

# Smackdown – October 15, 2015: The Weekly House Show

## Smackdown

Date: October 15, 2015

Location: US Bank Arena, Cincinnati, Ohio

Commentators: Rich Brennan, Jerry Lawler, Booker T.

Somehow we're ten days away from Hell in a Cell and it's time to put the finishing touches on the build. The announced main event for tonight is hometown boy Dean Ambrose teaming up with the Dudleyz to fight New Day in a bit of a preview for the pay per view. We might even get more speculation of what Cena is going to do there as well. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

## Roman Reigns vs. Bo Dallas

Before the match, Bo talks about Reigns going to a scary place at the pay per view. Dallas knows all about scary places because he went to Suplex City, but he actually survived it unlike Reigns. Dallas actually takes him into the corner to start but Reigns drops him with a neckbreaker. A middle rope clothesline to the back of the head gives Bo an opening, only to have Reigns come back with even more clotheslines of his own. Dallas wants time and Reigns stops to smile, only to get annoyed when he takes a kick to the ribs. Now the Samoan drop connects and the two moves end Dallas at 2:58.

Roman talks about Bray referring to himself as the devil. He can get behind that idea because he sees the pure evil in Bray's eyes. Roman is going to bring the big fight because it's the only way to stop the devil. Cue Bray, who says Reigns' sins will be his undoing. It is the sin of pride that will bring Reigns down because he isn't Bray's muse. On Monday, Bray is going to deliver a prophecy to Reigns. Anyone but you.

## Cesaro/Neville vs. Sheamus/King Barrett

Rematch from Raw because the writers already came up with their idea for the week. Ascension and Stardust are sitting in the crowd with a STARDUST SECTION sign. Barrett and Neville get things going with Neville starting his kicking regimen early. Sheamus comes in and eventually gets hurricanranaed out to the floor, allowing Cesaro to backdrop his partner over the top and onto the villains in a nice visual.

The referee tells them that they're about to go to a break so we come back with Barrett putting his knee into Neville's back and cranking on the arms. Sheamus stands between Neville and the corner like a good bully before planting him with a slam. We hit the chinlock from Barrett for a bit before he misses a running boot in the corner. Cesaro gets the tag and fires off the running uppercuts to Sheamus for two. The briefcase is brought in and the distraction lets Barrett get in a Bull Hammer to give Sheamus the pin at 10:10. Stardust and Ascension never got involved.

**Rating:** C-. This match is a good example of everything wrong with Smackdown. Not only have we already seen it on Raw with the same result but it's a match with no energy. I know it makes for a dull match but can you blame them? None of the matches on this show mean anything and Cesaro isn't going to get a major push because the boss doesn't care for him, so why should they try in a tag match that they've already done before? That's the nature of Smackdown these days and it has been for a very long time. If the wrestlers don't care, I don't get why I should either. At least Barrett/Sheamus have potential as a team.

Summer, guest referee for Ziggler vs. Rusev later tonight, says she's put men down before and is willing to do it again if she has to.

Earlier today, Ambrose unloaded his bag, which included a Slammy, a slinky, a balloon animal, a magic 8-ball....but no Payday. Oh never mind as it fell out of his bowling ball. I hate the fact that I chuckled at this.

#### Kevin Owens vs. Zack Ryder

Non-title and Ryback is at ringside. Owens shrugs off an early flurry and stomps Ryder down. A quick missile dropkick doesn't have much staying power for Ryder as Owens hits a Meathook, shouts FINISH IT and plants

Ryder with the Pop Up Powerbomb for the pin at 1:39. Total squash but effective.

Recap of Rollins and Kane on Monday. That would be another loss for the champ, which of course has nothing to do with the ratings plunging.

Paige stops Natalya in the back to offer an apology for her attitude as of late. The pressure got to her and she couldn't handle Natalya trying to take her place on Team PCB. Paige wants to make it right and just wants to be Natalya's friend again. Natalya says this is a start and leaves.

### Dolph Ziggler vs. Rusev

Summer Rae is guest referee and Dolph doesn't seem to mind when she takes her hair down. Rusev stomps Ziggler in the corner to start as Booker confuses Sherri Martel for his wife Sharmell. Ziggler gets knocked off the apron and into the barricade for a nice crash. Back in and Rusev charges into an elbow, followed by an elbow for a fast two. We get a Danny Davis reference, followed by Dolph's superkick being countered into a catapult into the corner. Rusev's jumping superkick gets the slow count required in a match like this, followed by a slap to knock Rusev into the Zig Zag for the pin at 4:26.

**Rating:** D+. This was every Rusev vs. Ziggler match you've ever seen plus every lame guest referee trope in the book. They're running out of places to go with this story so instead, why not just do the exact same things over and over again and expect a different result? This was nothing interesting aside from Summer's outfit. I'm curious to see how Lana will be received upon her return as she'll be booed, but I'm not sure how the fans are going to respond to her being stupid for going back to Rusev instead of the normal reasons they booed her.

Post match Summer suggests she and Dolph get back together but Dolph isn't playing those kind of games.

The Dudleyz say they have chemistry with Dean Ambrose. They're already the best team ever and Dean is combustible. Bubba tells Renee to touch Dean's arm. Bubba: "BOOM!" Dean says Dudleyville reminds him of

Cincinnati and they're going to take the New Day to the lunatic fringe.  
BOOM!

### Wyatt Family vs. Prime Time Players

Small change here as the Wyatts are in the upper left corner and the Players are in the lower right. You rarely see those changed up. Titus tries his luck against Braun to start and some corner clotheslines stagger the giant. They only stagger him though as Braun throws him into the corner and brings in Harper for a Gator Roll. O'Neil powers over for the tag to Darren as things speed up. Darren goes after the now legal Strowman but Harper superkicks him into the standing choke for the win at 2:59.

### Charlotte vs. Alicia Fox

Non-title. Fox takes over with a quick backbreaker and we hit the chinlock. We see Team BAD watching in the back as Alicia's northern lights suplex gets two. Both of them try big boots at the same time but it's Charlotte up first with the spear and the Figure Eight for the submission at 3:10.

**Rating:** D. A three minute match shouldn't have a 45 second chinlock. Every day that ticks by as we get closer to the pay per view, the more worried I get that they'll give the title back to Nikki because of her "star power". Also, how could they not throw Sasha in at this point, or at least not have her be the next challenger? She's on fire right now and they would be crazy to not go with it.

Team Bella attacks post match but Paige makes the save.

Post break Paige thinks PCB is back together but the other two aren't convinced. They head into their locker room and find Natalya laid out.

Video on Lesnar vs. Undertaker.

### New Day vs. Dean Ambrose/Dudley Boyz

Kofi tells everyone to forget what they learned in science class because the strongest force in the universe is the power of positivity. Cena,

Ziggler, Orton, D-Von, "Bully Ray Dudley" and Ambrose have all come to the New Day and gotten dropped. It's all science you see. You could even call it geology because New Day ROCKS. Dean is in a Cincinnati shirt and earns the hometown pop. We take a break before the bell (thank goodness) and start with Kofi headlocking Bubba.

D-Von comes in for a double elbow but Kofi drives him into the bad corner. A low blow gets D-Von down into the corner for the rotating stomps. Woods gets in a running forearm in the corner but D-Von grabs a neckbreaker. Lawler lightens the mood by talking about how the New Day won't go near a boot because it has a table of contents.

Dean comes in to clean house and Woods eats the suicide dive. The top rope standing clothesline gets two on Woods but Big E. hits a clothesline of his own. Bubba gets the tag for the Bionic Elbow (complete with trombone) to Kofi as everything breaks down. Dean goes up top for a dive on Big E. but Woods shoves him to the floor. Kofi eats 3D but Woods gets in a trombone shot for the DQ at 9:35.

**Rating:** C. Standard main event six man with Ambrose not really getting to do anything as the hometown boy. To be fair though he already got a big moment in Cincinnati earlier this year and that's more than most people get. They need to do something with the Dudleyz soon though as you can only have them beat New Day by DQ so many times.

New Day lays out the Dudleyz to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C-. Smackdown feels like a house show. Like I mentioned: there's little reason for the wrestlers to put in much effort, the matches almost never go anywhere or are referenced on Raw and they rarely get time to do anything interesting. What happens here that I would be interested in seeing? These shows aren't bad but they're not important and that makes Smackdown a waste of time.

## Results

Roman Reigns b. Bo Dallas – Spear

Sheamus/King Barrett b. Cesaro/Neville – Sheamus pinned Cesaro after a

Bull Hammer

Kevin Owens b. Zack Ryder – Pop Up Powerbomb

Dolph Ziggler b. Rusev – Zig Zag

Wyatt Family b. Prime Time Players – Standing choke to Young

Charlotte b. Alicia Fox – Figure Eight

Dudley Boyz/Dean Ambrose b. New Day via DQ when Woods used a trombone

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# Monday Night Raw – October 12, 2015: Lumberjacks and Marriage Proposals

## Monday Night Raw

Date: October 12, 2015

Location: Allstate Arena, Chicago, Illinois

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

We're getting closer to Hell in a Cell and most of the card is now set.

The big story though is New Day, who was showed a completely different style last week as they left John Cena, Dolph Ziggler and the Dudleyz laying. This is a different kind of crowd to perform in front of though and they could certainly change a lot of what we've got coming. Let's get to it.

Kane is on the phone with HHH and Stephanie, who aren't going to be here until late. They tell him to keep things with Rollins under control until they arrive. Kane promises he will and then makes himself vs. Rollins in a lumberjack match.

Opening sequence.

Here's Dean Ambrose with something to say. He's here to welcome us to the show but now he's looking for a fight. Instead he gets Randy Orton, who says he's been fighting the Wyatts alongside him and they're going to continue doing that at Hell in a Cell against Luke Harper and Braun Strowman. Ambrose says he's been fighting the Wyatts for years so if Orton follows his lead, everything will be fine.

Naturally they get in a mini argument over who the leader is but here's New Day to interrupt. They talk about slaying everyone last week and brag about leaving everyone laying with their bare hands. This included sending the Dudleyz to a retirement home and beating the WWE's prized possession down, even though they could see him. Evolution or Legacy couldn't do that and...dang Orton has been in a lot of groups. It's out with the old and in with the New Day so Orton and Ambrose need to pull a Derrick Rose and sit on the bench. That brings Kane to the screen to make the tag match for right now.

#### New Day vs. Randy Orton/Dean Ambrose

Non-title. Dean cleans house on Kofi to start and works on the arm. A shoulder sends Kofi to the floor and we take an early break. Back with Dean clotheslining Big E. for two and it's off to Orton for a dropkick. The good guys take turns stomping on Big E., complete with the Garvin stomp.

Dean shows Orton how to stomp and they get in an argument, allowing E. to

crawl over and tag as we take another break. Back with New Day in control and stomping Orton down, including the running dropkick from Orton. Big E. slaps on a bearhug until Randy elbows his way out, setting up the tag to Dean.

All of the New Day members are sent to the floor for a suicide dive but E. comes back with a belly to belly inside. Another tag brings in Orton, who ducks Trouble in Paradise and plants Kofi with the hanging DDT. The camera went wide like someone was going to run in but nothing happened. The RKO is loaded up but Kofi shoves Randy into Dean, setting up a rollup for the pin at 17:53.

**Rating:** C+. Long match here but more of a plot device than anything else. Above all here though: New Day didn't lose. That's a really nice surprise out of them as they didn't go with the lame idea of having the Tag Team Champions used to build up someone for a one off tag match and a possible feud among themselves. They're getting somewhere, just very slowly.

Video on Undertaker vs. Brock with the final chapter inside the Cell.

### Nikki Bella vs. Naomi

We see a video of the Iron Man match from last week and the fans want Sasha, who is at ringside. Naomi's corner wiggle (she's just having fun!) and a kick to the chest get two on Nikki but she takes Nikki down and stands on her hair. We hit the hammerlock on Naomi as Nikki tries to have some psychology. That preposterous idea offends Naomi so much that she rapid fires kicks to the ribs and sends Nikki out to the floor for a big dive. Brie gets on the mic and starts a WE WANT SASHA chant to get in Naomi's head. Sasha pulls Brie off the table but the distraction lets Nikki hit the forearm and Rack Attack for the pin at 4:54.

**Rating:** C-. Not bad here but they're getting dangerously close to making Sasha the star of the division while almost never wrestling a singles match. At this point they almost have to add her to the title match at the pay per view and that's where it seems they're going. I'd put the title on her now and be done with it, but Nikki getting it back is always a chance. Maybe Charlotte can chase her and not look like a huge loser for a change but that might be giving WWE too much credit.



Paige has been named the Most Unconventional Diva in a Payday (candy bar) product placement bit.

Here's John Cena for the US Open Challenge but first he wants to talk about this building. This is where he had his first WWE match back in 2002 but tonight Chicago is the place to be and he's the man to beat so who wants some this week?

#### US Title: John Cena vs. Dolph Ziggler

Cena is defending and starts with an armdrag (that's a new one) into an armbar. Ziggler goes to the floor and the fans go nuts with a YES chant and look at something in the crowd. Cena grabs the mic and says that we just had a marriage proposal and SHE SAID YES. Well that's not something you see every week. Fans: "She! Said YES!" Cena even goes to applaud them again and it's off to an armbar from Ziggler as we take a break.

Back with Ziggler hitting his elbow drops but Cena fires off the shoulders. Ziggler breaks up the Shuffle with a dropkick as we hear about John Cena facing Kurt Angle in his debut. A modified ProtoBomb sets up the Shuffle and the STF goes on. Ziggler somehow powers out and puts on a sleeper while they're still on the mat. That goes as far as a sleeper is going to and Cena knocks Ziggler to the floor.

The middle rope AA is broken up and Ziggler catches him with a running middle rope DDT (cool move) for a very close two. Cena's big running clothesline takes Ziggler down and he catches a charging Dolph in the AA but Ziggler counters into the Fameasser in midair for two. Now the STF goes on in the middle of the ring but Ziggler makes the rope again.

The cross body off the top sets up the roll into the AA but Ziggler rakes the eyes and superkicks Cena down for two. They slug it out and Ziggler headbutts him into the Zig Zag for a very close two. I thought that might have been it. Back up and the AA ends Ziggler at 17:40. It's as quick as it sounds.

**Rating:** B+. This was the standard formula for the US Open Challenge and it still works. I'm really curious where they're going to go with Cena as he's due off right after the pay per view and he doesn't really have

anything to do aside from the New Day fallout (is he going to mention that tonight?) and I'm not sure how they get the title off of him before then.

HHH calls Kane from the plane and asks how things are going. Kane doesn't mention the main event.

### Dudley Boyz vs. Ascension

Ascension jumps them to start and Viktor hits a nice jumping knee to D-Von's face. D-Von avoids an elbow and makes the tag off to Bubba, who talks trash as he beats Viktor up. The Doomsday Device (you knew they were busting that one out in Chicago) sets up the 3D to pin Viktor at 2:41.

### Neville/Cesaro vs. Sheamus/King Barrett

This could be fun. Neville speeds things up on Barrett to start before it's off to Cesaro, who gives Neville a boost for a (partially botched) standing Phoenix splash of all things. Sheamus comes in for a slugout but the battering ram is countered by another uppercut. Cesaro throws Neville down onto Sheamus and Barrett, only to have Sheamus' kickout send Neville into the Bull Hammer to give Sheamus the pin at 3:56.

**Rating:** D+. Neville is officially in free fall. He's still there and in some stories, but he's falling through the cracks in a hurry. I don't remember the last time he won a big match and the Stardust story just kind of ended with no real blowoff. Hopefully he bounces back and it's certainly not too late for him, but this isn't a good sign.

Video on Braun Strowman.

Here's Roman Reigns for his match against Braun Strowman but he has something to say first. He recaps the entire Bray Wyatt feud while stopping to ask if the fans can't hear him when they keep chanting WHAT. The fans aren't interested in the recap of the ANYONE BUT YOU but Reigns says this isn't boring. Imagine if someone tried to keep you from making a future for your family because Bray Wyatt is trying to hold Reigns back from building a life for his daughter.

That's the biggest mistake Bray could make and he'll get what's coming to him at Hell in a Cell. This was MUCH better than Reigns' normal stuff and he didn't stumble once. Cue the Wyatts with Bray asking who Roman is trying to convince. Bray will take the blame for Roman's lot in life but it all ends in the Cell. Roman says when that door is locked, Bray is going to wish that he's inside there with anyone but him. Good line there.

### Roman Reigns vs. Braun Strowman

Roman is quickly sent out to the floor so he tries to hit and move a bit more. Strowman easily powers him into the corner and slams Reigns down as Roman can't do anything with him here. Off to a neck crank for a bit until Reigns fights up and starts with the clotheslines. Bray is getting worried but Reigns can't Samoan drop Strowman.

Reigns punches away from the floor and the apron boot has Strowman staggered. The second attempt is blocked with a clothesline though and Braun comes out to play. Reigns sends him into the announcers' table several times but Roman has to Superman Punch Harper. There's another one to knock Strowman over the table and Braun is counted out at 7:58.

**Rating:** D+. Pretty ugly brawl here and I'm really not wild on having Strowman lose in any way this early. The fact that he wasn't pinned helped but as usual WWE has no idea how to book someone beyond from pay per view to pay per view. Strowman is looking more and more like a plot device to get us to Reigns vs. Wyatt again and that's a shame.

The Wyatts surround Roman but he gets to the floor just in time. Bray kneels in front of Roman and says follow the buzzards so Reigns pops him in the jaw.

The Authority calls again and they're on the way to the arena. This time Kane tells him the main event but HHH can't hear him due to bad reception. HHH: "I know Rollins but who is he facing?" Kane: "It's me." HHH: "I know it's you Kane but who is he facing?" Full House had better plot devices than this.

### Ryback vs. Rusev

No entrances for either guy. We recap the Summer story from last week and Cole casually mentions that TMZ reported Lana and Rusev got engaged over the weekend. So yeah, screw storylines because a gossip site told the truth about your story. You could always NOT SAY ANYTHING ABOUT IT but that would be ignoring the internet and that might mean a downgrade in your social media score or whatever.

JBL asks why Summer is here. Cole: "Maybe she's not into social media?" The Meathook looks to set up the Shell Shock but Rusev slips out. Rusev's charge hits the post though and now the Shell Shock is good for the pin at 3:07. So much for Rusev meaning much after Wrestlemania.

**Rating:** D+. What do I even say here? The entire story has been thrown out because we need to report on TMZ. It's another example of just taking the easy way out of a storyline instead of actually writing your way out of it. I can't stand that sort of laziness but it's what we're stuck with in modern wrestling.

Post match Summer shows us photos from TMZ and rips into Rusev for leading her on. She slaps him in the face and walks off as Rusev shouts a lot. My loose Russian translation thinks he said "I'll take em both, I'm hardcore."

### Kalisto vs. Kevin Owens

Non-title. Owens shrugs off the early kicks and punches Kalisto in the side of the head. Some more kicks have little effect and Owens sends him to the floor. Owens teases a dive of his own but opts for a running slide to the floor instead. We get the Lucha Dragons pose from Owens but Kalisto comes back with a rolling kick to the head and the hurricanrana faceplant for two. A tornado DDT gets the same but Kalisto's hurricanrana is countered into the Pop Up Powerbomb for the pin at 3:45.

**Rating:** C-. I still really like the booking here as Owens gets to have this meaningless mini feud with the Dragons but still gets to build towards his rematch with Ryback without the usual tropes WWE is so obsessed with. Good stuff here and again Kalisto is an incredibly fun act who could be something special going forward.

## Brie Bella/Alicia Fox vs. Becky Lynch/Charlotte

Paige is on commentary and isn't happy that Natalya is now part of Team NBC. Paige: "They're just going through a phase." Becky works on Brie's arm to start before it's off to Charlotte who helps with stereo legdrops onto Brie's arms. The spear gets two but Natalya goes to argue with Team Bella, causing Paige to get up and shove her a few times. Back inside and Charlotte walks into a middle rope dropkick from Brie for the pin at 3:07.

**Rating:** D. BRIE BELLA??? Now they have Charlotte losing to BRIE BELLA??? Charlotte's reign is reaching Zack Ryder territory now as they're having her lose everything and then expect her to still be over while the Bellas are the dominant looking ones. Nikki is one thing but BRIE BELLA???

The Authority finally finds out who Rollins is facing because Kane couldn't just text them the match earlier tonight. HHH says there's no way that match can happen. Anyone can replace Kane but he can't face Rollins. I smell a loophole coming. Fans: "CM PUNK!"

Rollins appeals to Big Show and says he sees him as family. Show laughs it off and leaves with Kane taking his place. He's going to find a suitable replacement though.

Another Lesnar vs. Undertaker video.

## Seth Rollins vs. ???

Non-title lumberjack match and the opponent is.....of course it's Demon Kane. Did you really expect anything else? They've even managed to calm down the Chicago crowd and Kane keeps throwing Rollins out to the lumberjacks who are more than willing to throw him back in. Kane gets low bridged to the floor but the lumberjacks just stand back. Seth's suicide dive is caught by the throat so Seth runs away, only to get caught by Cesaro.

Back in and a clothesline knocks Kane over the top but he lands on his feet. Kane starts beating up New Day but stops to stare at Big Show. Gah anything but that. Kane slaps him in the face so Show knocks Kane out but

he's still able to kick out at two. The springboard knee to the face gets the same as the announcers keep calling him Demon Kane.

A frog splash gets two more for the champ but Kane pulls him off the top with a superplex. Both guys are down and New Day pulls Kane to the floor, triggering a big brawl between all of the lumberjacks. Back in and the lumberjacks come in but Kane sits up to stop Big E.'s Warrior splash. Everything breaks down again and the Pedigree is countered, followed by a tombstone to pin Rollins at 8:21.

**Rating:** D. BUT HOW CAN ROLLINS POSSIBLY KEEP THE TITLE NOW??? I knew Kane was going to win the second his music hit because that's how you build to a match on pay per view: by having the same match on free TV just a few weeks beforehand. Kane doing his same schtick that he was doing twelve years ago doesn't do much for me, especially since he has no chance at winning in the title match.

**Overall Rating:** C+. This show had a lot more energy than usual and it helped things out quite a bit. They've got most of the show set for the pay per view and I'm actually intrigued by the card. Naturally there are some holes in this show such as the "let's ignore stories because TMZ said so" and the stupid swap for the main event, but did anyone not see that coming? I had a good time with this one though and it flew by, which is always a good feeling on Raw. I'm not sure that's a good thing though as it means you can't wait for it to be over and it's not as bad as it could have been. Take that for what you will.

### Results

New Day b. Randy Orton/Dean Ambrose – Rollup to Orton

Nikki Bella b. Naomi – Rack Attack

John Cena b. Dolph Ziggler – Zig Zag

Dudley Boyz b. Ascension – 3D to Ascension

Sheamus/King Barrett b. Neville/Cesaro – Sheamus pinned Neville after a Bull Hammer

Roman Reigns b. Braun Strowman via countout

Kevin Owens b. Kalisto – Pop Up Powerbomb

Brie Bella/Alicia Fox b. Becky Lynch/Charlotte – Missile dropkick to Charlotte

Kane b. Seth Rollins – Tombstone

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## **John Cena Taking Time Off From WWE After Hell in a Cell**

<http://www.wrestlingrumors.net/john-cena-taking-time-off-from-the-wwe/42139/>

I know this broke yesterday but I have to say something about it.

Well first and foremost this means that we're going to get a new US Champion. It should be interesting to see who they put the title on as Cena isn't really feuding with anyone at the moment. There are a bunch of options but I'd love to see Cesaro get it, even though there's almost no

chance of it happening. Hopefully it goes on someone who could use the title though and won't sit there and waste our time, though that's WWE's standard operating procedure more often than not.

Other than that, it might mean Cena being freshened up. The logical move would be to have him win the Royal Rumble (tying Austin for the most all time) so he can move on and win title #16 at Wrestlemania in Dallas but that might be a bit too easy. I'd have him take #17 at Wrestlemania number whatever in the future but I can't imagine WWE keeps the title off him that long.

The other interesting case is going to be the ratings. The numbers are already at some of the lowest in years (due to a ton of reasons, namely Monday Night Football and the third hour being too much TV but that's another story for another time) and Cena is one of their few proven draws. Take him away and WWE is really going to have to mix things up, which could certainly benefit the fans.

I hope he gets back soon because there's no one better, but this might be a good thing just a few months before one of their biggest shows ever.

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# Smackdown – September 24, 2015: Have Fun But Don't Watch

## Smackdown

Date: September 24, 2015

Location: American Bank Center, Corpus Christi, Texas

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Rich Brennan, Booker T.

We're getting closer to Kane vs. Rollins, likely inside the Cell, as they blow off their feud from months ago on a show where the other Cell match is the real main event. Then again, given that the World Champion is coming off two losses in two days (though he did beat a 56 year old), maybe it's better that he isn't main eventing. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the ending to Night of Champions and Kane's personality shift on Raw. I'm kind of shocked but the Kane stuff is entertaining me.

Here's a very enthusiastic Kane in the ring. He's back because the WWE is on fire right now and needs someone with his administrative assistance. First up, he makes Rusev/Kevin Owens vs. Dolph Ziggler/Ryback as well as Roman Reigns vs. Luke Harper with associated family members barred from ringside.

This brings out Rollins who wants Kane to cut out the nonsense. Kane talks about his training in conflict resolution and hopes to have a healthy dialogue to solve these issues. Seth doesn't buy it and asks about Kane attacking him twice. Just like on Monday, Kane has no idea what Seth is talking about.

Then he switches to serious and talks about being a corporate worker, not a demon who wants to inflict incredible pain and punishment upon him until he begs for mercy. Seth thinks Kane needs help and Kane is willing to take it under advisement. One last thing: Rollins is facing Dean Ambrose in the main event. Ok Rollins is guaranteed to win there right?

Ambrose barely ever beats...Dean is going to pin Rollins again isn't he?

Booker thinks Kane has multiple personalities but the old trickster Lawler thinks it's a ruse.

### Roman Reigns vs. Luke Harper

The Wyatts and Ambrose are banned from ringside. These two have fought each other about once every two weeks since late July. Both guys try powerbombs in the first ten seconds and head out to the floor. Harper gets sent into the barricade and then the announcers' table.

Back in and Harper elbows out of a Samoan drop, only to have Reigns power him up on the second attempt. So much for Reigns selling for more than five seconds. There are the ten clotheslines in the corner and they head outside again. Harper nails a superkick followed by the sitout powerbomb, only to have Roman come back with the Superman Punch and spear for the pin at 3:59.

**Rating:** D+. So we're now at the point where Reigns can beat Harper in under four minutes. Therefore, why would I want to see them fight again? To be fair I could have asked that question before as these two have fought what seems like a hundred times this year alone, but they had a good match or two so why not try it twenty times?

### New Day vs. Neville/Lucha Dragons

Before the match, New Day says the Dudleyz are gone after Madison Square Garden and the tables will be saved. Neville kicks Kofi to start and throws Kalisto onto him for a seated senton. All three members of New Day come in and get stared down to the floor as we take a break less than forty seconds into the match. Back with Kalisto in trouble and getting stomped down in the corner as Woods drops to the floor for some tromboning.

Kalisto backdrops Kofi to the floor and makes the tag off to Cara for a springboard moonsault and elbow to Xavier's jaw. New Day is all sent to the floor, allowing Neville and Kalisto to moonsault from the top as Cara adds a suicide dive. That looked awesome. Back in and Kofi grabs

Kalisto's leg, allowing Woods to add a running knee to the head for the pin at 7:33.

**Rating:** C-. The match was fun while it lasted but they really needed a break in a seven and a half minute match? I like the idea of some trios teams running around as it's not like they have anything to do on their own or in a tag team. If the Dragons aren't going to get a run in the tag team scene, let them hang out with Neville and do cool dives.

### Cesaro vs. Bo Dallas

During Cesaro's entrance, we see clips of Big Show squashing him on Monday to make sure you know you're about to watch a loser. Dallas talks about surviving Suplex City and suggests Cesaro Bo-lieve to get over his trip to Big Show Boulevard. Cesaro does four straight nips to escape a wristlock before wrapping his legs around Bo's waist and rolling him around the ring. Back up and Cesaro charges into an elbow in the corner and gets forearmed in the back.

Dallas pulls him to the apron and drops Cesaro back first across the apron. A chinlock doesn't have much effect so Dallas starts working on the back again. Booker thinks the back injury here could be career ending. If jobbing to Big Show twice in a week didn't kill it already, I don't think a few forearms to the back are going to do it. Back up and Cesaro grabs his arm trap small package for the pin at 4:26.

**Rating:** D+. Another short match here but it's nice to see Cesaro win again, even if it's to someone like Dallas. Thinking of Cesaro jobbing to Big Show twice in a row to build up what's likely going to be a five minute match with Lesnar doing the exact same thing he's done to Big Show every time they've fought makes my head hurt but that's life in WWE for you.

We recap Charlotte winning the title on Sunday.

Here are Charlotte and Becky Lynch with something to say. Lawler doesn't seem to know why Paige isn't with them. Charlotte talks about how perfect the last week has been for her but Paige comes out to interrupt. Paige has never been a team player and doesn't know what came over her. She's

glad Charlotte won the title but was hoping that she was in this spot. Paige thinks she deserves some recognition for starting the Divas Revolution.

Charlotte agrees and here's Natalya to interrupt. She thinks the division is as good as it's ever been before but Paige thinks Natalya is a crazy cat lady. Paige knows she's better than Natalya and thinks Natalya let the Revolution pass her by. Now she's trying to latch on to these younger Divas to keep herself relevant. Paige slaps her in the face and walks away. This has some potential, but none of it matters if they're going to just go back to the Bellas in three months.

### Kevin Owens/Rusev vs. Ryback/Dolph Ziggler

Ever the good coward, Owens tags out before having to face Ryback. Rusev demands Ziggler come in and stomps him into the corner. A dropkick gives Dolph a breather but he walks into a swinging Rock Bottom for two. Rusev: "I beat you Dolph! Now he's going to beat you!" Owens comes in for a few stomps before it's back to Rusev, who is quickly caught in the running DDT as we take a break.

Back with Owens slapping Dolph in a chinlock. Ziggler's running DDT doesn't work on Owens as Kevin throws him down and drops a backsplash. More heavy stomping gets two for Rusev before it's off to Rusev for more of the same. Ziggler slams both heels and makes the big diving tag to Ryback. Rusev's superkick is countered into a spinebuster but Owens offers a distraction, allowing Rusev to hit the superkick. Owens grabs the title and walks out, allowing Dolph to superkick Rusev into the Shell Shock for the pin at 12:45.

**Rating:** C-. Remember when beating Rusev was a big deal? Or when there wasn't a large stable to be made out of people who use superkicks? The one positive thing I remember here is the days when the midcard was strong and how we're getting closer to having one here. There's been a lot of attention given to the midcard feuds lately and the extra effort is paying off. It's not great or anything, but it's WAY better than it was a few years ago.

Video on Big Show to hype up Madison Square Garden.

The Dudleyz are talking strategy when Renee Young comes in to ask them about New Day. Bubba thinks New Day doesn't act like champions and the titles are all that matter. Notice that Bubba makes sure to get in the date of the show instead of just saying it's in so and so many days or a week from Saturday.

It's a definitive date instead of some point that might change depending on when you're watching the show. That's the old school way of doing things and I wish it was the more common way now. The Prime Time Players come in to say they want a shot after the Dudleyz win the belts. Bubba and D-Von aren't pleased but they shake the Players' hands.

Rollins promises to take care of Ambrose and Kane.

### Dean Ambrose vs. Seth Rollins

Non-title. Dean starts in on a wristlock before grabbing the champ's head. Seth comes back with choking in the corner as they're in first gear so far. A dropkick puts Seth on the floor and we take another early break. Back with Seth putting on a chinlock until Dean powers up and sends Rollins outside. The suicide dive is blocked though and Seth's top rope knee to the head gets two.

Ambrose comes back again with some chops but the tornado DDT is countered, followed by the low superkick for two. Booker: "Ask me what I think about Dean Ambrose." Rich: "What do you think about Dean Ambrose?" Booker: "He's a fighter." Thanks Book. Dean hits his rebound lariat (called the Lunatic Lariat) and a bunch of strikes followed by a butterfly superplex of all things for two. Dean comes up holding his leg but he's still able to start a nice pinfall reversal sequence for a bunch of near falls.

A backdrop puts the champ on the floor and now Ambrose's suicide dive connects. Dean gets two off a fisherman's suplex (he's mixing it up tonight) but Seth comes back with an enziguri to put both guys down. Seth is up first with the Sling Blade but the Pedigree is broken up. Instead a buckle bomb puts Dean down but Kane's pyro goes off, allowing Dean to grab a rollup for the pin at 17:33.

**Rating:** B-. The WWE World Heavyweight Champion has lost three times in five days. TV ratings are sinking like a stone and WWE's solution is to treat the World Champion the same way they used to treat the midcard titles. This is supposed to be the guy that is going to be getting the big face turn and push? The guy who keeps losing over and over again? But hey, did you see HHH and Stephanie dancing a few weeks ago and then getting to be all tough with Kane on Monday? Man they're awesome. Finally, anyone want to bet that this win for Ambrose goes nowhere? Just let it be a countout or DQ and it's the same thing.

Rollins grabs the mic and asks if Kane knows who he is. He hurt Sting at Night of Champions and Seth can do the same thing to Kane.

**Overall Rating:** C. This is a show where the wrestling was fine but the booking really holds it back. On the surface, it looks like there's some good stuff here. The midcard is looking stronger, New Day continues to be hilarious, Ambrose looks like he's going to get a push, Reigns looks like he's going somewhere over the Wyatts for a change and Cesaro looks primed for a push. That's what you would think if you just watched this show. Here's what's likely going to happen.

The midcard will likely do the exact same stuff it has done in the past because the writers can't maintain any stories. New Day will continue to be hilarious. Ambrose's win will mean nothing. Reigns will keep feuding with the Wyatts for another three months. Cesaro will be built up and fed to someone who doesn't need the push for a match that is never in doubt for a second.

In other words, WWE is fun if you watch once in awhile and don't follow it long term. Once you start getting your hopes up for something, they're going to come crashing down around you when you realize that WWE would rather spin its wheels and make sure that people don't get too popular for reasons I still can't comprehend. Everyone not named Cena winds up on equal footing and the numbers keep going down because there's no one worth cheering for. This was a totally watchable stand alone episode but it's nothing more than that.

Results

Roman Reigns b. Luke Harper – Spear

New Day b. Neville/Lucha Dragons – Running knee to Kalisto

Cesaro b. Bo Dallas – Arm trap small package

Dolph Ziggler/Ryback b. Rusev/Kevin Owens – Shell Shock to Rusev

Dean Ambrose b. Seth Rollins – Rollup

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# Monday Night Raw – September 21, 2015: Running On Empty Again

## Monday Night Raw

Date: September 21, 2015

Location: Laredo Energy Arena, Laredo, Texas

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

It's the night after Night of Champions and it seems that we're heading for Kane vs. Rollins for the World Title at Hell in a Cell. On the same

show we'll be seeing Undertaker vs. Brock Lesnar for the last time in a match that was a potential Wrestlemania headliner. As for tonight, there's also a chance we'll see the return of the US Open Challenge as John Cena regained the US Title last night. Let's get to it.

We open with the Wyatts instead of the traditional recap. Bray tried to warn Roman Reigns with words but he just didn't speak loudly enough. Then he tried to warn Roman with actions but he just didn't hit hard enough. Then last night he choked the golden idol by the throat and showed that he was right about everyone falling down.

Cue Reigns to say he wants to finish this with Bray, one on one, right now. This doesn't even need to be a match because they can just have a fight. Harper and Strowman head to the floor and Bray is ready to fight. Reigns takes over with right hands and the corner clotheslines, followed by the Superman Punch.

This brings Strowman and Harper back in but Ambrose charges out, runs by Strowman in a smart move, and fights Harper. A pair of suicide dives have almost no effect on Braun but Reigns gets back up. Unfortunately so does Bray and the Wyatts' numbers game takes over. This brings out Randy Orton to even things up and the combined forces of a bunch of right hands, a missile dropkick and the Superman Punch finally knock Strowman to the floor, though never off his feet. How nice was it to open with a fight and a return instead of a lot of talking that will only be repeated 95 times later in the night?

We recap Rollins' two title defenses from last night, as well as Sheamus not being able to cash in due to masked Kane's return.

Rollins comes in to the Authority's office and finds a very perky Corporate Kane. The monster says he's back and asks if Seth got the e-mail. The Authority isn't here yet but Kane has arranged for Seth to have his rematch for the US Title tonight. This was the most entertaining Kane has been since HELL NO.

#### Lucha Dragons/Neville vs. Ascension/Stardust

Rematch from last night's pre-show. Sin Cara and Konor starts with Cara



slipping off the top on a springboard attempt. It was just a slip and not a horrible botch but it looked bad. After some stomps from the villains it's time for a chinlock from Konor. Stardust comes in for a cartwheel, allowing the tag off to Neville. Viktor tries to break up a Red Arrow attempt like he did last night but Neville jumps over him, only to get Disaster kicked out to the floor as we take a break.

Back with Neville in the wrong corner with Konor being launched at him for two. Off to the chinlockery for a bit before Stardust puts Neville into an inverted Gory Stretch of all things. Neville finally kicks Konor in the head and makes the tag off to Kalisto. Everything breaks down with Cara running back in for a suicide dive on Konor. Stardust gets dropkicked to the floor and the Salida Del Sol pins Viktor at 10:32.

**Rating:** C-. The botches really hurt things here and dragged down what could have been a fun six man tag. Sometimes things can get dicey when you try to move too fast. This could have been a lot worse but the Cara botch set the stage for the match. I'm not sure where the feud goes from here, but maybe they both add a fourth for some Survivor Series action.

The limping Rollins comes up to the Authority to ask what they're thinking about reinstating Kane. They have no idea what he's talking about, but apparently Kane was allowed to make Cena vs. Rollins again tonight.

Stills of Kevin Owens winning the Intercontinental Title last night.

### Ryback vs. Bo Dallas

Owens comes out to do commentary. Bo congratulates Kevin on his win and is thrown across the ring by Ryback. Dallas gets shoved down and a suplex gets two. Cole asks about Owens raking Ryback's eyes to win the title last night. Owens tells Cole not to believe everything he reads on the internet. Dallas comes back with a kick to the face and a chinlock but Ryback shrugs him off. The Meat Hook and Shell Shock put Dallas away at 3:40.

**Rating:** D. Just a plot device here and another good use of a jobber. I'm fine with Dallas losing because his character is the kind of person who

can pop right back up with a single obnoxious promo. Owens vs. Ryback is a feud that has potential if they go somewhere, which hopefully seems to be a possibility.

Owens goes after Ryback post match but has to run away from a Shell Shock attempt.

Here's Ric Flair to talk about how proud of a father he is. The fans start chanting THANK YOU RIC but Flair quickly thanks the fans to get this back on Charlotte. The proudest moment of his life wasn't all his World Titles but rather last night when his daughter won her first Divas Championship. This brings out Team PCB to celebrate. Charlotte has to fight back tears because she's a Flair.

She's fought a long way to get here and gained two best friends on the way. Becky makes her laugh every day and Paige is the woman whose footsteps she followed in. Paige takes the mic and says that this is all because of her. Yeah Charlotte won the title last night but Paige won it on her first night. The first time Charlotte defends the title, the Bellas will win it back and everything goes back to normal.

There is no Divas Revolution because Becky is irrelevant, Charlotte is just a placeholder and Team Bad is all flash and no substance. Then you have Summer Rae and Lana who are trying to figure out who to climb on top of next. There's Nattie, who doesn't seem like she works here anymore.

Everyone knows why the Bellas are where they are (implying relationships with Cena and Bryan but not actually saying it because Nikki and Cena aren't a thing outside of Total Divas). Paige says that Charlotte is where she is because of her old man and walks off. Cue the Bellas with Nikki saying that Charlotte is going to lose because she can't handle the pressure of being Divas Champion. The Bellas really should have been saved for later because the turn didn't get the chance to sink in but it still worked very well.

### Brie Bella vs. Charlotte

Non-title. Brie starts fast with a middle rope dropkick and knocks the champ to the floor. The bad knee from last night gets sent into the steps

and Charlotte is in early trouble. There's a dragon screw leg whip followed by a leg lock as Becky plays cheerleader. A dropkick to the ribs gets two and a chop block puts Charlotte back down again. Off to a half crab for a bit until Charlotte comes up with an enziguri. The neckbreaker and spear set up the Figure Eight to make Brie tap at 6:24.

**Rating:** D+. Can someone explain the logic of having Charlotte on defense for about 90% of her title win and first match as champion? I mean, she's considered awesome for her abilities on offense and athleticism so you have her on the mat holding her knee most of the time? Brie is the less talented Bella, which really should tell you most of what you need to know about this match.

### Sheamus vs. Mark Henry

Henry runs him over to start and it's time for a breather on the floor. A clothesline does the same but Sheamus comes back with the ten forearms. Mark breaks it up at about six or seven but the Brogue Kick puts Mark away at 2:26.

Sheamus says it's a matter of time until he's World Champion.

The Authority comes in to see Kane. Instead of asking why they waited an hour to come talk to him, they ask why they didn't hear from him since he got hurt. Kane brushes it off and says he wanted to make a big impact tonight by making Cena vs. Rollins for the US Title. Stephanie wants Kane to give it back and holds her hand out. Kane high fives her but Stephanie wants the mask. The mask is gone from its case and Kane accuses Stephanie of losing it. Kane is happy to help her look for it though and smiles a lot.

Natalya comes up to see Paige and says Paige isn't the only one who has been frustrated. The only person standing in Paige's way has been Paige herself.

### New Day/Rusev vs. Dolph Ziggler/Dudley Boyz

Before the match, Woods holds up a piece of table in a bag which was apparently removed from his.....shall we say nether region. Kofi asks how

many tables must be destroyed. Big E. suggests building a wall around Dudleyville to keep those Dudleys away from our people, our values, and our tables. Kofi and Ziggy get things going with Kingston grabbing a top wristlock. Kofi's leapfrogs set up a monkey flip but Dolph lands on his feet.

Off to D-Von for a legdrop and right hands, followed by the belly to back neckbreaker on Big E. Rusev scampers to the floor and we take a break. We come back with Ziggy dropkicking Big E. but having to scare Woods off the apron, allowing E. to score with a clothesline. Rusev stomps away and it's time for the rotating stomps, complete with trombone accompaniment.

Rusev comes in so Xavier plays Rusev's theme music as we hit the chinlock on Ziggy. A back elbow to the jaw drops Ziggy (Woods: "BULGARIAN TRICEP MEAT! WHY DOES ZIGGLER HAVE ZIPPERS AND NO POCKETS???" ) and Big E. comes in for an abdominal stretch. Kofi breaks up the hot tag attempt and dropkicks Kofi down for two. It's back to Rusev for choking as he shouts that Lana is his.

The running DDT finally allows a diving tag to Bubba and everything breaks down. A big boot puts E. down and it's off to Ray vs. Rusev. Well for all of five seconds as D-Von comes in for a double suplex, followed by Dolph playing D-Von in What's Up. Ziggy superkicks the trombone out of Woods' hands (thankfully Summer makes the catch) but turns into a superkick from Rusev for the pin at 14:12.

**Rating:** B-. Oh man Woods gets better every week. This is what I've been talking about with comedy in wrestling: you can tell that these guys have been told to go out there and do whatever they think is funny and they're running with it. It's a different style than what WWE decides is funny and it makes for something much more entertaining. The day that trombone (seriously, they got a trombone over. I can't get past that.) gets broken, which better not be for at least another four months, is going to be glorious.

We recap Kane's odd antics throughout the night.

Natalya vs. Naomi

Both girls flip up to their feet to start until Naomi kicks Natalya in the face for two. We hit an early chinlock as Paige is shown watching in the back. Back up and Natalya makes her comeback, including a discus lariat (Me: "JBL is going to say shades of her daddy." JBL: "SHADES OF HER DADDY!") but a Sasha distraction lets the Rear View end Natalya at 3:46.

**Rating:** D. I'm so glad we got Natalya back for this mess. There's a chance this leads to her teaming with Paige under their common issue of being held back. It's worked for less talented people before so why not these two also. The match was nothing special but it's cool to see at least one team sticking around.

Rollins asks the Authority about the plan for tonight. HHH gets all serious and tells Seth to worry about Cena because they'll take care of Kane. This has been another moment where HHH's emotions change on a dime and it's considered totally normal.

#### Cesaro vs. Big Show

Rematch from Smackdown which isn't important enough to mention. Cesaro gets chopped out of the air to start and runs him over with a shoulder. Show launches him across the ring as this is a total squash so far. The Final Cut sets up a chinlock until Show misses an elbow. Cesaro starts his comeback and breaks up the chokeslam. Show is knocked to the floor for a European uppercut, only to catch Cesaro's cross body off the announcers' table and drive Cesaro into the post. Back inside and Cesaro suplexes Show from the apron back inside, only to have Show KO Cesaro for the pin at 6:30.

**Rating:** D. I know WWE says they're making movies. This must be where they show the trailers over and over again (because this is the same ending as the Smackdown match) and then expect us to see a movie where we know the ending because it's a sequel to the wreck of last year's Royal Rumble and EVERY MATCH THESE SHOW AND LESNAR HAVE HAD IN LIKE TEN YEARS. Of course there was no one in the back that you could have take this loss instead of Cesaro too. No one. Not Swagger or anyone, who is even more like Lesnar than Cesaro. Typical WWE.

Post match Show says he's going to knock Lesnar out and pin him like he did in 2002. For some reason this takes like three minutes.

We recap the Wyatt Family/Orton/Ambrose/Reigns segment from earlier.

Harper says he hears Bray's voice in his head. Bray taught him to learn from his mistakes but Orton never learned that lesson. Strowman talks about skinning a snake and drinking its blood. Bray says Randy will fall like everyone else. It's amazing how much better this team is when Bray isn't losing every other week.

#### US Title: John Cena vs. Seth Rollins

Cena is defending. Rollins jumps the champ during the intros and gets an early two. Some right hands have Cena in trouble. Like, way more trouble than a sneak attack and some right hands should have him in. The Pedigree is countered and an enziguri gets two. Cena comes back with that big clothesline that he uses when he needs to make a comeback but the announcers are too busy talking about the Kane story to notice. Seth escapes the AA and scores with a DDT for two.

Back with Seth putting on a chinlock, followed by a shot to Cena's face. Cena comes back with the usual but Rollins bails to the floor after the Shuffle. John throws him back in but a superplex is broken up, allowing Rollins to get two off a low superkick. We hit the STF on Cena but he muscles his way up for the counter.

The Pedigree is countered with a catapult into the corner and Cena pulls him off the middle rope with an electric chair. They counter finisher attempts until the Buckle Bomb sets up a Falcon's Arrow for two on Cena. Cena grabs a quick STF but Rollins grabs a rope even faster. A Five Star Frog Splash gets two on Cena but he rolls through into the AA for the pin to retain at 15:38.

**Rating:** B. I would have had a lot more fun with this match if I hadn't seen it a day ago. Also if there was any sort of a chance that Cena was going to lose. Thirdly, was it really necessary to have the World Champion lose a second match clean in two days? I know it's Cena, but stop having that happen. Now let's get to the obvious Demon Kane moment.

Post match Corporate Kane pops up on screen and says everyone is coming for the title. People Rollins wouldn't even imagine. Like the people from his worst nightmares. Cue the demon Kane through a hole in the ring to drag Seth under. Yes they're REALLY doing this again.

**Overall Rating:** C+. This show started off with so much promise and then, as is way too often the case, it died about halfway through. Raw runs out of steam way too often these days and it really is just because of that third hour. The night after a pay per view is really rough because you're looking at six hours of TV in just over a day. It's too much and drains way too much out of the fans when they're asked to watch it. The first hour carries this show, but they need to find a way to make this three hour work, because the fans are going to go away more and more with this much TV time to sit through.

### Results

Neville/Lucha Dragons b. Ascension/Stardust – Salida Del Sol to Viktor

Ryback b. Bo Dallas – Shell Shock

Charlotte b. Brie Bella – Figure Eight

Sheamus b. Mark Henry – Brogue Kick

New Day/Rusev b. Dolph Ziggler/Dudley Boyz – Superkick to Ziggler

Naomi b. Natalya – Rear View

Big Show b. Cesaro – KO Punch

John Cena b. Seth Rollins – Attitude Adjustment

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# Smackdown – September 17, 2015: Bring Back Livewire

## **Smackdown**

Date: September 17, 2015

Location: Verizon Arena, Little Rock, Arkansas

Commentators: Booker T., Jerry Lawler, Rich Brennan

It's the final show before Night of Champions 2015 and that likely means we'll be focusing on the midcard matches. If the past few Smackdowns before pay per views are any indications, that means it's likely going to be about Ambrose/Reigns vs. the Wyatts while they tease who the third man might be. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Sting's two matches on Monday, neither of which were important enough to announce more two and a half hours early.

Here's Seth for his opening statement. When he defends the US Title this Sunday, he's going to remind John Cena of what happened to him at Summerslam. Sting is going to get what's coming to him on Sunday. As for Sheamus, tonight he and Rollins will team up to face Roman Reigns and Dean Ambrose and Rollins will show Sheamus what happens to him if he tries to cash in.

This brings out Sheamus to ask if Seth sees him as a friend or an enemy. Rollins agrees with the fans' chants of YOU LOOK STUPID but Sheamus demands that they respect the hawk. Sheamus says the exact same things he's said for three weeks now and Rollins smirks it off. Nothing new here and I don't buy the threat of a cash-in on Sunday. They do this every fall and it hasn't happened in years.



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

Becky hammers Naomi in the face to start and knocks her into the corner for the tag off to Banks. Sasha quickly fights back and slams Becky on the back of her head as we take an early break. Back with Becky in trouble in the corner as Banks jumps down onto her ribs. Naomi does the same before it's back to Sasha for an abdominal stretch. Basic psychology here so far. Becky gets away and makes the tag off to Paige for her assortment of superkicks and knees to the face. Becky pulls Sasha off the apron but distracts her partner by mistake, allowing Naomi to small package Paige for the pin at 9:02.

**Rating:** C. The story continues to build to Paige turning on her teammates and blaming them for all of her troubles. This was a better match than most from the Divas because they were working on a body part instead of just doing all their spots. It's the difference between having a match instead of having a collection of moves.

Stardust and the Ascension are ready for Neville and the Lucha Dragons on Sunday's pre-show. Simple promo to build up a match.

## Kofi Kingston vs. D-Von Dudley

The SAVE THE TABLES signs are back! Before the match, Xavier wants to talk about a special woman: Mother Nature. Big E.: "She's a bad mother!" Woods: "SHUT YOUR MOUTH!" They have a petition on a clipboard (Woods: "That's like a mini table!") to save the tables and want the Dudleyz to sign right now. Kofi wants us to know that only we can prevent table poaching. D-Von isn't interested in signing and beats Kofi down in the corner. Big E. pulls out a table but D-Von throws Woods inside. The distraction lets Kofi grab a rollup with tights for the pin at 1:17.

New Day runs off with the table.

We recap Dolph Ziggler giving Summer a present on Raw. Brennan says it was a pair of earrings, which wasn't clear on Raw.

Recap of Nikki retaining the title via DQ on Monday, thereby breaking the record.

Team Bella is preparing for the Bellabration. They have 298 bottles of champagne ready for them. Nikki is proud that Kim and Kanye are coming but there needs to be some non-alcoholic drinks for Kim. Brie and Alicia don't seem pleased with her demands.

We recap the showdown between Reigns/Ambrose and the Wyatts on Monday.

Big Show is on his way to the ring for a match when Miz hands him a notebook with something inside. Show looks at whatever is in there, gets annoyed, and throws the book away.

### Cesaro vs. Big Show

Cesaro hits a pair of quick dropkicks to knock Show into the corner but Show chops him back down. Another chop is countered into an armbreaker over the ropes in a unique idea. Cesaro starts cranking the arm across his shoulder but Show throws him down to take over again. Show stands on the knee against the ropes as Booker talks about his Top Five. I've missed that thing, though I have no idea why. We hit a leg lock on Cesaro (think an ankle lock but with Show's arms around the shin and knee instead of the ankle and foot) but he quickly rolls out.

The uppercuts in the corner stagger Show and a high cross body gets two. Another running uppercut to a kneeling Show gets the same and Cesaro tries the Crossface while Show is on his knees. Booker thinks it's an abdominal stretch because he's not very smart on commentary. The Neutralizer is countered as Cesaro flips out of a backdrop but he tweaks his knee on the landing. Show KO's Cesaro for the pin at 5:54.

**Rating:** C+. I liked this more than I was expecting to but the ending hurts it a bit. I guess it's time to make Big Show look good before he gets squashed by Brock Lesnar in Madison Square Garden because we're supposed to forget Brock mauling him at the Royal Rumble last year. Oh and well done on making sure Cesaro's push is stopped cold, because there was no one else that could do this job.

Renee Young, in a leather jacket, asks Ambrose and Reigns who their

partner is on Sunday. Reigns says they have a partner but they can't say because they know Bray will be on him. Whoever it is, it was Dean's idea. They're ready to get momentum tonight before going to war on Sunday.

### Kevin Owens vs. Dolph Ziggler

Ziggler attacks with right hands to start but eats a big forearm to the face. Kevin avoids a dropkick and hits his backsplash for two. It's already time for the trash talking, followed by countering Dolph's running DDT into a regular one. We take a break and come back with Ziggler sidestepping a charge to send Owens into the post. A bunch of clotheslines set up the big elbow for two on Owens as they're not exactly doing anything beyond basics here.

Now the running DDT gets two more and Owens stumbles out to the floor. Ziggler tries to slide to the floor after him but gets caught in a fall away slam into the barricade. Owens throws him into the timekeeper's area for a nine count with Ziggler diving in before ten. Kevin superkicks him back to the floor and loads up the apron bomb but here's Ryback for the DQ at 11:07.

**Rating:** D+. I was bored for the most part here and the ending didn't help things. They were just doing the basics here and that's not really enough to get me interested in a match. I'm glad to see Owens win again though while Ziggler doesn't get pinned, proving that you can protect both guys and not have them limping into their pay per view matches. Good booking to a lame match.

No one has shown up to the Bellabration.

Connor's Cure video.

Nikki tries to have the Bellabration but no one has shown up. Brie and Fox go off to fix it when Team PCB comes in. Charlotte talks some smack but the three leave without doing anything. Adam Rose, now in glasses, comes in and rips on the party. Nikki throws her cake and hits Brie and Fox. This was even less entertaining than it sounds.

Summer comes up to a tired Dolph and asks about the earrings. He tells

her that sometimes a rose is just a rose, but sometimes it means more. Summer is confused.

### Roman Reigns/Dean Ambrose vs. Sheamus/Seth Rollins

Rollins and Ambrose get things going but do nothing before Sheamus gets the tag. We have to wait some more though as Sheamus rolls outside to yell at the fans for calling him stupid. He's very sensitive you see. Dean finally gets to punch Sheamus a few times before it's off to Roman for more of the same. Reigns sends Rollins to the floor and the Shield guys stand tall as we take a break.

Back with Seth holding Ambrose in a chinlock, followed by a belly to back suplex backbreaker for two. Sheamus comes in for a suplex into a slam and a lot of trash talking. It's back to Seth for a lot of stomping as Seth and Sheamus don't seem thrilled with tagging in and out. Off to an Irish chinlock until Dean fights up and takes Sheamus to the floor with a hurricanrana. The hot tag brings in Reigns to clean house and it's time for all those clotheslines. Seth escapes a powerslam but his low superkick is countered into a rollup.

That's not enough for Reigns as he lifts Seth up into a powerbomb. The threat of a Superman Punch sends Seth to the apron but he comes back in with a chop block and the low superkick. Sheamus reaches out for a tag but drops down to the floor instead. Seth grabs the briefcase but tags Sheamus in anyway. Sheamus takes the case right back, only to eat the suicide dive from Ambrose. Back in and the Superman punch and Dirty Deeds give Ambrose the pin at 16:51.

**Rating:** C. This was your standard main event tag as they continue to try to build up towards the six man on Sunday. It should be interesting to see who the partner is, but I have a bad feeling it's going to be Kane, because we need more Kane in our lives you see. Not a bad match though and Sheamus vs. Rollins is an interesting tease, though I don't think it's going anywhere.

Post match a Wyatt video pops up showing the destruction of Orton and Jimmy Uso. Bray and company come on screen to ask who would be foolish enough to join the fight on Sunday. Not that it matters as they will all

fall down.

**Overall Rating:** C. Well let's see. The promos were mediocre. The wrestling was mediocre. The build to Sunday was mediocre. What else can I do here other than call it an average show? It's the standard Smackdown: it's a decent enough way to kill two hours but you wouldn't miss a thing if you didn't see it. I've never been one to say that Smackdown should be canceled, but if this is all they can do with it, there's no need to have Smackdown around.

### Results

Sasha Banks/Naomi b. Paige/Becky Lynch – Small package to Paige

Kofi Kingston b. D-Von Dudley – Rollup with a handful of tights

Big Show b. Cesaro – KO Punch

Kevin Owens b. Dolph Ziggler via DQ when Ryback interfered

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

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# Monday Night Raw – September 14, 2015: Dance Fever And Scorpion Double Shots

## Monday Night Raw

Date: September 14, 2015

Location FedEx Forum, Memphis, Tennessee

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, John Bradshaw Layfield

Tonight is the season premier, as WWE throws whatever it can at Monday Night Football to try and not get completely decimated in the ratings. The big match tonight is Charlotte challenging Nikki Bella for the Divas Title in Nikki's first televised title defense in about two and a half months. Let's get to it.

We open with a full recap of the statue story because just having Cole explain it in fifteen seconds would be too complicated.

Here's the Authority walking down the ramp, which now has a Connor's Cure logo. HHH and Stephanie talk about all the new talent that have showed up in the last year and a half. That group will lead the WWE into the new generation, which will be lead by Seth Rollins. HHH explains the double title defense on Sunday and that's about it for Seth right now.

Stephanie explains the Divas Title situation and talks about how the Revolution has rocked everything. HHH has a major announcement for tonight: Sting will be wrestling his first match ever on Raw as he faces the Big Show. Stephanie introduces New Day for their title defense and the Authority dances with them.

So wait. They announced New Day vs. the Prime Time Players and the Divas Title in advance, but STING wrestling on Raw is announced with a few hours notice? These decisions continue to amaze me every single week, but at least they made sure to get Stephanie dancing to New Day's entrance because she's fun and cool that way. HHH dances a bit too.

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

New Day is defending with Woods on the floor as usual. Darren rolls Kofi up for a quick two before it's off to Titus for a slam on Big E. We see the Dudleyz looking on as E. comes back with a belly to belly, meaning it's time for some trombone playing. Back to the starters with Darren escaping the SOS and loading up the Gut Check, only to have Kofi tag out to Big E. The big guy sends Young into the post and it's time for the rotating stomps, accompanied by more tromboning as we take a break.

Back with New Day still in control and Woods tormenting him with the trombone. Titus comes after them but gets called back by the referee. Woods: "DO NOT TOUCH MY TROMBONE!" Back in and Kofi snaps Darren's throat across the top rope but he dives into some raised boots. Titus comes in off the tag to clean house and gives Kofi three straight backbreakers. A powerslam gets two on Big E. but Kofi gives Darren Trouble in Paradise on the floor. Woods offers a distraction and gets his trombone broken up, allowing the Midnight Hour to take Titus out for the pin at 12:15.

**Rating:** C. This was fine and a good way to set up New Day vs. the Dudleyz on Sunday. The Players have had their moment in the sun and it's time to move on to a more interesting team. Darren and Titus are fine for a midcard team, but I don't think anyone really bought them as a long term threat, which means they're left as a nice role team.

New Day celebrates but the Dudleyz come out for a staredown.

Video of Sting at Starrcade 1988, part of a series of clips of his career. Pay no attention to the fact that that was a pretty worthless match.

Seth Rollins comes in to see the Authority and after praising the dance moves, he's told to worry about Sunday. They do the New Day clap and that's about it. This is another good example of a segment that didn't need to be there.

We recap Charlotte making Nikki tap in a brawl last week.

Charlotte and Ric Flair are ready for the title match tonight and Ric praises the Divas division. They're doing a great job of making this feel like a big deal.

### Paige vs. Sasha Banks

It's just Becky at ringside while Naomi and Tamina are out with Banks. Sasha snaps Paige's arm across the middle rope to start and bends it around to put Paige in early trouble. Banks stomps on the arm in the corner instead of dropping the double knees before putting on an armbar.

Paige comes back with a knee in the corner and some kicks to the face for two as the announcers debate women's tennis in an attempt to tie it into the Divas Revolution. A wicked German suplex sends Sasha down onto the back of her head and out to the floor in a heap. Paige tries to dive off the apron but Tamina pulls Sasha away, sending Paige crashing down as well. Back in and the Bank Statement puts Paige away at 5:15.

**Rating:** C. The potential for a Paige heel turn would seem to make sense and there's nothing wrong with a story that might be this obvious. Once this team thing is done they can actually get on to something else instead of just running around in circles like they have been for weeks. The match was fine with that German suplex looking awesome, but I've lost interest in seeing them fight four times in two weeks. As usual, the word overkill doesn't exist in WWE's world.

We recap the Wyatt Family taking out Jimmy Uso and Randy Orton last week.

Video on Connor's Cure.

It's time for MizTV with special guests the Wyatt Family. Miz tells them to sit down but Bray tells Miz to not sit because he's not safe here. After assuring Bray that he's not the partner at Hell in a Cell (yes Hell in a Cell), Miz tries to talk to Strowman but Braun doesn't say a word. Bray gets right in Miz's face and says they're coming to Night of Champions to show that no matter who comes at them, they all fall down. Cue Reigns and Ambrose in the crowd with Dean beating up Miz for trying



to talk. Bray sits down as the other four stare at each other. Reigns calls Wyatt out for the attacks last week and promises to make him pay.

If Wyatt really was the man, he could have beaten Roman one on one but he just can't do it. A real man wouldn't have to surround himself with monsters. Reigns and Ambrose have found a third man for Night of Champions and they're ready to win. Everyone stares each other down and the camera cuts out. This would be much better if they didn't go to the announcers, meaning they're sitting there talking while the guys are still in the ring.

Clip of Sting winning his first World Title at Great American Bash 1990.

### John Cena vs. Sheamus

Sheamus' headlock doesn't get that far so he elbows Cena in the face instead. John is thrown to the floor and we take an early break. Back with Sheamus dropping a top rope knee for two before slapping on a sleeper. Cena pops up and hits the ProtoBomb followed by the Shuffle. A tornado DDT gets two on Sheamus but he comes back with an Edgeucator.

Cena grabs the ropes so Sheamus busts out the ten forearms instead. We get the same sequence with Cena using the STF and hitting some forearms of his own. The AA is blocked and Sheamus ax handles Cena in the face to take over again. Cena breaks up the Brogue Kick with a hard clothesline but can't follow up. A powerslam drops Cena again but he sidesteps the top rope shoulder. Sheamus charges but Cena powers him up into a powerbomb position, only to flip him over into an electric chair drop. Back up and Sheamus tries the Regal roll, only to have Cena roll over into the AA for the pin at 14:49.

**Rating:** B. Good match here and I believe the first time Cena has pinned Sheamus in a singles match on TV. This was harkening back to the days of the US Open Challenge (you know, all those weeks ago) and continues to show that Cena can work a very good match with anyone you throw out there against him. Good stuff here.

Here's Ryback with something to say. It's appropriate that we're in Memphis because Kevin Owens seems to have him all shook up. Ryback does a

little Elvis and the silence is so deafening that he has to acknowledge it. As he starts to talk about Kevin Owens not being a real man, Owens cuts him off. Owens comes out with a copy of The Secret, which Ryback has credited with his rise to success.

He calls the book a joke and throws it to the floor while calling it a travesty that Ryback is the Intercontinental Champion. Ryback talks about how positive he is and how he fell on his face after rocketing to the top of the company. Owens says he'd take the title the first chance he got, so Ryback offers him a shot at Night of Champions. Kevin leaves without accepting. I really like the idea of these two fighting, but Ryback crediting his success to a book really doesn't hold up for me.

The next Sting clip is Starrcade 1997, which is possibly the bullet that they never could recover from.

#### Stardust vs. Neville

The Lucha Dragons come out with Neville to counteract the Ascension. It's a huge brawl to start with the Dragons diving through the ropes to take Ascension out. Neville hurricanranas Stardust to the floor but Ascension drags him away before Neville can dive. No match.

Nikki Bella video where she takes credit for the Divas Revolution. This was....bad. Yeah that's the only way to put it. It was bad.

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

Nikki is defending in case that's not really clear. Charlotte takes her down to the mat and drops some knees. The figure four neck lock lets Charlotte rolls Nikki around the ring and tell her to bring it on. Nikki comes back by snapping Charlotte's arm across the top rope and wringing it down onto the apron as we take a break.

Back with Nikki staying on the arm but Charlotte lifts her out of an armbar into a powerbomb to break it up. A big boot gets two for Charlotte but a dropkick to the shoulder gets the same for the champ. Charlotte scores with the spear but Alicia gets on the apron for a distraction. It's Twin Magic time and Charlotte rolls Brie up for the pin at 10:02.

I'm not even going to bother rating it yet because here's Stephanie to say that doesn't count and Charlotte wins by DQ. Charlotte gets her rematch on Sunday and the title can change hands by any means.

**Rating:** C-. Well that happened. The match was nothing special but I'm sure we'll hear for weeks about how awesome it was as the NXT fans point to Sasha vs. Bayley. You had to know they were going with the record because this is all about making the Bellas into some kind of pop culture icon in WWE's mind and they just had to get her the record, which is totally better than Trish holding the Women's Title for over a year because reasons.

Sting was at Survivor Series 2014.

### Cesaro vs. Rusev

Rusev grabs a wristlock to start but Cesaro does four or five nips in a row to escape. A headscissors drops Rusev again and the delayed vertical suplex gets one. Rusev's spinwheel kick gets two but here's Dolph Ziggler with a present for Summer. The distraction lets Cesaro small package Rusev for the pin at 4:04.

**Rating:** C-. The booking here was a lot better as you had Cesaro get a win while Ziggler gets to cost Rusev a match. Everyone comes out looking the way they're supposed to look and Sunday's match gets some build. That's the kind of smart booking that WWE lacks so often and it's a nice touch.

Ziggler superkicks Rusev and Summer sneaks the present with her as they leave.

WWE was at a children's hospital earlier today.

Post break Rusev is livid and goes into his dressing room. Summer opens the present and it's.....something we can't see.

Recap of the Tag Team Title match and we run down the Night of Champions card. Owens vs. Ryback for the Intercontinental Title is confirmed, as is Neville/Lucha Dragons vs. Stardust/Ascension on the preshow.

Big Show promises the Authority that he'll knock Sting out.

## Sting vs. Big Show

These two headlined Slamboree 1996 nearly twenty years ago. The Authority is ringside to watch. Sting hammers away to start and gets in ten right hands in the corner. Show tries a chokeslam out of the corner but gets DDT'd down instead. There's the Stinger Splash but Rollins runs in for the DQ at 1:45.

Cena comes out for the save and HHH makes it a tag match.

## Sting/John Cena vs. Seth Rollins/Big Show

This is joined in progress after a break with Cena's shoulder block bouncing off Big Show. It's off to Rollins for some stomping but Cena backdrops him over the top to the floor for a big crash. Back in and Cena tries the AA but can't flip Show over, meaning the beating continues. Rollins and Big Show take turns beating on Cena while they both break up the tag attempts. The slow motion Vader Bomb gets two.

Cena turns Rollins inside out with a running clothesline but Show breaks up another hot tag attempt. Show misses the second Vader Bomb though and Cena dives over for the hot tag to Sting. It's showtime as Sting cleans house, only to be run over by Big Show. The giant takes the AA and Sting breaks up the Pedigree with a Scorpion Death Drop. The Scorpion Deathlock makes Rollins tap at 11:58.

**Rating:** C-. I don't like the ending but I get the idea. Sting isn't going to win the title on Sunday but it's still cool to see him in the ring on Raw, just for the novelty of it if nothing else. This could be another stake in HHH and Rollins' relationship as Rollins couldn't beat the man that HHH could, but they've been teasing the split for months now so I'll believe it when I see it.

**Overall Rating:** C+. This was FAR better than last week as you could feel an energy instead of the same boring show they did last week. It was also a good go home show for Night of Champions, which is looking like a pretty fun card on paper. I'm curious to see where some of the stuff goes and that's exactly what this show was supposed to accomplish. You had some big moments and a good match here so what else more can you ask for

out of a TV show? Well done this week.

### Results

New Day b. Prime Time Players – Midnight Hour to O’Neil

Sasha Banks b. Paige – Bank Statement

John Cena b. Sheamus – Attitude Adjustment

Charlotte b. Nikki Bella via DQ when Brie Bella interfered

Cesaro b. Rusev – Small package

Sting b. Big Show via DQ when Seth Rollins interfered

Sting/John Cena b. Big Show/Seth Rollins – Scorpion Deathlock to Rollins

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# **Smackdown – September 10, 2015: The Red Show**

### **Smackdown**

Date: September 10, 2015

Location: Mohegan Sun Arena, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Rich Brennan, Booker T., Jerry Lawler

We finally got to the point and had Sting destroy the statue on Raw to end the teasing for the last few weeks. Other than that we also have John Cena vs. Seth Rollins II coming up, which should be a better match and might even get us the US Open Challenges back on Raw. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's the Wyatt Family to get things going. Harper says Bray's words will show you the way. Bray talks about how smart Roman Reigns really is but he doesn't care about any single fan or about what any of the fans think about him. If Reigns is ever to fulfill his destiny and become WWE World Heavyweight Champion, the people must get on their hands and knees to bow down to Reigns. Anyone but you Roman.

Dean Ambrose on the other hand is cursed with loyalty to someone he believes to be his brother. Ambrose is missing a few pieces upstairs and deserves a warning. The two groups have become a modern day Hatfields and McCoys and will fight each other forever. It doesn't matter who is joining Reigns and Ambrose at Night of Champions and everyone will fall to the Wyatts. Run.

### Cesaro vs. The Miz

Rematch from Monday when Big Show interfered. Miz takes a few moments to take the glasses off so Cesaro, with his ribs taped again, hiptosses him down. The big dropkick knocks Miz off the top and out to the floor, leading to a chase scene. Back in and Miz starts kicking at the ribs before dropping Cesaro across the top rope. Off to a waistlock with Miz's legs but Cesaro turns around and muscles Miz up into a suplex. As usual, that's scary strength. Some more shots to the ribs have Cesaro in trouble but he grabs the leg and rolls over into the Sharpshooter for the submission at 4:38.

**Rating:** C-. Basic match here but that's all it needed to be. The rib work was fine and I'm glad they didn't have Cesaro win with a power move while barely selling the ribs. I can live with lifting Miz up into the suplex as it's a single spot instead of doing the same thing over and over

again. Also, how nice is it to see Cesaro get a clean fall for a change?

Jimmy Uso is very excited to be Reigns and Ambrose's partner tonight.

### Paige vs. Sasha Banks

Again. Both teams get in a brawl before the match and the other four are ejected. Paige grabs a quick rollup and backslide for two each and a sunset flip gets another near fall. With the quick wins not working, Paige knees Sasha in the face to send her outside. Sasha gets in a shot to the ribs to leave Paige laying as we take a break. Back with Sasha choking on the ropes and getting two off the double knees in the corner.

We hit a quickly broken chinlock before a shot to the ribs sets up chinlock's sequel. Paige fights up with a running knee in the corner and some kicks to the face but Sasha pokes her in the eye. Paige bails into the corner before spearing Sasha down, triggering a brawl for the double DQ at around 9:00.

**Rating:** D+. I really wasn't feeling this one and it came off like a bit way to fill in time instead of having a good match. You would think Charlotte would have played a bigger role here as she has a title shot in four days, though you can almost guarantee that she doesn't, likely due to a Paige heel turn.

Both groups come out to brawl until referees break it up.

We see most of the end of Monday's six man tag and Sting destroying his statue. This eats up ten minutes.

Rollins calls Monday the low point of his career because Sting destroyed the proof of his talent. He's requested a lumberjack match with Ryback tonight so all of the lumberjacks can see that he's still the best in the world. Sheamus comes up and says Rollins might have three matches at Night of Champions. Or maybe two matches tonight.

### New Day vs. Jimmy Uso/Dean Ambrose/Roman Reigns

No trombone this week. Woods goes behind Reigns to start but eventually gets his jaw jacked by an uppercut. Off to Ambrose who stalks Woods

around the ring until Big E. comes in and takes Dean's head off with a clothesline. That goes nowhere until Jimmy comes in to clean house as Ambrose takes Woods out with a suicide dive. Uso dives on Woods and Kingston but Big E. pulls Jimmy over the top and out to the floor as we take a break. There's really no reason for this match to continue, other than this match needs to fill in time on this meaningless show.

Back with Jimmy in trouble and Woods busting out the trombone. Kofi slams Jimmy head first onto the mat but Woods charges into a superkick. Roman gets the hot tag and cleans house with a nice tilt-a-whirl slam to Xavier, followed by a string of clotheslines in the corner. The apron kick knocks Woods even sillier and the Samoan drop puts Big E. down. Dirty Deeds does the same to Woods and there's a Superman Punch for good measure. Jimmy goes up top for the splash but the lights go out. When they come back, Jimmy is out cold on the stage. Wyatt's voice says "they all fall down" and the match is a no contest at 13:08.

**Rating:** C-. So in other words, this was Jimmy Uso substituting for Randy Orton after a long match that didn't change anything. Not a good match for the most part but it got a lot better once Reigns came in and cleaned house. It's a good story but I'm scared of who they might bring in as a partner, especially if it winds up being Erick Rowan or Kane.

### Lucha Dragons vs. Ascension

Stardust is with the Ascension and we're just supposed to forget that they got squashed on Monday. Or maybe we're supposed to forget everything they do here because only Raw counts. I lose track sometimes. Cara hits his springboard cross body to Viktor before it's off to Kalisto for some kicks to the face. Everything breaks down for a few moments until Viktor takes Kalisto down with the STO. The Fall of Man puts Kalisto away at 1:40.

The Dragons get beaten down until Neville makes the save.

Nikki Bella accuses Charlotte of being jealous of her. Charlotte comes in and says Nikki's record attempt ends Monday. Nikki can call her whatever she likes tonight because on Monday, she'll be calling Charlotte champion.



## Seth Rollins vs. Ryback

Lumberjack match and non-title in a rematch of Ryback pinning Rollins on Monday. A shoulder puts Rollins down to start but the champ flips out of a suplex. That's fine with Ryback as he throws Seth to the floor, only to have Rollins run back inside and send Ryback into the post. All of the lumberjacks are about to fight and we take a break. Back with Rollins getting two off a Sling Blade but charging into a fall away slam. Ryback starts cranking it up with clotheslines and a sitout powerslam for two.

Big Show starts beating people up at ringside and knocks Mark Henry out. All the other lumberjacks tell him to get out, leaving about half of them left at ringside. A spinebuster puts Rollins down again and Ryback backdrops him onto the remaining people. The heel lumberjacks come in and beat Ryback down until the good lumberjacks make the save. Neville dropkicks Stardust to the floor and moonsaults onto everyone.....this match is continuing. Apparently lumberjack matches are No DQ, meaning Kevin Owens is allowed to trip Ryback, allowing Rollins to hit the Pedigree for the pin at 11:55.

**Rating:** D+. I'm so glad they threw in the fact that this was No DQ with a minute and a half to go so they could have all of the insanity. It felt like the gimmick was there because it helped them get to the finish, which was their beloved 50/50 booking. I'm so glad that Ryback got to beat Rollins on Monday, only to have Rollins come out on top here to make sure it's all even. You wouldn't want Ryback to get away with a meaningless win. People might start caring about him and that would just be a disaster.

**Overall Rating:** D-. What a waste of my time. You had four matches and three of them were rematches from Raw. The one original match was a way to hammer in the exact same point that we covered on Raw with Orton. In case that's not enough Raw for you, how about showing the last ten minutes of the show to fill in even more time? This was a huge waste of two hours and basically a commercial for Raw, which is going to be a commercial for Night of Champions. In other words, this was the least important episode of Smackdown in a long time and that covers a lot of ground.

## Results

Cesaro b. The Miz – Sharpshooter

Paige vs. Sasha Banks went to a double DQ when both women brawled

Jimmy Uso/Roman Reigns/Dean Ambrose vs. New Day went to a no contest when the Wyatt Family interfered

Ascension b. Lucha Dragons – Fall of Man to Kalisto

Seth Rollins b. Ryback – Pedigree

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# **Smackdown – September 3, 2015: I Approve Of These Developments**

## **Smackdown**

Date: September 3, 2015

Location: American Airlines Arena, Miami, Florida

Commentators: Rich Brennan, Jerry Lawler, Jimmy Uso

This seems like it's going to be another midcard heavy episode as the main event players, save for the champion, who is arguably the lowest of the three people involved in the story, who is known to slum it here on Smackdown. The only major event announced is Lana and Dolph Ziggler appearing on MizTV. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's New Day to continue their SAVE THE TABLES campaign. Woods: "A table is a terrible thing to waste." Kofi calls tables the backbone of human achievement and thinks we wouldn't be here without hard working tables. The pilgrims and Indians had the first Thanksgiving at a table. The Declaration of Independence was written on a table. Walter Cronkite announced the moon landing while sitting at a table. Above all that though: New Day signed their WWE contracts at a table. Kofi: "I remember that!"

The Dudleyz don't respect tables but we can all change that. A Save-The-Tables clap starts up but here are the Dudleyz to interrupt. We see a clip of Woods going through a table and Bubba says history is going to repeat itself. This brings out the Prime Time Players who say the Dudleyz have to earn their keep. You mean like by beating the champs a few days ago? Bubba says they're here to put people through tables and win championships. Titus has two tickets to send them back to Dudleyville and it's time for a match.

#### Dudley Boyz vs. Prime Time Players

New Day is on commentary and Woods wants to know why Titus wants to send the Dudleyz back to where they live. That's not a great gift. D-Von slams Young down and hits that twisting elbow to the jaw of his. A lot of trash is talked and it's time for a break. Back with Big E. doing his reporter voice as it's off to Bubba vs. Young. Woods only sees half of Bubba due to all the camouflage and calls the Dudleyz table poachers. Soon New Day will have heavy heads because they'll be wearing the crown that makes them the greatest of all time.

The reverse 3D gets two on Young but he enziguris Bubba for a breather. New Day starts a SAVE THE TABLES dance as Titus comes in off the hot tag. Titus cleans house as Woods describes him as a German Sheppard that ate too many stale potato chips. Bubba elbows O'Neil in the jaw and it's 3D for the pin at 9:07.

**Rating:** C. New Day continues to be one of the most entertaining things WWE has come up with in years. The key thing to their comedy: it's clearly not scripted. It's obviously the three of them just riffing on what they're seeing and having fun with it, which makes the whole thing that much funnier. The match itself was fine too as the story is simple yet effective. That's often better than something in depth where things get too bogged down by ideas.

Kofi slaps D-Von in the back of the head as New Day leaves.

Post break it's time for a New Day trombone dance party, but Renee Young tells them they're facing Roman Reigns and Dean Ambrose tonight. Woods immediately plays a sad note on the trombone.

### Stardust vs. Neville

No match as the Ascension of all people jump Neville during his entrance. Stardust says Neville is flying too close to the sun and the Ascension are the new conniving cohorts. The Fall of Man leaves Neville laying. Welcome to the Cosmic Wasteland. I heartily approve of this development.

Cesaro is talking about his match with Sheamus tonight when Sheamus interrupts. Tonight, Cesaro will be good but not good enough, just like always as he disappoints the Cesaro section one more time. Cesaro's big comeback: Sheamus does look stupid up close.

### Sheamus vs. Cesaro

Cesaro has taped up ribs from going into the announcers' table on Monday. Sheamus bails to the floor to start and tells the fans that he doesn't look stupid. It's quickly back inside with Cesaro clotheslining him down and MESSING WITH THE MOHAWK. A suplex drops Sheamus with the ribs having no sign of injury whatsoever. Sheamus sends him hard into the corner

though and the ribs are suddenly in agony as we go to a break. Back with Sheamus cranking on a chinlock with a knee in Cesaro's back.

They slug it out from their knees and Cesaro takes over with European uppercuts. A dropkick knocks Sheamus off the top and out to the floor as Lawler isn't sure how the ribs are holding up. Cesaro's big running European uppercut knocks Sheamus into the barricade and Cesaro gets two off a high cross body. So much for the selling. The Irish Curse sets up the Cloverleaf but Cesaro is out before it can go on full. The Crossface is countered by elbows to the ribs and it's a Brogue Kick to give Sheamus the pin at 10:36.

**Rating:** C+. This was a hard one to grade as they beat each other up for a long time but the ribs weren't used for most of the match. The injury played into the ending though and that's a plus, but Cesaro casually hitting a high cross body for two and then just putting a hand on the ribs isn't enough for me. That being said, Sheamus is right: Cesaro comes up short again and it's been old for a long time.

It's time for MizTV. This past Monday, Raw turned into Days of Our Lives with everything happening between Ziggler, Lana and Summer Rae. Oh and Rusev is in there too somewhere. We get a long recap package, meaning we see almost the entire thing. Miz's first guest tonight is Summer Rae, complete with her CALL TO ME CALL TO ME song. That's going to be stuck in my head all day now.

Summer calls Monday unfortunate but admits that there's more to the story. Monday night, Dolph kissed her. Miz: "HE KISSED YOU???" It quickly turned from passion to guilt because she already has the most amazing man in the world. This brings out Dolph and Lana with Ziggler making fun of Miz despite things being kind of serious.

Summer accuses Dolph of having something going on with her for months now and we see a clip of Summer kissing Dolph in June 2014, though it seemed to be more to tick off Fandango. Yeah remember Fandango? WWE doesn't either. Summer says they've been together at hotels as recently as last week and Lana goes after her. Lana storms off and Summer shouts that she can't handle the truth.

### Bo Dallas vs. R-Truth

Dallas takes him into the corner and slams Truth down before driving knees into the head. Off to some chinlockery but Truth fights up and gets two off a side kick. That goes nowhere as Dallas drapes Truth's feet over the top rope and twist him down with a suplex spinning neckbreaker for the pin at 2:37.

Bo gives him another one post match and takes a victory lap.

We look back at Monday's Beat the Clock Challenge with Charlotte getting the Divas Title shot at Night of Champions.

Charlotte praises her teammates when the Bellas come up so Nikki can brag about the record. If there isn't at least a title defense before that night, this is going to reach an even lower level of stupid. Thankfully Charlotte says she's petitioned the Authority to have their match before the record is broken. If that is approved, the whole record comes crashing down. Tick tock Nikki.

### Tamina vs. Charlotte

Tamina shoves Charlotte down to start but gets WOOed for her efforts. A test of strength goes nowhere so Tamina takes her head off with a clothesline for two. Charlotte comes back by kicking her in the face and a spear, followed by Natural Selection for the pin at 3:18.

**Rating:** D+. The match was just there to give Charlotte more momentum, but the idea of the title match taking place before the record could be the most interesting thing to happen to this division in a long time. That is, assuming they take the title off Nikki. Of course it would also make the first month of the Divas Revolution a total waste of time because the title was never mentioned, but did I mention how awesome Stephanie's introduction of it was? That makes up for the whole thing.

Team Bella comes out to pose.

Long recap of the Cena/Rollins/Sting issues from Monday.

Kevin Owens brags about beating Cesaro twice in a row to silence the

Cesaro Section. That brings him to the next people he wants to be quiet: the people who are critical of his weight. He isn't going to change his diet though. Instead, feed him more. That's about as good of an idea as there is for him right now.

### Roman Reigns/Dean Ambrose vs. New Day

Big E. and Kofi here and this is non-title. Ambrose and Kingston get things going with Kofi actually punching him into the New Day corner. Woods wants us to pay attention to the educated fists of one Big E. Reigns comes in for half of a double suplex on Big E. for two but gets sent down into the corner as well. It's time for some trombone playing, followed by a quickly broken chinlock. E. splashes him in the corner but eats a big clothesline, allowing the tag off to Ambrose.

Dean cleans house and feeds Kofi in to Reigns for a clothesline. New Day is knocked outside and Dean dives onto all three as we take a break. Back with Kofi kicking Dean in the chest and slapping on another chinlock. Woods: "I HAVE A TROMBONE!" The Big E. splash gets two but Dean avoids a charge in the corner. He blocks Big E.'s belly to belly superplex and hits a nice missile dropkick. The nip up doesn't work so well though in an unintentionally funny moment.

Reigns comes in to clean house and Jimmy is way too excited. Woods' distraction lets Kofi grab a rollup for two, earning him a big powerbomb for the same. Dean sends E. into the barricade as Kofi springboards into the Superman Punch, drawing in Xavier for the DQ at 12:07.

**Rating:** C+. This was fine and the ending is a lot better than having the Dudleyz beat them clean on Monday. New Day gets to hold up the titles and swear that Kofi was going to kick out while everyone knows they're lying. It's a simple formula, but unfortunately WWE doesn't know how to keep that formula from getting repetitive. I really like New Day moving up the ladder like this though as they're definitely more than just another tag team. I mean, can you imagine the Prime Time Players in this role? It only works with the right kind of act, like New Day.

New Day gets their clocks cleaned (you never want a dirty clock) but Dean wants more. He wants another shot at Strowman and the Wyatt Family RIGHT

NOW. Bray pops up on screen and says let's do this at Night of Champions. Can you hear the footsteps of the apocalypse walking among them in the form of a black sheep? Run.

**Overall Rating:** C. Totally acceptable show here with the wrestling being fine, but above all else we actually got some storyline development for a change. Now granted it would be better if we had some major matches here instead of just the announcement of such matches, but I'll take what I can get where I can get it. Not a bad show here and that's more than you can say about Smackdown most of the time.

### Results

Dudley Boyz b. Prime Time Players – 3D to O'Neil

Sheamus b. Cesaro – Brogue Kick

Bo Dallas b. R-Truth – Draping suplex neckbreaker

Charlotte b. Tamina – Natural Selection

Roman Reigns/Dean Ambrose b. New Day when Xavier Woods interfered

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# Reviewing the Review — Summerslam 2015

We're past what is still called the second biggest show of the year (I've been swayed to the idea that the Raw after Wrestlemania has taken that spot) and things were.....there. I've had the better part of a week to digest the show now and I'm still not sure how I feel about it, so maybe I can figure it out by writing a long winded recap. Let's get to it.

There was no match on the preshow for reasons that aren't clear. I'm sure this will in no way cause the show to feel rushed because there's an extra match packed in.

Host Jon Stewart came out and said he was here to fight Brock Lesnar, with assistance from Mick Foley. The gag was that Foley thought it was to deal with his friend Rock instead of Brock so this isn't happening. Stewart is all "ok" and that's it. This was straight out of the Bundy vs. Gatorwolf days of Saturday Night's Main Event to remind you that Stewart is in fact here.

Sheamus pinned Orton clean in a watchable opener. I say opener because I have issues calling anything these two do good or interesting. There are some people who simply do not have chemistry and Orton vs. Sheamus is one such pairing. I like both guys, but I don't need to see them fighting, especially after Orton pinned Sheamus clean last month. It's a classic case of "why are these two still fighting" and I've yet to hear either of them give a reason other than "we were fighting last month so we should fight again because clean endings mean nothing". Not a good match but the lack of caring really hurt it.

So after that pretty lame opening, let's crank things up a bit by taking eight guys and have them fly around the ring for ten minutes after New Day sang a version of Jay-Z's New York (which might get WWE in trouble because copyright claims have reached the point where a parody song is somehow infringing on someone's intellectual property because.....well because America is obsessed with lawsuits that's why.).

This is one of those matches where you can't bother calling the action because it's all about the frantic pace. Well that and Xavier Woods NOT SHUTTING UP, and that's the entire point. Woods is supposed to be the most annoying guy in the world and fans getting fed up with him proves that he's doing his job exactly right. Eventually New Day got the titles back and oh sweet goodness am I glad they did as the comedy is just excellent, much like their celebratory dance upon getting the titles back. This was a really fun match and probably should have opened the show.

Undertaker walked past Jon Stewart and Stephen Amell and had smoke following him. It's not 1994 and Heaven help us if that's what WWE thinks we should be doing again.

Rusev and Dolph Ziggler had a long TV match that ended in a double countout so we can have the mixed tag that they wanted to do instead. Ziggler and Lana have about as much chemistry as a history book, which makes the story odd as everyone else works pretty well together. If nothing else, Lana in the 80s jeans attire works very, very well so there's something positive here. The match could have been on any given Raw though and that's not good on Summerslam.

Next up was a very nice treat as Stephen Amell and Neville beat Stardust and King Barrett. This worked far better than I was expecting as you had Amell give one of the best performances of all time by a celebrity. It was clear that he wanted to be out there and was having a blast, while also showing off some awesome athleticism. You would think Amell would pin Stardust here but there are rumors that another match might take place, which wouldn't be the worst thing in the world. However, why bother having Stardust take a fall when Barrett can instead?

The Triple threat match for the Intercontinental Title was exactly what I was expecting: nothing great, a way for Ryback to look good, and short. This seemed like the match that was the most hurt by the lack of a match on the preshow as it didn't even get six minutes. That being said, I'm really not sure how much more time would have helped here, as there was no reason for these guys to be fighting other than "I want your title!"

I'm assuming we'll get Miz vs. Ryback for the title soon, because Ryback beating Miz in a non-title singles match in less than three minutes warrants a title match, since, as the Divas Champion would say the next night on Raw: "wins and losses don't matter." And WWE still has the nerve to wonder why no one watches their shows.

Jon Stewart and Paul Heyman traded lines. This was what you would expect.

The Shield guys beat the Wyatt Family in about what you would expect, minus the heel turn. This was done exactly as it should have been: as a fight instead of a match. These guys are capable of having a very hard hitting and energetic tag match so just let them do that instead of trying to make something into whatever it's not supposed to be.

That being said, I never, in my entire life, need to see Roman Reigns and Luke Harper in the same ring again. Not even counting the tag matches, they had 40 minutes worth of singles matches in a month and almost all of them were the same. Factor in all the tags they've been in and my goodness. This may not have been the highest quality match, but it was a lot of fun.

Now we get to one of the major matches of the night. I'm not going to bore you with the details of the match (It's John Cena vs. Seth Rollins for twenty minutes. You know the wrestling itself is going to be good) because this is all about the ending. For reasons that are much easier to comprehend than they seem on the surface, Jon Stewart came in and attacked Cena with a chair (after the required ref bump of course), costing Cena the match and the US Title.

I didn't get this one at first but it became very clear the next night on Raw, which I'll get to when I look at that show again. That being said, gah. I knew something wacky was coming but that doesn't make it any less annoying. I like the idea of Rollins holding the title though, as he had to vanquish Cena at some point to legitimize his reign. This was basically fighting to a draw until Stewart came out though, and that's the best possible thing for Rollins at this point. Heck of a match too, as you had to expect.

So then we got to the nightly "THE BELLAS ARE AWESOME AND EMPOWER WOMEN"

segment of the night, which makes whatever feminist there is in me cringe more every time they speak. PCB beat the other two teams in another match that means absolutely nothing. Unfortunately this meant that we had to sit through the Bellas being in control for about eight minutes and the match just died.

The Bellas are very good at generating heat, but like the old villains of WCW, that all goes away as soon as the bell rings because they're just so boring between the ropes. The match was begging for Sasha Banks, the crowd favorite by a mile, to come in and clean house, so of course she was on offense for about thirty seconds.

This was another moment that made me realize that the Divas Revolution isn't going anywhere. It's another way to feature the Bellas, who started their big story (kind of) a year ago at Summerslam. This is of course ignoring the stuff that led up to Nikki turning heel, meaning they've been the top story for roughly fifteen months now. It's another Bellas story and that's all it was really ever destined to be. As usual, WWE is great at creating false hope, but the fact that their fans are suckered into it every single time should be much more telling.

The next to last match was Kevin Owens vs. Cesaro, which was almost a no win situation. Owens got the pin, which is a good thing as far as him regaining some momentum, but the fact that he beat Cesaro a night after a brutal ladder match really doesn't make Cesaro look good. That being said, Cesaro has gone from red hot to just Cesaro again, because WWE is fine with treating him like a breakout star for a month and then using him to get someone else over time after time. You really have to expect it at this point and that's sad.

Now we get to the main event, which is getting more talk than anything else, albeit only for the last thirty seconds. Instead of just talking about the ending, I'd like to talk a little bit about the match itself, which is being forgotten due to how messy the finish was. This match was what they wanted Wrestlemania XXX to be with the two guys just beating the tar out of each other. Well that and Undertaker's head not being scrambled but I thought that was obvious.

I liked the match more than I was expecting to with the spot of Undertaker sitting up and laughing at Brock before they slugged it out on the mat being a major highlight. However, you could see that Undertaker was getting weaker and weaker out there and I really don't need to see him trying to pull off one more miracle in one more match. Wrestlemania XXX was bad, Wrestlemania XXXI was passable, and this one was a borderline miracle. Just let it go, but you know we can't do that because of how this match ended.

As I'm sure you know by now, Undertaker tapped out in the Kimura but the referee didn't see it. Instead the timekeeper rang the bell, allowing Undertaker to hit Brock low (so much for selling the hold) and put on the Hell's Gate to make Brock pass out. So yeah, this was a way to set up a third match, likely at Wrestlemania, because we need a trilogy because those are cool. It didn't work in the HHH feud and I really don't see it working here either, though this could be better. I'm beyond the point of caring about Undertaker though, as he already lost the Streak and now he's tapped out. What's his career worth now anyway?

So that's Summerslam and my big takeaway from is is that people are talking about how the matches ended, now what the endings mean or lead to. The big stories have been the timekeeper and Jon Stewart, not Seth Rollins beating John Cena or what is likely going to be a featured match or maybe even the main event (Heaven help us). I liked the show well enough, but there's just something about this show that makes me wonder what it accomplished. This felt like a big build to other shows, which isn't what the second biggest show of the year should be about.

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