the winner on Heat like a good heel would.

We recap Angle vs. Lesnar. Angle lost to Brock in the main event of Wrestlemania, leading to Vengeance where Angle pinned Lesnar in a three way to get the title back. The two of them became best friends and friendly rivals, leading to Brock wanting a rematch. Vince said no, but if Lesnar can beat Vince in a cage with Angle as referee, he can have the shot. Before the match, someone attacked Brock and laid him out with a concussion. Brock popped up and turned on Angle, revealing that he's working for Vince as the new heavy and getting the title shot for tonight. Vince called this the REAL Brock Lesnar.

Smackdown World Title: Brock Lesnar vs. Kurt Angle

Angle is defending of course. Brock shoves him in the corner to show off the power so Angle starts getting lower. They hit the technical stuff on the mat but Brock escapes into a standoff. Brock quickly takes him down with a headscissors but it's Angle escaping to another stalemate. Lesnar shoves him around with the power so Angle leverages him into the corner and says bring it on. Some quick armdrags send Brock out to the floor and various things are destroyed in frustration.

Lesnar picks up the belt and tries to walk out with it but Kurt pounds him down in the aisle to start the brawling. Back in and Angle snaps off the first overhead belly to belly for two before stomping him down in the corner. Brock comes right back with a gorilla press and throws Angle out to the floor. Angle is sent into the steps as this is far different from the Wrestlemania match. Back in and Brock hits a release belly to belly without leaving his feet.

Angle slips out of another gorilla press and gets two off an O'Connor Roll, only to walk into a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker for two. We hit the rear naked choke on Angle which is turned into a bodyscissors. Angle fights up but runs into a knee to the ribs to put him right back down. Kurt is pounded into the corner but grabs a rollup for two, only to be clotheslined back down. The story of this match isn't working as well as their first fight. This is much more of a traditional wrestling match with good vs. evil and that's not what these two are best at.

Lesnar comes right back with something like a Muscle Buster for two, followed up by shoulders to the ribs in the corner. Brock sends him into the corner to stay on the ribs and back before firing off more shoulders in the corner. Angle finally moves to avoid a charge, sending Brock shoulder first into the post. A dropkick takes Brock's knee out and Angle rolls some Germans for a close two. Brock comes back with an overhead belly to belly of his own but Angle pops up and tries the Slam, only to be countered into a spinebuster for a close two. The fans are into this match.

Angle counters an F5 into a DDT and both guys are down. A delayed cover gets two for the champion and there go the straps. The Angle Slam connects but Brock is up at two as per tradition. In one of my favorite

moments, Angle puts the straps up so he can take them back down, firing himself up even more. There's the ankle lock but Brock makes a rope. Angle pulls him back so the rope doesn't count in a questionable call, so Lesnar rolls out, bumping the referee in the process.

Lesnar sends him into the corner and Angle tries a sunset flip but stops before going down, wrapping his legs around Brock's neck in a choke before putting on another ankle lock. Lesnar eventually taps but there's no referee so here's Vince with a chair to Angle's back to break the hold. Brock gets to his one good foot and hits a pretty awesome one legged F5 for a delayed two. Vince demands another F5 but Angle counters into the ankle lock. Brock grabs the rope but again Angle pulls him to the middle for no break. Brock grabs all four bottom ropes but the referee doesn't break it, forcing Brock to tap out.

**Rating:** B. It's a good match but the ending never worked for me. At the end of the day, if you touch the ropes the hold is supposed to be broken. That's wrestling 101, but for some reason it doesn't count at the end of this match. The match was good but it was overbooked when you have these two being able to own whatever ring they're in. The Vince stuff was annoying but that's what you have to expect in WWE.

Post match Vince tries to jump Angle again but gets Angle Slammed through a chair for his efforts. And on Vince's birthday too.

Goldberg is listening to an iPod to get ready. That's such a wrong image.

Some Arizona Diamondbacks are here.

We recap Kane vs. RVD. They had been friends and tag champions but Kane lost a match to HHH, forcing him to unmask. This unleashed Kane's inner demons for the 10<sup>th</sup> time or so, turning him into a psycho who lit JR on fire. Kane swore everyone was laughing at him even though RVD told him everything was fine. Kane beat up RVD in a match and tombstoned Linda McMahon on a stage to start his feud with Shane, leading to a rematch with Rob here tonight.

Kane vs. Rob Van Dam



Fink says this is No Holds Barred. So does that make Kane Zeus? JR calls Kane an inbred mongrel dog, which isn't that high up on his list of sayings. Van Dam fires off right hands to start but Kane takes him to the floor with a few uppercuts. Kane charges into a boot and gets kicked in the face to put the monster down. Kane easily slugs him down and pulls out a ladder. Van Dam manages to smash the end of it to drive the ladder into Kane's face, only to have Rolling Thunder caught by the throat.

RVD kicks out of the chokeslam but gets knocked out to the floor as the brawl continues. Kane sends him into the steps and is in full on monster mode. Back in and Van Dam scores with a kick and some shoulders to the ribs for two. Rob goes up top but gets shoved down onto the barricade to give Kane control again. A ladder to the face gets two back in the ring and a big clothesline puts Van Dam down again.

We hit the slow motion part of the match as Kane pounds on Van Dam very slowly to stop the crowd from being interested. Van Dam is backdropped to the floor but Kane badly botches the top rope clothesline, nearly falling on his head and dying. Kane avoids another ladder shot and DDTs Van Dam on the floor, only to have Rob catch a charging Kane in a drop toe-hold to send him face first into the steps. Kane is kicked into the crowd and crotched as he tries to come back to ringside.

Van Dam's spin kick off the apron puts Kane down again as this match just keeps going. Back in and Rolling Thunder onto the chair crushes Kane but Rob can't follow up. Kane sits up but gets caught by a Van Daminator. Rob loads up the Van Terminator but Kane rolls away at the last second. They head to the floor and Kane tombstones Rob onto the steps, killing him dead for the pin.

**Rating:** C-. This was an ok brawl but it went on WAY too long. At the end of the day this was just a rest stop on the way to Kane vs. Shane next month which was probably the more interesting feud anyway. The match was Van Dam trying his best but not being able to keep Kane down. It certainly wasn't a squash but it wasn't many steps above one.

Eric is annoyed that Terri is asking him questions. Linda comes in and slaps Bischoff in the face.

HHH looks at the world title.

The Chamber is lowered.

We recap the world title match. There isn't much to this other than HHH is injured and can't fight Goldberg one on one so we get an Elimination Chamber instead. Goldberg is in for obvious reasons, Jericho and Nash have been feuding lately, Orton is there to give HHH a hand and Shawn is there for past issues with HHH. This gets the music video treatment, set to St. Anger by Metallica.

Raw World Title: HHH vs. Kevin Nash vs. Goldberg vs. Chris Jericho vs. Shawn Michaels vs. Randy Orton

After about 12 minutes of entrances we start with Shawn vs. Jericho, who will go for three minutes. After that time is up, a pod will open to release another wrestler. Three more minutes and another pod opens. This repeats until everyone is in and it's last man standing wins.

Eliminations can occur at any time and have to take place in the ring, not on the cage floor outside the ring next to the pods. They trade hammerlocks to start until Jericho rolls through a cross body for two.

They trade chain wrestling moves into a pinfall reversal sequence as the fans chant for Goldberg. Back up and Shawn slaps him in the face before backdropping him down. Jericho's Walls attempt is countered into a small package for two but Jericho comes back with a bulldog to take Shawn down. JR screws up the world title continuity by saying the title has only changed hands once in Phoenix, but that's the other world title. Not that it matters to WWE but they make such a big deal about the continuity that it's worth pointing out.

Anyway Orton is #3 and gets two off a high cross to Shawn. Michaels is clotheslined to the cage floor but he comes back in to pound away on Jericho. Randy dropkicks him down and stomps Jericho down against the ropes but can't RKO Shawn. Instead Orton is sent to the cage floor by a combined effort, only to have Jericho put Shawn in the Walls. Kevin Nash is in at #4 to make the save and go after Jericho as Shawn and Orton brawl in the ring. Jericho's face is rubbed against the cage to give us our first blood.

Nash (with short blonde hair here for a movie) cleans house but walks into a superkick into a rollup for the pin by Jericho. Nash was in there about two minutes or so. HHH is #5 but Shawn superkicks him before he can get out of the pod to make sure the injured champion doesn't have to do much. Nash lays out Jericho, Orton and Shawn with Jackknives, leaving everyone down for a massive dead spot. Shawn is busted as well.

They finally get back up to slug it out as JR talks about Oklahoma for no apparent reason. Here's Goldberg at #6 to FINALLY wake the crowd up a bit. He cleans house and clotheslines Jericho and Shawn down before spearing Orton down for the pin, leaving us with four. Jericho hits a quick missile dropkick for two on Goldberg but he launches Chris into the cage to put him back down.

Goldberg sends Shawn into the corner before spearing Jericho through the glass pod. Goldberg is dazed though, allowing Shawn to drop the elbow to set up Sweet Chin Music. This is Goldberg though so the kick is blocked by a spear and the Jackhammer gets us down to three. A quick spear and Jackhammer to Jericho leaves us with HHH vs. Goldberg. HHH is still in the pod as he's been in the match for about six minutes now and literally hasn't done anything.

Flair shoves the pod door closed to save HHH so Goldberg kicks the pod door in so we can actually have a match. Goldberg pounds away in the pod before sending HHH face first into the cage. The champion is busted open but he FINALLY gets in a kick to the leg and sends Goldberg into the cage. Goldberg comes right back with a clothesline and they head into the ring. The spear is loaded up but hits the sledgehammer that Flair slid in, keeping the title on HHH.

**Rating:** C-. This didn't work very well and the ending sums up everything wrong with Raw in 2003. The fans were primed for a Goldberg title win, HHH was injured and had no business being in the match anyway, Goldberg dominated the match, HHH literally hit two offensive moves in ten minutes of match time, but HHH uses the sledgehammer to retain the title. Yeah Goldberg got the title a month later, but THIS is the match people remember because THIS is the big show. HHH wins at the big show, the monster wins the next month at the B show. Does this sound familiar to

fans in 2013?

As for the rest of the match, there's nothing going on here. It's less than twenty minutes long from bell to bell and the three minute intervals really hold this down. No one had time to do anything, making it more like the 1995 Rumble than anything else. It's just not very good and the ending sucked whatever life it had out of the match. Again, 2003 Raw just wasn't that good and this match sums up why.

Post match HHH and Evolution gets to destroy Goldberg again with the hammer to really pound in who is the star. Goldberg is handcuffed to the cage so HHH can shove the belt in his face and remind him who the champion is to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C. There's some good stuff on here but the HHH factor drags it down again. I've said this a lot tonight but 2003 just wasn't a good year overall. It's a bunch of matches and feuds that people don't want to see but we have the same McMahon nonsense over and over again because WWE is their playground and they can do whatever they like. Over on Raw HHH gets to keep the title FOREVER despite being hurt and having beasts like Benoit and Guerrero waiting in the wings to be the next guys. Did they pan out in the end? No, but at this point no one knew that was the case and HHH got the title as a result.

#### Ratings Comparison

La Resistance vs. Dudley Boyz

Original: C

Redo: D+

A-Train vs. Undertaker

Original: D

Redo: D

Eric Bischoff vs. Shane McMahon

Original: D

Redo: N/A

Tajiri vs. Rhyno vs. Eddie Guerrero vs. Chris Benoit

Original: B-

Redo: B+

Brock Lesnar vs. Kurt Angle

Original: A-

Redo: B

Rob Van Dam vs. Kane

Original: C-

Redo: C-

Goldberg vs. HHH vs. Kevin Nash vs. Shawn Michaels vs. Chris Jericho vs. Randy Orton

Original: D

Redo: C-

Overall Rating

Original: D+

Redo: C

So I liked almost all of the matches more or the same the first time, but the overall rating is much higher this time. Not surprising.

Here's the original review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/08/06/history-of-summerslam-count-up-2003-brock-vs-angle-ii/>

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## Thought of the Day – It's Been Awhile

Looking at why this rematch with Undertaker is being better received than Lesnar's other rematch.

One of the keys to Brock Lesnar is spacing out his matches as well as you can. Since he's been back, Brock has had the following matches:

John Cena – Extreme Rules 2012

HHH – Summerslam 2012

HHH – Wrestlemania XXIX

HHH – Extreme Rules 2013

CM Punk – Summerslam 2013

Big Show – Royal Rumble 2014

Undertaker – Wrestlemania XXX

John Cena – Summerslam 2014

John Cena – Night of Champions 2014

John Cena, Seth Rollins – Royal Rumble 2015

Seth Rollins, Roman Reigns – Wrestlemania XXXI

Kofi Kingston – Beast in the East

Seth Rollins – Battleground 2015

Now, and of course this isn't an exact science, the two times that people seemed to be getting annoyed with Lesnar's booking was during the HHH trilogy which never stopped and the Cena feud. The Cena feud is where I want to focus though, as people didn't seem to mind Cena getting a rematch, but moreso that he got so many in a row.

That's the key to most of Brock's feuds and the reason the Undertaker rematch is being fairly well received: it's been a year and a half since the first match, so Brock has had a chance to fight other people. Brock is still a featured attraction and we want to see him against a variety of opponents. Of course he's going to have rematches, but you need to space them out instead of just doing them all in a row. Imagine Rock vs. Austin on three straight pay per views. Sure the matches would be great, but waiting two years instead of four weeks was a huge improvement.

That being said, I'd love to see some extra time between regular feuds too. So many title matches would be better received if we hadn't seen it just a month earlier.

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# Reviewing the Review: Monday Night Raw – July 20, 2015

This one could be interesting as I barely remember the show as I was falling asleep due to a long day of traveling. This is the fallout show from Battleground where Undertaker returned (again. There's probably a three disc set of Undertaker returns ready to be made) to go after Brock Lesnar and set up the main event of Summerslam. We're on the road to the second biggest show of the year so let's get to it.

They opened as they should have, with Undertaker coming out and saying streaks are made to be broken. The gist of this was Undertaker being annoyed at Heyman and Lesnar for bragging about breaking the Streak over and over for the last fifteen months. To be fair, it is getting a bit old. The big story later in the night would be Heyman coming out to brag even more when Undertaker appeared, triggering a massive brawl, broken up by the locker room.

There isn't much to say here because the whole thing was awesome, but more importantly, they let it feel awesome. They let this thing feel like a brawl between two monsters, but I'm not sure how the match is going to go. Do you really want Undertaker to get suplexed all over the place? Undertaker isn't going to be a heel in this match no matter what they do, and thankfully they didn't seem to be trying to make him one. Anyway, the segments really worked and the match should be good, though I emphasize should.

Oh and there was something about the Authority wanting to prevent the match from being broken up. I stop caring when they're talking most of the time so I'm not sure what their issue was.



Charlotte beat Brie Bella in a totally watchable match. Brie still isn't great in the ring and probably never will be, but she's to the point where she can have a watchable match with someone talented like Charlotte. Also, nice touch on not having Charlotte get beaten yet, though I have a feeling she will when she comes up against Nikki because All Hail The Bellas.

Los Matadores beat the Prime Time Players in a non-title match because there was nothing better to do than to have New Day distract the champions so the low level team can beat them in a match that isn't going to lead anywhere.

Big Show beat Miz in a quick match that I think was supposed to make us care about the giant again. He then challenged Ryback to a fight on Tough Enough to try to make people watch it. It says a lot when Big Show is considered a draw.

Roman Reigns beat Luke Harper via DQ when Bray Wyatt interfered. This seems to be setting up a tag match at Summerslam with Ambrose coming in to help out his brother. I'd be interested in seeing them bring in a third man each, but bringing in Sting would be one of the lamest ideas they could have as it would overshadow the story they're shooting for with Reigns vs. Wyatt, as well as making people clamor for Wyatt vs. Sting because they're both supernatural or something and that instantly means you would want to see them fight.

Rollins bragged about keeping the title, Cena came out and said Rollins needed to take the title more seriously, and nothing else happened. I'm really hoping they're not setting up champion vs. champion, but given how the ratings have been going, it seems like we're getting back towards Cena on top as he's the only one that can really move things these days. And since the idea of ever pushing anyone as a big star is foreign to WWE, this is what we're stuck with for now.

Sasha Banks and Naomi beat Paige and Becky Lynch in another pretty good match. This actually got thirteen minutes and didn't feel long, which is more than you would ever expect out of a Divas match. The division has gotten the big boost that it needs, but they really need to go somewhere

with it in the next few weeks. There's more than enough time to have it be the big blow away story they need and thankfully Stephanie hasn't been a thing for the most part.

The main event was a six man tag with Cena/Orton/Cesaro beating Sheamus/Owens/Rusev in a match that actually tied things up in a nice package to end the show. That's not something you often see but it worked well enough one time. Other than that though, the big story was Owens and Sheamus walking out on their partner, leaving Rusev to take a big beating. Combine this with Rusev being the default face in his match with Owens on Smackdown and.....no I don't think they're turning Rusev.

Owens leaving makes sense as he lives to fight another day and I guess the same is true for Sheamus, though it's still not the best result in the world. Based on what happened on Smackdown we're going to get Cesaro vs. Owens at Summerslam and since we just NEED the Ziggler vs. Rusev showdown, there's no turning it into a triple threat. It would be nice to have a title for them to fight over, but we need champion vs. champion for reasons that aren't entirely clear.

Overall Raw was just kind of there with almost all of the focus being on Undertaker vs. Lesnar. Rollins will have his day soon enough and a win over Cena at one of the biggest show of the year would help him a lot, though I have a feeling Cena would get the title to make things all better again.

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# Reviewing the Review: Battleground 2015

This is going to be an interesting one as I was up late watching Battleground and had to leave to get on a plane about half an hour after the show ended. I saw the whole show, but I had a lot on my mind at the time. Now that I've had some time to think about the show, my opinions on it have shifted a bit. Let's get to it.

Starting on the pre-show, King Barrett retained the Crown against R-Truth. Oh sweet goodness I hated this feud, I hated this match and I hated how Barrett was treated during the whole thing. Yeah Barrett won, but that's like giving someone a sticker for not getting arrested this week: it's exactly what he was supposed to do and not something he really should be praised for doing. I don't know what WWE's obsession is with treating Barrett like a joke but I'm hoping (yet again) that they'll treat him seriously this time around.

Randy Orton vs. Sheamus was interesting, which goes against the main thing holding it back: the match didn't change anything. Orton won, but would it really have been different if Sheamus won? No one has anything to lose and Orton is just kind of floating with nothing to do. I don't want to see these two fight again because it's not that interesting. Both guys were fine in the ring and the match was a good choice for an opener with the hometown boy winning, but there was nothing important here.

However, there is something interesting about how the match was worked. They definitely picked up the pace in the second half, but it felt like a long TV match minus the commercial instead of a pay per view match. It's very telling that they're basically working pay per view style matches on TV today, which takes away from something like this. You can see that they rarely change from the same formula, and that's something that makes pay per views feel a lot less special. Anyway, good match but nothing I'm

ever going to think of again.

After a recap of Stephanie's awesomeness, Stephanie made a triple threat between a member of each Divas trio later. I've ranted enough about Stephanie hijacking this story to stroke her own ego, but can we at least make it clear if she's a face or a heel? She associates with the heel, but does face things when she's on her own and we're just supposed to accept it because this is the REAL Stephanie as opposed to the Authority Stephanie. Or do I have that backwards?

The Prime Time Players beat New Day to retain the Tag Team Titles in another Raw match. The only thing of note here was Xavier Woods being an obnoxious jerk during the match, making him more entertaining than he had ever been. The Players are fine as champions, but New Day has the potential to be one of those long running acts in the midcard that stays entertaining with or without ever doing much. That's a good thing, and given that the oldest member is Kofi at 33, it's not like they have to rush anything. Let these guys grow into something special instead of just breaking them up after a few months.

Bray Wyatt and Roman Reigns beat each other up for a long time until Luke Harper reunited with Wyatt to give him the win. This was the old school HIT EACH OTHER REALLY HARD style and these two nailed it as you kind of knew they would. It seems like we're heading for a showdown with the Wyatts vs. Ambrose/Reigns, which is probably the best idea all around. Wyatt has been floating for a bit so putting him back with the guy that helped make him the biggest he's ever been is a good idea.

Sasha Banks, Charlotte had a good match with Brie Bella in there too. The idea here was to let the two newcomers show off but they have to make it a three way to play up the three way feud that Stephanie has graced us with. They did a good job of keeping Brie away from the action and that's the right move here as Brie just can't keep up with these two. However, the stuff she did was acceptable as they kept it in small doses. There's nothing wrong with that as Brie isn't great in the ring, but she's certainly passable and that's a much better result than some of the disasters the Divas have had before.

This was meant to be a big showcase and it didn't get there, but it was certainly good, which is a step in the right direction. Once we can get past praising Stephanie for setting this up and giving them a fighting chance to get the title off Nikki, things could pick up. I dig the idea though and they worked the match the best way they could have, which gives me a lot of hope for the future.

Oh and screw Cole's "TEAM BELLA IS MORTAL!" line when Brie tapped out. They're the Bellas, not Moolah in the 80s. Then they're faces on Raw because.....well because they're the Bellas.

Now we get to the big match of the night as John Cena defended the US Title against Kevin Owens in their rubber match. This is the most controversial match of the show and while I started absolutely hating it, the more I think about it, and after I heard Owens' promo on Smackdown this week, the more I can live with it. Yes Owens tapped out, but as he said on Smackdown, it's his nature to live to fight another day. It came off more as Owens saying it's not worth it anymore so he'll just fight Cena again later.

However, the tap out came after Owens survived every single thing Cena threw at him, including the super AA, which, as far as I can remember, no one has ever kicked out of before. I would have gone the other way with it: Owens survives the STF and then goes down to the super AA, putting him on a short list of Cena opponents.

At the end of the day though, Owens debuted about two months ago, went 1-2 against Cena in three classics, and is going to have an awesome match against Cesaro at Summerslam. That's quite the debut, but as usual I think it's a case of people (myself included) wanting someone to go straight to the top after they did the same in NXT. I loved what Owens did and while I would have loved to see him take the title, I understand why they went the way they did.

Big Show punched Miz out because Ryback has a staph infection. There wasn't much else they could do here.

Finally we had Brock Lesnar challenging Seth Rollins for the World Title. Much like the opener, this was basically a Raw match with Brock beating

him up for nine minutes and then Undertaker showing up to get his revenge on Brock for breaking the Streak a year and a half ago. Keeping the title on Rollins makes sense here, but I really didn't like how they made him look like an afterthought. That's the World Heavyweight Champion, not Santino. Treat both him and the title with the respect they deserve. On top of all that though, it looked like they were trying to make Undertaker heel, and if that's the case they're stupider than I thought.

Overall, Battleground exceeded some very low expectations and kept up the WWE's streak of having good pay per views. There was nothing that blew me away, but the show as a whole was entertaining enough and the whole show was more than acceptable. Now we get to go to Summerslam though, where things can get really big for a change.

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## **New Column: It's A Big World After All**

Something I thought about over the ocean.

<http://www.wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-its-a-big-world-after-all/37205/>

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# Monday Night Raw – July 20, 2015: The Old and the Beautiful

## Monday Night Raw

Date: July 20, 2015

Location: Sprint Center, Kansas City, Missouri

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, John Bradshaw Layfield

As uneventful as Battleground seemed going into last night, a lot changed in the final moments. The Undertaker of all people returned to end the World Title match by attacking Brock Lesnar. The interesting point was that Rollins just disappeared after basically being squashed by Lesnar for the entire match. It should be interesting to see what happens as we head towards Summerslam. Let's get to it.

The opening recap looks at the end of the main event.

Here's Undertaker to open things up with the announcers listing off all of his accomplishments and making the entire moment feel like anything else. The fans don't seem to mind Undertaker's rather heelish actions last night, as anyone with a functioning brain could have predicted. Undertaker starts with a big line: streaks are made to be broken.

However, Lesnar has gone on for months about his greatest accomplishment. Ever since he broke the Streak, Lesnar has bragged about it. You can't kill what won't die, and Undertaker will conquer what has yet to be conquered. Just like everyone else, be they man or beast, Brock Lesnar will rest in peace. This definitely wasn't a heel promo and it didn't need to be.

Since we haven't talked about them enough yet, we cut to the Authority who brags about how big a main event they have. Stephanie is ready to

market things, but HHH thinks Brock should take the night off.

Cena/Orton/Cesaro vs. Rusev/Owens/Sheamus for the main event. Cesaro and Rusev getting those spots is a great sign.

### Charlotte vs. Brie Bella

Team Bad is on commentary but before the match we have to get a quick recap of how Stephanie saved us all. Feeling out process to start with Charlotte knocking Brie to the floor but misses a dive. Back from a break with Brie working on the arm and kicking Charlotte square in the jaw. We get the YES Kicks to fire up the crowd, followed by a low dropkick for two. Brie hooks a chinlock for a good while before Charlotte starts firing off chops and a big boot to the face. Nikki's distraction doesn't work and a spear sets up the Figure Eight for the submission for Charlotte at 9:02.

**Rating:** C. Brie is fine if you keep things simple but Charlotte winning is definitely the right idea. It's starting to feel like the new girls are becoming a thing and that's a very good sign this early in their run. It's going to get annoying just sitting around waiting on the title match though, which seems to be what we're going to be doing until Nikki breaks the record.

HHH is on the phone with Heyman and tells Lesnar to take the night off. Heyman needs to grow a set and tell Lesnar to not show up tonight. Miz tries to interrupt and gets Big Show as a result.

### Prime Time Players vs. Los Matadores

Non-title. Darren takes Diego into the corner to start and blasts him with a spinning forearm. The masked men take over, despite the fans not sounding all that interested. Young snaps off a belly to belly suplex and it's off to Titus to clean house. Cue New Day for a distraction though, allowing Diego to hit a Backstabber on Titus for the pin at 4:04.

**Rating:** D. So not only is the feud continuing, but now we're getting the old distraction into a pin finish again? Also, can we please stop giving people wins over champions when it's not going to lead anywhere? This



happened a few years back when Kofi pinned WWE Champion Randy Orton and then it went nowhere. If that's what you're going for, just have the champs win and then let it be a post match attack. Finally, if you want to build a team up, STOP HAVING THEM LOSE TO A NOTHING TEAM LIKE LOS MATADORES! That's not how you build up a match, especially when they're not even in the feud.

### Big Show vs. Miz

Show chops Miz in the corner to start, as only Big Show can do. A slam sets up the middle rope elbow for the pin on Miz at 1:27. And he was supposed to get a title shot last night?

Show rants about how he's still around and tells Ryback to show up on Tough Enough tomorrow night for a brawl.

HHH and Stephanie want artwork made up for Lesnar vs. Undertaker when Heyman arrives. He's here to give Lesnar's response and nothing more, but the Authority isn't interested.

Back from a break with the roster meeting with the Authority. They want the entire locker room to keep Lesnar and Undertaker apart because they have to protect the Summerslam main event. There is WAY too much Authority tonight.

Here's Heyman to address the Summerslam main event. Brock isn't the World Champion right now, but why isn't he? It's not because Rollins out wrestled or out fought him or because Rollins survived a trip to Suplex City. It was all because of a yet again resurrected Undertaker, who can't get over losing the Streak to Brock Lesnar. Of course Heyman has hyped up the Streak being broken because why wouldn't he?

It's the biggest accomplishment of his career because no one else could ever do it. The Undertaker wants to face Brock Lesnar again at Summerslam, so let's make this personal. Heyman goes into full on promoter voice to rant about the Streak being broken. Undertaker may have sold his soul to the devil to get revenge but he belongs to Brock Lesnar. There goes the gong and the look on Heyman's face is priceless.

Brock hits the ring and the fight is on with the fans being behind a ticked off Brock. Security has as much success as you would expect so HHH sends a bunch of midcarders out until there must be twenty five guys trying to break this up. The announcers bail so it's up to the audience to tell us how awesome this is (and they're right for a change). Undertaker gets to him on the floor again as even main eventers are out there to break it up now.

We come back from a break and they're fighting in the back again with the entire roster not being able to hold them back. Brock finally steps back and says he's done, allowing the police to tie his hands.

Rollins comes in to laugh at what just happened but promises the Authority that he'll be in the arena later.

Bray Wyatt says he's never alone because his family stands by his side. They know that he is the revolution and the fans need to learn it. The people have annointed Roman Reigns and it's time for them to burn for it. Harper says this is just the beginning and they will take Reigns apart brick by brick. Anyone but you.

### Luke Harper vs. Roman Reigns

The fans sound like they're chanting for Wyatt so Byron says it's for Reigns. Roman shrugs off a clothesline and fires off chops, only to have Harper go after Roman's left arm. That earns him a suplex though and we take a quick break. Back with Roman stuck in a chinlock before Harper wisely goes back to the arm. A charge doesn't work for Reigns as Harper tosses him outside, injuring the arm again.

The match keeps going as Harper cranks on the arm while also working on a chinlock. That's dedication to your craft. Harper misses a big boot and crashes to the floor, allowing Reigns to start his comeback. Roman and Bray get into it with both Wyatts taking apron kicks. Wyatt pulls Reigns outside though and that's a DQ at 13:00.

**Rating:** C-. Harper trying some psychology was a good idea but it's pretty clear that we're headed for a tag match at Summerslam. I like the idea of Ambrose and Reigns as the best friends/brothers who will fight back to

back until the end and anything with Wyatts vs. Shield vibes is a good thing.

Everyone brawls post match and the Wyatts run.

We get the same recap from the opening.

Here's Rollins to brag about surviving with the title. He's sorry to announce this to the people but Lesnar didn't get the job done. Being champion is so much harder than people think it is because Rollins has to put so much effort into it. After last night, he's still exactly where he promised he would be, but he never got to hear his name announced last night. Therefore, Lillian Garcia is invited in for the official announcement.

That's exactly what we get...and here's Cena to interrupt. Rollins cuts him off by saying this isn't about him because no one cares about what he does, but Cena talks about how a champion is supposed to be ready to fight no matter what. The brawl is about to be on but, as you would expect, Rollins bails. That might be the co-main event at Summerslam.

Hey! Remember when Stephanie TOTALLY saved the Divas' division? Well here it is again.

#### Paige/Becky Lynch vs. Naomi/Sasha Banks

The Bellas/Alicia are on commentary this time. Sasha and Becky get things going, which is almost guaranteed to be awesome. Some armdrags and an armbar have Sasha in early trouble so it's off to Naomi. That's fine with Becky who drops a leg (where's Xavier Woods to rate it though?) as the heroes stay in control.

Sasha gets kicked in the head a few times and we take a break. Back with Naomi cranking on a front facelock as JBL brings up WCW and the NWO because it's just so fun to make fun eighteen years later. Back from a break with Naomi kicking Becky in the face for two. Sasha comes back in to yell at Paige, allowing Naomi to get in some shots from the apron.

Becky rolls away and DIVES for a tag but Sasha makes a save, only to have the hot tag bring in Paige a second later. Paige cleans house but the PTO

on Maomi is broken up at the last second. Everything breaks down as the Bellas just keep chattering like they do in everything they say. The Bank Statement makes Paige tag at 13:05.

**Rating:** C+. Less Bella means a better match. It's so adorable hearing them talk about themselves like that and imagining that people care for them. I'm sure they'll still be around because that's the nature of the beast, but at least there's some fresh blood to change things up around here.

Southpaw preview, which is tied into a Tough Enough plug.

Long Undertaker vs. Lesnar recap.

We look back at Rusev's ankle being fine and the ensuing Ziggler beatdown.

Lana says Ziggler will be fine when Summer Rae comes up in a Lana outfit. Rusev comes in to kiss Summer, who then slaps Lana in the face.

Randy Orton/John Cena/Cesaro vs. Kevin Owens/Rusev/Sheamus

After the entrances take their sweet time, we start things off with Cena vs. Owens. Why? The feud (should have at least) ended last night and it's off to Rusev before any contact. An early fall away slam gets two and Rusev opts for the stomping away in the corner. That goes badly for the Russian so it's back to Owens, who has to dive to the ropes to break up an STF attempt. A DDT plants Cena but he rolls away from the Cannonball for the hot tag.

Everything breaks down and Cesaro loads up the Swing, only to eat a jumping superkick to send the match to a break. Back with Owens holding Cesaro down until Cesaro powers up with a nice suplex. Cesaro gets to play face in peril for a bit as all the heels get in their shots. Sheamus and Owens wind up hitting each other though and the fight is on with Sheamus getting the worse of it.

Sheamus walks out on the match and Owens does the same a few moments later, leaving Rusev down 3-1. This goes about as you would expect it to with the parade of finishers putting Rusev down. Cue Lana to spear Summer

down, leaving Cesaro to catapult Rusev into an RKO for the pin at 14:21.

**Rating:** C. Totally Smackdown six man until the cool ending move. I'm not sure what the point of this was as it just came and went without having much going on, but at least Rusev doesn't look bad in defeat and the other two looked fine as well. This was such a strange ending to Raw as everything was wrapped up and none of these guys seem to have a match set for Summerslam.

**Overall Rating:** C+. This is about as much of a two idea show as you can have as they set up the main event of Summerslam and pushed the heck out of the Divas revolution. How amazing is it that the Divas could arguably be the more interesting story of the two? You can see that they've turned it on for Summerslam and that's one of the best things you can get in WWE.

### Results

Charlotte b. Brie Bella – Figure Eight

Los Matadores b. Prime Time Players – Backstabber to O'Neil

Big Show b. Miz – Middle rope elbow

Roman Reigns b. Luke Harper via DQ when Bray Wyatt interfered

Sasha Banks/Naomi b. Paige/Becky Lynch – Bank Statement to Paige

John Cena/Randy Orton/Cesaro b. Rusev/Kevin Owens/Sheamus – RKO to Rusev

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# Battleground 2015: Burn It To The Ground

## Battleground 2015

Date: July 19, 2015

Location: Scottrade Center, St. Louis, Missouri

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Jerry Lawler

It's time for the show that is here to fill time until it's Summerslam, which usually isn't the most interesting thing in the world. The main event tonight is Seth Rollins defending the World Title against Brock Lesnar in Brock's return title match after Rollins stole the title at Wrestlemania. We also have Owens vs. Cena III for Cena's US Title which has the potential to steal the show again. Let's get to it.

### Pre-Show: King Barrett vs. R-Truth

For the crown in one of the worst feuds I can remember in a long time. Truth takes him into the corner to start and bunny hops out as we hear a very brief history of the King's Crown Title from the 1980s. Barrett shoves him away but gets a pelvic thrust and dropkick. A slingshot dive drops Barrett as Lawler makes big nose jokes. The announcers babble about BB King, Stephen King and Burger King as we take a break.

Back with Barrett stretching the arms and JBL talking about working on a rap album with Truth. This goes about as far as you would expect until Truth fights back and gets two off an ax kick. Lawler: "He's got the whole world in his nose!" Winds of Change gets two on Truth and the Bull Hammer FINALLY gives Barrett the pin at 9:10.

**Rating:** F. The wrestling sucked, but this fails due to the jokes and the story. This has been a lame story since the beginning and they've made no secret about the fact that no one cares what happens here. Barrett is right back where he started and that's not something you want from

someone who is supposed to be a big deal after winning the tournament. Awful stuff and please let him do anything new, as long as it's serious.

The opening video talks about how the matches tonight have led to a battleground to decide their final fate. This isn't exactly making up for the lame build.

### Randy Orton vs. Sheamus

This is due to Sheamus helping Kane beat Orton a few weeks back, triggering a feud that most people aren't all that interested in seeing. Big pop for the hometown Orton, even though he isn't billed from St. Louis here. Feeling out process to start with Sheamus bailing to the floor, only to have Randy follow him outside to start the beating. The fans get behind Orton but the match immediately gets back to its boring pace.

Sheamus comes back with a kick to the ribs and Orton is in trouble. Three straight Irish Curses put Orton down again for two and a knee drop gets the same. It's time to hit that chinlock as this is normally the time where we would be coming back from a commercial. Back up and they slug it out with Orton getting the better of it (duh) before they head outside to keep up the fight.

Orton drops him onto the table and snaps off the powerslam for two more back inside. The elevated DDT is countered with a necksnap across the top and a tilt-a-whirl powerslam gets another two. Can we please get to the pay per view level stuff and drop this TV style? I know it's the most important thing but it's still nothing I want to see. Both finishers are countered so Sheamus plants him with White Noise for two.

Sheamus goes up but eats a bunch of right hands, setting up the superplex for, say it with me, two. The elevated DDT connects this time and the place goes nuts for the RKO set up but Sheamus rolls him up for two. The Brogue Kick connects out of nowhere but Sheamus can't cover. Instead it's the Cloverleaf with Orton having to crawl to the ropes twice. Not that it matters as the RKO finishes Sheamus at 16:46.

**Rating:** C+. This took its time to get going but the second half was far

better than the first. In other words, it was another good TV match formula transferred over to pay per view. Orton going over here, while annoying in a way, was the right choice for an opener, even though I hate Sheamus losing as Mr. Money in the Bank. Good back and forth stuff here though and I got a lot more into it after that chinlock.

Cole talks about the revolution in the Divas' division setting social media on fire. Therefore, it's time to recap the Stephanie segment from Raw because that was the focus of the entire thing. Stephanie saying she set the table was horrible and made Paige's whole story look worthless because Stephanie had to be there to get the credit for everything.

Stephanie, playing a total face instead of the heel authority figure, sucks up to the live crowd. Tonight there's a triple threat match between each Divas' trio and Stephanie will accept nothing less than the house being torn down.

#### Tag Team Titles: Prime Time Players vs. New Day

New Day is challenging after losing the belts to the Players at Money in the Bank. Before the match, New Day talks about staying positive because they know they have to reap the rewards of their sacrifices soon. Woods is on the floor as Kofi starts with Darren. Kofi is a bit too fast for Young so it's off to Titus for some VERY loud chops in the corner. A New Day conference leads to a tag to Big E., who eats a legdrop from Titus. Woods: "WORST LEGDROP EVER!"

It's back to Darren who gets thrown outside as the champs take over, allowing Xavier to be an even more obnoxious (meaning AWESOME) cheerleader. We get the alternating stomps, capped off by a running basement dropkick. Woods: "OH IT'S SO GOOD!" An apron splash gets two on Young (that looked good) and we hit the abdominal stretch.

Woods shouts about tricep meat and Darren scores with an enziguri, setting up the hot tag to Titus so house can be cleaned. Titus' dominance doesn't last long though as it's quickly back to Young. The Midnight Hour is broken up and the Gut Check sends Kofi to the floor. O'Neil comes back in for the Clash of the Titus on Big E. to retain at 8:53.



**Rating:** D+. Well that's a surprise. I'm not sure how I feel about the result as the Players are little more than adequate and New Day is still one of the funniest acts in wrestling. The match was nothing to see but the Players retaining is an acceptable result. It's more of a surprise than anything else, and that's not the worst thing in the world.

Paige is with Charlotte and Becky Lynch in the back and makes sure to praise Stephanie for starting the revolution. They're going to tear the house down tonight and rebuild the division brick by brick.

We recap Reigns vs. Wyatt, which started with Bray using Reigns' daughter to get inside his head, before saying anyone but Reigns. The idea seems to be that Reigns hasn't earned the hero role and Wyatt wants anyone else there, but as usual it isn't clear with Bray.

### Bray Wyatt vs. Roman Reigns

The fireflies continue to look awesome. They lock up to start with Bray hammering him down in the corner for a bit of a surprise. The fans are WAY into Wyatt here, though it might be more anti-Roman instead. An uppercut sends Wyatt to the floor but he pops Reigns with one of his own to take over again. The cross body block takes Reigns down again but Reigns Samoan drops him out to the floor.

Wyatt is fine with the violence of course and sends Reigns into the steps as this has been almost all Bray so far. They slug it out on the apron for something different, setting up a Wyatt DDT on the apron for something painful. We hit the chinlock and get a creepy Wyatt smile as he pulls back. That's the kind of thing Wyatt does very well and it's a great addition to the whole package. Reigns finally powers up with a belly to back suplex to break the hold.

It's time for the comeback, thankfully with only one standing clothesline. Another belly to back drops Wyatt but he clotheslines Reigns out of the air to break up the apron kick (now the Drive By apparently). Bray adds a backsplash on the floor but takes too long putting Reigns on top, allowing Roman to Batista Bomb him out of the corner for a very close two. The Superman Punch misses but Reigns drops him on the apron again.

The apron boot (screw that Drive By nonsense) connects but Bray shakes it off and Rock Bottoms Reigns (appropriate) for two. Fans: "THAT WAS THREE!" I know they've been talking about making Wyatt face for a long time now and the fan support seems to be there. Sister Abigail is countered into the Superman Punch (with Bray falling before it connected) for two. This is surprising, despite that almost never being a finisher. Reigns gets all fired up and tries the spear but eats a boot, followed by getting all fired up again but charging into a right hand. You have to change it up a bit you see.

Sister Abigail is broken up (obvious due to being a slow kiss) so Reigns hits ten clotheslines in the corner and another Samoan drop. Both guys are spent so Bray grabs some chairs. Reigns knocks them away just as quickly though and grabs chairs of his own. All four chairs wind up in the ring but someone in a hood superkicks Reigns, allowing Bray to hit Sister Abigail for the pin at 22:10.

**Rating:** B. I liked this more than I thought I would and Bray getting the win is a very nice sign. Reigns is going to be a big deal and Wyatt could be as well, but at some point you need to win matches like this one. The interference is a good sign as well with Bray's best days being as a cult leader, so why not let him try it again?

The guy gets in the ring and it's....Luke Harper, so maybe the reunion is on.

Naomi, Tamina and Sasha Banks (collectively known as B.A.D., meaning Beautiful and Dangerous, as well as the fact that they're doomed because that's a horrible name) are ready for the triple threat.

#### Sasha Banks vs. Charlotte vs. Nikki Bella

All nine are here. Nikki and Sasha have a staredown before the match and it's going to be Brie instead. Oh yay.

#### Sasha Banks vs. Charlotte vs. Brie Bella

Thankfully Brie is sent outside early on, leaving the two that know what they're doing in the ring. Charlotte gets her throat snapped across the

top rope, leaving Brie to come in with her catfight style Thesz press. That's fine with Sasha, who sends both of them to the corner for the double knees to the ribs for two each. It seems that they're keeping Brie out of the action for the most part here and it's no secret that that's a good idea.

Sasha headscissors Charlotte down for two and hits a pair of running knees in the corner for the same. Brie makes a save as the fans want Becky. Charlotte clotheslines both of them down but Brie comes back with her own screaming clotheslines. A double bulldog kind of works but Brie just gets two on both. Back up and Sasha sidesteps a charge, sending Charlotte into Brie instead. They're doing a really good job of keeping Brie limited here while the talented ones do their thing.

Brie comes back in with a double missile dropkick (with the camera barely catching it), setting up the BRIE MODE running knees to the chest. The Bellas huddle on the floor but are quickly surrounded, setting up a BIG staredown. Sasha dives through the ropes to take out a lot of them, followed by Charlotte diving on the rest. Back in and Brie breaks up the Bank Statement on Charlotte, only to have the Bella Buster countered into the Figure Eight for the submission at 11:31. Cole: "TEAM BELLA IS MORTAL!" Oh shut up Michael.

**Rating:** C+. This was as well booked as they could have made it. You want to keep Nikki away from these newcomers as long as you can and Brie is about as perfect of a sacrifice as there is. It was clear that Brie couldn't hang with the other two and it would have been crazy to imply she could. This was better than I was expecting and it's clear that they want the Divas to mean something, which is a great sign.

The preshow panel recaps the night, including Barrett beating Truth.

Long recap of Cena vs. Owens. They traded wins in their first two classics but tonight Cena's US Title is on the line. Owens claims that Cena keeps disrespecting him but Owens has never been the kind of guy that says what he really means.

US Title: John Cena vs. Kevin Owens

Cena is defending and gets the JOHN CENA SUCKS song. Cena: "RAIN IT DOWN!" Owens gets in the first big shot to start and slugs Cena down with forearms to the back. More big shots put Cena down and the backsplash (just wait until Owens or Bray have to drop that one) gets two. Cena tries a comeback with a dropkick but Owens puts him down one more time, only to miss a swanton. It's really impressive that a guy his size can do something like that.

Owens busts out Cena's finishing sequence but the AA is countered into Cena's STF. The rope is quickly grabbed as Cena starts his comeback, only to Kevin catch the top rope legdrop into a sitout powerbomb for two more. An AA gets two for the champ, thereby fulfilling the quota for the match. The sunset bomb gets the same but Owens busts out the swinging superplex for the same.

Back up and the Pop Up Powerbomb is countered with a hurricanrana, setting up an AA to Cena, followed by an STF to really fire up the crowd. John finally makes the ropes and dives for a tornado DDT, which still doesn't put Owens away. The Springboard Stunner does better than usual but Owens stays going and takes Cena's head off with a clothesline. No cover though, as Owens goes with the brainbuster onto the knee for two instead.

Another AA gets another two on Kevin and the Pop Up Powerbomb gets the same on the champ. Owens heads up top again and gets caught one more time, setting up the super AA for two. I don't think anyone has ever kicked out of that one before so well done. Cena has the same face he had when the Rock beat him at Wrestlemania so it's off to a rematch that no one wanted to see. Actually it's the STF instead and Owens taps at 22:14.

**Rating:** B+. I didn't like this one quite as much as the other two and I have no idea why you don't put the title on Owens here. Owens kicked out of the super finisher and then just taps out to the regular finish? That's some backwards booking to put it mildly, despite a great match to get there. Owens will be fine, but this really should have been his big moment. As a sidebar, they really didn't put Cesaro and/or Rusev on this show somewhere? Really?

Here's Miz for a chat instead of the Intercontinental Title match. Miz rips on Ryback for bailing on the match because it's messed up his branding team's plans for talk show appearances as the new champion. He knows he's the toughest man in St. Louis and thinks Big Show should retire like everyone wants him to do. Big Show comes out and lays Miz out with one punch as you would expect him to do.

Long recap of Rollins vs. Lesnar. Seth stole the World Title by cashing in Money in the Bank at Wrestlemania, but tonight Lesnar is out for revenge and his title. Brock has also broken Kane's ankle and put the Stooges out of action to make this one on one. Also something about breaking a car for some product placement.

#### WWE World Heavyweight Title: Seth Rollins vs. Brock Lesnar

Seth is defending of course but Brock drives him into the corner for some shoulders to the ribs. An early German attempt sends Seth outside and the champ gets Brock to chase him. Back in and some kicks to the leg have Brock staggered, but Rollins dives into the first German. Three more send Rollins flying and it's out to the floor. He tries to run but Brock just hurdles the barricade and throws him back to ringside. Well that's one way to get him back.

German #6 has Rollins in even more trouble and Brock looks livid. Rollins backflips out of #7 and hits a superkick (way too common a move tonight), followed by three straight low superkicks. Another regular superkick means Rollins can apply to be a Young Buck, but the Pedigree is easily countered. Rollins hits a pair of suicide dives but Brock charges in and throws Rollins with a belly to belly.

Brock rolls three more Germans (10), followed by a release for #11. We're up to thirteen and Rollins looks dead. The F5 connects.....and we've got Undertaker. Brock looks terrified but escapes a chokeslam. The F5 is countered and Undertaker kicks him in the face. We'll say the match was thrown out at 9:00.

**Rating:** C+. I really didn't like this one as I'm getting tired of all the suplexes. I know Brock is capable of doing other stuff but he's basically a popular Royal Rumble 2003 Scott Steiner in this formula. It's still

entertaining enough but Brock can do more stuff than just throw Germans everywhere all the time. This was probably their best idea, but I'm not sure who goes after the belt next.

The chokeslam works the second time and Brock gets tombstoned for good measure. Rollins is nowhere in sight during any of this. A second Tombstone has Heyman freaking out and Undertaker poses to end the show. The fans were behind him so I think it's face vs. face at Summerslam.

**Overall Rating:** B-. This was a really tricky one to grade as it's much more a collection of good to quite good matches instead of a great show. The Undertaker stuff could go a bunch of ways, but it's cool to see him doing ANYTHING other than his usual Wrestlemania appearance. The show was better than I was expecting and for a Summerslam warmup, I'll call it a big success. Just keep the scale in mind when you consider that big success.

### Results

Randy Orton b. Sheamus – RKO

Prime Time Players b. New Day – Clash of the Titus to Big E.

Bray Wyatt b. Roman Reigns – Sister Abigail

Charlotte b. Brie Bella and Sasha Banks – Figure Eight to Bella

John Cena b. Kevin Owens – STF

Brock Lesnar vs. Seth Rollins went to a no contest when Undertaker interfered

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# Battleground 2015 Preview

Maybe it's just where I've been away for a bit but it doesn't feel like it's time for a pay per view. To be fair though, WWE doesn't seem to know either, because it's the day before the show and we've got a five match card. While I'm sure there will be some fixes made and matches added, Battleground feels like a show that doesn't need to exist, but there's some stuff worth looking at. Let's get to it.

Starting with the preshow, we have King Barrett vs. R-Truth for the Crown. Now you may be asking, why is this match happening. Well that's because Vince has again fallen in love with a comedy character and thinks that it's just SO FREAKING FUNNY that it's worth putting Barrett through another mess for a story that no one cares about.

Barrett summed up the problems on Raw: why should I care if he beats Truth again when he already beat him in the King of the Ring tournament in the first place? These two have traded wins since then and the story just isn't working. Let's say Barrett wins Sunday. Where is he then? Right back where he was when he won the tournament: King, having beaten R-Truth to get there.

That is of course after all the weeks of having bad matches and stupid promos about R-Truth being KING WHAT'S UP because it's funny that Truth is crazy. This has been such a waste of Barrett and the entire tournament, but then again the whole thing was thrown together as a Network audience builder. This was a huge waste of time and I guess Barrett wins, because there's no point to putting it on Truth other than to make Vince lau....Truth is probably winning isn't he? I'll stick with Barrett but be ready to throw my remote at the TV.

I'll take Reigns and Wyatt going to a DQ to set up another Raw match. My

guess is we eventually get Reigns vs. Ambrose at Summerslam, but at this point I'm thinking it's a double DQ or double countout, because Reigns hasn't failed in enough big matches yet. Wyatt needs the win, but he's needed a big win since.....December? I don't think you can count Ryback as a major win, not back then at least. I'll take the draw here, but my goodness is there anything worse than seeing these two as such meaningless acts right now?

New Day gets the belts back. Word on the street is the Players got the belts because of Titus' dad of the year award and, shockingly enough, NO ONE CARED ABOUT THAT EITHER. New Day gets the titles back here and thankfully we're back to normal. The Players are a fine team and Titus is as professional as they get, but there's just no reason to care about them on top of the division.

It's taken me a while to write this out but I'll take Orton to win over Sheamus. Not that it's a complicated decision or anything, but it took me three or four tries to stay awake to write this out. There's no reason for this match to be happening aside from they both need something to do. Neither guy feels like anything more than an overgrown midcard act right now, even though they're both former World Champions and legitimate big stars. There's nothing to this story and the match has no heat, especially considering how many times these two have bored the fans to death. Orton wins as Sheamus has the MITB curse at the moment.

I'll go with the obvious and have Owens take the US Title. As strange as it would be to have the US Champion fighting for the NXT Title, it's clear that Owens thinks the NXT Title means something. If that's not where they go with it, there's always the option of Owens saying the US Title is more important and saying he'll do the rematch because he signed and a loss means nothing to him. Still though, Cena has nothing left to do with the title so put it on Owens, the best heel going today.

That leaves us with the main event and....just dang man. This should have been the easiest feud in the world ("You stole the Beast's title and now it is time to pay."). That's where they've kind of gone with it, but for the most part it's been about beating up the Stooges and a car for product placement. I certainly don't hate this one, but it hasn't made



itself stand out.

At least there aren't currently any Authority members to bail Seth out, but whether he wins or loses, this is going to wind up being about the Authority one way or another. Why? Because that's how WWE works and there's no way around it. I'll take Seth retaining through shenanigans to drag this out. Again.

And somehow that's it. We really don't have anything else on the card to talk about, though I'm pretty sure we're going to get something between Big Show vs. Miz and maybe Stardust vs. Neville. However, that leaves out Cesaro and Rusev, who both currently have rockets attached to their backs. I could easily see Cesaro added to the Intercontinental Title match for a vacated title, but I could also see him doing nothing more than a run-in during the US Title match.

Throw in a Divas match/segment, but there's something interesting here: yeah the NXT girls are here, but we're counting down the days until Nikki sets the record. This is where the problem: at some point she's going to have to fight one of them, and I'm not sure they can come up with two months of stalling before either A, the NXT girls lose or B, Nikki drags them down and no one cares. In other words, that whole record thing is going to threaten the entire story, but WWE would rather destroy their entire division to get rid of AJ Lee from the history books, unless they grow up and stop Nikki's reign early.

Overall, Battleground could be fun if the matches overachieve, but at some point WWE needs to be running on more than just that. There isn't a lot going on here and the big draws are the third match of a trilogy and Lesnar, who probably doesn't get the title back. Then again, this show doesn't really mean much as we're gearing up for Summerslam, where the real fun takes place.

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# Monday Night Raw – July 13, 2015: Viva Las Divas (And Stephanie Just Because)

## Monday Night Raw

Date: July 13, 2015

Location: Phillips Arena, Atlanta, Georgia

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

It's the go home show for Battleground and thankfully Brock is here, hopefully to beat up a pair of cars in a handicap match this week. Other than that we have the rest of the build towards Wyatt vs. Reigns, possibly even including why they're fighting and what it has to do with Reigns' daughter, and more stuff including whatever Ambrose might be doing on Sunday. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week's Lesnar beatdown, complete with Heyman reusing the Dudleys' commandment of don't screw with Brock. It's fair to erase the Dudleys from history at this point so it's not that big a deal. Heyman might have written that line in the first place.

Here are Brock and Heyman to get things going, drawing a SUPLEX CITY chant. For some reason the crushed car is brought out as Heyman proclaims

Brock's impending dominance over Rollins this coming Sunday. Paul lists off Brock's accomplishments and the various people he's conquered before promising to have Lesnar suplex Rollins all over the place, put his foot on Seth's chest and be proclaimed the champion once again.

Cue Rollins and Kane because YAY KANE IS BACK FROM HAWAII OR WHATEVER THAT STUPID STORY WAS! Rollins talks about how Brock is frustrated over his inability to be champion and stumbles over trying to say "an inanimate object" in a funny goof. Brock has been carrying the car around the country (in a truck or on his back?) like a symbol and that's just fine, because Suplex City is burned to the ground tonight.

Brock offers to take Rollins to Suplex City tonight but Kane intervenes with the threat of a contract signing. Kane threatens Lesnar if he messes up the contract signing but Heyman laughs off the threats from "Undertaker's baby brother." Kane is of course annoyed as Heyman goes on about Brock smashing stuff with one final promise of pain to Rollins if he provokes the Beast tonight.

#### Ryback/Randy Orton vs. Sheamus/Big Show

Miz is on commentary and this is billed as an All-Star match. I'd prefer we go play that over the top video game instead but have it your way. This is the old standard idea of taking two feuds and combining them into a tag match, which is an idea that stays around because it still works. Ryback knocks Sheamus to the floor to start and we're in a very early break.

Back with Sheamus bailing into the floor to hide from Orton. Apparently Randy is really bad at hide and seek so it's back to Ryback vs. Big Show with the latter stomping Ryback down onto the mat to take over. Sheamus tries a bearhug and is easily driven into the corner for the tag to Orton. Remember the days when Sheamus was like, really really strong? What happened to that?

Back from a second break with an Irish Curse (backbreaker. OH THE SCANDAL!) for two on Orton but he counters Big Show's chokeslam into a DDT for a breather. Miz gets off of commentary and shouts on a mic as Ryback comes in and cleans house. Big Show has enough of Miz though and

chases him up the ramp, leaving Sheamus to take an RKO and top rope splash from Ryback for the pin at 15:21.

**Rating:** C+. Nice long tag match here and again, a good way to set up both matches at once. I would have liked a countout or DQ finish instead of having Sheamus take a pin, but it's a plus that he took two finishers for a pin so it's hardly clean. Sheamus vs. Orton does nothing for me and the triple threat isn't much better, but at least there's something on the line and Ryback has started looking good again.

Network ad.

Rollins doesn't like the idea of the contract signing but Kane has a plan.

#### Dean Ambrose vs. Bray Wyatt

Good grief people build a midcard already. Wyatt's name graphic is just letters on a screen now instead of in a box like everyone else. During the entrance though, Reigns appears and lays out Wyatt as Ambrose is just kind of forgotten. Bray finally gets in a lantern shot to escape. No match.

The Bellas have been nominated for Choice Female Athletes in the Teen Choice Awards. Dear goodness I don't want to know who else they are.

Here are the Bellas and Alicia Fox with something to say. Nikki brags about holding the title forever because AJ Lee MUST be eliminated from history. She's defended against every single Diva there is and has given them all a chance. A quick search shows that, at least in TV matches, Nikki has defended against AJ, Naomi and Tamina (whose one shot came at Beast in the East) and that's it. She calls the three of them Team Bella, because all you have to do these days is put the word Team in front of a name. Come up with something more interesting, please.

Nikki goes on about how awesome she is and how dominant they are...and here's Stephanie McMahon because she hasn't laid waste to the Divas yet. Stephanie is a face tonight too because there's something cool coming and therefore she just MUST be there to get a piece of the action. The legacy

of the WWE rests on her shoulders (yes, Stephanie says this company's history is on HER shoulders) and there's a revolution going on right now in women's sports, ranging from women's soccer to UFC to tennis. These are supposed to be applause lines if that's not clear.

Stephanie introduces Paige, because of ALL DIVAS IN WWE, Paige is the one that would be thrilled to be associated with Stephanie. I mean Paige is clearly a corporate loyalist right? Nikki talks about how Paige doesn't deserve another shot, but STEPHANIE runs WWE and this division instead of her.

Stephanie, the WWE and Paige want this revolution (what is she even talking about?) but courage can't do it alone. Therefore, Paige needs backup. Instead of bringing this person out though, Stephanie goes on about how amazing they are and FINALLY introduces Becky Lynch. Now, does Becky get to say anything and introduce herself? Of course not, because that would cut away from Stephanie's mic time, meaning the boss gets to introduce Charlotte, in that voice that only Stephanie can deliver.

Cole: "STEPHANIE HAS SHAKEN THINGS UP!" I hate this company at times.  
Stephanie: "WOO!" Oh shut up. Cue Naomi and Tamina with a mic because we haven't heard enough horrible voices yet. Naomi says the two of them are all the competition the Bellas need. That's all the mic time she needs too, because Stephanie needs to bring out Sasha Banks. Sasha stands with Naomi and Tamina, but STEPHANIE WON'T SHUT HER FREAKING MOUTH and talks about setting the table for opportunity.

We get a THIS IS AWESOME chant to a legitimately cool moment and the fight is on. Charlotte cleans house until Naomi dropkicks her down, only to have Paige and Sasha get into it. Tamina breaks up the PTO on Naomi but Brie Bella interrupts as the announcers line up to kiss Stephanie's feet for these new arrivals. Alicia gets caught in the Figure Eight, Becky puts Brie in the armbar and Nikki gets the Bank Statement as a big NXT chant breaks out. The Bellas and Fox are cleared out and the other six yell at each other as the freaking Total Divas theme plays this out.

I'm not going to bother ranting about how Stephanie made this all about her. It's Stephanie McMahon, she's the biggest hound for a spotlight that

has ever lived in WWE and you know that if there's a big moment there that people are going to erupt over, she's going to shoehorn her way in despite the fact that there is absolutely no logical reason for her to be involved.

This story has been about Paige finding help but that's thrown out the window because Stephanie has basically just decided to turn this story into a chess game for her own amusement. The big sign here: none of them got to talk and then Stephanie just left after she was the only voice you heard for the big moment. The main part here was all about Stephanie look cool and how thankful we should be for her big gift to us and that's all there is to it.

Aside from all that, this is EXACTLY what the Divas have been needing for so long. All of a sudden, there is some brand new blood in the Divas' division and the fans buy into it. They know these three are amazingly talented and can tear the house down...but the Bellas are still around. As long as they're the focus of the division (and they will be as long as Total Divas is around), the newcomers are going to have to tone it WAY down so Nikki, Brie and Alicia can handle it and that takes away from the NXT crew's magic. This is going to be interesting, but they could drag things way down for the sake of breaking AJ's record.

#### New Day vs. Prime Time Players/Mark Henry

The hometown boy Xavier Woods says this is the greatest town in the world because they stay positive. Even though they shut down the city due to an inch of snow last year and the Atlanta Hawks choked in the NBA Playoffs, they stayed positive. Kofi is 100% that they're getting the titles back on Sunday because Prime Time is out of time at Battleground because NEW DAY ROCKS.

Titus shrugs off a Kofi kick to start so it's off to Darren, who clotheslines E. out to the floor. The Players and Henry throw everyone out to the floor (JBL: "FLYING PH.D!") as we take an early break. Back with Titus taking the rotating stomps in the corner as the announcers talk about how awesome the Divas were. For once, they're actually right. E. gets two off a splash but Titus is quickly up and tagging in Henry to

clean house. Everything breaks down and a World's Strongest Slam ends Woods at 8:29.

**Rating:** D+. Good night do they really not know how to set up a tag match anymore? When is the last time New Day won a match? My guess is they get the belts back anyway because that's how WWE works these days. The match was nothing interesting and Henry is just thrown out there but gets the pin over a #1 contender anyway. Well sure why not.

The winners dance.

Long recap of Lesnar b. Cadillac via TKO last week.

### King Barrett vs. R-Truth

No King entrance for Truth and Cole tells us he rapped to the ring during the commercial. Truth gyrates a lot to start and gets kicked in his face. A backbreaker and middle rope elbow get two each on Truth and a boot knocks him onto the apron. Truth fights out of a chinlock as the announcers talk about Tough Enough to kill time. Barrett misses a charge and eats a Lie Detector for the pin at 3:12.

**Rating:** D-. Good grief it's going to get a rubber match on Sunday isn't it? This whole thing is such a waste of whatever they had with the King of the Ring because Barrett hasn't been embarrassed enough over the years. Bad match, horrible feud, disgusting waste of someone like Barrett for a comedy act.

Truth puts on his king attire.

We recap Rusev destroying Ziggler last week, finally making Rusev feel like a monster (and a wrestler) again.

It's Open Challenge time and Rusev is here to renew a rivalry that doesn't need to be renewed. He blames Lana for losing the title in the first place and says he broke Ziggler because of the USA. Before the match though, here's Kevin Owens with something to say. Rusev says no because he was here first and that Owens needs to pick a single first name. They argue a bit but here's Cesaro to interrupt as well. Cena heads outside as the three brawl, setting up a triple threat match with the

winner getting a title shot immediately after because WHO NEEDS PSYCHOLOGY???

### Rusev vs. Cesaro vs. Kevin Owens

Cena is on commentary as Cesaro gets beaten down in the corner. Rusev gets beaten down and Cannonballed, only to have Cesaro hit the running uppercut to Owens' jaw. Swiss Death gets two on Rusev as Cena puts over the Divas' segment. Owens has to escape two pinfall attempts, followed by Cesaro doing the same off a Saito Suplex from Rusev. Cena continues to be as good of a commentator as you'll see in this company, only to have to stop for Cesaro turning Owens' superplex into a Tower of Doom for two each.

The Russian takes over again as these guys are just hammering each other. Owens blocks Rusev's German suplex attempt so Cesaro Germans both of them AT ONCE. I know I say this every week but DANG that guy is strong. Since that's not enough, Cesaro busts out a corkscrew dive over the top to take out both guys. Back in and Cesaro gets two off a high cross body on Rusev but Owens breaks up the Swing with a superkick.

Kevin drops both guys but stops to shout at Cena, allowing Rusev's Alabama Slam to set up the Accolade. Cesaro saves this time and delays a vertical suplex on the Russian. Well ex-Russian but whatever. Cena keeps making some rather heelish yet totally fair comments about how he's the lucky one here as these guys are all brawling but he gets to come in fresh. Rusev sends Kevin outside and Owens bails, saying he'll see Cena Sunday.

Back from a break with Rusev chinlocking Cesaro, only to have the bald one pop up and hit a springboard spinning uppercut to drop Rusev. The apron superplex is countered with Rusev suplexing Cesaro onto the apron to put both guys down onto the floor. Back in again and Cesaro dropkicks Rusev on the top, only to have his superplex countered. The Russian's top rope splash misses and Cesaro crossfaces Rusev, only to have Rusev power up into something like a spinning Rock Bottom for two more.

Back up again and Cesaro can't get a Sharpshooter, allowing Rusev to hit a spinwheel kick for two. The Accolade is countered into the Swing which



sets up the Sharpshooter, drawing a loud TAP chant. Rusev makes the rope but since this is still officially a triple threat, he has to crawl outside to break the hold. Nice touch of continuity there. Cesaro hasn't done something cool in all of 14 seconds now so he comes back with a suicide dive. Back in and Cesaro gets tripped off the top, setting up a superkick from Rusev for the pin at 24:02.

**Rating:** B+. Why not make Cesaro the Intercontinental Champion? Like, just let him go out there and have awesome matches with anyone because Cesaro is pure gold at this point. It's the simple concept of "hey, this guy is awesome right now so LET'S PUSH HIM!" Unfortunately he'll probably be forgotten again in three weeks while someone like Barrett or Truth get pushed because they're funny or something. Like, is Cesaro even going to be on the pay per view?

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

The psychology is all over the place here as Cena, the face champion, comes in with a huge advantage since Rusev is spent. Cena starts fast and hits a release fisherman's suplex followed by a headlock. Rusev bails to the ropes but Cena nails the shoulders. In a nice touch, Rusev can't get up due to the exhaustion, making the finishing sequence look really awkward. The AA is countered into the Accolade out of nowhere and Cena hangs on for about 45 seconds (fair since Rusev is weakened) until Owens comes back in for the DQ at 4:57.

**Rating:** D. This was more awkward and weird than bad as Cena was basically wrestling a squash match against a big name until the end where he got caught in a big move. Like I said, this was just strange and would have been FAR better served as a single, four way elimination with Cena involved. It was different, but the execution of the second match didn't work for me.

Owens gives Rusev a Pop-Up Powerbomb and tells Cena that he's taking the title on Sunday.

Rollins tells Kane that it's on him if tonight goes bad.

The Tough Enough cast is on stage when Lita (a coach on the show) comes

out with something to say. She officially introduces us to the cast and this is a big waste of time because Tough Enough just isn't all that interesting this season. It was so uninteresting that I haven't watched it yet and don't plan to.

We recap Reigns and Wyatt from earlier.

Stardust (hey he's back) talks about how the world needs heroes because the world is made up of heroes and villains. "From where I stand, the view never changes." Neville has been claiming that the forces of evil have forsaken him, but those forces will bring him down. Embrace the strange. Or embrace Cody Rhodes for a change.

Barrett vs. Truth for the crown on Sunday. If Rusev and/or Cesaro aren't on that show, I lose so much of my faith in this company, meaning I fully expect it to happen.

### Stardust vs. Neville

Neville is no longer the New Sensation, which is one of the best things that could happen to him. A loud CODY chant starts up but let's just keep him as Stardust because it's done wonders for his career. Stardust isn't interested in a handshake and kicks Neville down, only to have to get up before the Red Arrow can launch. There's a cartwheel from Star and we hit the chinlock.

As has been the trend tonight, this match is bizarre as the fans are cheering Stardust instead of the guy they're pushing as an actual superhero. It's funny how such shortsightedness works. Neville fights back to silence (I'm stunned too) but Stardust rolls him up and grabs the trunks for the pin at 4:09. JBL: "Go to the pay window young man!"

**Rating:** D. So let's see. They've (so far) wasted any potential for Cody coming off his father's passing, Neville looks lame because no one wants to boo the son of a legend whose father recently passed away, and then Stardust cheats instead of getting to make this an important and cool moment. Oh and the match wasn't any good either. What a mess as psychology means nothing around here.

It's time for the contract signing to close things up this week. Rollins and Kane are out first and the champ talks about watching the footage of the car being destroyed again. After this Sunday, Suplex City will be a memory and he'll still be champion, but here's a Beast to disagree. Well, likely to stand there while Heyman disagrees. Paul says Rollins wants to burn Suplex City down, but the fans want to see him get taken apart for his breaking of the eleventh commandment.

People want to see Rollins get beaten up and that's what they're going to see this Sunday when he gets kicked, slapped, punched, suplexed, F5'd and dethroned. Rollins signs anyway, as does Brock, and there goes the table. Kane comes at Brock but Lesnar pulls out an ax handle and actually flips the table back up. The fight is on again and Rollins goes flying. Kane breaks up an F5 on the floor and Rollins hits him with the ax handle.

Some steps to the head have Brock in more trouble but Beast Mode prevails with Kane taking an F5 on the floor. There goes Rollins into the crowd, leaving Brock to crush Kane's ankle on the steps, likely making this Sunday one on one. Brock poses with the title but we're not done yet as Rollins comes back to ringside and yells about being the man to slay the Beast on Sunday. Medics tend to Kane so Rollins yells at him too, calling Kane's career one big disappointment. This is on Kane and Rollins kicks him in the ankle to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** D+. This is a great example of a show where the good was good but the bad was really bad. Some of these matches and stories are disasters and I really don't think I need to explain which is which. The show wasn't terrible and had some VERY good stuff going on, but between Stephanie throwing herself into a feud she has nothing to do with and the battle of the kings that no one wants to see and a few other big misses, I wanted this show to end instead of wanting to like it. Not the worst by any means and the Divas segment (once it was about them) was great, but WAY too much bad to hold it back.

### Results

Ryback/Randy Orton b. Sheamus/Big Show – Top rope splash to Sheamus

Mark Henry/Prime Time Players b. New Day – World's Strongest Slam to

Woods

R-Truth b. King Barrett – Lie Detector

Rusev b. Kevin Owens and Cesaro – Superkick to Cesaro

Rusev b. John Cena via DQ when Kevin Owens interfered

Stardust b. Neville – Rollup with a handful of trunks

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# Monday Night Raw – July 13, 2015: The KB Is On His Honeymoon So The Show Will Be Up Later Edition

## Monday Night Raw

Date: July 13, 2015

Location: Phillips Arena, Atlanta, Georgia

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

It's the go home show for Battleground and thankfully Brock is here, hopefully to beat up a pair of cars in a handicap match this week. Other than that we have the rest of the build towards Wyatt vs. Reigns, possibly even including why they're fighting and what it has to do with Reigns' daughter, and more stuff including whatever Ambrose might be doing on Sunday. Let's get to it.