

Smackdown – April 16, 2019: The Night Of Smart Moves



IMG Credit: WWE

Smackdown

Date: April 16, 2019

Location: Bell Centre, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Commentators: Corey Graves, Tom Phillips, Byron Saxton

It's the second night of the Superstar Shakeup and that means it's time to find out who is coming over to the blue brand, either from Raw, 205 Live or NXT. One of the more interesting things is how people who were on the show last night could pop up here, meaning things might not be as one sided as they seem. Let's get to it.

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

We open with a recap of most of the moves to Raw from last night.

Here's Kevin Owens to open things up with the Kevin Owens Show. He speaks French and says something about Wrestlemania, which has the fans rather pleased. Now to English, tonight is the second night of the Superstar Shakeup so let's bring out his guests: the New Day. Kevin talks about how cool it was for Kofi to win the title and gives him a standing ovation with the crowd following suit.

Kofi thanks Kevin and then switches to the fans in French. Kevin sits

back down and brings up Big E.'s meniscus tear, sending Xavier over the edge because Raw took like half of the UpUpDownDown roster. Xavier: "IF I DON'T SEE TYLER BREEZE ON SMACKDOWN TONIGHT I'M GOING TO LOSE IT!!!" Things calm down and Kevin brings up their tag match against Shinsuke Nakamura and Rusev.

They're used to being a trio and with Big E. down, Big O. should step in. Kofi: "Are you willing to wear a crop top?" Kevin: "We can talk about it!" Owens is willing to talk about cereal and pancakes, but he's already ready to thrust his groin and swivel his hips. Kofi and Xavier are impressed and the fans agree, so Kevin puts on Kofi's rather small shirt. Owens kneels and is given his own unicorn horn.

As the dancing ensues, Cesaro comes up to offer his services to Nakamura and Rusev.

Finn Balor vs. Ali

Balor is fresh on the show and the Intercontinental Title isn't on the line. Ali wastes no time with a dropkick and a quickly broken headlock. An elbow to the chest has Ali in trouble and we hit the armbar. Back up and Ali sends him to the floor for a suicide dive and we take a quick break.

We come back with Balor chopping away in the corner and nailing the Sling Blade. Ali cuts him off with a superkick for two but the spinning DDT is countered. The Coup de Grace is broken up with a dropkick and a super hurricanrana gives Ali two more. The 450 misses though and Balor shotgun dropkicks him into the corner. Now the Coup de Grace can finish Ali at 10:16.

Rating: C. Watchable enough match with Balor getting a win to establish himself on Smackdown, which only makes last night's loss to Andrade all the more meaningless. That puts the Intercontinental Champion at 1-1 this week, which in WWE's mind is perfectly acceptable. Ali takes another loss, but at least he was competitive again.

New Day initiates Owens onto the team by having him break Big E's pancake eating time.

Buzzard puppet vignette.

Owens beats Big E.'s record.

Carmella vs. Charlotte

Charlotte shoves her down to start and shouts about hating Canada. A kick to the ribs sends Charlotte outside and it's time for some gyrating. Back in and Carmella hits a quick Bronco Buster but gets sent to the apron for a big boot. We take a break and come back with Carmella in more trouble, including a dragon screw legwhip across the middle rope. Charlotte follows her out and shrugs off a superkick, setting up the chop block back inside. The Figure Eight makes Carmella tap at 7:30.

Rating: D+. This was pretty much a squash for Charlotte and there's nothing wrong with that to get her back on track. I'm not sure what she's going to do at the moment though as Charlotte vs. Becky has been done time after time and other than Asuka, no one on Smackdown is on Charlotte's level. Charlotte vs. Asuka is fine, but would it just be a #1 contenders feud?

Post match R-Truth checks on Carmella, but here's Lars Sullivan to lay him out. The Lie Detector barely staggers Sullivan and it's a Freak Accident to plant Truth. A running Liger Bomb makes it even worse. So Sullivan is on Smackdown this week. Got it.

Here's Becky Lynch for a chat, though first we see a clip of the Wrestlemania main event. Becky talks about how she saw everyone coming to Raw last night but here she can face anyone on any brand...and here's Ember Moon. Ember wants a shot at the best but here's Bayley to interrupt. She and Sasha Banks lost the Women's Tag Team Titles but she wants the Smackdown Women's Title.

This brings out the IIconics to say their titles are iconic, but here's Paige to interrupt. She's here to represent a new team, which brings out Mandy Rose and Sonya Deville to interrupt. Paige cuts them off to say not so fast. That would actually be Asuka and Kairi Sane, who are sent to the ring for a big brawl with Becky just stepping back and letting them fight. I'd have bet on the Sky Pirates but Shirai hasn't been in NXT very

long yet.

Ember Moon/Bayley/Asuka/Kairi Sane vs. IIconics/Sonya Deville/Mandy Rose

Joined in progress with Ember cleaning house before handing it off to Bayley for the elbow drops. The middle rope elbow to the face gets two on Sonya and it's Asuka coming in for a kick to Sonya's face. Mandy comes in and gets a hip attack before it's off to Kairi for the first time on the main roster. Kairi and Asuka hit some rapid fire kicks to the face, setting up a suicide dive from Bayley onto Mandy and Sonya. Ember dives off the top onto all four villains and we take a break.

Back with Bayley being driven into the corner for a boot choke from Royce. Bayley shoves her over the top but Ember gets knocked off the apron before the tag. Of course the tag goes through to Asuka a few seconds later, meaning it's time for a hip attack. Mandy knees Asuka in the head and we hit the parade of secondary finishers. Peyton slaps Kairi but walks into a reverse DDT from Asuka. The Insane Elbow finishes Peyton at 8:15.

Rating: C. Perfectly watchable showcase for all of the new women on the show, with Sane wisely getting the pin. It's not as wise to have ANOTHER CHAMPION LOSE but this should set up Asuka/Sane as the new #1 contenders. Or it's going to be ignored as tends to be the case with so many champions losing.

We recap stars moving to the show. Sullivan is official.

We look back at Sullivan attacking various people over the last few weeks.

Buddy Murphy is coming to Smackdown. Well done.

Kofi Kingston/Xavier Woods/Kevin Owens vs. Rusev/Shinsuke Nakamura/Cesaro

Woods takes over on Rusev to start and it's off to Kofi for a quick two. Nakamura comes in for Good Vibrations but gets pulled into the corner for the Unicorn Stampede with Owens getting in on the fun. The Cannonball gets two on Nakamura but he's right back with a kick to Woods' face. That's enough for the tag off to Cesaro and Woods is brought outside for

a drop onto the barricade.

We take a break and come back with Woods still in trouble, including a sliding German suplex for two. Even Lana gets in a slap and Nakamura kicks Woods in the head to keep him on top. Woods knocks him down though and it's a missile dropkick to set up the hot tag to Kofi.

The Boom Drop hits Cesaro, who catches a high crossbody. That's fine with Kofi, who gets two off the SOS but gets caught in the Swing. The Sharpshooter goes on with Kevin making the save off a superkick. Nakamura kicks him down but gets tornado DDT'd for his efforts. Kofi slides over for the tag to Owens, who launches Kofi over the top for a crash. That leaves Rusev to take Trouble in Paradise into the Stunner for the pin at 15:22.

Rating: C+. Nice tag match here with Owens thankfully not turning on New Day so soon. There's no reason to have him end the angle so fast, though you can almost guarantee him getting a title shot at some point. This is as good as anything else they can do, at least until there's a new big bad on Smackdown.

Here's Vince McMahon to introduce the biggest acquisition in Smackdown history. He rarely endorses someone but this guy has so much charisma that he's going to be the biggest star on Smackdown. That would be...Elias (Graves: "I QUIT!"), who likes Smackdown but doesn't like Montreal. He starts up the guitar and here's Roman Reigns for the real big move to take Elias out. Vince yells so it's a Superman Punch for him as well. Reigns declares Smackdown his yard now and hits a spear on Elias to end the show. That's a good move as Reigns could use a change of scenery. It's also going to help Seth Rollins a lot.

Overall Rating: C+. I'm not sure what to think of this one as it certainly didn't have the same impact as last night's show. The problem here is that outside of Reigns, this didn't feel like any major names came over. We did get a lot of people moving and that's a good thing, but I'm not sure how many of them are going to have that big of an impact at the moment. Kingston should have some challengers soon (you know Reigns is getting the title before the year is out) and I like some of the

moves. While Raw had a quick impact, this is more of a wait and see version and that's ok. Nice show, but not a blow away Shakeup.

Results

Finn Balor b. Ali – Coup de Grace

Charlotte b. Carmella – Figure Eight

Ember Moon/Bayley/Asuka/Kairi Sane b. IIconics/Sonya Deville/Mandy Rose – Insane Elbow to Royce

Xavier Woods/Kofi Kingston/Kevin Owens b. Cesaro/Shinsuke Nakamura/Rusev – Stunner to Rusev

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Main Event – December 14,

2017: This Is How You Remind Me

Main Event

Date: December 14, 2017

Location: Quicken Loans Arena, Cleveland, Ohio

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Nigel McGuinness

It's the go home show for Clash of Champions 2017 and for once that might mean something around here. The recent change towards having Smackdown clips as well as Raw stuff is a nice idea and that's a very cool thing for the time being. Maybe we can even build towards the pay per view a bit. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Curt Hawkins vs. Rhyno

Feeling out process to start until Rhyno scores with some chops and an elbow. Hawkins is right back with a clothesline for two but stops to pose. Nigel isn't pleased with Hawkins' offensive choices and we hit the chinlock. Rhyno fights up without much effort and runs Hawkins over again. The spinebuster is good for the pin on Hawkins at 5:04.

Rating: D. I'm not even sure what to say about these matches anymore, though to be fair I'm not sure there's supposed to be much to say about them in the first place. Hawkins losing is a guarantee but you can pretty much write out every Rhyno match for the rest of his career. It's not a horrible match or anything but it's the same thing we've seen so many times now.

From Raw.

Intercontinental Title: Roman Reigns vs. Cesaro

Reigns is defending and starts fast with uppercuts and clotheslines. They fight to the floor and we take an early break. Back with Cesaro cranking on the arm after swinging it into the barricade for a sick thud during

the commercial. Reigns fights out with a backslide for two, followed by a rollup. That's reversed into a Fujiwara armbar and then a regular armbar. Reigns fights up again and hits the apron kick to the face for two, only to get pulled into a Crossface.

Reigns reverses into a Samoan drop for two, only to be sent HARD into the post. It doesn't seem to matter that much though as Reigns scores with a Superman punch off the apron. The arm won't let him follow up properly though, allowing Cesaro to grab another Crossface. The Swing is reversed into a sitout powerbomb for two more but Reigns can't follow up. Cesaro slugs away in the corner but the Neutralizer is countered with a backdrop, followed by the spear to retain the title at 16:53.

Rating: B+. It's a long match but it actually needed a little more time. I would have liked a lot more of Reigns fighting back and something better than "spear, ow my arm, pin". Cesaro working on the arm for that long looked like it was going somewhere but then they just went to the finish. That being said, they beat the heck out of each other for a long time and it was a heck of a match. Just have a better finish and it's a classic.

From Raw again.

Video on Strowman vs. Kane.

Kane vs. Braun Strowman

The winner gets Lesnar at the Rumble. Strowman wastes no time by splashing Kane in the corner, followed by a running dropkick for one. Kane avoids a charge though and a chokeslam gets two. Another chokeslam gets the same before Strowman chokeslams Kane for good measure. They fight into the crowd and Strowman spears Kane through the barricade for a double countout at 4:31.

Rating: C-. It was fun while it lasted in a Brock Lesnar vs. Goldberg at Wrestlemania kind of way but that's about all it had. I don't think anyone expected Kane to win here and Strowman not winning is likely a good idea, especially if it would have meant losing to Lesnar again at the Rumble. I really hope Lesnar does defend at the pay per view

(assuming he's not injured or something) but this doesn't give me a lot of hope.

The fight continues post match with both guys picking up steps. Said steps are rammed together with Strowman getting the better of it but he can't crush Kane's throat again. Kane chairs Strowman in the knee and then the back, finally taking the monster down. Kane sets up a table but a double clothesline gives us a double situp. Strowman muscles him up for the powerslam through the table to end the show.

Video on the Riott Squad wrecking the Smackdown women's division.

Pay per view rundown.

Brian Kendrick/Jack Gallagher vs. Gran Metalik/Akira Tozawa

Gallagher and Tozawa get things going with Jack doing his headstand in the corner and jumping over a charging Tozawa. It's quickly off to Metalik vs. Kendrick with the masked man speeding things up, including a rope walk middle rope dropkick. Kendrick hits a super atomic drop of all things and we take a break. Back with the Metalik Driver getting two with Kendrick grabbing a Captain's Hook for the save. Everything breaks down and Metalik drops a rope walk elbow for the pin on Kendrick at 7:10. Not enough shown to rate but it was energetic while it lasted.

From Smackdown.

Here's Styles to open things up. He won the title a little over a month ago and wants to be a fighting champion. This Sunday he defends against Mahal and lists off what Mahal will do to get the title back, including bringing in Great Khali. Cue the Singh Brothers, who say they're not introducing Mahal tonight. We look back at Mahal attacking the two of them two weeks ago so AJ wants to hug it out. AJ: "Come hug it out with Uncle Al!"

The Brothers get in the ring and say they want to be in Mahal's corner on Sunday. One of them rants about how horrible Mahal is ("He thinks we're twins!") while the other tries to calm him down. AJ doesn't buy it and shows a still of the Brothers being in Mahal's corner this weekend in

India. They swear they're done with Mahal, who comes out looking rather angry. AJ of course doesn't buy any of this (thank goodness) and lays the Brothers out.

And we'll wrap it up with more Smackdown.

Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Kevin Owens

Bryan is on commentary to continue a trend tonight. Owens grabs a headlock for a bit before getting kicked in the chest for his efforts. A knee to the ribs cuts Nakamura down though and a backsplash gets two. We hit the chinlock as Bryan talks about how Shane's stipulations aren't exactly fair. Nakamura fights up but can't hit the knee in the corner. Instead he gets sent hard into the barricade as we take a break.

Back with Owens stomping away until Nakamura gets in a running kick to the face. Some YES Kicks have Owens in more trouble and there's Good Vibrations for a bonus. The running knee in the corner gets two but Owens breaks up a superplex. His Swanton hits knees but Owens blocks the reverse exploder. The referee gets bumped and Bryan takes over instead. Nakamura's spinning kick to the head gets a delayed two as Orton and Zayn get in a fight. The distraction lets Owens hit a Pop Up Powerbomb for the pin at 14:29.

Rating: C+. Good match, but the sledgehammer of plot didn't help things. This was supposed to be the smoking gun that proves Bryan is going to be biased on Sunday but it feels a bit forced. Granted some of that might have been Byron Saxton hammering home the same idea over and over again, which makes anything sound annoying. I would say I look forward to this story ending on Sunday but I'd be surprised if it's done by Wrestlemania at this point.

Kevin and Sami say no one is taking their careers away because they'll win at the Clash.

Overall Rating: D+. All this show did was reinforce how boring WWE TV has been as of late. On top of that it also shows how unnecessary Clash of Champions is, but never let that get in the way of putting a pay per view on for the sake of putting a pay per view on. This didn't do anything to

change those issues and that's becoming a problem. Hopefully it gets better after next week but I wouldn't bet on it.

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Monday Night Raw – November 27, 2017: The Monster Among The Mayor

Monday Night Raw

Date: November 27, 2017

Location: Thompson-Boling Arena, Knoxville, Tennessee

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Booker T.

We're finally out of Houston and on the road to the Royal Rumble. The big story coming out of last week is Roman Reigns winning the Intercontinental Title for the first time and issuing an open challenge after the show went off the air. Other than that we have the continuing issues with Kurt Angle, HHH and Stephanie McMahon as we flash back about seventeen years. Let's get to it.

The opening recap looks at Kane vs. Braun Strowman, including Kane injuring Strowman's throat last week.

Here's Reigns to open things up. Last week was a big week for him as he and the Shield beat up New Day. Then he had an opportunity and we see a clip of him winning the Intercontinental Title. After the show was over, Shield came back out and put Miz through a table. This is his yard and this is the title so if you want it, come get it. Cue the Miztourage to say they know someone who wants the title. This brings out Elias of all people to say he wants the title. Reigns thinks it sounds like Elias wants to walk with the big dog, but after tonight he might have a neck brace like Curtis Axel.

Seth Rollins vs. Cesaro

Dean Ambrose is on his honeymoon so Rollins is on his own. It's not like he has a buddy who happens to be Intercontinental Champion around or anything. Cesaro works on a wristlock to start but gets stomped down into the corner without much effort. Seth gets sent outside though and we take a break.

Back with Cesaro working on the ribs by dropping some knees for two. Seth's high crossbody is countered into a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker and we hit a waistlock. Rollins tries an abdominal stretch of his own but gets hiptossed down without much effort. The Blockbuster works a bit better and Cesaro falls outside for a suicide dive.

Back from a second break with Rollins getting two off a Falcon Arrow. A poke to the eye sets up a small package for two on Seth and it's off to the Sharpshooter. Rollins makes the rope though and gets two of his own off the low superkick. The wind-up knee is enough to end Cesaro at 18:23.

Rating: B. Nice long match here with Rollins getting a win to hopefully set up a title match next week. That being said, I have no idea how they're supposed to keep doing these one on one matches. There really should be a better way to set up a title match than having the singles wrestlers fight over and over again, but that might mean building up more teams.

Post match Seth says the Shield isn't going their separate ways because it's time to invoke the rematch for the Tag Team Titles.

We look at the end of last week's 205 Live with the Zo Train losing but beating down the good guys anyway.

Kurt Angle is with the four good cruiserweights and says it's time to determine who gets the shot. Tonight there's going to be a four way and next week there's going to be another one. The winners of those matches will face off for the next title shot.

Titus O'Neil vs. Samoa Joe

Titus charge at him in the corner but gets headbutted away without much effort. An early Koquina Clutch is broken up and it turns into a chop off. A kick to the shoulder gives Titus two but a right hand takes him down. The Clutch makes Titus tap at 2:30.

Apollo Crews tries to go after Joe and gets choked out too. I have no idea why this is what Samoa Joe is stuck doing.

We recap Paige and company invading last week.

Paige/Mandy Rose/Sonya DeVille vs. Bayley/Sasha Banks/Mickie James

Alexa Bliss is on commentary.....and there's no Mickie or Bayley. Paige and company come out and laugh off the idea of Sasha having no partners. We cut to the back where Mickie is holding her shin and Bayley is holding her neck. Paige laughs this off and says she's tired of hearing about her interfering last week. Last year, she was THE woman in WWE and helped erase the word Diva from WWE (we could have a tournament for everyone who takes credit for anything like this).

Now she and her friends, named Absolution (sounds like a bad perfume) are here to take things back. Rose and DeVille talk about how everyone has tried to be the next big thing but they remember how Paige started all of this. Paige offers Sasha a spot on the team but she forearm Paige off the apron. The beatdown is on in a hurry with everyone hitting a finisher. No match of course.

Bray Wyatt is here. Post break he's in the ring for a chat. Bray talks about never having a childhood. He never got to do all the usual things that children do. Your entire world exists inside the confines of a cardboard box. They tell you what to do and who to love. It's pathetic really, just like everyone here. Their suffering brings him joy and he can see them for who they truly are. Bray says we're all dead and starts cackling.

Bray Wyatt vs. Matt Hardy

Joined in progress with Bray running Matt over without much effort. The backsplash gets two but Matt drops him without too much effort. The middle rope elbow doesn't work so Matt settles for the Side Effect for two. Matt's moonsault misses and Bray spider walks up, followed by Sister Abigail to give Bray the pin at 3:30.

Rating: D+. Nothing to see here, though that's usually the case with Matt's matches anymore. They're not very interesting and the big story with him tends to be when is Jeff getting back. I'd love it if this losing streak started moving him towards the Broken Matt character, as I can't imagine WWE not getting their hands on it eventually.

Post match Matt sits in the corner and starts screaming while doing the DELETE motion. Cole: "Are we witnessing the beginning of a Matt Hardy...breakdown?"

We look at Strowman getting hurt last week.

Jason Jordan wants to face Strowman again this week but since Braun is hurt, he'll face Kane instead.

Rich Swann vs. Akira Tozawa vs. Ariya Daivari vs. Noam Dar

One fall to a finish and winner goes on to a one on one #1 contenders match in two weeks. It's a brawl to start with Tozawa fighting off a double teaming but Swann flips over him. They trade some rollups for two each until the villains take him outside. Swann hits a big flip dive onto all of them with his knee hitting Tozawa square in the face. He seems ok though as Swann heads back inside for Rolling Thunder, only to be caught

by Daivari's spinebuster.

Tozawa comes back in and is double whipped into the corner. A double suplex drops Swann on the floor and we take a break. Back with Swann still on the floor as Tozawa hits the standing backplash on Daivari. The top rope version is broken up but Swann comes back in for the Tower of Doom. Dar breaks up the Phoenix splash but Tozawa takes him out with a dive.

Daivari's frog splash gets two on Swann, only to have Tozawa catch him with a Shining Wizard. The top rope backplash crushes Daivari with Dar sending Tozawa into the post. Dar's running kick to the head drops Tozawa so Swann pulls Tozawa outside. A regular kick to the head sets up the Phoenix splash to give Swann the pin and the spot in the #1 contenders match at 12:37.

Rating: C+. This was longer than it needed to be but the right guy won. Nothing here felt like anything you couldn't see on a regular episode of 205 Live, which is a big part of the problem. Hopefully this sets up Swann vs. Cedric Alexander for the title shot with Cedric eventually getting the win, as he's long overdue for a run as champion.

Here's Elias for his Intercontinental Title shot but first, a song about how sad the Miztourage is to not have their leader around. Dallas and Axel join in on harmonica and do give quite a performance. Elias offers them some praise but the fans cut him off with a WE WANT ROMAN chant. That's cut off by a NO WE DON'T chant and we're FINALLY ready to go.

Intercontinental Title: Roman Reigns vs. Elias

Elias is challenging. They trade shoulders to start with Elias getting the better of it and slapping on a reverse chinlock. Elias gets two off a clothesline and we hit a regular chinlock. Back up and the Miztourage offers a distraction so Elias can get in a hard knee for a near fall.

We come back from a break with Elias getting kicked in the face, only to have Reigns stop and take out the Miztourage instead of following up. The distraction lets Elias take Reigns down and drop a top rope elbow for a rather near fall. A sitout powerbomb gets the same but Reigns is right

back with a Superman Punch for two of his own. Back up and the spear retains the title at 14:48.

Rating: B-. While the ending wasn't exactly in doubt here, it was still a good, hard hitting match. They're certainly protecting Elias at the moment and I'm not sure what to make of that. It would be nice if they had him actually win something but with the Intercontinental Title now basically the show's World Title, he's kind of stuck. But at least it was a good match.

Post match Samoa Joe sneaks in and chokes Reigns out. No Rollins for the save either, mainly because this was a Reigns singles match and not a Shield match. That determines who comes out for a save you see.

Asuka vs. Dana Brooke

Brooke says she'll be all over Asuka at the bell. A cross armbreaker makes Dana tap at five seconds.

Post match Absolution comes out and surrounds the ring, only to let Asuka leave in peace.

Jason Jordan vs. Kane

Before the match, Jordan talks about how he's an athlete and knew his knee was banged up last week. Kane actually gets powered into the corner a few times to start but the suplex is broken up. A hard toss sends Jordan outside where he comes up holding the knee again. That's enough for a countout at 1:42.

Post match Kane stays on the knee until Finn Balor comes out for the save. They stare each other down and we take a break.

Finn Balor vs. Kane

Kane wastes no time in whipping Balor into the corner and we're into an early chinlock. Balor dropkicks him outside and hits a dive as the announcers talk about what a big deal a win over Kane would be. Kane hits him in the ribs with a chair for the DQ at 2:44.

Kane beats on him with the chair and wraps it around Balor's throat until Braun Strowman comes out for the save. A chair to the back has no effect on Strowman and the beatdown is on. Strowman destroys him with the steps and a chair, including a powerslam onto the steps. Kane gets his throat crushed on the chair and staggers into the crowd (probably looking for registered voters) to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. The good, long matches worked but I have no idea what that ending was supposed to be. So Jordan is trying to be all gutsy and get over his knee injury, Balor is dealing with Kane (and getting destroyed by him over and over) and Kane vs. Strowman is over who the real monster is. Ignoring the fact that Kane hasn't been viewed as much of a monster in at least ten years and WHY IS THIS THE TOP STORY OF THE SHOW??? Like, is this supposed to set up Kane vs. Strowman, after Strowman has beaten Kane down multiple times now? That's their big draw?

Other than that, the show actually wasn't half bad with Asuka's win being a high point. Sometimes there's no need to have the match be anything other than a glorified joke and that's what we had there. Asuka is just better than Brooke and there was no need to watch it go for three minutes to prove such a thing. As mentioned, the wrestling was good but the booking of the last thirty minutes or so...not so much. Have Reigns vs. Elias and the Samoa Joe attack close the show and it's far, far better. Still good though.

Results

Seth Rollins b. Cesaro – Wind-up knee

Samoa Joe b. Titus O'Neil – Koquina Clutch

Bray Wyatt b. Matt Hardy – Sister Abigail

Rich Swann b. Ariya Daivari, Akira Tozawa and Noam Dar – Phoenix splash to Dar

Roman Reigns b. Elias – Spear

Asuka b. Dana Brooke – Cross armbreaker

Kane b. Jason Jordan via countout

Finn Balor b. Kane via DQ when Kane used a chair

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Survivor Series Count-Up – 2016 (2017 Redo): I'm Mellowing In My Old Age

Survivor Series 2016

Date: November 20, 2016

Location: Air Canada Centre, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Attendance: 17,143

Commentators: Corey Graves, Byron Saxton, Mauro Ranallo, John Bradshaw Layfield, Michael Cole, David Otunga

I say this every year but it's always hard to believe that it's been a full year since this show. This was the first time that a Survivor Series was expanded to four hours but thankfully there's a good chance that they could make it work, mainly due to the elimination matches. The main event

though is Brock Lesnar vs. Goldberg, which I'm sure will be completely uneventful. Let's get to it.

Kickoff Show: Drew Gulak/Ariya Daivari/Tony Nese vs. Noam Dar/TJ Perkins/Rich Swann

This is a preview match for something called 205 Live, which debuts next week. I know it hasn't gone great but the division really has evolved into a better place than when it started. Swann gets a nice reaction and then starts with Nese, who gets chopped in the corner. They do their regular flips with Swann's jump over Nese's feet getting a good pop (as always) before it's off to Perkins.

Some suplexes set up an Octopus Hold but Nese reverses into a kind of gutwrench suplex. Gulak comes in and gets caught in the wrong corner with everyone working him over. We actually get a TJ PERKINS chant as he slaps on the kneebar to keep Gulak in trouble. Everything breaks down and we take a break.

Back with Daivari in trouble this time as Dar gets two off a running kick to the face. Nese offers a distraction though and a spinebuster takes Dar down. A superkick gives Daivari two and it's back to Gulak to crank on the leg. If this sounds rather uninteresting, it's only because that's what it is.

Dar dropkicks his way to freedom and the hot tag brings in Swann to very little reaction. A good looking jumping hurricanrana takes Daivari off the middle rope as everything breaks down again. That means we hit the dives but the referee CUTS PERKINS OFF. Now you know that's not working so Perkins dives over the referee to take out some villains. Back in and Swann's standing 450 ends Daivari at 11:48.

Rating: C-. I forgot how uninteresting these earlier cruiserweight matches were. The guys barely have characters and the entire story here was "three faces vs. three heels". It didn't get much better for a long time but, as usual, the problem comes down to one simple thing: if the smaller guys on the main roster can be big stars and do all these dives, why should I be impressed when cruiserweights can do them too?

Kickoff Show: Luke Harper vs. Kane

Harper is part of the NEW Wyatt Family, which screwed Kane over, meaning we need a match here. Kane grabs a full nelson of all things and we're in a chinlock fifteen seconds in. That goes nowhere so Harper grabs a headlock as the fans are oddly split here. Kane starts in on the shoulder by sending it into the buckle. Harper sends him outside though and hits that suicide shove of his (Who needs cruiserweights?).

A slingshot flip splash gives Luke two and we take a break. Back with Kane in a chinlock (well duh) but managing to superplex Harper down for a crash. The sidewalk slam gets two but Harper scores with a superkick for the same. Kane's running DDT and Harper's Boss Man Slam are good for two more each but it's the chokeslam to put Harper away at 9:10.

Rating: D+. Well what were you expecting here? This was exactly the match you would have planned out for them and Kane won with his finisher. It's about as paint by numbers of a power match as you can get and while it wasn't terrible, it's also a match I really didn't need to see.

The opening video looks at Goldberg vs. Lesnar and then all the Raw vs. Smackdown matches. Well at least they got some time. I'm sure Stephanie's voiceovers had nothing to do with it.

Raw Women's Team vs. Smackdown Women's Team

Raw: Bayley, Alicia Fox, Charlotte, Nia Jax, Sasha Banks

Smackdown: Alexa Bliss, Becky Lynch, Carmella, Naomi, Nikki Bella

Entrances alone take forever of course, which will be a theme tonight. Charlotte is Raw Women's Champion and has Dana Brooke in her corner. Becky is Smackdown Women's Champion but Nikki is captain. You know, because of course. Bliss gets a heck of a reaction (gee I wonder why). Actually hang on a second as there's no Nikki. We cut to the back where she's down after being attacked. Not to worry though, as Smackdown coach Natalya is more than willing to take the spot.

Carmella and Alicia get things going and it's an early northern lights suplex to give Fox two. That just earns her a trip into the corner for

the Staten Island Shuffle...and let's look at Team Raw while Fox gets in a kick to the face. That felt like a hard edit to make sure we didn't see something. Becky comes in and wants Bayley but Charlotte tags herself in instead. Banks does the same though and everything breaks down as Team Raw is about to implode. As usual, I would ask why Team Smackdown didn't just let them. Nia will have none of this though and easily clears the ring to settle things down.

We settle down to Becky and Banks trading rollups before it's off to Charlotte for more of the same. Becky can't get the Disarm-Her and it's off to Nia as things get a lot more difficult. Carmella and Bliss come in for the expected results and Naomi's high crossbody is pulled out of the air. Natalya actually gets a reaction but Nia clotheslines her head off for her efforts. It's off to Fox vs. Carmella with Alicia avoiding a Bronco Buster, setting up what looked to be a mostly missed ax kick for the elimination at 6:35. Bliss comes right in, sends Fox into the buckle and adds Twisted Bliss to tie it up at 6:48.

Charlotte and Naomi come in with the latter cleaning house, including knocking Nia outside and hitting a high crossbody to the floor. Nia posts her though and that's a countout at 8:23. We pause for the Tye Dillinger TEN chant until Bliss takes Banks down and grinds her face into the mat. Banks sends Bliss and Natalya into each other, followed by the double knees in the corner to Alexa. Back up and Bliss saves Natalya from the Bank Statement, allowing Natalya to roll Banks up for the elimination at 10:20.

Charlotte comes in and gets suplexed, meaning we hit the SUPLEX CITY chants. You would think fans would know more chants than that. Charlotte goes up for the moonsault but, as always, Natalya powerbombs her down for two in the near fall that never ends Charlotte. The required Sharpshooter sends Charlotte crawling for the ropes but a big boot ends Natalya at 12:01.

Becky and Bliss get in an argument over who should come in, allowing Jax to suplex them both at the same time. Of course that gets a MAMA MIA from Mauro, which I miss hearing so often. Bliss gets caught in a slam but Becky makes a blind tag and missile dropkicks Bliss in the back to knock

her onto Jax. The Disarm-Her actually makes Jax tap at 13:35 and it's 2-2 with Becky/Bliss vs Charlotte/Bayley.

Jax mauls Becky, leaving Bliss to get big booted down for the elimination at 14:03. Becky fights back as fast as she can with the series of clotheslines into the leg lariat, followed by Bplex. Bayley has to dive in for a save after a top rope legdrop before coming in for the slugout. Another Bplex gets two but Bayley's elbow to the back gets the same. You can tell Becky is getting tired out there so Bayley blocks the Disarm-Her and grabs the Bayley to Belly for the final pin at 17:53.

Rating: C+. The quick eliminations didn't help things here but the ending was the right call. There was way too much talent on the Raw side to lose and I'm VERY glad it was Natalya, who can wrestle this style without having to dumb things down too much. Becky was pretty much all the blue team had for a lot of the match and she put up a valiant effort, only to be outgunned. That makes her look strong and Bayley getting a win like this is a good thing for her at this stage in her main roster career.

Charlotte takes Bayley out post match and beats her around ringside.

Smackdown mascot James Ellsworth runs into Karl Anderson and Luke Gallows, who weren't funny in 2016 either. They make some bad chin puns but Raw GM Mick Foley comes in to run them off. Ellsworth talks about all the great memories he has of Foley, most of which involve him being in extreme pain. Foley thanks him anyway and suggests Ellsworth move to Raw. He appreciates the offer but politely turns it down because he's true blue. Foley leaves and Ellsworth runs into Braun Strowman, who asks if he knows Ellsworth. James runs in a smart move.

Intercontinental Title: Miz vs. Sami Zayn

Miz is defending and Sami is trying to take the title to Raw. We get the Big Match Intros and Sami gets quite the reaction for being Canadian. Sami spins out of a wristlock to start and Miz looks annoyed in the corner. Miz gets sent outside but Sami has to bail out of the flip dive. The moonsault off the barricade works though, drawing over Maryse for a distraction. Well she can be quite distracting.

This one works well with Miz taking out the knee to get his first advantage. Some hard stomps to the knees have Sami in trouble but he's still able to clothesline Miz to the floor. A flip dive works as well, followed by a Michinoku Driver for two. Miz's short DDT gets the same and it's time for a double breather. The running corner dropkick/clothesline look to set up the ax handle but Sami reverses into the Blue Thunder Bomb.

The Helluva Kick only hits corner though and that means the Figure Four. This one stays on for a good while until Sami makes the ropes, earning himself some YES Kicks. Sami reverses one into a Figure Four of his own but Maryse rings the bell. Since Sami isn't all that bright, he of course falls for it, only to have Miz roll him up to retain at 14:06.

Rating: C-. Kind of a dull match as you knew a lot of Sami's near falls weren't going anywhere. I can go for Miz and Maryse teaming up to steal wins though and it's a big reason why he's been an awesome Intercontinental Champion. This would also help play into Sami's heel turn nearly a year later as he would get tired of losing while playing by the rules. Makes sense, especially in a long term form.

Dean Ambrose and AJ Styles are bickering over being teammates tonight when Shane McMahon comes in and tells them to cool it so Smackdown doesn't lose again.

Raw Tag Teams vs. Smackdown Tag Teams

Raw: Enzo Amore/Big Cass, Cesaro/Sheamus, Gallows and Anderson, New Day, Shining Stars

Smackdown: American Alpha, Breezango, Heath Slater/Rhyno, Hype Bros, Usos

A fall eliminates both members of a team. Enzo and Cass suck up to the live crowd, as you might expect. New Day and Slater/Rhyno are the respective champions. Fandango tries to give everyone a fashion ticket to start, earning himself a Midnight Hour for the elimination at 44 seconds. New Day spends too much time celebrating though and it's a superkick from Jimmy to pin Big E. at 1:08.

Gallows comes in to punch Jimmy in the face before handing it off to Cass for the tall power. The fast tags continue as it's off to Epico vs. Ryder (who is rocking some old school Survivor Series logo trunks) with Mojo coming in for a clap around the ears. Rawley gets taken down into the corner for the huge group beating though as we keep trying to get everyone in. It's back to Ryder (not Slater like the fans want) but Gallows saves Anderson from the Broski Boot. Instead it's the Magic Killer to pin Ryder at 5:08.

Gable comes in as Graves talks about how scared he is of American Alpha. It doesn't seem to be the most valid fear to start though as Epico takes Gable down into a chinlock. Some rolling suplexes have Gable in more trouble and Primo comes in with a springboard ax handle to the ribs. He misses a charge in the corner though and it's off to Jordan for a quick Steiner Bulldog to get rid of the Stars at 8:08.

The six remaining teams (Enzo/Big Cass, Cesaro/Sheamus, Gallows and Anderson vs. American Alpha, Heath Slater/Rhyno, Usos) come in at once as everything breaks down. That means Enzo gets tossed over the top onto a big pile...which was mainly Raw guys but whatever. Rhyno gets thrown over the top as well, only to have Slater add an even bigger dive. Back in and Cesaro swings Jordan but Gable makes the save with a Rolling Chaos Theory.

Gable isn't done though as Jordan throws him over the top for a HUGE flip dive onto everyone. Sweet goodness those two were awesome together. I mean, not as awesome as Jordan on his own with Kurt Angle kind of around but still. Back in and it's a quick Magic Killer to get rid of Jordan at 10:39 as the eliminations are still flying. A spinebuster plants Slater and he's caught in the wrong corner.

Sheamus won't tag Cesaro (this was before their ridiculous matching outfits) and an argument breaks out, allowing the hot tag off to Rhyno as everyone bickers. Rhyno comes in and Gores Gallows for an elimination at 12:28. Cass wastes no time with a big boot to Rhyno, followed by the Bada Boom Shaka Lacka for the pin at 12:45.

That leaves us with the Usos...who superkick Enzo down to set up the

Superfly Splash and an elimination at 13:26 before I can type the Raw teams. So now we're down to the Usos vs. Cesaro/Sheamus with the latter hitting the ten forearms (you know the chant) on Jimmy. Cesaro comes in and eats a double superkick but Sheamus Brogue kicks Jimmy with Jey making a diving save.

Super White Noise plants Jimmy again but Jey is right back with a Superfly Splash for two with Cesaro making a save of his own. The hot tag brings in Cesaro for the Uppercut Train and a 619 as the fans lose their minds over Cesaro again. A high crossbody gets two on Jey and it's time for the Swing. Jimmy breaks up the Sharpshooter and Jey gets the Tequila Sunrise. That's reversed right back into the Sharpshooter with Sheamus remembering he's in the match to cut off Jimmy, leaving Jey to tap at 18:55.

Rating: B. This was during the time that I couldn't stand Sheamus and Cesaro (not a lot has changed in a year) but they did a lot of stuff in this match, despite the crunched timeline. Getting nine eliminations in less than nineteen minutes is a lot but you have to clear the ring out at the beginning. It's entertaining, but hits a hard ceiling that it's not getting past.

Stephanie and Foley decide that Sheamus and Cesaro should get a Tag Team Title shot tomorrow night. They recap the rest of the show with Stephanie getting way too serious, as usual.

Preview for TLC with Dean Ambrose vs. AJ Styles in a TLC match for the title.

Cruiserweight Champion Brian Kendrick does his best Sean O'Haire impression and is ready for Kalisto. If Kalisto wins, he brings the division to Smackdown. It's fine for a one off match but it was really hard to buy Kendrick as the best cruiserweight in the company in 2016.

Cruiserweight Title: Kalisto vs. Brian Kendrick

Kendrick is defending and charges straight into a knee to the face. Kalisto is right back with a suicide dive, followed by a springboard corkscrew crossbody for two. Some rollups give Kalisto more near falls

and a shotgun dropkick has Kendrick in even more trouble. A rollup into the corner finally gives Kendrick a breather and he crushes Kalisto between the steps and the apron for good measure.

Back in and we hit the cravate to slow things back down. Kalisto manages to fight up and get to the apron where he grabs a C4 out to the floor in the big crash of the match. A good looking suicide dive takes Kendrick down again but he reverses a super Salida Del Sol into the Captain's Hook. Kalisto finally grabs the ropes and fires off some kicks, followed by the hurricanrana driver. The Salida Del Sol gets two with Kendrick getting to the ropes. Kalisto heads up top...and here's Baron Corbin for the DQ at 12:21.

Rating: C-. The match was good at times but Kendrick really isn't the kind of guy you want as a long term champion. It also didn't help that you knew they weren't changing up the cruiserweight division so close to 205 Live's launch. Corbin interfering was fine enough, but it really does make the title match feel like a big waste of time.

The Kickoff Show panel recaps the show so far.

Daniel Bryan yells at Corbin, who doesn't want little pests running around on Smackdown.

We recap the men's Survivor Series match, which started in July at the second Brand Split. Naturally this is about the McMahons as Shane and Stephanie are the Commissioners and therefore they have to be fighting. We look at all the entrants as this is treated like the major match is should be treated as. Then Shane is added to the match and that notion kind of falls apart.

Raw Men's Team vs. Smackdown Men's Team

Raw: Braun Strowman, Chris Jericho, Kevin Owens, Roman Reigns

Seth Rollins

Smackdown: AJ Styles, Bray Wyatt, Dean Ambrose, Randy Orton, Shane McMahon

AJ and Owens are the World Champions, Reigns is US Champion and Ellsworth is here as the mascot. This is also during the period where Orton is part of the Wyatt Family because we needed that story to get to Orton as World Champion again. Rollins gets a nice reaction and it's far better without BURN IT DOWN or whatever the line is. AJ and Owens start things off with Styles wasting no time in hitting the drop down into the dropkick.

That's enough of that though as it's and they slug it out with AJ getting the better of it. The STUPID IDIOT chants mean it's time for Jericho, who throws his shirt at AJ and hammers away. Styles dropkicks him down again as the announcers discuss Jericho insulting Undertaker on Twitter. It's off to Ambrose vs. Rollins, which turns into far more of a wrestling match than it should.

Rollins can't get a Pedigree so let's go back to Jericho. Chris yells at Dean for the \$15,000 jacket issue, earning himself some really bad armdrags. An enziguri cuts Dean down for two but Ambrose is right back with a bunch of right hands to the head. Shane comes in for the first time and my interest goes down. I'm still not a fan of middle aged Shane and this isn't likely to change things.

Shane's bad punches and an armdrag (better than Dean's) take Jericho down until a dropkick cuts him off. The announcers debate the TV ratings as Reigns comes in and gets booed out of the building. Roman hammers him down in the corner and Seth comes in for a chinlock. That's broken up so let's go with Dean vs. Kevin. Owens hits a superkick but gets caught in a hurricanrana, only to have Jericho break up Dirty Deeds.

Everything breaks down and Strowman tags himself in, leaving the fans to chant for Ellsworth. The fight heads outside with Dean being left alone in the ring until Strowman catches his slingshot dive. Strowman walks him around the ring until AJ's slingshot forearm to the floor breaks it up. Owens dives onto everyone and Strowman tosses Shane across the ring in a pretty good power display.

Some double teaming doesn't do much to stop Strowman but they manage to knock him outside. That's enough of Dean and Ambrose working together so they get in a fight, allowing Strowman to hit the running powerslam for

the pin on Dean at 15:57. AJ was looking right at the cover and didn't move. Shane gets to beat on Strowman for a bit but thankfully he gets hammered down as well.

The Phenomenal Forearm is pulled out of the air with AJ being tossed outside in a nasty heap. Orton gets thrown aside too but a stare from Bray stops Strowman in his tracks. Strowman grabs Jericho by the throat but decides to run Bray over instead, followed by a dropkick to put him on the floor. Braun goes outside as well but runs into an RKO onto the announcers' table. After we pause to see what a random eight year old fan thought of it (he was applauding), Shane drops the top rope elbow to put Strowman through said table. That and Ellsworth grabbing Braun's foot get Strowman counted out at 21:18.

Strowman catches Ellsworth running up the ramp though (How slow is this guy?) and throws him off the stage through some tables. Everyone else is mostly dead until Jericho covers Shane for two. Owens is fresh enough to drop the backplash on Shane for two (but only after mocking the dance). There's the Lionsault but Shane gets two of his own off a small package.

Shane takes a Codebreaker but Orton comes in before the cover, meaning Shane survives another finisher. He avoids a top rope splash though and it's off to AJ to work on Jericho. With Owens getting in an insult to AJ's hair (too far man), Jericho counters the Styles Clash into a failed Walls attempt. The Phenomenal Blitz rocks Jericho but Owens comes in with the List of Jericho to blast AJ. That's a DQ at 29:23, but not before he gives AJ a Pop Up Powerbomb.

Orton gets the tag and comes in with the RKO to get rid of Jericho at 30:19. Notice Reigns blankly staring up at the ramp and not hearing the RKO RIGHT IN FRONT OF HIM. So it's down to Shane/AJ/Orton/Wyatt vs. Reigns/Rollins with Orton hammering on Rollins to start. Wyatt and Orton take turns on Seth as Shane is still laid on the apron after his long time in the ring. The superplex takes Rollins down (looks great too) but it allows the hot tag to Reigns. AJ comes in as well and MY GOODNESS the fans do not like Reigns.

House is cleaned with a series of Samoan drops, followed by a great

looking Razor's Edge powerbomb for two on AJ. Seriously that was good enough to cut off the booing. A Pele cuts off a Superman Punch and it's back to Shane for no logical reason. Shane gets in a tornado DDT to drop Reigns and a clothesline takes Rollins down. Reigns tries a spear but gets awkwardly countered into the post.

In probably the spot of the match, Shane loads up Coast to Coast but gets speared out of the air for a SICK landing. Shane actually kicks out at two but you can see that he is completely gone. Like Lesnar after the botched shooting star gone. The referee says Shane is eliminated at 37:07, presumably due to his brains looking like a pie that has been run over by a bus driven by raccoons.

We pause for a bit as doctors get Shane out of the ring until Roman blasts Bray with a clothesline. Rollins and AJ get stereo hot tags with Seth's Blockbuster putting Styles down. There's the slingshot knee to AJ and a suicide dive to Wyatt. With Reigns down on the floor, let's hit that ROMAN'S SLEEPING chant! Still one of my favorites because the fans just will not give him a break no matter what. An enziguri staggers AJ on top and now it's WAKE UP ROMAN. Reigns does in fact wake up and saves Rollins from a hanging DDT on the floor.

With Orton down, it seems as good a time as any for a DoubleBomb. Styles makes a save before it can be loaded up but here's Ambrose to jump Styles again. The fans call Dean a STUPID IDIOT as the former Shield beats up security. NOW the TripleBomb puts AJ through the table, allowing Rollins to get the pin at 47:00. It's down to two on two with the Wyatts vs. the Shield (not the worst idea in the world)....and here's Luke Harper for a distraction so the Wyatts can take over.

Reigns posts Orton but Harper superkicks him down, only to have Rollins score with a flip dive to the floor. Back in and the low superkick hits Wyatt but he dives into an RK0, giving Bray the pin at 49:25. Reigns, all alone, sends both of them outside and takes Harper out as a bonus. Back in and Orton eats a spear to save Wyatt, leaving Bray to grab Sister Abigail for the pin at 52:50.

Rating: A. This is a great example of a match that benefits from all of

the time it had. What I loved about this was how long it took to take someone out. Most of the people in here were former World Champions and it doesn't make sense to have them losing in a minute or two like in the other matches. They let the match build up for a change and that's what makes this feel important.

Above all else though, this felt like someone surviving instead of whoever was left last. Look at the women's match. Bayley barely looked like she had been through anything at the end. Orton and Wyatt looked banged up, which is how they should after a match like this. It's a well put together match that got the kind of time it needed, which is exactly how something like this should be. Really strong stuff here with Bray, who actually needed it, getting the win.

We recap Goldberg vs. Brock Lesnar. Goldberg was being interviewed about being in WWE2K16 and said he didn't owe Lesnar a rematch. Lesnar challenged him though and Goldberg wanted his son to see him wrestle. The match was on and it does indeed feel like a battle of two people who could kill each other.

Brock Lesnar vs. Goldberg

We get the full Goldberg entrance, complete with someone knocking on his door. Lesnar drives him into the corner to start but Goldberg shoves him right back down, scaring the heck out of Lesnar in the process. Back up and the spear connects to drop Lesnar again. There's a second spear, followed by a Jackhammer to give Goldberg the huge upset at 1:25.

Yeah I still don't like it. Sure it was shocking and a huge moment, but what did this set up? Goldberg eliminating Lesnar from the Rumble, Goldberg getting the most unnecessary Universal Title reign ever, and then a good sub five minute match at Wrestlemania. One of WWE's biggest issues is giving fans something to cheer for and they give this spot to Goldberg, who they didn't even create, for the sake of a video game (might not have been their call) and a story that could have made someone's career. After this, Samoa Joe and Braun Strowman both fell to Lesnar, but Goldberg doesn't. I don't buy it, nor do I like it.

Goldberg celebrates with his family to end the show.

Overall Rating: B+. One of the major perks about a match running nearly an hour on a three and a half hour show is that it can REALLY bring an overall rating up. Throw in a good women's match and nothing really bad, this is actually a strong show. It's far from perfect (main event aside, though that was the only thing that could have closed the show) but it's a heck of a card, which I can always go for of course. The main issue is they could have gotten this one under three hours so it's a bit long but nothing too bad. Really solid show though and most of that is due to the mega long match.

Ratings Comparison

Rich Swann/Noam Dar/TJ Perkins vs. Ariya Daivari/Tony Nese/Drew Gulak

Original: C

Redo: C-

Kane vs. Luke Harper

Original: C-

Redo: D+

Women's Survivor Series Match

Original: C

Redo: C+

Miz vs. Sami Zayn

Original: C+

Redo: C-

Tag Team Survivor Series Match

Original: D+

Redo: B

Kalisto vs. Brian Kendrick

Original: C

Redo: C-

Men's Survivor Series Match

Original: A-

Redo: A

Goldberg vs. Brock Lesnar

Original: N/A

Redo: N/A

Overall Rating

Original: C-

Redo: B+

My eyebrows went up when I saw the original overall rating. The year of mellowing on the ending have helped a lot as there's no way this is a B-. Also I really couldn't stand Sheamus and Cesaro back then.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2016/11/20/survivor-series-2016-there-are-no-words/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the Updated History of the Intercontinental Title in E-Book or Paperback. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/10/02/new-paperback-kbs-history-of-the-intercontinental-title-updated-version/>

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Monday Night Raw – October 2, 2017: The Upside Down Egg Version

Monday Night Raw

Date: October 2, 2017

Location: Pepsi Center, Denver Colorado

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves, Booker T.

We've got a title match on the card tonight as the Miz defends the Intercontinental Title against Roman Reigns. While a title change is always possible, there's also the high likelihood that this is all helping to set up the Miztourage vs. a reunited Shield at Tables Ladders and Chairs 2017. Let's get to it.

The roster is on the stage for a moment of silence in memory of the Las Vegas shooting. Even Vince and Shane are there.

Video on the Miztourage beating Reigns down last week and standing over him in the Shield pose.

Opening sequence.

Seth Rollins vs. Braun Strowman

Rollins kicks at the ribs to start but has to slip out of a running powerslam attempt. For some reason Seth slaps him in the face, setting off a chase. A kick to Braun's head connects but Braun launches him into

the air for a big crash. We hit the chinlock for a bit before Seth fights up and sends him outside. A suicide dive is knocked out of the air though and we take a break.

Back with Rollins getting tossed via a fall away slam but sidestepping a charge. Now the suicide dives connect, only to have the springboard knee to the face get two. A great looking superkick drops Braun but the wind up knee is countered with a clothesline. The running powerslam ends Rollins at 10:27.

Rating: C. Not a bad little match here but there was no question about Strowman winning. Rollins is great for something like this though as he's legitimate competition for Strowman and makes him look great even in defeat. It was a fun match and a good way to open the show, which is all you can ask for.

Strowman gives him another powerslam for fun. He goes back for more but Dean Ambrose runs out for a save attempt, only to get chokeslammed for his efforts. Another running powerslam leaves both champions laying. Strowman leaves and here are Sheamus and Cesaro to pick the bones.

Breast cancer awareness video.

We recap Mickie James and Alexa Bliss' issues.

Mickie runs into Alicia Fox and Emma, who say there's a present in Mickie's dressing room. She goes in to find a walker and adult diapers. Mickie goes to find Alexa but she's hiding behind Nia Jax. A match is set for later.

Bray Wyatt is in his walking chair and rocking back and forth, going over things that Sister Abigail told him. She told him to fight the man and would never lie to him. He repeats the last line over and over.

Here's Elias to tell us how horrible this town is and how much he can't stand Titus O'Neil.

Elias vs. Titus O'Neil

Elias headlocks him to start but gets shoved off for a crash. A big boot

knocks Elias outside where he gets in a staredown with Apollo Crews. Back in and Drift Away ends Titus at 2:58. Nothing match.

The announcers preview Hell in a Cell.

Mickie James vs. Nia Jax

Alexa comes out to watch and the distraction lets Nia jump Mickie from behind. The beating is on in a hurry and Mickie is sent outside as we take a break. Back with Mickie slugging away but getting thrown down again, setting up a chinlock and bearhug. Nia tries a powerbomb but Mickie slips out, setting up a few running kicks. A bad looking tornado DDT (Mickie's leg was underneath Nia) plants Jax, only to have Alexa run in for the DQ at 9:45.

Rating: D+. As I've said before, Nia needs to win something at some point. That being said, I'm very happy that Mickie is in this story as she's the fresh blood the division has been needing. That being said, she's now been in stories where she's crazy, fat and old. What did she do to WWE over the years to deserve those?

Mickie kicks Alexa in the face.

Long recap of Enzo Amore winning the title and being destroyed last week.

Enzo has nothing to say.

Mickie James will get her title shot at TLC.

Matt Hardy/Jason Jordan vs. Anderson and Gallows

Jordan slugs away at Anderson to start but everything breaks down with the good guys (guys, not Brothers) cleaning house to send us to a break. Back with Anderson working over Matt in the corner but it's quickly off to Jordan. A slam is broken up via a Gallows kick to the face and Jordan is back in trouble again.

Anderson slaps on an armbar as the announcers ask Booker why he's always complaining about Jordan's relationship with Angle. That's broken up as well and the hot tag brings in Matt for a middle rope elbow. Anderson

makes a save and knocks Jordan outside, leaving Matt to take the Magic Killer for the pin at 11:02.

Rating: D+. Not much to this one but were you expecting anything else? Jordan is a complete filler partner and while that makes sense in the short term, I don't see this lasting too much longer. Hardy is more than capable of a singles run and that would be the best option for everyone at the moment.

Reigns says he's keeping things simple tonight: destroy what's in front of him, break Miz's jaw, and leave with the title.

Some breast cancer survivors are brought out and presented with WWE Championships by Dana Warrior.

Intercontinental Title: Roman Reigns vs. The Miz

Miz is defending and comes out ala the Shield with the Miztourage. Reigns wastes no time in bailing to the floor and beating the heck out of the Miztourage to make things even. Axel staggers through the crowd so Reigns follows him up for a chair to the back. Dallas gets one as well before Reigns just unloads on both of them with multiple chair shots. The bell rings after a break with Reigns headbutting the champ on the floor. Miz avoids a charge though and Reigns winds up in the crowd. That's only good for a nine count but Miz catches him in a short DDT for two.

We hit the chinlock for a bit before Miz switches to just choking on the ropes. Back from a break with Miz hitting the YES Kicks but getting caught in a sitout powerbomb for a very near fall. The Superman Punch is countered into the Skull Crushing Finale for the same and Miz is stunned. The second Superman Punch connects for an even closer two and it's Reigns' turn to be shocked. Reigns loads up the spear but Sheamus and Cesaro pull him out for the DQ at 10:47.

Rating: B-. This was good while it lasted but the ending hurt it a lot. They're not hiding what they're going for in the post match stuff and while there's nothing wrong with that, I could go for it not being so heavy handed. There were some awesome near falls in this one and it was really entertaining at times, but the time factor and the storyline stuff

isn't great.

Reigns gets destroyed post match. The fans chant for the Shield as Reigns takes a TripleBomb. Miz, Sheamus and Cesaro do the Shield pose. That would be a heck of a lot better than Miz and the Miztourage.

Here's Finn Balor for a chat. He's heard Bray Wyatt's talk for weeks now and he sees Bray for the coward he is. For all of Bray's games, it boils down to him just being afraid that he can't beat Finn Balor. If Bray wants another fight, come get one right now. Bray appears on screen, again in his rocking chair and saying that she never lied to me. Finn lied to him though and hid his true face behind the Demon. Sister Abigail is alive and dying to meet Balor.

Video on Asuka.

Sasha Banks/Bayley vs. Emma/Alicia Fox

Sasha takes Emma down and does Bayley's roll over Emma's back to take over. Bayley sends her into the corner for some rams into the buckle and we take a break. Back with Fox hammering on Banks before Emma comes in for a chinlock. Emma's butterfly suplex gets two and Fox's tilt-a-whirl backbreaker gets the same.

Banks still can't get over for the hot tag as Fox pulls her back one more time. This time around though Banks sends the villains into each other and the hot tag brings in Bayley for some right hands to Alicia. A jawbreaker cuts Bayley off...but Emma drops to the floor and says she's out. The Bayley to Belly ends Alicia at 12:58.

Rating: C-. Kind of boring with all the chinlockery but it wasn't too bad. The big problem here though was the lack of any question about who was going to win. Emma and Alicia are some of the lowest level women the division has had in a good while and there's no reason to expect that they're going to beat two of the bigger names. That made the long chinlocks feel even longer, though it wasn't the worst thing in the world.

We look at Amore getting destroyed last week.

Here's Enzo Amore to talk about the beating he took last week. He's now put the cruiserweight division in the main event two weeks in a row and you're absolutely right that he deserves it. Enzo talks about all the money he makes and all of his star power, but carrying the division has made his back hurt. He brings up the No Contact clause from last week and says there's a new one tonight: if anyone attacks him, they're fired. Now he's on top of the throne but he doesn't have any opponents.

Cue the cruiserweight division to surround Amore but he insults every single one of them in turn. This brings out Angle to say that none of the cruiserweights at ringside can lay a hand on him. HOWEVER, there's a new member of the Cruiserweight division: Kalisto. The fight is on in a hurry with Kalisto easily beating the heck out of Enzo.

A banged up Reigns is in the back when Ambrose comes in. They stare at each other a bit until Rollins comes in as well. Ambrose leaves with Rollins going the opposite way. Reigns thinks things over to end the show. No one ever said or did anything more than look at the others.

Overall Rating: C-. I'm really going to need more time to get used to this Saturday Night's Main Event style layout for the shows. For the young ones out there, Saturday Night's Main Event would load up the first third or half of the show and then the last part would be whatever else they had time to squeeze in.

That would make for a far less interesting ending, which is what WWE has been going for lately. I'm so used to Raw ending with a big moment and now it's something that feels like it's filler. I get why they're doing it (the last hour doesn't do well anyway so don't waste big stories) but DANG it's punishing to fans who watch the whole thing.

The rest of the show was fine enough with Cesaro and Sheamus being a VERY nice upgrade over Axel and Dallas. It's made me somewhat more interested in a Shield reunion, even if they're doing such a rushed job with the whole thing. The show wasn't terrible, but aside from the Shield stuff, I'm having trouble remembering anything important on the whole thing. That's not good, especially when we're less than three weeks away from a big pay per view.

Results

Braun Strowman b. Seth Rollins – Running powerslam

Elias b. Titus O'Neil – Drift Away

Mickie James b. Nia Jax via DQ when Alexa Bliss interfered

Anderson and Gallows b. Matt Hardy/Jason Jordan – Magic Killer to Hardy

Roman Reigns b. The Miz via DQ when Sheamus and Cesaro interfered

Sasha Banks/Bayley b. Alicia Fox/Emma – Bayley to Belly to Fox

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the Updated History of the Intercontinental Title in E-Book or Paperback. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/10/02/new-paperback-kbs-history-of-the-intercontinental-title-updated-version/>

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

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

No Mercy 2017: Space is Warped and Wrestling is Bendable

No Mercy 2017

Date: September 24, 2017

Location: Staples Center, Los Angeles, California

Commentators: Michael Cole, Booker T., Corey Graves

I don't remember being this excited for a B pay per view in a very long time. This show is all about the double main event with a combination of Brock Lesnar defending the Universal Title against Braun Strowman and John Cena vs. Roman Reigns in one heck of a big time match. That should be more than enough to carry this show so let's get to it.

Kickoff Show: Elias vs. Apollo Crews

No real story here as this was just thrown together for the sake of a Kickoff match. Elias sings a little ditty about Los Angeles but gets cut off by Titus Worldwide and Crews in particular. Elias shoves him away without much effort and grabs a headlock to keep Crews slowed down. An armbar has Elias in some trouble and Crews snaps off a dropkick to take over. Elias sends him to the apron though and knocks Crews outside as we take a break.

Back with Elias still in control until Crews punches him in the ribs and slowly slugs away. Crews fights out of a reverse chinlock and scores with the standing shooting star. An enziguri staggers Elias but he sends Crews into the corner, setting up Drift Away for the pin at 8:54.

Rating: D+. This felt like a long Raw match and to be fair that's all it was really supposed to be. Apollo losing again doesn't really do anything that bad for him as it's not like he had anything going for him anyway. On the other hand you have Elias, who is looking more and more like someone they would like to push every single week. Good outing from Elias but not much of a match.

Elias goes after Crews again but Titus makes a fast save.

The opening video looks at the two main events and talks about how everyone has the potential to show no mercy.

Intercontinental Title: Jason Jordan vs. The Miz

Jordan is challenging after winning a six way on Raw. Miz gets a bit too cocky to start and walks into a series of suplexes for his efforts. A

cheap shot to the ribs has Jason in trouble though and a DDT gets two. The dueling WHO'S YOUR DADDY/LET'S GO MIZ chants starts up as Jordan slugs away, only to get sent outside for a breather. Back in and we hit the YES Kicks to Jordan with Cole and Corey arguing over who invented them.

Jordan catches one of them in another suplex and a Saito suplex is good for a near fall. Some rolling northern lights suplexes give Jordan a bridging two and Miz bails outside again. Back in and Jordan slaps on a Crossface for a bit, only to miss the running shoulder in the corner. Another suplex drops Miz and now the shoulder hits but Jordan has to go after Bo Dallas. Curtis Axel gets in a cheap shot though, knocking Jordan into Miz for the Skull Crushing Finale to retain at 10:10.

Rating: C. Jordan's suplexes looked great but I'm not sure that's enough to carry him to glory. He really doesn't have enough of a character to make it work but maybe it just needs another tweak to really start clicking. Miz retaining is the right call as he gets to keep setting himself closer towards the most days with the title.

Post match Jordan says he's love a rematch and thinks Miz sucks, just like the chants about his father.

Long recap of Bray Wyatt vs. Finn Balor. Bray targeted Finn for thinking he was a false idol with the Balor Club. Bray beat him on Raw but then lost to the Demon at Summerslam. Now Bray wants to win again to show he can beat Balor himself.

Bray Wyatt vs. Finn Balor

Bray jumps him before the bell and sends Balor into various hard objects. The referees come out to check on Balor and start to take him to the back until Bray says that Balor is a coward who is scared of the monster in front of him. Of course those are fighting words and the brawl is on early. Sister Abigail is broken up and Balor sidesteps a charge to send Bray outside.

Back in and Bray catches him with a superplex to stay on the bad ribs like a good villain should. Finn's shoulder is sent down into the apron

as Bray is picking him apart piece by piece. Bray gets caught in the ring skirt though (That's still a thing?) and Balor kicks him in the chest. Back in and Balor goes up, only to have Bray do the spider walk to scare the heck out of Finn.

The Sling Blade puts Bray down but he pops back up for a shot to the ribs and the backsplash for two. A double stomp gets Balor out of trouble but he takes too long going up top. Bray pulls him back down and hits a heck of a clothesline for two more. Back to back suplex throws have the ribs in more trouble (good psychological sense) but he takes too long on the ropes too. Balor hits the running corner dropkick and the Coup de Grace is good for the pin at 11:55.

Rating: C+. Better match than their last effort and hopefully this ends their rivalry so Bray can find someone else to beat him up for a change. The match ran into the same trap that so many Wyatt matches run into: I didn't buy most of his near falls because it felt like we were just waiting around for him to get beaten. They really need to fix that if they want Bray to move forward. Balor on the other hand needs to be in the World Title picture like...oh anytime would be nice.

Asuka debuts at TLC.

Sheamus and Cesaro say they'll win.

Tag Team Titles: Sheamus/Cesaro vs. Seth Rollins/Dean Ambrose

Rollins and Ambrose are defending. Ambrose sends both challengers outside to start but gets run over from behind by Sheamus. Cesaro rams him hard into the steps and comes up (well, he's still on the ground but you get the idea) holding his arm. Back in and things actually slow down a bit for the referee to check on the arm so you know it's serious. Cesaro's boot to the face gets two and he cranks on the arm for good measure.

Dean fights up and sends him into the post though, allowing the hot tag to Rollins so house can be cleaned in a hurry, starting with the springboard clothesline and a catapult into the post. There's the low superkick as Cesaro is bleeding from the face, due to LOSING BOTH OF HIS FRONT TEETH WHEN HIS HEAD SMACKED INTO THE POST! AND HE'S STILL GOING!

Sweet goodness someone get this man a....what the heck should he get? Sheamus is ticked off (must be a dental enthusiast) and grabs three straight Irish Curses to take Seth down.

It's back to Cesaro (now less bloody) for a big boot to take Ambrose off the apron. Rollins slugs away anyway and avoids a charge to send Sheamus into the post. One heck of a backdrop sends Cesaro outside and the hot tag brings Dean back in. Ambrose clotheslines Sheamus outside and, while still favoring the arm, hits a suicide dive. Back in and Seth has to save Dean from a double Razor's Edge, only to have Cesaro kick him to the floor.

That means a Sharpshooter and Crossface for Dean, who somehow makes the ropes. The double Razor's Edge gets two and Sheamus can't believe the kickout (fair enough, as that should be a heck of a finisher). With nothing else working, the super White Noise is loaded up but Rollins is there for a hurricanrana...which is blocked through raw power.

Sheamus gives Ambrose the regular White Noise and Cesaro superbombs Rollins onto Dean for the most ludicrous kickout I've seen in months. Dean collapses before a Brogue Kick can connect so Sheamus tries again, only to hit Cesaro by mistake. The wind-up knee knocks Sheamus into Dirt Deeds to retain the titles at 15:57.

Rating: B+. Do we still have Isaac Yankem's business card? I don't think I need to explain that this was an insanely hard hitting match with both teams beating the fire (and teeth) out of each other. I wasn't expecting anything coming into this and while the kickouts were ridiculous at times (unfortunately that has to be plural), heck of a performance here and worth checking out.

We recap the Women's Title match, which is a five way due to trying to throw in everyone they can. Alexa Bliss is defending, Sasha Banks is getting a mandatory rematch, Nia Jax and Emma won a tag match to get here and Bayley is just there because reasons.

Women's Title: Alexa Bliss vs. Emma vs. Sasha Banks vs. Bayley vs. Nia Jax

Bliss is defending her right to get killed by Asuka. Emma now has new music that starts with "it's all about me". Uh, nothing has ever been about you Emma. Bliss and Jax are knocked to the floor without much effort and it's a rare triple test of strength from the other three. Emma is sent outside as well to give us the big showdown, only to have Nia back in and destroy the mere mortals.

Bliss comes back in and tries her DDT on Jax, who just shrugs it off in a nearly funny moment. Banks tries a save so Nia Samoan drops her and Bliss at the same time, leaving Bayley to dive in for a save. The guillotine choke over the ropes has Nia in trouble so everyone can get together and dump her out. Nia gets right back up and grabs Emma, who slips between her legs and grabs a powerbomb with Bayley helping and Banks and Bliss dropkicking her away from the ropes.

Nia lands ON HER HEAD but thankfully seems to be alive. Back in and Banks hits Rey Mysterio's sitout bulldog on Emma, followed by the Bank Statement on Bliss. Bayley makes a save and grabs the Bayley to Belly for two of her own. Nia is back up though and starts destroying people again, including a legdrop on Sasha for two. The monster is taken to the floor but Bliss uses the distraction to DDT Bayley and retain the title at 9:59.

Rating: B-. THEN WHY WAS EMMA IN THE FREAKING MATCH??? Of all the people they could have take the fall (and by that I mean of like three), they pick BAYLEY? The one coming back from injury after her horrible run? They have the jobbiest jobber to ever job in Emma and she's just out there on the floor with the rest of them while Bayley takes the fall? And they wonder why no one buys into her. The other problem here is Nia, who needs to actually win something at some point in her career.

Bliss says she's a goddess.

Clip from No Mercy 2005 with Batista retaining the Smackdown World Title over Eddie Guerrero.

Long recap of John Cena vs. Roman Reigns. Cena came to Raw to face Reigns and then destroyed him in a series of promos. Reigns talked about Cena leaving for Hollywood and says he needs to win this match to really be

the big dog.

John Cena vs. Roman Reigns

Reigns shoulders him down to start, drawing a YOU BOTH SUCK chant. Cena actually gets out of the ring and walks up the ramp (Huh?), allowing Reigns to follow him up and get in a shot to the face to take over again. Some right hands have little effect on Reigns, who drops Cena with a single shot for two. Cena sends him into the steps for a breather but still doesn't seem to have the killer instinct going yet.

Reigns does the same thing to him, followed by the apron dropkick. The fans aren't sure who to cheer for here as Reigns gets two. Cena gets in a few right hands but a pair of kicks cut him off again as Cena has still had almost no offense. We hit the chinlock as the announcers are suggesting that Cena is starting to lose his big match skills and the stupid fans chant boring.

Back up and the shoulder block is cut off with an uppercut as Reigns is nailing the heel style. Cena's finishing sequence is initiated but the Five Knuckle Shuffle is countered with another Samoan drop. The Superman Punch is countered into an STF but Reigns powers out into the sitout powerbomb for two more. Cena powers up again and hits the AA for two on a very near fall that I almost bought.

The top rope Fameasser is countered with a not great powerbomb for two and another Superman Punch gets another near fall. Back up and Reigns' spear hits the post (CHECK HIS TEETH! CHECK HIS TEETH!) so Cena grabs the super AA for another very close two that I bought more than the standard version.

With nothing else working, Cena loads up the announcers' tables but his third AA is countered into a spear through the table, though Cena kind of countered it with a DDT. Fans: "YOU STILL SUCK!" That's only good for two back inside but another spear is countered into rolling AA's for a two that I didn't buy as much this time around. Another Superman Punch and another spear gives Reigns the pin at 21:48. Cole: "This may be the biggest win of Reigns' career!" No Cole. No.

Rating: B. Yeah this didn't really work like it was supposed to and the spamming of finishers was laughable at the ending. The fact that I bought the first AA, really bought the second AA, and didn't buy the rolling AA's tells you all you need to know. This was supposed to be some big win that made Reigns but he's main evented THREE WRESTLEMANIAS IN A ROW. Excuse me if I'm not thrilled with Reigns winning the co-main event of a B show. It's a big win, but this wasn't anything close to the level of epic they were hoping for.

Cena raises Reigns' hand and sits in the corner after Reigns leaves. The fans applaud and give him a THANK YOU CENA chant because they're acting like he's retiring for some reason. Cena goes to the ramp, turns around and salutes before leaving.

Miz tells Kurt Angle he wants a special MizTV with Roman Reigns tomorrow night because that win was the same as retiring the Undertaker. Angle agrees and says it's opening the show. Translation: PLEASE DON'T WATCH MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL!

Cruiserweight Title: Enzo Amore vs. Neville

Enzo is challenging and comes out dressed like Beetlejuice. Before the match, Enzo runs his mouth about taking the king's queen (Enzo: "What is a king without a queen?" Still a king you buffoon.) and something about cookie dough. Neville wristlocks him to start and takes Enzo down with a front facelock. A backflip out of trouble just earns Enzo a kick to the leg as Neville doesn't seem to be sweating this one too much.

Neville sends him head first into the corner and stomps away, followed by a sliding kick to the head. All champ so far and you can feel the screwy ending coming. One heck of a superkick drops Enzo again and more kicks have him reeling. Neville goes up but takes too long jawing at the fans for the Phoenix splash. The DDG gets a close two on the champ but he throws Enzo outside and over the barricade. With the referee at nine, Enzo holds up the title and dives back in. The referee takes it away, allowing Enzo to hit a low blow for the pin and the title at 9:43.

Rating: F. Enzo Amore is Cruiserweight Champion. This is a failure.

D for those of you who are picky about this kind of stuff. It was a squash with a screwy finish.

We recap Brock Lesnar vs. Braun Strowman, which is going to be a big collision. Strowman is the biggest monster that Lesnar has ever faced and he might not be enough of a beast to conquer him.

Universal Title: Brock Lesnar vs. Braun Strowman

Strowman is challenging. Brock gets shoved down to start and a takedown attempt is shoved away. The first German suplex is no sold and Brock gets chokeslammed (Graves: "CHOKESLAM CITY BROCK!"). Braun's running powerslam only gets two and Heyman is panicking. An elbow and headbutt block another German suplex attempt and Brock's back gives out on an F5 attempt.

Braun posts him and sends Brock hard into the corner, only to miss a charge. Strowman gets caught in the Kimura and despite Braun grabbing the ropes four times, he settles for a spinebuster to break the hold. It's Suplex City time with numbers two thru six having Strowman in trouble and Lesnar in a puddle of sweat. The F5 doesn't work though and a second running powerslam plants Lesnar. A third only gets two on Brock as the fans aren't reacting to these near falls. Back up and the F5 retains the title out of nowhere at 8:58.

Rating: D. Well that was garbage. They had something going in the first few minutes but Brock just shrugged everything off and hit the F5 to retain. You know, likely because we need Reigns vs. Lesnar II in New Orleans. Braun made one big mistake coming into this match: he got himself over when he wasn't supposed to and WWE isn't changing their plans for anyone, especially if the World Title is involved.

Overall Rating: B. That was a heck of a surprise as everything I was looking forward to was either disappointing or just bad and almost everything that I wasn't interested in was good stuff. Reigns vs. Cena was certainly entertaining though nowhere near as big as WWE thinks it was. Strowman vs. Lesnar...yeah we all bought into the false hope that we're getting ANYTHING other than Reigns vs. Lesnar II in New Orleans. It's a shame, but I can't really say I'm surprised. Disappointed, but not

surprised.

The rest of the show was actually very good with the low point being....I guess Balor vs. Wyatt? I had a good time with this show, even if it was for the polar opposite reason I was expecting to. Still though, it's one of the better B shows they've done in a long time and the good stuff at the beginning more than makes up for the lackluster main event.

Of course nothing makes up for Enzo winning. That's a wound that will never heal.

Results

The Miz b. Jason Jordan – Skull Crushing Finale

Finn Balor b. Bray Wyatt – Coup de Grace

Seth Rollins/Dean Ambrose b. Cesaro/Sheamus – Dirty Deeds to Sheamus

Alexa Bliss b. Bayley, Nia Jax, Emma and Sasha Banks – DDT to Bayley

Roman Reigns b. John Cena – Spear

Enzo Amore b. Neville – Low blow

Brock Lesnar b. Braun Strowman – F5

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<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/07/21/new-e-bookpaperback-kbs-complete-monday-night-raw-2002-reviews/>

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Went to the Raw House Show Last Night

I took in the Raw house show last night at Rupp Arena in Lexington, Kentucky. The featured attraction this time around was John Cena, who was making a rare house show appearance. However, this wasn't mentioned on TV commercials until the week of the show, despite the announcement being made on WWE.com over three weeks ago. The crowd was solid enough for a Sunday house show but I have to think advertising Cena as a major attraction would have helped.

The show was scheduled to start at 7pm and actually kicked off a minute or so early. It was a fairly strong turnout with the upper deck completely tarped off but that's standard for a place the size of Rupp Arena. It should be noted that Rupp Arena is the largest arena in the United States built for basketball with over 23,000 seats. Therefore, even a crowd that is only half full would be a solid showing elsewhere.

1. Apollo Crews/Heath Slater/Rhyno b. Curt Hawkins/Anderson and Gallows (5:50) C-.

This was exactly the opener you would have wanted with the faces being incredibly popular and everyone going nuts for Slater and Rhyno. Crews is a fine face with the athleticism and Titus makes for a solid manager who knows how to fire up a crowd. You don't come off as professional as he does and not have some kind of use, even if it's just a spot as a manager. The best note of this was Anderson beating Slater up and shouting that he has kids too. Rhyno hit a spinebuster on Hawkins for the pin.

2. Goldust b. R-Truth (1:18)

This was another good choice to fire the crowd up but the ending was really sudden. Truth beat the heck out of Goldust for about a minute but

charged into a boot and got rolled up for the pin with feet on the ropes. After it was over, Truth promised to get back at Goldust. Nothing to see here but Truth's song fired up the crowd.

3. Akira Tozawa b. Brian Kendrick (8:26) B-.

This might have been the match of the night, which isn't really saying much on a show like this. Tozawa got the crowd going again (notice a pattern here) with the shouting and there was a great near fall off a kick to Kendrick's head. Tozawa won with the top rope backsplash after escaping the Captain's Hook. No Titus here, despite Tozawa signing with Titus Worldwide. The problem here continues to be very simple though: no one cares about the cruiserweights and there's no real way around it.

4. Finn Balor b. Elias Samson (8:39) C.

I've said this before and I'll say it again: I have no idea why Finn Balor's isn't World Champion like, now. The guy is an absolute star and comes off exactly as such with the fans eating up everything he does. He has a good look, his matches are solid and his entrance is outstanding. Throw in the Demon King when the time is right and he's pure money. This was longer than it needed to be with Samson in control for the most part. Balor made the comeback you would expect him to make and finished with the Coup de Grace.

5. Dean Ambrose/Seth Rollins b. Miztourage (14:45) B-.

I love lackeys. They can help extend both a feud and a character so much just by having people there to fight instead of doing the same match over and over again. That was the case here as Curtis Axel and Bo Dallas said Miz was too busy for a town like Lexington and they were representing him instead. Axel got in a great line: "I'm not saying Kentucky sucks. I'm saying LEXINGTON, Kentucky sucks."

The place went coconuts for Rollins when he was the surprise (Kind of?) partner for Ambrose. I still think he could easily be the next Jeff Hardy and the reaction he received here only reinforce that theory. This was a longer match than you would expect and went about as you would have guessed. The Miztourage are fine heels and can go in the ring, making me

all the sadder that Axel was wasted for so many years. Ambrose won with Dirty Deeds to Dallas in an energetic match.

Intermission. Two kids got to play the What Happens Next game and thankfully they didn't go with the Vince dying clip. After the kids got it right, they received a program, a WWE Top Ten book, the Best of the 2000s DVD, a shirt, every autographed poster for sale, and probably something else that I'm forgetting. Not bad at all for a single night.

6. Mickie James/Dana Brooke b. Alexa Bliss/Nia Jax (6:55) D+.

And then the crowd died when they realized Bayley and Sasha Banks weren't here. I'm a bigger Brooke fan than most but sweet goodness people did not care about these two against the top heels. The match wasn't even very good either with the lone highlight (aside from Alexa of course) being Bliss not being able to whip Jax into the corner for a splash and just giving up. Mickie kicked Bliss in the face for the surprising pin.

7. Sheamus/Cesaro b. Hardy Boyz (12:32) C+.

The Hardys got the pop of the night but unfortunately the match was about the same thing these teams have been doing for months now. Jeff had his facepaint back and Matt was doing the DELETE pose fairly often. The match was perfectly watchable and the crowd was WAY into everything the Hardys were doing all match long. Sheamus snapped Matt's throat across the top rope so Cesaro could grab a small package to retain the titles.

8. John Cena b. Bray Wyatt (14:08) C.

Much like the previous match, this was exactly what you would expect from these two. Cena got a great reaction and easily the second biggest of the night. Above all else though, I couldn't get over how sad it is that Bray has gone from an awesome cult leader to a homeless guy who swings a lantern around. He's completely lacking direction and it's been sad to watch for a good while now. The ref got bumped so there was no one to see Bray tap to the STF. A low blow gave Wyatt two (with the kids losing their minds on the kickout), followed by an AA for the pin.

A Smackdown Live taping was announced for November, though I had

originally heard of this as a Raw. They put tickets on sale for one night so I picked up a similar seat for the exact same price as the house show. You would think the TV aspect and a more important show would raise prices/mean the house show should have been lower but not so much. There were probably 100 people in line to buy tickets but if there are four months before the show, the low pre-sale isn't a surprise.

Overall it was a fun night with a VERY hot crowd. The faces mostly won and it was more than entertaining enough. Two tickets in the lower arena (sixth row in the first set of seats off the floor) were \$75 total so it was hardly expensive as another nice perk. Good show and a lot of fun, which to be fair was helped by it being five minutes from my house.

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<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/05/19/history-of-saturday-nights-main-event-and-clash-of-the-champions-now-in-paperback-plus-price-drops/>

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Great Balls of Fire: This Show Came Along and Moved Me

Honey

Great Balls of Fire

Date: July 9, 2017

Location: American Airlines Center, Dallas, Texas

Commentators: Michael Cole, Booker T., Corey Graves

It's time for the most oddly named pay per view in a long time and yes they're actually going to call it this. Brock Lesnar is getting back in the ring for the first time since Wrestlemania to defend the Universal Title against Samoa Joe. This has the potential to be a war and that's what the title needs. Let's get to it.

Kickoff Show: Cruiserweight Title: Neville vs. Akira Tozawa

Tozawa is defending and has Titus O'Neil in his corner. They run the ropes to start and flip away from each other. Neville gets sent to the floor but blocks a dive with a kick, allowing Neville to yell at Titus. Tozawa gets sent into the barricade and we take a break. Back with Neville getting two off a kick to the chest. Tozawa gets in a kick of his own and goes up so Neville bails, meaning Tozawa gets in a suicide dive for two.

An Octopus Hold sends Neville to the ropes before he can kick Tozawa in the head for two more. Neville's Phoenix splash misses and Tozawa gets in the top rope backsplash, only to have Neville roll outside again. Tozawa heads up but gets crotched hard. Neville kicks the ropes to make it even worse and a kick to the chest retains the title at 11:26.

Rating: C+. What in the world is supposed to stop Neville? The division is pretty much empty now, though that finish seems to set up a rematch. I don't really need to see these two fight again but that's never stopped WWE before. Summerslam is up next and Tozawa vs. Neville II doesn't seem like the most interesting match in the world. Then again that would allow the creative department to not have to do anything so look for it to happen. The match didn't really click the way I was expecting as Tozawa just kicked and did his dives but at least he was a fresh challenger.

A longer than usual opening video has a drive-in movie theme with the matches being treated as old school trailers.

Bray Wyatt vs. Seth Rollins

Standard Bray feud: Rollins is popular so Bray wants to beat him up. Seth kicks him down to start and Bray smiles in the corner. It's too early for the suicide dive though as Bray punches him back and hammers away. They head to the apron for a slugout and Seth is sent hard into the steps for his efforts.

One heck of a charge sends Seth into the barricade and we hit the chinlock. Seth fights up and heads to the top, meaning it's a superplex to bring him back down. Bray has cut him off almost every time so far like he has Seth very well scouted. Rollins knees out of a suplex and sends Bray outside for the suicide dive.

The Sling Blade and Blockbuster get two on Bray but he breaks up the momentum with a heck of a clothesline. That hard release Rock Bottom gives Bray two and he runs his mouth about being a god. Rollins slugs away until a poke to the eye cuts him off. Sister Abigail gives Bray the pin at 12:05.

Rating: B-. Well it was short but at least Bray won, even if that's not going to mean anything in his future. He's done this kind of thing before and it never goes anywhere because he'll lose the next time there's anything remotely resembling a big match. WWE has made it clear that they're not going to do anything with him long term and that gets very annoying for anyone who wants to get behind him.

The Hardys have been watching superhero shows to prepare for facing Sheamus and Cesaro. Jeff talks about being in the first tag team tables match and tag team ladder match. Not only do they break barriers but they also break bars.

We recap Enzo Amore vs. Big Cass. They were a popular team but Big Cass got tired of bailing Enzo out of trouble for running his mouth. Cass finally had enough of it and turned on him, sending Enzo into a more emotional place than ever before. Enzo is in way over his head physically

but his heart could carry him through.

Enzo Amore vs. Big Cass

Before the match, Enzo talks about how they debuted here last year in the same arena but now it's war. He quotes some That's Life and says if Cass wants to stomp on him, come on because he's always going to be a dreamed. Enzo goes on for a LONG time and basically says he's here to fight because he won't give up. Cass debuts some new music, which might not be the most original but at least it's something new.

Enzo charges right at him and gets tossed around like he's not even there. Something like a crossface chickenwing slows Enzo down and Cass splashes him for good measure. Some forearms to the back have Amore in more trouble and Cass tells him to bring it on. A gorilla press drop sends him outside but he gets back in at nine. The big boot ends Enzo at 5:22.

Rating: D+. Total and complete squash and that's exactly what it should have been. Amore isn't someone who is going to be able to get in any significant offense on someone like Cass and that's what happened here. This is a good example of a perfectly booked match and that's not something you get anymore.

Tag Team Titles: Hardys vs. Sheamus/Cesaro

Sheamus and Cesaro are defending and this is a thirty minute Iron Man match because we haven't watched them fight enough. Cesaro distracts Matt to start and it's a Brogue Kick for the first fall at 20 seconds. Jeff tries his luck and dropkicks both of them down, followed by Matt ramming Sheamus' head into the apron a few times. It's Cesaro cutting Jeff off to save his brother and they head outside with the champs taking over.

Back in and Cesaro grabs a gutwrench to keep Jeff in trouble as the announcers get in "playing defense" as many times as they can. Jeff is sent outside and the match is going so slowly that we look back at the first fall. Cesaro grabs a side choke as we're not even ten minutes in yet. Matt gets knocked off the apron and the assisted White Noise gives Cesaro the second fall on Jeff at 9:48.

Back up and Sheamus goes shoulder first into the post, allowing the hot tag back to Matt. Sheamus is rammed into three buckles ten times each, followed by Poetry in Motion and a Side Effect. The Twist of Fate ends Cesaro to make it 2-1 at 12:55. Sheamus comes in and gets caught with the slingshot dropkick in the corner for two as we hit the halfway point. Jeff flip dives onto everyone but Cesaro posts Matt for a countout to go up 3-1 at 16:55.

Sheamus grabs a chinlock, followed by the very slow forearms to the chest. We hit ten minutes to go as Sheamus gets two off a double suplex. Cesaro kicks Jeff off the apron and grabs the Sharpshooter on Matt. Sheamus gets dropped as well though and Matt makes a fast tag so Jeff can cradle Cesaro to make it 3-2 at 22:55. A basement dropkick gives Jeff two more, followed by Matt's tornado DDT for two at 5:00 to go.

Matt hits the moonsault for what looked like three with Cesaro diving in (possibly too late) for the save. A super Twist of Fate drops Sheamus and we're tied at 2:55 to go. Sheamus is still down so a top rope splash/elbow give the Hardys two. Jeff gets a blind tag and hits the Swanton but Cesaro, the legal man, rolls him up for the pin at 25 seconds left. Time runs out and the champs retain 4-3 at 30:00.

Rating: D. WOW this was boring and one of the most boring matches I've seen in years. There was no need for this to be thirty minutes long and this better wrap up the feud already. The last few minutes were a bit better but this felt like it was about an hour and a half long, which really isn't something you want happening, especially on a pay per view with no breaks. Now PLEASE let them be done.

Xavier Woods was at the Rocket League World Championships.

We recap the Women's Title match. Alexa Bliss is tired of being judged and if she has to beat up Sasha Banks to prove herself, so be it.

Women's Title: Alexa Bliss vs. Sasha Banks

Banks is challenging. Sasha knocks her outside to start and Bliss takes a breather while feeling her own jaw. Back in and Bliss does her dislocated arm thing, which the announcers are all shocked by because they've never

watched her matches before. Bliss teases walking out and rams Bliss into the apron to take over. The double knees and moonsault knees to the back give the champ two and it's off to a modified surfboard.

One heck of a backbreaker gives Bliss two more but Sasha comes back with some forearm to the face. Bliss catches her with a sunset bomb out of the corner for two (nasty landing). Twisted Bliss hits knees (kind of) and the Bank Statement has Alexa in trouble until a rope is grabbed. Banks sends her into the barricade but Bliss slaps her in the face and takes the countout at 11:48.

Rating: C. The ending hurt it a bit but this is clearly there to set up a rematch. The dislocated elbow thing is still creepy and Banks is good for a challenger. I'm sure this is going to set up a rematch in some form of gimmick match, probably at Summerslam, which might not be the worst idea in the world. It's good enough but felt like a longer TV match.

Post match Sasha fights her up to the announcers' table. Bliss gets shoved off and the double knees off the table drops Bliss to the floor.

We look at the Kickoff Show match.

Tozawa is in pain and tells Titus he wants a rematch. Titus will work on it but wants Tozawa to get looked at by the trainers.

Intercontinental Title: The Miz vs. Dean Ambrose

Miz is defending. Dean goes after the Miztourage to start and grabs a rollup for two. Miz gets in the short DDT and kicks Dean in the chest to stay in control. Dirty Deeds is broken up but Ambrose throws Miz down to get a breather anyway. A butterfly superplex gives Dean two but he tweaks his knee on the way down.

Dirty Deeds still doesn't work and we hit the Figure Four. Dean, with a bloody lip, makes the bottom rope but the knee is done. Miz fires off the YES Kicks but gets slapped in the face. The top rope standing elbow gives Dean two but the Miztourage pulls Dean to the floor for a beating.

Dean dives on all three of them but bangs up his knee even more. Back in and Dirty Deeds connects with Maryse putting the foot on the ropes. Dean

hits a suicide dive (partially taking Maryse out in the process) but Dallas hits him in the back of the head, setting up the Skull Crushing Finale to retain at 11:15.

Rating: C-. They had a long way to go to get over the boring story and they didn't get there. The Miztourage is a great addition for Miz as they fit him so well and Dallas looking like a Duck Dynasty/Sons of Anarchy hybrid helps a lot. I hope this doesn't lead to another rematch but these two have only dominated the Intercontinental Title picture for fifteen months now. WWE can get at least three more months out of this thing before they have to come up with something new.

Long recap of Roman Reigns vs. Braun Strowman. They were fighting back in February, then took a break for Wrestlemania, then Strowman shoved over an ambulance with Reigns inside, then they took another month off because of an elbow injury. Tonight it's an ambulance match in what should be the blowoff.

Roman Reigns vs. Braun Strowman

Ambulance match. Strowman goes right after the ribs and throws Reigns outside with ease. A shot with the steps crushes Roman again but Strowman hits the post with the steps. Back in and Roman's comeback is cut off by the powerslam with Strowman going for a cover out of instinct.

Reigns slips off of Braun's shoulders and manages a Samoan drop. Strowman goes shoulder first into the post and Roman wraps it around the post. Some chair shots make the elbow even worse but Strowman just gets up and shrugs them off. Strowman tells Reigns to hit him and then knocks him off the stage and into the side of the ambulance. Reigns send him head first into the ambulance for a breather, followed by a Superman punch to put him halfway inside.

Strowman hits him with a backboard and throws Reigns back onto the stage. A hard shot knocks Strowman through the LED screen but Reigns can't follow up. Instead Braun pops up and throws him off the stage again. Roman misses a spear though and winds up in the ambulance to give Braun the win at 15:30.

Rating: B. It was a fun brawl and should end the feud (oh just wait a minute) but now it's clear that we're getting Reigns vs. Lesnar at Wrestlemania. Why? We're just that lucky I guess. Strowman vs. Lesnar could be a heck of a war like this one, though hopefully with an ending that doesn't look like the Cowardly Lion diving away from the Wizard of Oz. This was about what you had to expect, but that's not a bad thing in this case.

Roman pops out of the ambulance and spears Strowman into it. He jumps into the driver's seat and speeds to the back where, after a few camera cuts, backs the ambulance into a production truck to pretty much kill Strowman. Kurt Angle and company come up to try and open the ambulance...and we're going to the ring?

Heath Slater vs. Curt Hawkins

This is an impromptu match and I have no idea why it's been added. Hawkins is barely ready and the announcers ignore the match to talk about Strowman being in trouble. We cut to the back again where a fire truck is coming in to get Strowman out. With the camera away from the ring, Slater wins with something we don't even see at 2:28.

Still in the back, the Dallas fire department is here to use the jaws of life to open the ambulance. Braun crawls away and refuses medical help. Angle is STUNNED as Strowman walks away to applause. If they didn't do this for the sake of a double turn, I have officially lost the ability to understand this company. That was every possible sign of a Strowman face turn and Reigns, who lost and ATTEMPTED TO MURDER STROWMAN, is now about as heelish as you can get.

We recap Brock Lesnar vs. Samoa Joe. Samoa Joe became #1 contender last month and has showed that he's not afraid of Lesnar, even nearly choking him out at one point. Lesnar has shown no signs of being afraid of Joe and laughed at him for even trying. Tonight it's going to be a fight.

Universal Title: Samoa Joe vs. Brock Lesnar

Lesnar is defending and Joe's music hits at 10:51pm. Joe jumps him during the Big Match Intros and they head outside with Lesnar being Rock

Bottomed through the table. The bell hasn't rung yet and Lesnar is dragging himself inside. Joe enziguris him in the corner and starts laying in the headbutts. Lesnar can't overpower him and Joe hammers away in the corner. He can't get the full Koquina Clutch in though and Lesnar sends him into the buckle for the break.

There's the first German suplex, followed by the second and third but Joe kicks him low for the break. Another Rock Bottom gives Joe two but he still can't get the Clutch. A weak version of the Clutch goes on until Lesnar escapes with a side slam. Lesnar charges into the post, only to slip between Joe's legs and turn on the German suplexes again. We hit the sixth but Joe slips out of the F5 and puts on the Clutch. Lesnar grabs the ropes but the referee casually lets it stay on. Brock is turning purple but he powers up into the F5 to retain at 6:29.

Rating: B+. THIS is what I've been wanting from Lesnar for a long time. Joe got in some serious offense and beat on Lesnar for a good chunk of that match. This was FAR from what we had to sit through with Lesnar just wrecking people as he was put to the test and caught Joe in the end. I had a great time with this and it was certainly acceptable rather than having Lesnar destroy him. Very good match and a big relief.

Joe glares at Lesnar with the announcers emphasizing that Joe got caught and Lesnar was in big trouble to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. The two main events are enough to carry it but SWEET GOODNESS the rest of this show was weak. The Tag Team Title match felt like it went on for longer than ever, Banks vs. Bliss was there for the sake of setting up a rematch, Bray vs. Seth was exactly what you would expect and Miz vs. Ambrose is likely continuing for no logical reason.

That being said, this show was the modern day In Your House: a lot of nothing and a major match on the end to draw the fans. It's certainly not terrible but there's no hiding the fact that it's a pit stop on the way to Brooklyn for Summerslam. That's not a bad thing and the fact that it's the same price at Wrestlemania makes up for a lot of it. Check out the main event but that's all you really need to see.

Results

Bray Wyatt b. Seth Rollins – Sister Abigail

Big Cass b. Enzo Amore – Big boot

Cesaro/Sheamus b. Hardys 4-3

Sasha Banks b. Alexa Bliss via countout

Miz b. Dean Ambrose – Skull Crushing Finale

Braun Strowman b. Roman Reigns – Strowman shut Reigns in the ambulance

Heath Slater b. Curt Hawkins – Unknown

Brock Lesnar b. Samoa Joe – F5

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Monday Night Raw – July 3,

2017: Let's (Get Ready to) Light It Up

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 3, 2017

Location: Talking Stick Resort Arena, Phoenix, Arizona

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Booker T.

It's the go home show for Great Balls of Fire and the question becomes which match WWE is treating as the featured attraction tonight. In other words, it depends on if Brock Lesnar is here tonight or not, as tends to be the case all the time. Sunday's show is suddenly a bit more interesting amid rumors of Roman Reigns vs. Lesnar at Summerslam instead of Wrestlemania so let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Enzo Amore pleading with Big Cass to keep the team together and Cass teasing to do so, only to lay Enzo out again. Still the absolutely right call.

Here's Enzo to open the show. He lists off all the bad things that have happened to him in the last year and says that all happened while Cass was behind his back. Cass watched all that time because he never had Enzo's back. Cass wanted to take advantage of the silver tongue but now he has to face the fists that come with it.

Enzo is grateful for everything that's happened to him and he'd shove his dad down a wishing well before he joined the dark side. He's grateful to every kid out there wearing his gear. They're the people who help put food on his table because he believes in the good that he's doing. It's something you just can't teach. He walks in and out of a room with confidence because he knows who he is and he knows where he's going. He's been in holes a lot deeper than seven feet before and Cass is nothing more than a catchphrase that Enzo wrote.

Cass said his mouth writes checks that he can't back up but no one goes harder than him. Next time, don't be surprised if that merchandise check is for ZERO DIMES. Unless he starts wearing a Casshole shirt. Enzo is

ready to go but comes back to say he's ready to fight on his own because it's all him now. This was an INCREDIBLE promo but there's not much of a way around the fact that he has nothing to back it up with in the ring.

Cass says Enzo can't talk the talk because on Sunday, he won't be walking at all. He's ready for Sunday but Enzo jumps him from behind and the fight is on. It's quickly broken up but that was some good fire.

Sasha Banks/Bayley vs. Nia Jax/Alexa Bliss

Nia throws Bayley into the corner to start but gets dropkicked a few times. That just earns Bayley a modified Snake Eyes so it's off to Banks for a double dropkick. Another dropkick puts Nia on the floor but she grabs Bayley off the apron and crushes her against the barricade. Back from a break with Bayley having been taken to the back from being crushed. Sasha stomps Alexa in the corner but Nia just crushes her with a backbreaker. Bliss stands on Banks' hair for a bit until Sasha fights up and kicks Jax in the knee. The Bank Statement ends Bliss out of nowhere at 10:15.

Rating: C-. I'd love to see how much further they could make Bayley look worthless. At this point they're setting her up for a heel turn and really, that's about all they can do for her as she's been treated as the biggest loser I've seen in a long time. Banks just beat the monster and the champ on her own but I'm supposed to care about Bayley? Really?

Braun Strowman tells Kurt Angle that he's dealing with Roman Reigns tonight.

Long video on Samoa Joe vs. Brock Lesnar with Brock saying he's not worried about Joe just because he put his hands on Heyman.

Noam Dar vs. Cedric Alexander

These two have spent more time being done fighting than they spent fighting in the first place. Alicia Fox makes her return and gets to see Cedric clothesline Dar to the floor. Back in and Dar gets in a kick to the chest for two. Dar starts in on the arm but Fox gets on the apron for an accidental distraction, allowing Cedric to hit the Lumbar Check for

the pin at 2:09. NOW NEVER TALK TO EACH OTHER AGAIN.

We look at the attention the Ball Family got from their MizTV appearance last week. Ignore no one talking about wrestling and talking about Ball acting like an idiot but any publicity is good publicity right Vince? When is that Chris Benoit retrospective coming?

It's time for MizTV with Curtis Axel and Bo Dallas behind Miz and Maryse. Last week, Miz exposed the Ball Family as the overrated acts that they are and Lonzo will prove it again when he's an NBA bust. The only bigger bust than Lonzo is Dean Ambrose, who the Ball Family would be crazy to have as a representative. When Ambrose debuted, he was going to be the next Roddy Piper and the breakout star of the Shield. Now though, we know that Ambrose can't handle success. Dean is going to be the biggest joke in WWE but here he is to interrupt.

Ambrose wants his rematch for the Intercontinental Title and wants it tonight. Cue Heath Slater and Rhyno though with Heath saying he's never had a shot at a singles title in eight years. He's always telling his kids that he's got this and things will be ok but in reality, he has no idea if he's got this. Dean: "You've got kids?" Miz says no but here's Angle to say Miz is defending against Slater tonight and Ambrose on Sunday. Let's have tonight's match....now.

Intercontinental Title: Miz vs. Heath Slater

Miz is defending and wearing a suit while Ambrose is on commentary. Slater grabs a rollup to start but we go with a headlock to slow things down instead. Some right hands have Miz in trouble as Dean talks about the delicious food that he hears Slater's wife makes at the trailer. Miz bails to the floor off an atomic drop and we take a break.

Back with Miz holding a front facelock and sending Heath outside where Rhyno and the Miztourage get in a staredown. Ambrose: "Miztourage. That's so bad. That's almost as bad as Great Balls of fire." Back in and Miz hits the YES Kicks until a flapjack takes him down. Slater slugs away and hits a jumping knee to the face for two.

The neckbreaker out of the corner gets two more and Slater powerslams him

off the top for a nice counter. Rhyno goes after Dallas and Axel for getting on the apron to distract the referee, earning himself a posting. The distraction lets the Skull Crushing Finale retain the title at 12:48.

Rating: C+. Better than I was expecting here with Slater giving it a go but coming up short due to the numbers game. The Miztourage is a nice upgrade for Miz, who could only get so far with Maryse in his corner. Of course it doesn't matter as he's fighting Ambrose AGAIN, which feels like he's been going on for a year now.

Ambrose hits the ring for the save but gets beaten down as well.

We look back at Strowman taking Reigns out last week.

Titus O'Neil wants Apollo Crews to face Braun Strowman for the sake of his daughter. Crews actually falls for it with Titus saying the power of freaky daddy strength is enough to beat Strowman. If FREAKY DADDY STRENGTH isn't a shirt by Thursday, I worry about this promotion's future.

Here's Goldust to talk about his new film: the Shattered Truth. This film wouldn't be possible without everyone in this arena. All the little people you see. With this film, he's done the impossible and turned R-Truth into a star. The film is a highlight reel of last week's non-match, shot something like a trailer with footage from the cameraman Goldust brought with him. When the film is done, Truth is behind Goldust, munching on some popcorn. Goldust is quickly chased to the floor.

Sheamus and Cesaro come into Angle's office so he can give them their stipulation for Sunday's title match against the Hardys: a thirty minute Iron Man match. EGADS are they trying to give me an aneurysm with these guys feuding forever?

Seth Rollins vs. Curt Hawkins

Hawkins polls the fans on who is going to win here. After Rollins tells him to shut up, it's the windup jumping knee to the face for the pin at 9 seconds.

Post match Rollins grabs the mic and calls Bray Wyatt a coward. Whenever

he's ready for a fight, Wyatt is nowhere to be seen. Wyatt always talks about how he's a god and ready to destroy everything but on Sunday, Seth is going to expose him for what he is. The only question will be if Bray is a man or a coward.

Samoa Joe and Brock Lesnar are live via satellite for a sitdown interview. Joe rants about being tired of answering questions because he's ready to fight. Lesnar calls him a coward but Joe says Brock can never get his hands on him. Joe is ready to fight so Lesnar lists off all the names he's beaten. That's fine with Joe, who has a list of names he's choked out. Lesnar and Heyman chuckle so Joe walks out and goes to find Brock. Angle tries to talk him down but security pulls Joe away from Lesnar's room. I know Joe loses on Sunday but this is the best build of a Lesnar opponent in longer than I can remember.

Neville vs. Mustafa Ali

Non-title. Ali snaps off a running hurricanrana but it's too early for the inverted 450. Instead Neville loads up a reverse belly to back superplex, only to have Ali land on his feet. The running tornado DDT plants Neville for two but he shoves Ali off the top for a crash. Ali's head hits the barricade so Neville stomps away and tosses him into the air for the crash. For some reason Ali tries another rolling neckbreaker and eats a heck of a clothesline. The Rings of Saturn makes Ali tap at 6:20.

Rating: D+. The cruiserweights manage to kill another little piece of my soul. The matches are usually good but the show feels like it's coming to a grinding halt whenever they show up. The 205 Live stuff is better but the matches here range from long to not interesting and that's not good when they happen twice a week most of the time.

Bray Wyatt is in the desert and talks about people worshiping the sun. It's been less than 100 days since Wrestlemania and things have been chaos ever since. The Beast has been made a mortal and there's no stopping Bray now. On Sunday, Rollins will learn what it's like to burn in the sun. This was as rambling of an interview as Bray has ever given and I have almost no idea what the point was supposed to be.

Bliss is leaving and says she let Sasha beat her as a strategy for Sunday.

Finn Balor vs. Cesaro

The Hardys jump in on commentary as part of a continuing trend tonight. Cesaro powers Balor up and hits a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker to take over. Some chops in the corner rock Cesaro but Balor gets thrown to the floor in a heap as we take a break. Back with Finn getting two off a sunset flip but Cesaro muscles him up with a gutwrench suplex.

Finn fights back and kicks Cesaro away, only to have Elias Samson come out for a distraction. Swiss Death gives Cesaro two and another uppercut rocks Finn. It doesn't rock him enough though as Finn kicks him off the apron. Samson breaks up a dive so the Hardys get off commentary to brawl with Samson and Sheamus. Finn dives onto everyone and we hit various finishers until Balor throws Cesaro back inside for the Coup de Grace and the pin at 15:05.

Rating: D+. I wasn't feeling this one but Cesaro and Sheamus have become a black hole of charisma and the Hardys aren't exactly helping things. At the same time the tag division continues to die, American Alpha continues to sit in the black hole underneath Smackdown and the Revival was on Main Event last week and will be again this week. Just throwing that out there.

We run down the pay per view card. "Order now and get two pay per views for FREE" is the best pitch they could have for the Network.

Here's an ambulance plus Braun Strowman to talk about how much he loves to hurt Roman Reigns. Titus O'Neil comes out to introduce Crews for the slaughter.

Apollo Crews vs. Braun Strowman

Crews does what he can to start but is quickly thrown outside as soon as Strowman gets his hands on him. We hit the neck crank before Crews is sent outside again. Titus fires him up enough that two enziguris stagger Strowman. The standing moonsault is broken up with Strowman kicking

Apollo across the ring in an awesome block. Three straight powerslams finally put Crews away at 4:13.

Rating: D. This was just a step above a squash and that's all it needed to be. Strowman is gearing up for the second biggest match at Sunday's pay per view and it makes sense to have him squash someone. At least it was someone fresh and not the same stuff we've seen a dozen times.

Post match Titus tries to save Apollo from a worse beating but takes one himself. Apollo gets thrown into the ambulance but it won't drive away. Of course Reigns is the driver (Thanks for having Crews' back earlier you jerk) and he spears Strowman off the stage. Strowman is on his feet before the show is over.

Overall Rating: D+. Tonight felt like one of the longest shows I can remember in a good while. Parts of it were good and they've actually done a solid job of building up what should have been a nothing pay per view. Lesnar vs. Joe looks like a blast and I'm sure the ambulance match will be fun too. The problem here was the wrestling, which really didn't do much for me and added even less to the show. It wasn't the worst show in the world but it needed a good match in there to help carry things.

Results

Bayley/Sasha Banks b. Alexa Bliss/Nia Jax – Bank Statement to Bliss

Cedric Alexander b. Noam Dar – Lumbar Check

Miz b. Heath Slater – Skull Crushing Finale

Seth Rollins b. Curt Hawkins – Windup jumping knee

Neville b. Mustafa Ali – Rings of Saturn

Finn Balor b. Cesaro – Coup de Grace

Braun Strowman b. Apollo Crews – Powerslam

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Monday Night Raw – June 12, 2017: No Roman, No... Well It Still Had Problems But Different Ones.

Monday Night Raw

Date: June 12, 2017

Location: Cajundome, Lafayette, Louisiana

Commentators: Michael Cole, Booker T., Corey Graves

It's a big night as Brock Lesnar is back on the show for the first time since winning the Universal Title nearly two and a half months ago. That means we're getting ready for his first title defense against Samoa Joe in about a month, which has been enhanced by Samoa Joe choking out Lesnar's advocate Paul Heyman. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of Samoa Joe attacking Heyman last week to send Lesnar a message. That's still the perfect way to set the match up.

Here are Lesnar and Heyman to get things going with Paul saying it's time for some revenge. Now last week, Samoa Joe attacked Heyman and Paul gets why that's the case. Sometimes he certainly deserves it but that wasn't true last week. Last week, Heyman saw someone that could go man to beast with Brock.

There have been a lot of Samoans in wrestling but Joe is the outcast one. For some reason he's not treated the same and his biggest claim to fame is choking Heyman out. Heyman agrees that the Koquina Clutch was everything that Joe promised it would be. That made Heyman wonder what would happen to the title if Brock was ever caught in that hold. Then Heyman realized that's not a problem because Joe isn't man enough to get the hold on Brock Lesnar.

Cue Joe to headbutt Lesnar right in the face as the brawl is on. Security is sent out and dispatched just as fast so here's the locker room (or at least the midcard) to try again. That goes just as badly with Joe breaking away to superkick Joe right in the jaw. The fight is finally broken up and things settle down. This was an outstanding start but there's one thing: none of this matters if Brock is lazy and just does suplexes into an F5 at the pay per view. Make it a competitive match where they beat the heck out of each other and things will be fine. Just don't make it a squash, please.

Back with a replay because of course.

Here's Elias Samson to sing a song running down both Louisiana and Dean Ambrose.

Elias Samson vs. Dean Ambrose

They brawl into the corner to start with Booker praising Samson every chance he can. An elbow to the face and chop send Samson to the floor as we take a break. Back with Ambrose caught in a chinlock before fighting up with more elbows to the face. A fisherman's suplex is good for two on Samson and the suicide dive makes things even worse.

Back in and Dean breaks up a superplex attempt, only to have Miz come out for a distraction. Samson's rollup gets two but Dean goes after Miz and

Maryse. The distraction is good for a nine count with Samson kneeling Dean in the back as he comes back in. Samson's swinging neckbreaker is good for the pin on Ambrose at 11:49.

Rating: C. Samson is being treated as a big deal (certainly a bigger deal than he was in NXT) and that's a good thing. Ambrose isn't going to be hurt by screwy finishes like this one so just let him talk his way right back to his normal spot. Miz vs. Ambrose has been done to death but there's a good chance they'll blow the whole thing off at the pay per view.

Goldust says he and R-Truth were never friends or brothers. No one ever understood him and he's going to make them all very uncomfortable.

Kurt Angle yells at Miz, who brings up Kurt's personal problems. Miz wants Angle to do something about Dean but Angle says do it yourself.

Video on Cedric Alexander.

Noam Dar is in the back when Cedric comes up to say he's done with Dar and Alicia Fox. It turns out that Alicia is talking to Alicia on Skype and she wants Cedric to say things to his face. Alexander says this ends tonight. Didn't he just say he was already done with it?

Cedric Alexander vs. Noam Dar

Dar brings his phone to the ring where Fox is still yelling at him. For some reason this goes over the arena's audio system with Alicia saying he's making her neck hurt. As for the match, the bell rings and the Lumbar Check ends Dar at 6 seconds.

Next week, Roman Reigns will announce his plans for Summerslam. Isn't it a bit early for that? Eh not for Reigns of course.

Bray Wyatt wants to break things.

Here's Wyatt to talk about how people shouldn't deny him like Seth Rollins has done. Seth lives in a glass house and a single shout brought it all crashing down. This brings out Rollins, who says he was speaking the truth when he called Wyatt a false prophet. If Bray is that disturbed

by what Seth said, do something about it. Bray says Seth is beneath him and that Rollins doesn't want this fight. The lights go out again and Bray is gone. They go out again and Bray is on the screen, saying Seth can slay a king but not a god.

The Hardys are ready to get their titles back.

Kalisto vs. Apollo Crews

Because WWE doesn't know how to end a feud. Titus O'Neil is at ringside and has Akira Tozawa in the front row to help recruit him to the Titus Brand. You know, because he couldn't get tickets on his own. Kalisto does his handstand walk but Crews dropkicks him down. We hit a front facelock as Tozawa is plugging his ears to avoid listening to Titus. Kalisto's hurricanrana driver gets two, followed by Crews' Toss Powerbomb for the pin at 2:16.

Tozawa is thrown into the ring and forced to take a picture. He doesn't look pleased.

Miz comes up to Heath Slater and Rhyno (who are eating cheese and crackers) to offer the former a spot in his entourage. Slater seems intrigued in exchange for an Intercontinental Title shot. Rhyno doesn't like this and tells Miz to get a partner for a tag match later.

Here's Alexa Bliss for a chat...but she's quickly cut off by a ticked off Nia Jax. Alexa's tone changes in a hurry and she talks about wanting to give Nia a great match that people would talk about for years. It was Mickie James and Dana Brooke that messed things up though. This brings out Mickie and Dana to call Bliss out for saying they all have a Nia Jax problem.

Bliss doesn't want to hear it because she's above the two of them but here's Emma to say it's her time. Alexa says this is what she's talking about and tries to get Nia on her side, only to have Sasha Banks come out as well. She wants to show Bliss how a Boss throws a party and decks Alexa in the face. The brawl is on and we take a break.

Alexa Bliss/Nia Jax/Emma vs. Dana Brooke/Mickie James/Sasha Banks

Well duh. Joined in progress with Bliss holding Dana in a chinlock until it's off to Emma. Dana stops a charge with a raised boot but Emma kicks her in the ribs to cut off a tag attempt. That lasts all of three seconds as it's off to Sasha for the house cleaning. Emma tries to tag off to Alexa but the champ drops to the floor and walks out. Mickie dives onto Nia and Sasha grabs the Bank Statement to make Emma tap at 3:29.

Rating: D+. At least they kept it short. These matches don't really do much for me as they're just throwing everything together for the sake of having everyone in the match. The teams only make a bit of sense but at least they said Angle set them up. It's not horrible but this is your standard WWE booking formula, which isn't the best thing in the world.

The announcers talk about Money in the Bank.

Video on Finn Balor.

Bayley sat down with Corey Graves earlier today to talk about her loss at Extreme Rules. Bayley says she's always going to be herself and do what's best for herself no matter what. As for her future, she wants to get her title back and walk into Wrestlemania defending it again next year. The fans need to know that they can do it their way, which is what she wants everyone to know. To wrap it up, Bayley hugs Graves, who looks a bit disturbed. Graves: "I need a cigarette."

Miz/??? vs. Heath Slater/Rhyno

Miz doesn't have a partner....so here's a bear on a tricycle. The bear scratches itself on the post and distracts Slater so he can grab a rollup for two. An armbar doesn't get him very far so it's off to the bear for a staredown. Heath doesn't think much of it so the bear paws him (one of Cole's many jokes) a few times.

It's back to Miz, who beats the bear up. The head is taken off to reveal....a no name. Back in and Miz gets beaten down again, only to have the bear come back in with the head on. Miz is sent into Maryse, who walks out on the match. Of course it's Dean Ambrose underneath the match this time and Dirty Deeds gives Heath the pin at 6:30. Total comedy that advanced the story.

Rating: N/A. This wasn't a match but a comedy segment that had wrestling involved. That being said, I had a good time with this one because it wasn't supposed to be anything more than what it was. Just have some fun out there and advance a story with something that had been set up earlier in the story.

Video on the Hardys returning and winning/losing the Tag Team Titles.

Neville vs. Rich Swann

Non-title and Neville jumps Swann during his dancing. The Rings of Saturn go on and there's no match.

Neville lists off the people he's destroyed and wants to know how many more names he has to beat up before he gets his respect. That brings him to Akira Tozawa, who has been getting his attention as of late. If Tozawa keeps doing this though, he's going to have to bend his knee as well.

Cesaro and Sheamus say they are the bar.

Enzo Amore/Big Cass vs. Anderson and Gallows

Hang on as Cass is down again (you can see Revival walking through the background) with Enzo running up to check on him. Cass says it was one shot to the back of his head but he'll be out there anyway. After Anderson and Gallows get in some mocking, the match starts anyway. Cass is clearly shaken up as he beats Anderson up. It's off to Enzo as Cass is knocked off the apron again. Enzo fights back but gets superkicked out of the air, setting up the Magic Killer for the pin at 2:27.

Big Show comes out to break up the post match beatdown. Cass isn't cool with Show helping Enzo up.

Post break Enzo asks Show if he attacked Cass because not many people could take Cass out with one shot. Show calls Cass S-A-W-F-T.

We recap the opening segment.

Samoa Joe is ready to choke Brock out. Again, this is Joe looking serious and sounding like he can back it up. He's also not being presented as

scared of Brock, which is a rare thing.

Next week, Roman Reigns will announce his Summerslam plans. Nothing has changed in the last hour and a half.

Tag Team Titles: Sheamus/Cesaro vs. Hardys

Sheamus and Cesaro are defending and this is 2/3 falls. An early Brogue Kick misses and it's Poetry in Motion to set up the Side Effect for two on Sheamus. Jeff tries to jump over Sheamus and gets Brogue Kicked for the first fall at 1:11. If my sources are right, that's the first time the Hardys have been pinned in a tag match since November 2014.

Back from a break with Jeff still in trouble until he kicks Sheamus away and makes the hot tag off to Matt. The DELETE chants strike up as Matt sends Cesaro into each buckle ten times. A tornado DDT gets two and the Twist of Fate ties things up at 8:51 (total, including the first fall).

Everything breaks down in a hurry for the third fall with Jeff getting kneed in the face for two. Cesaro takes Matt down into the Sharpshooter but Jeff makes a save. The European uppercut gets another near fall on Jeff as Matt is driven into the barricade. Jeff gets in a quick Swanton but Cesaro makes the save at two. Everyone brawls to the floor and the third fall is a double countout at 15:25.

Rating: B. I'm really not sure where they're going with this (as in I don't know what the next gimmick will be) but this actually got me a bit more into the feud than I had been before. It's still not the most thrilling stuff in the world but they were beating each other up here and had me interested in where it was going, which is a lot more than I can say for most feuds these days.

The Hardys beat them up a bit more to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. This was....different, and I'm not sure if that's a good thing or not. First of all, the show didn't really have one big story and kept going around to different topics instead of focusing on one. The main event was treated like a big deal but Joe vs. Lesnar was done in the first fifteen minutes and the next major story was over the

midcard title.

It felt like a throwaway show, which it probably was given the NBA Finals being on TV again. Of course that's likely going to be used as a way to prove Roman's drawing power, but that's life in WWE. The show wasn't good but it was watchable and felt a bit different, which might be the best thing I can say about it.

Results

Elias Samson b. Dean Ambrose – Swinging neckbreaker

Cedric Alexander b. Noam Dar – Lumbar Check

Apollo Crews b. Kalisto – Toss powerbomb

Dana Brooke/Mickie James/Sasha Banks b. Alexa Bliss/Nia Jax/Emma – Bank Statement to Emma

Heath Slater/Rhyno b. Miz/Bear – Dirty Deeds to Miz

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

Cesaro/Sheamus vs. Hardys went to a draw

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