

New Column: It's A Big World After All

Something I thought about over the ocean.

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

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

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 20, 2015

Location: Sprint Center, Kansas City, Missouri

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, John Bradshaw Layfield

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

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

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

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

Since we haven't talked about them enough yet, we cut to the Authority who brags about how big a main event they have. Stephanie is ready to market things, but HHH thinks Brock should take the night off.

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

Charlotte vs. Brie Bella

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

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

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

Prime Time Players vs. Los Matadores

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

Rating: D. So not only is the feud continuing, but now we're getting the old distraction into a pin finish again? Also, can we please stop giving people wins over champions when it's not going to lead anywhere? This happened a few years back when Kofi pinned WWE Champion Randy Orton and then it went nowhere. If that's what you're going for, just have the champs win and then let it be a post match attack. Finally, if you want to build a team up, STOP HAVING THEM LOSE TO A NOTHING TEAM LIKE LOS MATADORES! That's not how you build up a match, especially when they're not even in the feud.

Big Show vs. Miz

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

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

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

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

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

the Streak being broken because why wouldn't he?

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

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

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

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

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

Luke Harper vs. Roman Reigns

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

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

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

Everyone brawls post match and the Wyatts run.

We get the same recap from the opening.

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

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

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

Paige/Becky Lynch vs. Naomi/Sasha Banks

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

heroes stay in control.

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

Becky rolls away and DIVES for a tag but Sasha makes a save, only to have the hot tag bring in Paige a second later. Paige cleans house but the PTO on Naomi is broken up at the last second. Everything breaks down as the Bellas just keep chattering like they do in everything they say. The Bank Statement makes Paige tag at 13:05.

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

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

Long Undertaker vs. Lesnar recap.

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

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

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

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

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

Sheamus walks out on the match and Owens does the same a few moments later, leaving Rusev down 3-1. This goes about as you would expect it to with the parade of finishers putting Rusev down. Cue Lana to spear Summer down, leaving Cesaro to catapult Rusev into an RK0 for the pin at 14:21.

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

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

Results

Charlotte b. Brie Bella – Figure Eight

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

Big Show b. Miz – Middle rope elbow

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

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

John Cena/Randy Orton/Cesaro b. Rusev/Kevin Owens/Sheamus – RK0 to Rusev

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Battleground 2015 Preview

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

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

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

That is of course after all the weeks of having bad matches and stupid

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

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

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

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

I'll go with the obvious and have Owens take the US Title. As strange as it would be to have the US Champion fighting for the NXT Title, it's clear that Owens thinks the NXT Title means something. If that's not where they go with it, there's always the option of Owens saying the US

Title is more important and saying he'll do the rematch because he signed and a loss means nothing to him. Still though, Cena has nothing left to do with the title so put it on Owens, the best heel going today.

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

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

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

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

Overall, Battleground could be fun if the matches overachieve, but at some point WWE needs to be running on more than just that. There isn't a lot going on here and the big draws are the third match of a trilogy and

Lesnar, who probably doesn't get the title back. Then again, this show doesn't really mean much as we're gearing up for Summerslam, where the real fun takes place.

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Smackdown – July 16, 2015: That Man Is Strong

I'll be back to the normal schedule next week so just one more early Smackdown, unless you like them early. I normally have them done before the show is on the air and could easily post them early if you prefer. Let me know which way you like me doing them.

Smackdown

Date: July 16, 2015

Location: Legacy Arena, Birmingham, Alabama

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Jimmy Uso, Jerry Lawler

It's the go home show for Battleground and this past Monday's show saw the destruction of Kane at the hands of Brock Lesnar, meaning Seth Rollins is all alone on Sunday. My guess is that this week's show will focus on Wyatt vs. Reigns, which is all but set yet still needs a few more details. Like why Wyatt is doing anything and why he just dropped the stuff with Reigns' daughter. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's Reigns to open the show. This all started at Money in the Bank when Wyatt cost him the match, but Bray isn't in his head and Bray can't break his focus. Tonight we have Dean Ambrose/Roman Reigns vs. Big Show/Sheamus and it's time to start a fight, but here's Bray on screen to interrupt. He asks what gave Roman the right to go after him on Monday, but Wyatt knew Reigns was there. For a moment, Bray was just like these people. For once, he saw Reigns being exactly what he should have been.

Bray saw him as a stone monument, but at Battleground, he will be the hammer that breaks the monument down. Reigns is ready to fight but Bray says this is what true fear feels like. Collect your roses gladiator because none of them are real. What is real though is that Bray is back here with everyone Reigns cares about. He's capable of some very evil things and this game has just begun. Wyatt has been trying to bring the fire out of Reigns and knows he'll get bitten by the big dog. One day though, he'll tell the dog to sit and the dog will obey. Roman needs to go kiss the people he cares about because anyone but him.

This helped and is probably as clear of a reason as we're going to get as to why Wyatt has targeted Reigns. I'm still not clear on why his daughter is involved, but maybe the idea is that Reigns isn't what he seems and Wyatt wants to expose him as a fraud? It all started with Reigns in an ad for being a great father so maybe Bray thinks that's not the real Reigns?

New Day vs. Lucha Dragons

The champs are on commentary of course with Woods as the odd man out. Kofi flips over Cara to start but Cara does the exact same thing. Off to E. vs. Kalisto, with the latter hitting a nice springboard wristdrag/headscissors to take New Day down and we take an early break.

Back with New Day stomping in the corner and Titus thinking this would be a fun triple threat match on Sunday. Kofi hurricanranas Cara down and Kalisto gets knocked off the apron for not paying attention. The abdominal stretch keeps Cara in trouble but he finally dives over Big E. and makes the hot tag to Kalisto. Everything breaks down and the Salida Del Sol plants Big E., only to have Kofi break up Cara's swanton. The Midnight Hour ends Kalisto at 10:06.

Rating: C-. Phillips saying that the New Day is on a roll tells you how lame the division has become again in recent weeks. Assuming they win on Sunday, New Day is stuck sitting around waiting on the Usos to come back and then.....well then I have no idea where they're going. I see no reason to believe the Players keep the titles as the lame father of the year award "hype" is over so there's no reason to have Titus as a champion anymore.

New Day says they'll win on Sunday and change the chant up to "NEW! TAG CHAMPS!" The Players chase them off without violence. At least they made the match feel a little more important.

Reigns and Ambrose are ready to take care of Sheamus and Big Show because they both want to get rid of Wyatt. Dean says he hates everyone.

King Barrett vs. Jack Swagger

This is how far Barrett has fallen. Swagger rides him to the mat to start but Barrett punches him in the face a few times. The announcers of course treat this match as a joke by talking about Barrett's nose, because that's what Barrett is these days. An attempt at the Vader Bomb doesn't get to launch so Swagger slams him into the apron, only to get kicked in the ribs. The Bullhammer ends Swagger at 2:35.

Post match Truth comes out so they can shout over each other. Barrett says this has gone on long enough (amen) because he's the real King of the Ring. Truth on the other hand is just another guy who lost in the same tournament, which really isn't helping me care about this feud. Barrett promises to make Truth bow on Sunday.

Recap of Lesnar vs. Rollins, focusing on various beatdowns of both Lesnar

and the car.

Cesaro runs into Kevin Owens, who wishes him luck in his match.

Rusev vs. Cesaro

This should be on pay per view but that's what Smackdown is for these days. They shove each other around to start with Cesaro getting the better of it, only to have Rusev punch him in the face to take over. Rusev loads up a suplex but Cesaro will have none of that as he reverses into one of his own. I could watch Cesaro throw people around all day.

A snap belly to back suplex drops Cesaro again but he rolls some quick Germans for a breather. Back from a break with Cesaro fighting out of a chinlock and a clip of the slam into the spinout Rock Bottom from Rusev during the commercial. The uppercuts stagger Rusev and a nice dropkick puts him on the floor. There isn't much to talk about here as this is quite the back and forth power brawl so far.

Back in and the spinwheel kick stops Cesaro cold but he comes right back with a Neutralizer attempt. Rusev backdrops him down though and nails a superkick. The Accolade doesn't work either though, setting up a USA chant. Jimmy: "I know what's about to happen King!" They head outside again where Cesaro charges into another superkick. Jimmy: "I didn't know that was about to happen King!" Rusev goes up top but dives into an "uppercut" (barely connected and looked awkward), setting up the Neutralizer to give Cesaro the pin at 12:40. Cesaro is the second person to ever pin Rusev in WWE.

Rating: B. Now THAT is more like it. This was treated as a big deal and actually felt like one with the commentators pointing out that Rusev has never been pinned on Smackdown (or on TV ever I believe). Cesaro comes off like a big deal, but at the moment he isn't scheduled to be in action at the pay per view. It's a shame that another bald power guy who happens to hold a title isn't injured, leaving a spot open for a title match that Cesaro could say, win on Sunday, leaving him to do this every week on Smackdown like Daniel Bryan was scheduled to do.

Cesaro jumps into the crowd to celebrate.

Sheamus says Sunday is just another day at the office. Tonight he gets to team with a giant and he hopes Orton is watching the beating that Ambrose and Reigns receive. What is WWE's obsession with Sheamus vs. Orton? They've never had anything resembling a good match so they keep getting pushed because they look like a good match on paper? To be fair it wouldn't be the first time WWE has done something because it sounded good and continued to do so after it failed time after time.

Stardust vs. Neville

Rematch from Raw where Neville lost in what is being billed as a battle of comic book characters, complete with comic page backgrounds on the recap. Stardust drops him with a quick forearm, only to be sent to the floor for the Asai moonsault. Back in and Stardust gets caught holding the ropes on a sunset flip, allowing to pop back up with a victory roll for the pin at 2:20. The good vs. evil concept works and I like Neville being treated as a superhero, but the matches aren't lighting anything on fire, let alone the world.

After a break, Neville says his strategy was just to wait for his window of opportunity to open and then strike. Stardust decks him and says prepare for turbulence during the Altitude Era.

Long recap of the Divas' segment from Raw. It still focuses on Stephanie and therefore it's still not as good as it could be. It's still great, but it shouldn't have been about her.

Sasha/Tamina/Naomi say it's finally fair because the odds are even. Sasha says it's their time to run this division. Naomi: "We bad." They're the trifecta and they're not here to make friends or play nice.

Dean Ambrose/Roman Reigns vs. Big Show/Sheamus

Dean rides Sheamus to the mat to start but Sheamus knees him in the back to take over. That goes nowhere as Dean runs Sheamus over and knocks Show to the floor, setting up the standing elbow drop to both. We come back from a break with Reigns coming in to face off with Big Show because IT WILL NEVER DIE! It's quickly back to Dean to hammer on Big Show in the corner but Sheamus gets in a shot to take over as we're firmly in the

Smackdown main event formula.

Show punches him in the ribs a few times, which the announcers equate to drowning. The Final Cut gets two and makes me remember that the Final Cut used to be a move. An elbow finally misses and it's a double tag to Reigns and Sheamus with the former cleaning house as you would expect. Big Show offers a distraction though, allowing Sheamus to get two off White Noise. Dean's suicide dive is caught by Big Show but the chokeslam through the table is countered into a DDT to put everyone down again. Reigns wins a slugout with Sheamus and hits the Superman Punch but Wyatt comes in for the DQ at 13:52.

Rating: C-. Dull but fine match here as we were just waiting for Bray to run in. I do however like that no one actually jobbed three days before a pay per view because there's no logical reason to have someone get pinned going into a major match. Also, how nice was it to see someone stay down from a DDT for a change? It was a big spot and they treated it like one for a change. That's a rare delicacy, as sad as that really is.

Overall Rating: C+. This is the kind of show they needed to shore things up before Battleground. The World Title match has long since been set so tonight was mostly about setting up everything else, but I'm curious to see where they go with the Intercontinental Title situation. You would think Neville vs. Stardust would be added to the pre-show, but I can't accept the idea of Cesaro not being on the main card. He's earned a spot doing something there and if he's left off for something stupid, it's going to be a shame. The Divas have to get something in there too so Sunday could look very interesting.

Results

New Day b. Lucha Dragons – Midnight Hour to Kalisto

King Barrett b. Jack Swagger – Bullhammer

Cesaro b. Rusev – Neutralizer

Neville b. Stardust – Victor roll

Roman Reigns/Dean Ambrose b. Sheamus/Big Show via DQ when Bray Wyatt

interfered

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Ryback Injured, Out Of Battleground

<http://www.wwe.com/shows/wwebattleground/ryback-injured-27658773>

Sounds legit. I'd assume we get Miz vs. Big Show or a talking segment, but I'd love it if their time was given to Cesaro and/or Rusev. Those guys deserve it after their performances Monday, and I'm sure a lot of fans will be annoyed if they don't make it on but Barrett vs. Truth for the crown makes it instead.

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

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 13, 2015

Location: Phillips Arena, Atlanta, Georgia

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

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

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

Here are Brock and Heyman to get things going, drawing a SUPLEX CITY chant. For some reason the crushed car is brought out as Heyman proclaims Brock's impending dominance over Rollins this coming Sunday. Paul lists off Brock's accomplishments and the various people he's conquered before promising to have Lesnar suplex Rollins all over the place, put his foot on Seth's chest and be proclaimed the champion once again.

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

Brock offers to take Rollins to Suplex City tonight but Kane intervenes

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

Ryback/Randy Orton vs. Sheamus/Big Show

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

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

Back from a second break with an Irish Curse (backbreaker. OH THE SCANDAL!) for two on Orton but he counters Big Show’s chokeslam into a DDT for a breather. Miz gets off of commentary and shouts on a mic as Ryback comes in and cleans house. Big Show has enough of Miz though and chases him up the ramp, leaving Sheamus to take an RKO and top rope splash from Ryback for the pin at 15:21.

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

Network ad.

Rollins doesn’t like the idea of the contract signing but Kane has a

plan.

Dean Ambrose vs. Bray Wyatt

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

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

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

Nikki goes on about how awesome she is and how dominant they are...and here's Stephanie McMahon because she hasn't laid waste to the Divas yet. Stephanie is a face tonight too because there's something cool coming and therefore she just MUST be there to get a piece of the action. The legacy of the WWE rests on her shoulders (yes, Stephanie says this company's history is on HER shoulders) and there's a revolution going on right now in women's sports, ranging from women's soccer to UFC to tennis. These are supposed to be applause lines if that's not clear.

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

Stephanie, the WWE and Paige want this revolution (what is she even talking about?) but courage can't do it alone. Therefore, Paige needs

backup. Instead of bringing this person out though, Stephanie goes on about how amazing they are and FINALLY introduces Becky Lynch. Now, does Becky get to say anything and introduce herself? Of course not, because that would cut away from Stephanie's mic time, meaning the boss gets to introduce Charlotte, in that voice that only Stephanie can deliver.

Cole: "STEPHANIE HAS SHAKEN THINGS UP!" I hate this company at times.

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

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

I'm not going to bother ranting about how Stephanie made this all about her. It's Stephanie McMahon, she's the biggest hound for a spotlight that has ever lived in WWE and you know that if there's a big moment there that people are going to erupt over, she's going to shoehorn her way in despite the fact that there is absolutely no logical reason for her to be involved.

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

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

New Day vs. Prime Time Players/Mark Henry

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

Titus shrugs off a Kofi kick to start so it's off to Darren, who clotheslines E. out to the floor. The Players and Henry throw everyone out to the floor (JBL: "FLYING PH.D!") as we take an early break. Back with Titus taking the rotating stomps in the corner as the announcers talk about how awesome the Divas were. For once, they're actually right. E. gets two off a splash but Titus is quickly up and tagging in Henry to clean house. Everything breaks down and a World's Strongest Slam ends Woods at 8:29.

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

The winners dance.

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

King Barrett vs. R-Truth

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

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

Truth puts on his king attire.

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

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

Rusev vs. Cesaro vs. Kevin Owens

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

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

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

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

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

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

be on the pay per view?

US Title: Rusev vs. John Cena

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

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

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

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

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

We recap Reigns and Wyatt from earlier.

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

Barrett vs. Truth for the crown on Sunday. If Rusev and/or Cesaro aren't

on that show, I lose so much of my faith in this company, meaning I fully expect it to happen.

Stardust vs. Neville

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Results

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

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

R-Truth b. King Barrett – Lie Detector

Rusev b. Kevin Owens and Cesaro – Superkick to Cesaro

Rusev b. John Cena via DQ when Kevin Owens interfered

Stardust b. Neville – Rollup with a handful of trunks

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Monday Night Raw – July 6, 2015: Well Of Course Brock Smash

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 6, 2015

Location: Allstate Arena, Chicago, Illinois

Commentators: Byron Saxton, Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

The big story coming out of last week: product placement and lame action. The shows really aren't lighting the world on fire right now, but a lot of that has to do with a lack of the Authority and Brock, because without the two of them, the show comes off as a glorified Smackdown. Get to the point already or get rid of the Authority as the main focus of the show because otherwise, a show without them on it isn't going to go anywhere. Let's get to it.

The opening recap covers last week's product placement and Rollins reuniting the team.

We open with Heyman and Lesnar coming out to the exact reaction you would expect for them in a smark paradise like Chicago. Heyman talks about how the Authority thinks Brock is still in Tokyo, because they allowed him to show up tonight. Lesnar is a god and hallowed be his name, but he isn't a god of love or charity or kindness. No, Lesnar is a god of violent retribution and the sword that will pierce Seth Rollins' shield.

Heyman brings up the Streak but points out that it wasn't because of any malice towards Undertaker. Heyman: "This one you'll cheer." When Brock took John Cena to Suplex City, it was just because Lesnar wanted the title and not out of disrespect. The same was true for Reigns at Wrestlemania, but it's not the case for Seth Rollins.

No, Rollins has broken the 11th commandment by cashing in Money in the Bank, running away from a rematch and having his Authority buddies attack him two weeks ago. Heyman's job is to sell us on Battleground in St. Louis, but the beatings and the suplexes begin tonight in Chicago. The Beast of Battleground is waiting for the champ tonight, so Rollins better be ready.

Kane is in Hawaii and we have badly photoshopped and unfunny photos to prove it.

The Stooges have taken a road trip and we're going to get pictures later. That....could work?

Big Show vs. Ryback

Non-title and Miz is at ringside in director's chair with a microphone. In an inset interview, Ryback says he is one of the few who can manhandle Big Show and Big Show doesn't like that. Well not many people would but Ryback never was very insightful. Miz starts shouting into the mic but only tells the big guys to hit each other.

The fans really don't seem pleased with this one and Show chops Ryback in the corner. Miz: "ONE MORE TIME! ONE MORE TIME!" Ryback kicks him in the face a few times but Show knees Ryback into the corner. This is a very slow and lumbering match so far which isn't a great choice for the opening match. Miz distracts Ryback so Show can slam him down as we take a break.

Back with Show holding a leg lock and Miz telling Show that he should never retire (WOO!). Ryback powers out and takes out the knee as well before dropping Show with three straight shoulders. The Meat Hook and a splash get two but the top rope version misses. Show hits a chokeslam and middle rope elbow, drawing in Miz for the double DQ (he was smart enough

to hit them both at once) at 9:24.

Rating: D-. I have tried and tried to defend this three way feud but my goodness Big Show is dragging it down. Ryback is trying to become a more interesting character but there's only so much you can do with Big Show as the power moves against him look cool, but once you've seen them a few times (over the last fifteen years or so) they lose a lot of their impact. Let him do comedy again or something, because Show as the big, strong monster is WAY past its expiration date.

Miz attacks both guys and then begs both guys to wait for Battleground. Ignore the large gap behind him where he could run at any time of course. Miz takes a Shell Shock and chokeslam and another Meat Hook drops Show again. At least the champ stood tall.

More Kane hysterics.

The Stooges went to Wrigley Field and weren't impressed. They could at least take the price sticker off the window. That car better bite the dust before the end of the night.

Brie Bella vs. Paige

Paige gets backdropped to the apron to start and the announcers are already on the amount of days Nikki has held the title. So we're just stuck with nothing interesting until we get to AJ because Nikki is interesting or something. Nikki: "BRIE MODE!" You can hear the crowd dying for this one, which could be because this story hasn't changed in weeks now. Fox gets in a cheap shot but Brie knees down her sister/friend at the same time by mistake. Paige sidesteps the middle rope dropkick ala Samoa Joe but the other girls get involved, setting up the Bella Buster for the pin at 3:12.

Rating: D. This story needs to go somewhere already, and by somewhere I don't mean having Naomi and Tamina come in to help Paige. This story has been set up for something major and the same Divas being rotated in one more time certainly isn't it. The Bellas are long past interesting at this point and while Nikki is better than she was, this story needs a rest but we're pretty much confirmed for the next few months because AJ

MUST DIE or something.

Paige gets beaten up post match.

Recap of Wyatt vs. Reigns from last week.

Sheamus vs. Roman Reigns

Get your countouts ready now. Reigns shoves the briefcase out of Sheamus' hands before we start and the brawl is on with a devastating headlock. Sheamus knees him in the ribs to take over but Reigns pulls him off the middle rope and knocks Sheamus outside. They're still firmly in first power gear at this point.

Sheamus actually wins a slugout on the apron and sends Reigns face first into the post as we go to a break. That looked (and sounded) good at least. Back with Sheamus holding a chinlock and a nice loud CM PUNK chant keeping the crowd from being bored. Reigns' best way around this is a bunch of clotheslines, followed by a BIG clothesline in the corner. Feel the intensity!

The Irish Curse is countered and a Samoan drop connects. The Superman Punch is countered into another Irish Curse for two but Reigns Superman Punches him out of the air...and here's Bray. Roman charges up the ramp and Superman Punches...somebody, as Bray pops up on the screen and says anyone but you. Sheamus wins by countout at 11:20.

Rating: C. Decent enough power brawl here but like I said, it was no secret that we were going to get a countout or some kind of wonky finish. It wasn't anything of note, but there's only so much you can do with power brawls, especially when we just had one about forty minutes ago. WWE REALLY needs to work on alternating their styles because you keep getting the same styles of matches over and over and they get old fast.

Post match Randy Orton comes out for an RKO. I had been wondering where he was.

The WWE Network is in Italy. Uh...yay.

Rollins comes in to see HHH, who wants to know what Seth is going to do

about Brock Lesnar. The champ thinks he has Battleground in the bag, but HHH is worried about tonight. Rollins needs to do the unthinkable tonight: have him laid out by the Authority like they did two weeks ago. To be fair, that is pretty unthinkable. Imagine the Stooges and Rollins being a real threat to Brock.

Here are Rusev and Summer Rae to keep this mess going. Rusev loves having a submissive Summer around but gets annoyed at the fans wanting Lana. He rambles on about being better than Dolph Ziggler until Summer tells the fans to give Rusev the respect he deserves. Rusev: "Thank you hot Summer." Is she a radio chick now?

Cue Ziggler and Lana with the former saying Rusev achieved everything he has in WWE because of Lana. Dolph says Lana is his now and it's time for kisses. The girls tease a fight but Rusev blasts Ziggler with the crutch before taking off the boot. This goes on for nearly five minutes with the only highlight being Summer attacking Lana. Ziggler's comeback didn't work and the beating just kept going.

This was WAY too long and my goodness Ziggler sucks in this role. After all the years of being with whatever girl can get him somewhere he's all gaga over yet another good looking blonde because....she likes him? Is there any other reason for these two to be together? Rusev needs to murder Ziggler and then do something bad to Lana and then never speak of this whole mess again.

Post break they actually do the big serious talk about Ziggler being attacked. Ziggler even did a stretcher job. This story SUCKS and there is no need to ever talk about it again. Figure out how your characters work and then don't screw with them because going against established characters is one of the worst things you can do in wrestling or any other form of entertainment.

Bo Dallas vs. Dean Ambrose

Before the match, Dallas talks about how that was a bad thing happening to a bad person. Good things happen to people like him though, as long as you BOLIEVE! The dueling WE BOLIEVE/LET'S GO AMBROSE chants start up as Bo gets two off a clothesline before hitting the chinlock. Bo misses a

knee drop and gets bulldogged down, setting up Dirty Deeds for the pin at 2:59. This was WWE saying "yeah Ambrose is still a thing after losing Thursday. Oh you didn't know he lost Thursday? Well then never mind."

The Stooges got stuck in traffic. Seriously.

R-Truth vs. King Barrett

No entrance for either guy as this feud just keeps going. Barrett stomps him down in the corner to start and a clothesline takes them out to the floor. Truth is sent into the post a few times and we hit the chinlock. A big boot gets two for Barrett and we take a break. Oh freaking joy we get to see more of this match. Barrett hammers away but runs into a series of clotheslines (WAY too popular tonight and in general). Winds of Change is countered into a crucifix for two but a low blow drops Truth. Truth goes up and dives into the Bull Hammer for the pin at 9:37.

Rating: D. So? Barrett has knocked Truth out a few times already, so what difference does it make if he does it again? Why should this horribly uninteresting feud that has made Barrett look even less important than he was when he was Intercontinental Champion? Barrett could be doing ANYTHING else and it would be better but we're stuck with this. The match was boring too, just like everything else they've done.

Back from a break with another look at Zigler being beaten down. This is treated as way too big of a deal after the mess they've made of this feud.

Here's Rollins with an ax handle and the Stooges with their car and their own ax handles. Oh come on man. No one could possibly be that stupid. Rollins is going to burn Suplex City to the ground before going on about how awesome he is a bit longer. He finally asks if Lesnar is just Heyman's....uh....I think you can figure this out, so here's Brock. All three are ready for him so Brock thinks better of it and tells Heyman to bring him something. Heyman brings over an anvil case containing a pair of axes. Oh this is going to be good.

Brock smashes the ax into the car door and can't even get it out, so he breaks a few windows and tears off a door. The door goes flying into the

crowd (apparently hitting a fan, who was ok) and now it's time for the Stooges to come save their car. Noble winds up with a broken arm and Mercury gets suplexed onto the hood, much to the delight of the crowd. Brock chases Rollins out of the ring and holds up the title to wrap things up.

THIS is what Brock should have been doing for the last six months. Just have him break stuff and be a freak of nature. Don't have him get beaten down by Kane and the Stooges like EVERY OTHER FACE EVER. That was the problem with the HHH feud: anyone could have played Lesnar's role. Here, there isn't anyone else that Rollins hasn't already beaten or has any real reason to be afraid of anymore so only Brock really fits.

Lucha Dragons vs. New Day

Woods is the odd man out here and the Players are on commentary, with a shirt for Cole. The Dragons speed things up to start but Kofi comes back with a kick to the ribs (devastating!) before it's off to Big E. Titus goes on about some kind of fungus that Big E. has (maybe he could use a washcloth to clean it up. It didn't make sense when they said it for weeks on end (and yes I know what it is) so why not say it again here?) before the Dragons clean house and dive on all three New Day guys as we take a break.

Back with Kofi getting two on Kalisto before it's off to Big E. for more clubbing forearms. The abdominal stretch with the slaps set up a chinlock from Kofi as we hear about where everyone went to college. The hot tag brings in Cara and Titus takes over on commentary, doing a pretty awesome old school play by play, including a quick rant about how he should have JBL's salary. Everything breaks down and the Midnight Hour ends Cara at 10:16.

Rating: C. This was fine and a nice way to set up the title match at Battleground. Neither of these teams are exactly lighting the world on fire at the moment but it's nice to see something other than the team fighting over and over again. Titus continues to be WAY more charismatic than half the roster and deserves the success he's having.

Steve Austin is on the cover of WWE2K16.

It's Open Challenge time but first we get a package on Owens losing the NXT Title in Tokyo over the weekend. Cena says have no fear because the champ is here, meaning there will be a title match right here on Raw. Again Owens interrupts and says this is the worst part of the show every week because the people have to listen to Cena saying the same garbage over and over again. The bell is about to ring but here's Cesaro one more time. Cesaro says he deserves another shot because he had Cena ready to tap out but Owens cost him the title shot. Owens walks away from the threat of violence and it's time for a rematch.

US Title: Cesaro vs. John Cena

Cena is defending of course. A quick uppercut puts Cena down on the floor and we take a very early break. Stop doing that nonsense and just have the bell after the break. We got maybe 40 seconds of "action" and then miss three and a half minutes. I hate that way of thinking. Back with Cesaro stomping away as he almost has to play the heel here, even though he's turned face for all intents and purposes.

A one arm delayed vertical suplex with a squat gets two but Cena shrugs it off (because it's a suplex) and drops Cesaro with a front face electric chair drop. The AA is countered into a DDT for two and it's off to the chinlock. That's good for a second commercial in about five minutes of actual match time because they're really trying to fill in time. Back with Cesaro catching Cena's shoulder in a backbreaker and countering the Shuffle with a crossface.

That's countered into an AA attempt but Cena has to settle for the STF instead. A rope is grabbed so Cesaro rolls some gutwrench suplexes for two of his own. That was a cool looking spot, as always. Cena blocks the Swing by doing a big situp into a DDT for two of his own and the fans are starting to buy into this. Cena rolls through a cross body into the AA but Cesaro lands on his feet.

Swiss Death is countered into a hurricanrana for two and both guys are down. The fans officially think this is awesome so they've won over one of the tougher crowd. Cesaro makes it even more awesome with a spinning springboard uppercut for an even closer two. They fall to the floor with

Cena backdropping him into the timekeeper's area but the referee takes his time counting. Well to be fair that's not really a main event level finish so you can't go there again.

Cena shoves Cesaro off the top for two off the Fameasser and then tells him to hold the ropes, which Cesaro does to counter another AA. A HUGE Swiss Death connects for two more but a quick AA gets the same. Both guys are spent so Cesaro is able to grab the Swing, setting up the Sharpshooter which he transitions into another crossface, but Cena slips out and puts on the STF.

Cesaro powers out of THAT and lifts Cena up into the air for a snap suplex. That is just scary, scary power. The Springboard Stunner misses so badly that Cesaro just Neutralizes Cena for two instead of going down. Cena's tornado DDT is stopped in midair and Cesaro slaps him down into another crossface, sending Cena into the ropes for a chorus of boos.

The apron superplex (with EASE) gets two but Cena pops back up and floats over into a Batista Bomb (the sign of Cena being desperate) for a sloppy two, as called out by the announcers. Cena takes him to the corner but almost gets caught in a super Neutralizer, only to be countered into a super AA to retain the title at a mind blowing 30:10.

Rating: A-. Yo Vince, I think the guy can connect to the fans. Cesaro is basically where Dolph Ziggler was a few years ago: having really entertaining matches but never being able to show what else he can do because he's never given the chance. Cesaro is one of the rare cases where he nails every single thing he's asked to do and almost everyone is begging for him to move up to the next level, but something about a superhuman freak with a good look who can speak five languages fluently and has nearly fifteen years experience doesn't click with Vince and for some reason the guy never gets the push he deserves.

At least there was this though, which is somehow better than last week's near classic. Cena and Cesaro are guys with incredible chemistry and yet another example of someone going out there and having maybe the match of their lives against Cena. I'm hoping that when Cena retires, people look back at him in awe because this is a once in a generation kind of talent

and we take him for granted.

Owens runs in and eats an AA to close the show.

Overall Rating: C. It took a lot to bail this show out but thankfully the main event is awesome and eats up well over half an hour to close things out. Other than that and the awesome BROCK SMASH segment, there really wasn't much to see here. The wrestling in the first hour was horribly lame and the Rusev vs. Ziggler stuff has to end with Ziggler getting eaten like a Russian stew or the whole thing is an even bigger disaster than I was expecting. The main event leaves this on a very positive note, but there's a lot for it to overcome here.

Results

Big Show vs. Ryback went to a double DQ when Miz interfered

Brie Bella b. Paige – Bella Buster

Sheamus b. Roman Reigns via countout

Dean Ambrose b. Bo Dallas – Dirty Deeds

John Cena b. Cesaro – Middle rope Attitude Adjustment

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of Complete Monday Nitro Reviews Volume III at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

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Wrestling Wars Podcast

Episode 16

I'm back....eventually. I join NorCal about ten minutes in to talk about TNA's latest woes, ROH, the Beast in the East and Battleground. Plus Dimension X.

<http://mightynorcal.podbean.com/e/wwp-16-we-start-off-with-a-solo-effort-that-turns-into-a-kb-run-in-we-cover-beast-in-the-east-battleground-mock-tna-even-a-roh-segment/>

Smackdown – June 18, 2015: They're Getting A Handle On Things

Smackdown

Date: June 18, 2015

Location: First Niagara Center, Buffalo, New York

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Byron Saxton, Jerry Lawler

The ending of Monday's show saw the return of Brock Lesnar as the Authority's big surprise to deal with Rollins, ignoring the history of Lesnar hurting HHH and then Stephanie freaking out on him the night after Wrestlemania when Lesnar destroyed everything and injured Cole, which hasn't been mentioned on TV yet. Let's get to it.

In memory of Dusty Rhodes.

Opening sequence.

Here's Sheamus to get things going. Sheamus holds up the briefcase and laughs at the fans for saying he looked stupid. He feels like a million dollars and promises to be the next WWE Champion. I know it's not a popular opinion but I wouldn't be opposed to that. Sheamus has been making plans to get around Seth Rollins and Brock Lesnar, which would leave everyone out of his way to make him champion.

This brings out Dean Ambrose to remind Sheamus that he pinned him on Monday. Why should that matter? Money in the Bank is a shortcut around silly things like wins and losses and just lets the company put whomever they want in the title scene without putting in the effort. Anyway, Ambrose says the briefcase belongs to Reigns and Dean would have no problem getting it back to its rightful owner. Sheamus wants to fight right now but Kane comes out to uneven the odds. The match is on.

Kane/Sheamus vs. Dean Ambrose

Dean is smart enough to drop to the floor at the bell before he runs back in to low bridge Kane outside. The top rope elbow is broken up though and the double teaming begins. Reigns sneaks in from behind, because somehow he knew Sheamus would be waiting in the normal spot, for the DQ at 1:29.

After a break, the tag team main event is announced.

Roman wants Bray to know he never runs.

Brie Bella vs. Paige

Paige gets a jobber entrance but we're lucky enough to get BRIE MODE. No Nikki here for a change. Brie goes after her to start but Paige drops down as you do when someone is running the ropes, only to have Brie trip over her. Paige's superplex is countered into a sunset bomb (good looking one too) for two as we take a break. Back with Brie putting on a chinlock with her knees in Paige's back before Paige takes her into the corner for some elbows to the jaw. Paige goes up top but Alicia Fox runs out to shove her down, setting up the Bella Buster for the pin and another BRIE MODE at 7:28.

Rating: C. Considering Brie was in there and can't seem to handle running

the ropes, this was better than I was expecting. There's something interesting about the Divas going after Paige and her needing reinforcements (say from NXT?) and at least Alicia is 14% more competent than most of the other Divas.

The Bellas pose on the stage and Alicia is given Bella gear.

Stills of Cena vs. Owens II and then Owens attacking Machine Gun Kelly on Monday.

Owens mocks Renee Young for possibly being a Machine Gun Kelly fan but blames Kelly for putting his hands on Owens first and on Cena for not being there to save him. Kevin doesn't need to pander to the crowd and likes it when people earn title shots, meaning there will be no open challenge. This brings in Cesaro, with headphones around his neck, who would love to get in the ring with Owens tonight. He even puts his hands on Owens' shoulder to make sure Owens gets the point.

Dolph Ziggler vs. Bo Dallas

Before the match, Dallas calls Lana a rebound girl. She's broken Rusev's heart and is now with Ziggler, who definitely should have made her swipe left (online dating thing I guess). Ziggler dropkicks him at the bell but Bo grabs a cravate. Rusev is watching in the back as Ziggler ducks a right hand and hits the Zig Zag for the pin at 1:12.

Rusev freaks out over a post match kiss.

Tough Enough stuff.

Xavier Woods vs. Neville

Woods takes over fast and stomps Neville about 20 times in a row. We're already in the cobra clutch for a bit before New Day tries to get involved, drawing out the Prime Time Players to even the odds. Back in and a kick to the head looks to set up the Red Arrow but Kofi offers a distraction to break it up. Everyone on the floor gets into it and a dropkick sets up the Red Arrow to give Neville the pin at 2:57. I'm getting into this six man feud.

Here's Seth Rollins with something to say. After looking at a clip of the end of Raw, Rollins brags about being the biggest star in WWE. However, he's under constant scrutiny and always being disrespected by these fans. That's what happened this Monday on Raw, as people are instantly thinking Lesnar will be the next WWE Champion. Rollins was shocked when he saw Brock but at Battleground, he's going to get to prove that he really is the diamond and he can't wait.

We recap Bray's promo on Reigns from Raw.

Ambrose asks Reigns how long it takes Sheamus to do his hair but Reigns is focused on Wyatt. Dean asks about Bray but Reigns doesn't want to talk about it. Just handle business tonight so he can get home to his family.

Kevin Owens vs. Cesaro

Non-title and Owens pops Cesaro in the jaw to start. Cesaro does just the same to knock Kevin outside for a suicide dive. Back in and Cesaro can't get him up for a suplex so Owens sends him face first into the post as we take an early break from a promising power brawl. We come back to a chinlock of course because how else do you expect to come back from a break? Owens finds it boring as well as he jumps to the middle rope and spins into a tornado DDT for two.

Cesaro comes back with his reverse Angle Slam for two of his own. That earns him snake eyes (a move that hasn't been seen in a while) and the Cannonball for two, shocking Owens, because he's a good heel who can't believe that someone could kick out of any of his offense. A dropkick knocks Owens off the top and both guys are down again. Is there anything Cesaro can't do? I'd bet he's a world class knitter. Owens crotches him to break up the apron superplex and the Pop Up Powerbomb is good for the pin at 10:38.

Rating: B. Owens continues to master the power brawling style and hopefully this leads to a singles push for Cesaro. The guy is incredibly talented and the multiple languages should get WWE some international help if they let him go to some other countries for publicity. This was a fun, hard hitting match though as both guys got to throw each other around, which is always entertaining.

Time for Miz at the Movies where he talks about all the movies starring wrestlers this year. Tonight's movie: Vendetta, starring Dean Cain and Big Show. Apparently Big Show was a jerk and Miz should have had the role, as well as the Intercontinental Title. Miz rants about his resume and wants to know why he isn't being treated like a superstar.

Dusty Rhodes tribute video.

Sheamus/Kane vs. Dean Ambrose/Roman Reigns

Ambrose and Sheamus get things going with the latter stomping away in the corner. Dean comes back with chops and punches as they've forgotten the whole wrestling thing so far. Everything breaks down for a bit and the Shield brethren clean house to take us to the early break. Back with Dean hitting the dropkick against the ropes on Kane but Sheamus pulls him outside to take over.

Some knees get two for Sheamus back inside and it's off to Kane to work on the knee that was destroyed in the ladder match. Smart man that old giant. Sheamus slaps on a Brock Lock for a bit before it's back to Kane, who gently lifts Dean throat first into the bottom rope. It's called a catapult but that's being more generous than it is to call Kane interesting. Dean gets in some right hands and the top rope elbow, finally allowing for the hot tag despite the bad knee.

Reigns comes in off the hot tag and cleans house with a series of clotheslines to Kane and a Samoan drop to Sheamus. The Superman Punch is broken up by Kane grabbing both Shield guys by the throat but the rebound lariat breaks it up. Dean dives on Sheamus but here's Wyatt with the picture of Reigns and his daughter as he sings I'm A Little Teapot. The distraction lets a Brogue Kick connect for the pin on Reigns at 12:57.

Rating: C. This was fine for a long way to build up the Reigns vs. Wyatt story. There was little chance that Wyatt wasn't going to get involved somewhere in here and that wasn't the worst way in the world. I could go for a more sinister Wyatt who gets inside your head instead of just saying he's scary of whatever he meant in the last few months.

Bray says Happy Father's Day and the picture is next to Reigns to end the

show.

Overall Rating: C+. I liked this better than I was expecting to as they gave us a good match with Owens vs. Cesaro (no real surprise there) and nothing bad. That's a major key to a good show these days, especially with so much stuff packed in: nothing on here was really bad. Some stuff was better than others, but everything was either quick enough to not be bad or good enough to be acceptable. Solid show this week and it went by fast.

Results

Kane/Sheamus b. Dean Ambrose via DQ when Roman Reigns interfered

Brie Bella b. Paige – Bella Buster

Dolph Ziggler b. Bo Dallas – Zig Zag

Neville b. Xavier Woods – Red Arrow

Kevin Owens b. Cesaro – Pop Up Powerbomb

Kane/Sheamus b. Roman Reigns/Dean Ambrose – Brogue Kick to Reigns

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Elimination Chamber 2015: The Future Is Here

Elimination Chamber 2015

Date: May 29, 2015

Location: American Bank Center, Corpus Christi, Texas

Commentators: Michael Cole, Booker T., Jerry Lawler

It's another pay per view just two weeks after Payback but the card has been put together fairly well this time. The main event this time is WWE World Champion Seth Rollins defending against Dean Ambrose, plus the Tag Team Titles and Intercontinental Title being decided inside the Chamber, both for the first time ever. Let's get to it.

Pre-Show: Zack Ryder vs. Stardust

Bonus match. Ryder had a decent match against Cena on Monday so it's nice to see him get a PPV spot, even if it's something like this. Stardust hits some shoulders to start but Zack punches him to the floor for a quick baseball slide. Back in and the announcers talk about the World Title match as Stardust cranks on the arm. That goes nowhere so let's talk about Love Boat.

Ryder fights back up as the announcers transition into a discussion of Arrow's Stephen Amell wanting to fight Stardust at some point. JBL promises us a new move from Stardust called the Queen's Crossbow (Arrow reference), which winds up being Cross Rhodes and it puts Ryder out at 5:53.

Rating: D. Well so much for Ryder. He had a nice little comeback and the fans liked him, but we need to keep Stardust strong for a match with a celebrity which is probably coming at Summerslam. Nothing match here and that's the problem with pre-show matches. Ryder could be very good in a midcard role but this is what we're stuck with instead. Joy indeed.

It's time for MizTV with special guest Daniel Bryan. We look at Bryan vacating the title and Miz said that was hard even for him. In his time

away, Bryan has written a book but his career isn't over. Miz thinks he can help Bryan with marketing and merchandising and it's only going to cost him 10% of the profit.

Bryan passes but promises he'll be back. Miz wants to slap him in the face but knows he can't so he has some advice for Bryan....which we don't hear as Bryan thinks it's going to be boring. Therefore, he's brought someone who also thinks Miz is boring: Axelmania and Macho Mandow. House is quickly cleaned and the good guys celebrate. Nothing to see here as it was just a big commercial for Bryan's book.

The opening video sets up both Chamber matches with a focus on the structure itself. Owens vs. Cena gets some hype as well.

Tag Team Titles: Lucha Dragons vs. Ascension vs. Los Matadores vs. Prime Time Players vs. Cesaro/Tyson Kidd vs. New Day

Inside the Elimination Chamber, no tags required, New Day is defending, all three champions will be allowed in and we have four minute intervals. Two teams start and one more enters every minute. As the name suggests, it's elimination rules and the last team standing wins the titles. Lucha Dragons and Ascension get things going (these teams can never escape each other) with the Dragons hammering on the power guys as fast as they can but Ascension starts slugging Cara down in the corner.

Sin escapes and throws Kalisto up onto the New Day pod but they try to pull him down inside. Cara gets slammed down but Kalisto kicks both Ascension members down, allowing Sin Cara to get up and hit a HUGE Swanton off a pod to crush Viktor. Kalisto loads up a dive of his own but New Day pulls him down to break it up, giving us New Day doing the LUCHA dance. Cesaro and Kidd are in next and Cesaro starts busting out the European uppercuts, including Tyson launching Konnor into Swiss Death for two.

Kalisto is still on top of the pod until Cesaro superplexes him down and Kidd adds a springboard elbow drop for two with Cara having to dive in for a save. Only Kidd and Cesaro are on their feet and Kidd slaps the Sharpshooter on Viktor but Konnor breaks it up. The La Mistica mat slam plants Konnor as Lawler calls JBL JR by mistake. Cara powerbombs Kidd as

Kalisto is on top of the Prime Time Players' pod.

Los Matadores, with Torito on top of their pod, are in third with the bull hitting a good looking hurricanrana on Konnor. During the entrance, Kalisto has climbed to the top of the Chamber itself and drops down onto everyone for one of the biggest crashes (or at least the highest) I've ever seen.

Torito gets thrown into Fernando, setting up the Fall of Man on Diego for the first elimination. Did anyone buy Los Matadores as a real threat anyway? Kalisto, thankfully able to walk, climbs the corner but gets pulled down as well for another Fall of Man to get rid of the Dragons. There goes my pick of course. So we have Ascension vs. Kidd/Cesaro at the moment but the Prime Time Players are added...with Ascension nailing them as soon as their pod opens.

Titus fights back and throws both guys into the ring so Young can hit his gutbuster on Viktor for a quick elimination. Things settle down a bit with Titus suplexing Young onto both guys for two, but Cesaro pops up and drills O'Neal with a clothesline. Cesaro loads Young up for a gutwrench superplex but Titus adds a powerbomb to make it a Tower of Doom for two. New Day comes in to complete the field but Cesaro and Kidd are all over them with a triple suplex.

Things get smart in a hurry as Cesaro and Kidd throw Woods into the pod and shut the door to even things up. The Swing into the dropkick knocks Kofi silly but Young sneaks in to roll Cesaro up for the elimination. It's the Prime Time Players vs. New Day for the titles and Big E. gets Woods out of the pod to make it 3-2. New Day stomps Titus against the chamber wall and get his head through the chain.

Young fights back and sends Big E shoulder first into the pod with his head hitting the pod for good measure. Everyone is down but Titus frees himself and starts throwing Big E. into the wall. Xavier gets the same treatment and the gutbuster takes out Kofi for two. Big E. is back up and suplexes Darren on the cage floor, only to walk into a powerslam from Titus. Not that it matters though as Trouble in Paradise sets up a triple pin to retain the titles at 19:34.

Rating: B. This was a lot of fun and the best choice they had on the card for an opener. New Day winning will be worth it for the victory promo alone and the more I think about it, the more I like the booking. Any team can say they haven't gotten a fair shot at them since it was 3-2 so this doesn't close all the doors for challengers. I love this protecting the losers booking they've had lately and it helps so much in places like this.

Rusev is out of the Chamber with a broken foot. No replacement has been announced yet.

Ziggler is getting ready when Lana comes up. Tonight isn't about showing Rusev up but about getting the title around Ziggler's waist. Dolph says that after he wins the title, maybe it can be about them.

Divas Title: Nikki Bella vs. Naomi vs. Paige

No one is allowed at ringside. Nikki is defending after Paige won a battle royal a few months back but was laid out by Naomi. The champ is quickly taken to the floor and thrown into the announcers' table, leaving Paige to hit her clotheslines on Naomi. Nikki is quickly back in with a facebuster for two on Paige. The Alabama Slam plants Paige again but Naomi rolls Nikki up for two.

Naomi starts cleaning house and loads Paige up for a belly to back superplex, only to have Nikki come in for a Tower of Doom. The Rack Attack to Paige is broken up with a Rear View for a near fall with Paige making the save. Naomi heads to the corner but gets caught in an electric chair from Paige, only to be countered into a reverse hurricanrana. It didn't go smoothly but it could have been a lot worse. Not that it matters as Nikki Rack Attacks Naomi to retain at 6:05.

Rating: C. What was I thinking to question Nikki's title reign of awesomeness that is TOTALLY better than Trish and Lita's reigns combined? The match was fairly good but again, there's only so much you can do other than cram in spots with just six minutes. I have no idea where they can go next with Nikki aside from another Brie feud or facing an NXT callup.

We recap Kevin Owens vs. John Cena. Owens answered a Cena open challenge a few weeks back but said he already had the prize he wanted in the NXT Title. He got in a surprise powerbomb on Cena and stepped on the US Title to show how big of a jerk he was. This set up a showdown tonight in a champion vs. champion match.

Kevin Owens vs. John Cena

Alright WWE. This is your chance. You can elevate someone or go with the same old stuff. Owens is very fired up to be in there and actually doesn't drop to the floor at the bell as is his custom in NXT. A quick shoulder puts Owens down but he takes Cena into the corner and puts a boot in his face. Cena gets punched to the apron so Kevin can rip at his face like a villain should.

The fans chant for NXT and we hit the chinlock. Cena powers up into an AA attempt but Owens calmly escapes and hits a DDT for two. Owens opts to just punch Cena in the face (I love it when people do that) for a bit before a backsplash connects for two more. Back up and Kevin tries a swinging Rock Bottom but Cena counters into a crucifix, only to have Owens slam him down in a kind of Samoan drop for another near fall. The Cannonball gets the same and Owens says it's time for Johnny boy to give up.

The pop up powerbomb is countered with a leapfrog and Cena initiates his finishing sequence. Cena loads up the AA but gets countered into the pop up powerbomb for a close two, stunning Owens. Kevin gets crotches on top but headbutts Cena down, only to miss a moonsault of all things. The AA gets two (take a shot!) and both guys are down. Owens nails a superkick and tries his own Five Knuckle Shuffle (because he's that awesome) but Cena pulls him down into the STF.

Cena tries to pull him back to the middle but Owens kicks him away and hits an AA of his own (good one too) for another near fall. Both guys are down again and it's Cena up first for the two off the top rope Fameasser. Cole calls that patented, but I'm not sure Cena ever filed that paperwork. Back up again and Owens loads up the package piledriver (his pre-WWE finisher) but slams Cena to the side instead of dropping him on

his head.

Kevin starts talking more trash before winning a slugout, only to get caught in the springboard Stunner for two. Frustration is setting in so Cena takes him up top for a superplex, only to have Owens counter into a spinning superplex of his own for two. Owens runs to the top for a Swanton for two more and now Kevin is frustrated. Cena nails that big running clothesline and Owens is rocked. John goes for another but walks into the pop up powerbomb for the completely clean pin at 20:03.

Rating: A. My jaw dropped on the pin. This is EXACTLY the way they should have gone as Cena hit him with the best and Owens pinned him in the middle of the ring. The key thing here is Cena isn't going to lose a thing out of this as he'll be fine in about two minutes. Owens on the other hand looks like the biggest new deal in years and couldn't get a bigger rub if they tried. Great, great stuff here and I loved the booking so much.

Owens says he debuted on Raw a few weeks back and started a fight, but tonight he finished it. He has some veteran advice for Cena: it's time for him to go because his time is way up and THE CHAMP IS HERE!

Pre-show panel chat.

Bo Dallas vs. Neville

Neville has a bad knee coming in, partially thanks to Dallas. The knee is fine enough for Neville to do his flips out of the corner before sending Bo to the floor to avoid a Red Arrow attempt. That's fine with Neville as he hits a huge moonsault to the floor. Back in and Neville puts on a chinlock (rare sight for a good guy) but Bo gets to the ropes ("LET ME GO!"). He offers peace but starts elbowing Neville in the face and gets two off a running forearm.

Off to a cravate on Neville to slow things way down as the announcers talk about football from the 1960s. Back up and Bo elbows him in the head, only to be sent out to the floor. Bo's stunned look is great. Neville comes back with kicks to the head and a running forearm, followed by a standing shooting star for two. The Bodog is countered and the Red

Arrow connects for the pin at 9:07.

Rating: C-. Nothing great here as it was basically a long TV match. Neville winning was the right call as Bo can be back off another cheesy promo, but Neville gets a nice push with a win he should have gotten. The knee didn't go anywhere, but at least there was a story coming into the match.

Reigns and Ambrose are in the back when HHH comes in and bans Reigns from ringside. If Reigns interferes, Ambrose will be disqualified. You mean like in any match?

The Chamber is lowered.

Intercontinental Title: Sheamus vs. Ryback vs. Dolph Ziggler vs. King Barrett vs. R-Truth vs. ???

The title is vacant coming in due to Daniel Bryan vacating it due to injury. There are four minute intervals again and Rusev's replacement is.....Mark Henry. Bray Wyatt had been rumored but I like this better as Wyatt isn't likely winning so why give him another loss? Ziggler and Barrett get things going. They trade rollups to start but Barrett shrugs him down and puts Dolph on the top rope for a kick to the ribs.

We hit a chinlock on Dolph for a bit before he realizes this is the freaking Elimination Chamber and fights back with his dropkick and neckbreaker for two. Barrett sends him into the cage and talks a lot of trash until R-Truth is in third. The King is smart enough to jump Truth before he can get out of the pod and stomps him down. He kicks Truth and Ziggler in the face to keep control but Truth gets back up for the spinning forearm and ax kick.

Barrett rolls away from the cover but Ziggler is back up with a kick to the face for two. Back up and Barrett drives Ziggler through a pod wall, freeing Mark Henry to come in before his entrance. There's nothing the referee can do because it's no disqualification, and likely because the show is threatening to run long and they need to save some time. Ryback comes in a few seconds later and runs Henry over for two. Henry stands around as Barrett plants Ziggler with Wasteland, only to break it up at

two like the schmuck that he is.

Back up and the parade of finishers eliminates Barrett first because OF COURSE IT DOES! The four in the ring pair off with Ryback stomping Ziggler into the corner and Henry doing the same to Truth. Sheamus is supposed to be in last but the door won't open. Ryback, Truth and Ziggler trade rollups as they try to fix the door before Henry gets triple teamed. Shell Shock gets rid of Truth and a very delayed suplex plants Ziggler.

Ryback's Meat Hook is countered by a superkick and all three are down. With all three down, Sheamus takes out the Celtic cross that he had put in the door to keep the door stuck shut. Well that was smart. A Brogue Kick gets rid of Henry in a hurry and we're down to three. Ziggler counters a suplex into a small package for two but Sheamus counters the running DDT. The second attempt gets two but a quick Brogue Kick gets us down to Sheamus vs. Ryback.

They trade powerslams with Ryback getting the better of it and driving shoulders to the ribs in the corner. The Meat Hook doesn't work and Sheamus tries to get back in his pod. Ryback picks him up before he can get in, only to have Sheamus counter into White Noise on the cage floor for two. The ten forearms are countered but Sheamus hits the Regal Roll on the cage again. A Brogue Kick is countered into a powerbomb into the ring and Shell Shock gives Ryback his first title at 25:06.

Rating: C+. Well that was a surprise. I didn't like the action as well as I liked the first one but it was still a fun match. They've set up Ryback as never having won a title so this was a good way to pay that story off. Ryback has been pushed pretty strong since returning (ignore the loss at Payback) and this was the right call for a step up.

Daniel Bryan congratulates Ryback and presents him with his new title.

We look at Owens pinning Cena earlier tonight. The rematch is official for Money in the Bank.

Dolph Ziggler, Neville, Roman Reigns, Randy Orton, Kofi Kingston and Sheamus are official for the Money in the Bank ladder match. More will be

announced later.

We recap Ambrose vs. Rollins. The theme is that Ambrose made a bad decision by trusting Rollins in the Shield but tonight no one can help him, including his mommy and daddy.

WWE World Title: Seth Rollins vs. Dean Ambrose

Dean is challenging but has to deal with Kane and the Stooges at ringside. Rollins grabs a headlock to start but Dean counters into an armbar. Back up and the champ stomps away in the corner until Dean goes back to the arm to take over again. Dean drapes him over the middle rope for a Fameasser but the Stooges offer a distraction so Seth can crotch him into the Tree of Woe.

A huge top rope double stomps gets two on the challenger and Rollins takes over. We hit the chinlock for a bit followed by a clothesline to put Dean back down. Dean comes back with a sitout Tesshocker (belly to back suplex but he slams Rollins face first instead of dropping him back) for two. The Stooges pull Rollins to the floor but Dean dives through the ropes to take everyone out. Back in and Rollins tries to counter a superplex into a sunset bomb, only to have Dean nail a Cactus Clothesline to put both guys outside again.

More Stooges interference lets Rollins take over again and the top rope knee (really a shin) to the head gets two. Dean finally comes back with a tornado DDT (second person tonight to use that) and the running dropkick against the ropes. A clothesline turns Rollins inside out for two more and the flying standing elbow gets the same.

The Rebound clothesline is countered by a clothesline from the champ and a suicide dive puts Dean down again. Back in and the buckle bomb is countered with a clothesline (we get it) out of the corner but Dean opts to dive on Kane and the Stooges. The referee gets bumped and Dean nails Dirty Deeds, drawing in another official for the pin at 21:48. Lawler: "This may start a new Attitude Era." Oh shut up.

Rating: C. I don't buy for a second that this is going to stand so I'm not going to bother treating this very seriously. This felt like a long

Raw match instead of something worth watching, and the ending is clearly there to set up a rematch at Money in the Bank. The match was decent but it had the recurring problem of all WWE pay per views: you don't bother caring about the meat of the match because you're just waiting on the wacky finish.

And of course it doesn't count because the first referee says the Stooges pulled him to the floor for a DQ. Dean gets beaten down but Reigns comes down the ramp for a surprise and beats everyone up. Dean and Roman leave with the belt to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. I liked the show for the most part but this could have been put in a different order to make things flow better. Swapping the Chamber matches would have helped a lot and having Owens vs. Cena later in the card would have been a good move. Still though, for a throw together show to get people to watch for free and then hope they forget to cancel in the next hour so you get some bonus buys is a decent enough idea. Owens vs. Cena II doesn't need to happen but you know it's going to and will likely set up a big showdown at Battleground. Good enough show but mostly nothing worth seeing again.

Results

New Day b. Prime Time Players, Ascension, Los Matadores, Lucha Dragons and Tyson Kidd/Cesaro – Trouble in Paradise to O'Neal

Nikki Bella b. Paige and Naomi – Rack Attack to Naomi

Kevin Owens b. John Cena – Pop up powerbomb

Neville b. Bo Dallas – Red Arrow

Ryback b. Mark Henry, King Barrett, Dolph Ziggler, R-Truth and Sheamus – Shell Shock to Sheamus

Dean Ambrose b. Seth Rollins via DQ when Jamie Noble and Joey Mercury interfered

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