

# Monday Night Raw – December 30, 2013: Daniel Bryan... .Says Yes?

## Monday Night Raw

Date: December 30, 2013

Location: Richmond Coliseum, Richmond, Virginia

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, John Bradshaw Layfield

It's the final show of the year tonight and the main story is that a large portion of the roster is at a house show in Toronto. There's no Cena, Orton, Wyatts, Big Show or several others tonight, meaning we could be in for a very different kind of show. There's also been a major event spoiled but I'll save it in case you haven't seen it yet. Let's get to it.

Here's Punk to open things up. He's excited for a new year but wants to reflect on what he's done in 2013. After starting off the year as the longest reigning champion in 25 years, he went one on one with the great one, stood toe to toe with Undertaker, lost a friend in Paul Heyman and then beat the tar out of him. However, this hasn't been CM Punk's year. Instead, this year belonged to the Shield.

Punk has a proposition for the Shield tonight and will present it to him whenever their paths cross. Here they are immediately with Ambrose dropping his belt as they come over the barricade. Ambrose wants a good reason why they're not ending Punk right now. Punk says he's the best, but he wants to fight the best member of Shield. Ambrose says he's ready right now but Punk was talking about Reigns and Rollins because he's beaten Dean half a dozen times.

If Ambrose is the weak link, Punk wants to find out who is the strong link. If it's Reigns, let's find out right now. Rollins says he (Rollins) is the best and he'll fight Punk tonight. Punk isn't sure Rollins is the best and neither is Reigns who gets in Seth's face. Brad Maddox returns from whatever hole he fell into about six weeks ago to make the match

right now.

### Seth Rollins vs. CM Punk

Rollins bails to the floor from an early GTS attempt and we take a break 20 seconds in. Back with Rollins taking Punk into the corner but coming out with an elbow to the jaw. The announcers talk about the potential split in the Shield as Punk tries a sunset flip out of the corner but there's no Rollins there. They do the spot again with Punk swinging around the ropes to put Rollins in the Anaconda Vice. CM lets go of the hold and slams Punk down to take over.

Punk sends Rollins into the corner and tries a small package but they botch every bit of it with Rollins stumbling around instead of going down. We hit the reverse chinlock from Rollins as he stays on the back. Rollins stomps Punk down for two and it's off to a regular chinlock. Punk fights up and suplexes Rollins down but gets knocked off the apron as we take a break. Back with Punk missing a charge into the corner to injure his shoulder and stop a comeback.

Rollins goes up but misses a backsplash, allowing Punk to get two more off a rollup. Punk comes back with the running knee in the corner but Rollins catches him coming and throws Punk into a buckle bomb. The Blackout misses but Seth enziguris him down for two. Reigns slaps the mat and tells Rollins to end this so Seth loads up a GTS, only to be shoved away and hit with a running knee against the ropes. Punk tries the Macho Elbow but Rollins rolls away, only to have Shield pull Punk face first into the middle buckle.

Seth goes up but gets crotched, only to block a Punk superplex attempt. Rollins hits a high cross body but Punk rolls through into the Anaconda Vice. Ambrose comes in but makes no contact so the match continues. Punk tries the GTS but Rollins reverses into the standing Sliced Bread. The referee is with Shield so the count is delayed and just gets two. Punk backdrops Rollins onto Ambrose and Reigns but Rollins blocks a suicide dive attempt. Seth tries a sunset flip but Punk catches him on the shoulders and puts Seth to sleep for the pin at 18:12.

**Rating:** B-. The match was solid and continued to make Rollins look great

but there were some bad moments with the small package standing out. It's still good stuff and with so many people gone, they had to have long matches like this to fill in the time. The Shield split should be interesting to watch.

Brad Maddox talks about how important tonight is when the Authority comes in. After some sucking up, Maddox thinks he's ready to take a step forward. Daniel Bryan comes in and demands a shot at Bray Wyatt before the year ends. Maddox makes a gauntlet match with Daniel against the Wyatts. Stephanie is impressed but is going to top him by naming the main event for the Royal Rumble.

Here's Stephanie to brag about what the Authority has done. Their biggest accomplishment: crowning a single WWE World Heavyweight Champion in Randy Orton. This sets up a long video package on Orton's career to fill in more time. Stephanie announces the main event of the Royal Rumble: a traditional match with the fall coming by pinfall or submission only as Orton defends against...John Cena. Ok then.

We recap Bryan vs. the Wyatts.

HHH has an announcement of his own for later.

### Curtis Axel vs. Dolph Ziggler

Ziggler still has that stupid pink streak in his hair. Also it's good to see that he's back this fast after being DDT'd on the floor on Friday. Axel quickly throws Dolph to the floor for two and it's time to choke. Ziggler reverses a whip to send Axel face first into the middle buckle before pounding away with right hands. A neckbreaker gets two for Ziggler but Axel comes back with a suplex and some trash talk. He talks so much that Ziggler pops up and hits the Zig Zag for the pin at 4:20.

**Rating:** D+. Well that happened. Neither guy is going anywhere at all and it's good that things only got as bad as they did this year. Axel just needs to be repackaged already while he still has something going for him at all. There's just nothing to him anymore and it's getting more and more depressing.

How to download the App.

You can pick Sandow's opponent tonight: Khali, Miz or Kofi.

Next week: Raw Old School. I'm so in.

### Intercontinental Title: Fandango vs. Big E. Langston

We actually get big match intros for this one. Langston takes him to the mat with ease and actually does some amateur stuff for a change. Fandango comes back with a spinwheel kick for two and pounds away on the champion. Langston pops up and leapfrogs over Fandango before hitting a hard shoulder to send him outside. Back in and Langston charges again but hits his knee on Fandango's head. Fandango puts on a modified Indian deathlock but Langston punches him in the face for the break. Big E. misses a charge into the post though and we take a break.

Back with Fandango still on the knee and putting on a series of leg locks. Langston fights out of a chinlock and tries a belly to belly despite being on one leg. The Warrior Splash is blocked by another shot to the knee and Fandango gets two off a tornado DDT. The guillotine legdrop connects but the champion rolls to the floor. Fandango throws him back inside and kicks Langston in the face but it only seems to wake Big E. up. An overhead belly to belly sets up the Warrior Splash and the Big Ending retains the title at 13:00.

**Rating:** C+. Now why is this so hard? They're building up challengers of the week for Langston and having him mow them down after getting in trouble during the matches. That's how you build up both a champion and a title but for some reason it's NEVER done anymore. If they keep this up, Langston will come out looking great.

More on Bryan vs. Wyatts.

Here are Booker T, the Prime Time Players, a bunch of jobbers and the Divas for a New Year's party. We're going to get a New Year's Spinarooni but here's Bad News Barrett on a rising platform to stop the fun. Barrett says the new year is supposed to be about new beginnings but it's really just about bringing us one year closer to the apocalypse.

The reality is everyone will keep stabbing each other in the back for whatever they want while everyone else is going to pollute the environment before holding their hands out for donations once Mother Nature takes their homes away. Bad News Barrett will be here to tell us how bad it is of course.

Sandow says he'll quit if he loses this week.

### Damien Sandow vs. Great Khali

Khali wins a pretty close poll with 39% of the vote. Damien fires off right hands but gets caught by loud chops. Sandow escapes a powerbomb and dropkicks Khali's knee out to take over. Some knee drops get two for Damien and it's back to the leg all over again. The fans are quickly getting bored as Sandow drops an elbow for two. Khali chops Sandow from his knees and grabs the Vice, only to have Damien roll forward and send Khali into the buckle. A rollup keeps Sandow around at 4:55.

**Rating:** F. They spent five minutes resolving an angle that was set up five minutes before the match. Terribly uninteresting match here, especially considering Heath Slater pinned Khali earlier this year. Sandow has the character and isn't bad in the ring but he's been completely wasted lately.

### R-Truth vs. Brodus Clay

Woods is on commentary and claims to have taught Brodus how to dance. Brodus shoves Truth down to start but Truth comes back with some pelvic thrusts. A headbutt to the chest puts Truth down and there's the t-bone suplex out of the corner. Brodus throws him down again and cannonballs onto Truth's back. Off to an over the shoulder backbreaker by Clay before he drops an elbow for two. Woods gets up on the announce table and asks for the girls to come out here. Dancing ensues and Truth comes off the middle rope with Little Jimmy for the pin at 4:05.

**Rating:** D. Has Brodus won a match since turning heel? In case you couldn't guess, this match sucked and that's all there is to say about it.

Here's HHH for his announcement. 2013 was a great year under the Authority but next year will be even bigger. With that, please welcome back this man: Brock Lesnar, flanked by Paul Heyman. HHH shakes Brock's hand and walks out to let Heyman talk. Paul talks about the Beast being back but says Lesnar isn't here for revenge. However, Brock Lesnar is here to announce his desire to become WWE World Heavyweight Champion. That means the winner of Cena vs. Orton will have to face the self declared #1 contender.

Brock takes the mic and says he doesn't care who he's fighting because there's no one here that can stop him. He doesn't have to stand in line for a title shot because the line forms behind him. Brock dares anyone to come out here and do something about that, so here's Mark Henry to challenge. Lesnar hits a jumping knee to knock Henry to the floor and spears Henry through the barricade. An F5 on the floor leaves Henry laying as Heyman calls Brock off.

#### Total Divas vs. True Divas

It's the Bellas/Funkadactyls/Eva Marie vs. Rosa Mendes/Summer Rae/Alicia Fox/Kaitlyn/Aksana. Eva and Kaitlyn get things going with Eva elbowing her in the face and blowing kisses to the crowd. Kaitlyn is staggered by a kick to the chest but none of the other Total Divas want to deal with Eva. Eva finally tags Cameron in but Alicia makes a blind tag and cleans house.

Summer Rae and Rosa (dressed almost identically) take turns stomping on Cameron in the corner before it's off to Aksana for some choking. Cameron finally crawls over for a tag to Nikki who puts Aksana in the rack (get it?). Everything breaks down and Aksana hits a reverse Eye of the Hurricane for the pin on Nikki at 5:10.

**Rating:** D-. Yeah it sucked, but it was a bunch of good looking women in tiny outfits. That's more than the Tribute to the Troops show managed to pull off. They need to figure out where this division is going though because it's getting even worse. From what I can find, that's Aksana's first pin on TV in nearly two years.

We look at Tribute to the Troops from Saturday.

Brad Maddox tells the Authority that Khali's shoulders were up and the matter has been dealt with. Stephanie is pleased and asks about Old School Raw next week. Apparently Brad has lined up their favorites including Naitch himself. Brad: "WOO!" HHH: "Don't do that."

### Daniel Bryan vs. Wyatt Family

Luke Harper the first part of the gauntlet match. Bryan fires off kicks at the knee in the corner to start before putting on the seated surfboard submission. Harper comes back with some elbows in the corner and those weird noises he makes. There's the Gator Roll followed by a headlock to kill some time. Bryan fights up but gets caught in a Michinoku Driver for two as we take a break.

Back with Bryan fighting out of a chinlock and doing the moonsault out of the corner to set up the running clothesline. Harper goes to the floor for TWO FLYING GOATS and some kicks to the chest. Back in and Bryan hits the missile dropkick and YES Kicks for two as Wyatt is looking nervous. Bryan fires off more kicks in the corner but gets powerbombed down for two.

Bray takes his hat off, making him look even more bizarre in the process. A release half nelson suplex gets two more for Harper but Luke spends too much time looking around and gets caught in the YES Lock. That's fine with him though as Harper just breaks Daniel's grip. Bryan flips out of a suplex and hits the running knee for the pin at 15:00. I'll be rating the matches as a whole at the end.

Rowan jumps Bryan to start the second match before sending him out to the floor. Bryan gets whipped across the announcers' table as we take a break. Back with Rowan driving a knee into Bryan's ribs for two. A middle rope fallaway slam sends the fans into a no chant, prompting Bryan to grab a small package for the pin 22:15. Rowan immediately goes after Bryan but Harper pulls him away because Bray wants Bryan to himself.

Bray talks a lot of trash and does the upside down look in the corner as Bryan gets to his feet. Wyatt charges at Bray but stops just short. He turns his back on Daniel but the Wyatts come in for the DQ 24:10. There was no contact between Bray and Daniel at all, which is probably the best

move.

**Rating:** B-. This was a good match and the main story at the end of the day is we still have Bryan vs. Wyatt down the line. The match is going to be awesome due to the buildup which is the thing we don't get anymore. It's the long term build instead of just hotshotting something and that's what this feud needed.

The Family destroys Bryan while Bray watches from the corner. He says this is where Bryan's story ends because Bray is all out of mercy. Bray puts a mic to Daniel's mouth and Daniel says Bray is right. Wyatt tells him to say it again and Daniel complies. He talks about how the machine doesn't care about him because they've ignored the YES chants and all the matches he's won.

Bryan says he's Bray's and wants to join the Family. He pulls himself up by Bray's leg and does the Bray pose, only to get a Sister Abigail without really struggling. Bray puts Daniel's hand over his own heart and says this is forever. The Family carries Bryan up the ramp but he stops and walks on his own but stops at the stage. The fans chant NO but Bray says not to listen to them. Bryan looks back but closes his eyes and bows his head before getting all angry. He calms down, drops his head, and leaves with the Wyatts to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. This was one of those shows where they didn't try as hard to make it feel epic and the show got WAY better as a result. The main story is of course the return of Brock as you can feel Wrestlemania coming soon. Bryan getting to face Wyatt was a nice idea but that's going to be a big deal when we get the real version. Him joining the Family is going to be an interesting story but it's going to make the eventual showdown all the more interesting. This show flew by which is a good way to close out the year.

## Results

CM Punk b. Seth Rollins – GTS

Dolph Ziggler b. Curtis Axel – Zig Zag



Big E. Langston b. Fandango – Big Ending

Damien Sandow b. Great Khali – Rollup

True Divas b. Total Divas – Reverse Eye of the Hurricane to Nikki

Daniel Bryan b. Wyatt Family via DQ when Harper and Rowan interfered

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## **2013 Awards: Match of the Year**

There were some great matches in 2013 and several of them were available for free.

One honorable mention: Sami Zayn vs. Antonio Cesaro from NXT. It's a 2/3 falls match and an outstanding fight. Zayn is as good of an underdog character as you'll find in wrestling today but Cesaro in Beast Mode is going to put down anyone he's against.

Now to the nominees:

Rhodes Brothers vs. Shield – Battleground. It's the worst show of the year but this match brought out so much emotion for reasons we've already covered. The main story here is the Brothers trying to get their jobs back after losing them to

the Authority. The match was all about the emotion and that's better than action every single time. Great match but it didn't save the show.

CM Punk vs. John Cena – February 26 Raw. This was the match for Cena's Wrestlemania title shot and these guys tore the house down. I called it the best TV match I've ever seen and I still think it ranks right up there with anything I've ever seen. The one thing that holds it back is the lack of drama at the end. Everyone knew Cena was going to win, but the question was how. That's very good but not perfect.

Daniel Bryan Runs The Gauntlet – July 22 Raw. If a match told a better story on TV this year, I didn't see it. Bryan had to face Jack Swagger, Antonio Cesaro and then Ryback in succession. Swagger didn't even last three minutes, but the Cesaro section is a war between two different styles. After that it was Ryback where Bryan gave it his all but couldn't overcome the power. The key here though: Ryback lost via DQ, thereby giving us a logical conclusion that doesn't damage anyone. Outstanding stuff.

That brings us to the two real contenders.

Daniel Bryan vs. John Cena – Summerslam. What else can I say about this match? It was long, it was exciting, it had great action, it had an ending that came out of nowhere. The one thing that holds it back: there was no way Cena was winning with that baseball growing out of his elbow. Just like Cena vs. Punk, there was only one possible winner to this and that was Daniel Bryan. Still though, excellent match.

The winner:

CM Punk vs. Brock Lesnar – Summerslam. My goodness what a match this was. In something I don't say that often, I was completely wrong about this one. I didn't think Punk could be a realistic threat to Lesnar but he went move for move with the beast and had me wondering who was going to win the entire time. It's an amazing match with both guys beating the tar out of each other. On top of that, it was more proof that HHH had no business hogging Lesnar for a year as Brock has had masterpieces with Punk and Cena but three only good matches with HHH.

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## **WWE Stars Go Bowling**

I think the title speaks for itself.

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# Tribute to the Troops 2013: They Deserve Better

## Tribute to the Troops 2013

Date: December 28, 2013

Location: Joint Base Lewis-McCord, Tacoma, Washington

Commentators: John Bradshaw Layfield, Michael Cole

It's the annual holiday tradition but things are being scaled back a bit this year. Instead of the two hour edition on USA, we're only getting the hour long show on NBC. This was taped a few weeks back, before TLC, meaning there are still two world champions. There will also be concerts and some standup comedy to fill in the time. Let's get to it.

As always, the ratings will be lighter than usual as the matches aren't meant to be taken as seriously.

The arena looks very different with a huge plane over the entrance and no Titantron.

We get a history package of WWE visiting the troops over the years. This includes shots of soldiers surprising their families by coming home which are always cool.

## Daniel Bryan vs. Bray Wyatt

Bryan has an awesome goat with wings shirt. This is a pretty big match for a holiday special. Bray hits his low running cross body to take over and slugs Bryan down in the corner. A LOUD YES chant starts up and Bray mocks the arm motion in a funny bit. Bryan comes back with the moonsault out of the corner and the running clothesline to set up the YES Kicks. The Swan Dive gets two and here are Harper and Rowan in for the DQ at 1:45.

Before the triple beating can go down, here's Punk for the save. Punk sends the Family to the floor and hits a suicide dive to take them both down. Vickie comes out and makes a tag match.

#### Daniel Bryan/CM Punk vs. Wyatt Family

Bray is the man on the floor here. This is joined in progress after a break with Bryan getting taken down by a Rowan elbow to the jaw. Off to Harper as we get to one of the best parts of this show: the crowd. They are into EVERYTHING and act like a 1980s crowd. We get a look at the plane over the entrance and see that it's a real plane rather than a prop.

Rowan comes back in for an elbow drop for two before cranking on the neck. A fallaway slam sends Bryan flying but he misses a splash, allowing for the hot tag to Punk. CM speeds things up with all of his usual stuff and takes Rowan down with a neckbreaker. The GTS is loaded up but Bray comes in for the DQ at 2:50 shown.

I think you know what's coming. After a run-in and another Vickie appearance, here's the payoff:

#### John Cena/Daniel Bryan/CM Punk vs. Wyatt Family

This is joined in progress with Bray doing his upside down in the corner look at Punk before tagging in Harper for a chinlock. Cena is drawn in as Harper gets two off a suplex and Rowan hits a quick backbreaker to keep Punk down. Back to Wyatt but Punk shoves him away and hits a high cross body, setting up the hot tag to Cena. John initiates the finishing sequence on Harper but can't get him up in the AA. Instead it's the STF but Rowan breaks it up as everything breaks down. Wyatt and Rowan are sent to the floor and it's a GTS, running knee and AA (do they want to kill him???) for the pin on Harper at 3:55.

**Rating:** C. This was exactly what it was supposed to be: building up to the conclusion that the fans wanted to see and then delivering it. The three heroes hitting the finishers in a row for the pin on a monster is as good as you're going to get for something like this. Also thank goodness they didn't pin Wyatt here.

Bruce Willis loves the troops.

Ryan Seacrest loves the troops.

Michelle Beadle, the host for the night, joins us about half an hour into the show to interview the base's commander. This is about what you would expect it to be.

Santino introduces Daughtry for a few songs.

#### Fandango vs. R-Truth

Fast paced feeling out process to start with Truth thrusting his hips and taking Fandango down with a hiptoss. A side kick takes Fandango down again and the sitout front suplex gets two. Fandango gets sent to the apron but comes back with an enziguri. Not that it matters as he walks into Little Jimmy for the pin at 1:48.

Alec Baldwin loves the troops.

Will Ferrell loves the troops and talks like Ron Burgandy.

The Bellas introduce Jeff Dunham.

Dunham and his puppets do a Christmas themed set until Big Show interrupts for even more bad jokes.

## Big Show vs. Damien Sandow

Sandow tells us just how stupid this show has been on his way to the ring. It's a comedy match with Big Show laughing at Sandow for trying any offense and giving him a Stinkface for good measure. We get the loud chops, some shoulder blocks and a chokeslam sets up the WMD for the pin at 2:03.

The locker room comes out to celebrate to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** D-. This was AWFUL and by far the worst of these things they've ever done. There was no effort put into this show at all and I'm going to forget about it in about 30 minutes. It felt like they had a house show, put up some flags and called it Tribute to the troops. They didn't even do a Divas match for the sake of good looking women in small outfits. Those are too racy now too? Just a horrible show that felt like a pat on the back to WWE instead of ANYTHING about the troops at all.

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# 2013 Awards: Angle of the Year

Make your own Kurt jokes.

This one comes down to two options as most angles either aren't all that entertaining or get on my nerves with stupid twists.

I'll throw in an honorable mention to Angle vs. Roode since TNA has had a really bad year. This started off as a makeshift match for Angle but it's turned into one of the few bright spots in TNA in the last few months. Roode is looking like a killer for the first time in a long time and Angle is Angle. Good stuff all around there.

Now to the real contenders.

First up: Heyman vs. Punk. The premise was great, the beginning was great, the stuff with Lesnar was great, the ending...was that the ending? That's where they lose me as the ending just kind of happened instead of building up to a big conclusion. When I hear Punk talking about wanting to destroy Heyman for months, I need more than him just beating on Paul with a kendo stick on top of the Cell. It didn't help that Ryback and Axel are a long jump down from Lesnar.

The only other option is the winner: the rise of Daniel Bryan. If anyone has had a hotter year in recent memory than Bryan, I can't remember him. He starts out the year as part of one of the best teams in years before moving up to beating everyone in sight. Bryan got the rub of a lifetime with Cena selecting him as the Summerslam opponent and he capitalized on it with the running knee (that was awesome) to pin Cena 100% clean for the title. I say rise of Daniel Bryan because everything after that was pretty horrible for Daniel, so much like Total Divas, we'll just pretend none of that happened and that Daniel is still WWE Champion.

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## **2013 Awards: Promo Of The Year**

We've got a few options here but a handful stand out about others. First up is Mark Henry retiring. This worked for one reason: I bought it. I totally believed he was done and was actually sad to see him go. I didn't think he had a chance to win the title at the PPV, but this worked perfectly for the time being. Unfortunately it led to a one off match and Henry is a smiling face again.

Second and the runner up is AJ Lee vs. the Total Divas. As someone who watched every episode of Total Divas (good looking women in small outfits being completely over the top in a fake scripted show with wrestlers making cameos? You couldn't sign me up fast enough), I was literally cheering for her as she ripped that show limb from limb. The problem again here is the follow up. WWE relied on the idea that the fans were going to like the Total Divas, even though AJ has run circles around them (literally at certain points). AJ is portrayed as the heel here and that just doesn't work, especially when AJ has mauled them at every opportunity.

This brings us to the winner: CM Punk vs. Paul Heyman after Money in the Bank. Here's why it worked: it had a history, it had logic, it had hatred, and most importantly of all, it was leading up to a professional wrestling match. CM Punk vented his frustration against Heyman, swearing vengeance against Heyman for costing him the world title. The obstacle in

Punk's way: the Beast Incarnate, Brock Lesnar. This was setting up David vs. Goliath, but Goliath was standing in the way of David's real target. That's wrestling in a nutshell people, and you had two of the best out there talking about it, and that's why it's the best of the year.

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# **Monday Night Raw – December 23, 2013: A 400lb Wig Splitter Fights To Save Christmas!**

**Monday Night Raw**

Date: December 23, 2013

Location: Frank Erwin Center, Austin, Texas

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

Tonight is the taped Christmas special featuring the potentially amazing

Damien Sandow vs. Mark Henry battle to save Christmas. Again, it's the 400lb monster who talks about splitting wigs fighting a Latin speaking know it all to prevent Christmas from being canceled. There is no way this won't be awesome. Let's get to it.

We open with Santa Henry and Damien Claus taking turns reading their own versions of the WWE Night Before Christmas. Henry's reindeer: Stone Cold, Hitman and Sexy. Sandow's: Mountie, Blassie and Irwin R. Schyster.

The Christmas set looks awesome with presents, trees and even snow falling in the arena.

Here's the Authority in Santa hats with Kane handing out Christmas candy. They even have an elf in a suit. Stephanie and Hunter talk about how important it is to give back around this time of year and hype up the Battle of the Santas. We're also getting the Rhodes Brothers/Bryan vs. the Wyatt Family plus Shield vs. Langston/Punk/Cena. I'm sold. HHH starts to leave but Orton interrupts him, still with both belts but he puts the WHC under the WWE Title for his promo.

He's thankful for the Authority having his back lately and wants to give them a gift in return. Their gift is one of a kind and comes wrapped in a golden bow: the WWE World Heavyweight Champion. He thanks them for the night off and we get a group hug. Orton goes to leave and Kane quotes the end of Twas the Night Before Christmas and hits the post fire.

Vickie Guerrero/Tamina Snuka/Aksana/Alicia Fox/Summer Rae/Kaitlyn vs. Total Divas

AJ is on commentary wearing a Grinch shirt while everyone else is in a holiday outfit of some kind. Everyone tags in and out quickly so fast that I can't keep up with them. Naomi hits a nice hurricanrana on Alicia before it's back to Cameron for a double suplex. We get some stripper dancing and a double splits legdrop before it's back to I think Nikki for some clotheslines.

Fox grabs a northern lights suplex into a perfect bridge for two before it's off to Vickie. Guerrero immediately runs away from Nikki and it's off to Aksana vs. Natalya. Everything quickly breaks down and the Total

Divas do what is either a creative or ridiculous crack the whip with each one hitting a clothesline. Natalya Sharpshooters Aksana for the win at 3:49.

**Rating:** N/A. This was nothing resembling a match and the outfits weren't even all that sexy. The crack the whip sequence (it started with Natalya hitting a clothesline before she locked arms with Brie who hit a clothesline and went on until it was all six) gets stupider every time I think about it. They're booking themselves into a corner with the Total Divas as AJ is just so much better than they are but someone is going to have to take the title eventually.

### Curtis Axel vs. Sin Cara

Cara cuts a quick promo wishing us a Merry Christmas before the match. There's another thing he has up on Mistico. Curtis gets in a few quick shots to start but a headscissors puts him on the floor. Axel slams him onto the apron and into the post to take over. We head inside for a front facelock as JBL compares Cara to other evil masked men over the years, including Hannibal Lecter and Darth Vader.

Axel rubs the masked face into the mat but Cara makes a comeback by sending Axel to the floor for a nice flip dive. Back inside and Cara gets two off a springboard clothesline and a handspring elbow gets the same. Something resembling a Samoan drop sets up the Swanton for the pin at 5:26.

**Result:** D. This felt way longer than five and a half minutes. Axel just has nothing special about him and a complete lack of character doesn't help him at all. It's time to repackage the guy and let him do ANYTHING else to get over again. Hunico on the other hand is thriving in this role and is everything WWE was hoping Mistico would have been.

We recap the handicap tag from Smackdown with Cena and Punk beating Shield by DQ. Langston made the post match save, setting up the six man tonight.

Damien Sandow makes a little girl cry.

Bad News Barrett collected donations for something on the streets earlier...and that's it. For now I'm assuming.

Video on Bryan vs. the Wyatts, including them injuring Bryan on Smackdown. Bray continues to disturb.

### Cody Rhodes/Goldust vs. Wyatt Family

Rowan and Cody get things going with Rhodes taking over on the arm. Cody drags him into the corner for a tag off to Goldust who drives in some shoulders. Off to Bryan for a big pop but Rowan throws him around with ease. Back to Goldust who gets to face Harper with the big man sending him into the corner. Goldust grabs a cravate of all things and puts his boot on the top rope for Cody to tag. That's certainly bizarre.

Bryan comes back in for kicks to Harper's leg and avoids a big boot in the corner to crotch Harper. Luke gets caught in the Tree of Woe and dropkicks in the face. He bails to the corner and Bryan wants Bray but gets a commercial instead. We come back with Harper putting Cody in a front facelock and Gator Rolling him for good measure. Cody fights back with a running clothesline and tags off to his brother. An atomic drop and kick to the jaw have Harper in trouble and Goldust rains right hands down in the corner.

A middle rope hurricanrana of all things put Harper down but he comes right back with a big boot. Now we get Bray for some hard elbow drops and the upside down look out of the corner. Back to Harper to break up a tag attempt but he quickly tags out to Rowan for a neck crank. We get a claw of all things with Cole asking when was the last time you saw that. The answer would be Friday when Rowan used it on Smackdown, which was taped after this to be fair.

Anyway Goldust comes back with a DDT to Harper and tags in Bryan to speed things up. Daniel fires off the kicks to Rowan and the Swan Dive connects. Instead of covering though Daniel has to go after Bray who leads Bryan right into Rowan. A staredown on the floor takes us to our second break. Back with Bray beating on a helpless Daniel before it's back to Rowan for some stomping. Daniel finally comes back with a tornado DDT and we get the hot tag to Cody.

A nice springboard missile dropkick puts Harper down and there's a Disaster Kick to knock Rowan off the apron. The moonsault press gets two and everything breaks down. Bryan takes Wyatt down with a missile dropkick and the FLYING GOAT drops Bray again. Rowan saves his leader but it's Goldust diving off the apron to take Erick out. Cody hits the Disaster Kick to Harper but Bray makes a blind tag and hits Sister Abigail (complete with a quick kiss to the forehead) for the pin on Cody at 22:28.

**Rating:** B-. This match flew by in a good way. I'm not wild on the champions losing again but it looks like we're headed for Wyatts against the Brothers which should be an awesome match if given time. Bray vs. Daniel has a ton of potential and the blowoff match will be great when we get there.

Post match Bray has the Family hold Bryan while he shouts that he can take Daniel's pain away. The lights go out and come back on to show the Wyatts are at ringside.

Mark Henry makes a child happy.

More of Bad News Barrett collecting donations.

We get a Christmas Carol singing contest. Up first are Xavier Woods and R-Truth with O Holy Night. Woods can actually sing but Truth shouts various lines to screw it up. Next we have Drew McIntyre and Jinder Mahal who go back and forth on a bad rendition of Jingle Bells. Cole: "Was Jillian busy?" Khali and Santino go last with Deck the Halls. Khali handles the fa-la-la-la-laing and brings home the win for his team. 3MB are sore losers and get beaten up. The good guys wish us a Merry Christmas to end the segment. Stupid filler but it could have been worse.

### Fandango vs. Dolph Ziggler

This is a Christmas present on a pole match. The present: an Intercontinental Title shot next week. We start with a string of failed climb attempt with Ziggler battling his trunks more than Fandango. Fandango tries a powerbomb out of the corner but gets countered into a Fameasser. Ziggler goes for the present but a hard clothesline sends him

into the post and out to the floor. Both guys go for the present but Fandango gets in a kick to the head to hang Ziggler upside down. Dolph fights back to crotch the dancer but gets rammed into the post again, knocking him into the steps. Fandango grabs the present for the win at 4:45.

**Rating:** D. This didn't have time to go anywhere but that might have been the right idea. The best thing out of all this though: it seems we're moving away from they're moving away from the beat the champ to get a title shot style of booking. I have no idea what's so bad about having someone beat a string of opponents and getting a title shot as a result. Also Ziggler building himself up in the midcard is as good as he can hope for at the moment.

Here are the Prime Time Players with Darren saying we're in Houston instead of Austin. The fans are all over Darren as Titus says the three things the Players want for Christmas: a win tonight, a title shot, and everyone to join them in the Millions of Dollars dance.

#### Prime Time Players vs. Usos

Titus shoulder blocks Jey down to start and leapfrogs over him in a nice athletic display. He picks Jey up for a fallaway slam but drops him to the side in a different style move. Off to Darren who gets suplexed down onto Jey for two but walks into an armdrag. Jimmy comes in as the fans chant THIS IS AUSTIN.

We hit the armbars on Young before Jey comes back in with an ax handle to the arm. The arm hold stays on until the fans are nearly silent. Young comes back with a northern lights suplex and a clothesline but Jimmy comes in off a blind tag. A Samoan drop puts Young down and Titus is sent to the floor, allowing Jey (who dons a Rudolph nose) to hit the Superfly Splash on Darren for the pin at 4:55.

**Rating:** D. This was REALLY dull for most of the match as those arm holds just brought the match to a screeching halt. The face vs. face idea was interesting but the execution didn't work at all for the most part. I don't know if they were tired or what but the match didn't do it for me.

Everyone dances post match.

We get a tale of the tape between good and bad Santa. It's completely gimmicked complete with sleigh model, gifts they plan to give (Xbox vs. onions) and favorite hobbies (filling stockings vs. throwing snowballs at carolers). This is going to be GREAT.

### Good Santa vs. Bad Santa

Sandow of course brings coal to the ring, but more importantly he comes out to Xanta Claus' theme song. Look him up. Henry opens a present to reveal a toilet and shoves Sandow's face in the bowl. JBL: "This is like George Bailey vs. Mr. Potter." Damien gets a present of his own to reveal a fire extinguisher...which doesn't work. Henry shoves him down and pulls out the pin (safety first you see) and hoses Damien down. They head up the ramp and Sandow finds a candy kendo stick. He beats Henry down and shoves over a Christmas tree, drawing the most heat of his entire career.

Henry breaks the stick and shoves Sandow down the aisle. Damien grabs a star off the top of a tree which is too much for JBL to take. Henry knocks Sandow into the tree and they head back inside where Sandow still can't get the extinguisher to work. Mark sprays him down again and hits the World's Strongest Slam for the pin at 3:15.

**Rating:** A+. A 400lb muscle man just beat a Latin speaking know it all to save Christmas. If you don't get why this is an A+, you don't understand entertainment.

Henry shoves Christmas cupcakes in Sandow's face post match.

Punk is very happy to have Langston and Cena as his partners. Cena wants Langston to knock Reigns' teeth in and to give Rollins an Attitude Adjustment. Also they need to Ambrose a pillow because he's going to sleep.

### Real Americans vs. Los Matadores

Before the match Colter says more immigrants need to be like Santa: leave the same day they arrive. Also it's Merry Christmas, not Feliz Navidad. Torito is in white for some reason tonight. Cesaro pounds on I believe



Diego to get things going but Diego flips over Antonio's back and hurricanranas him down. A flying headscissors puts Cesaro down but a middle rope hurricanrana is caught in the Cesaro Swing. This might be the longest one ever, going over thirty seconds.

Diego rolls to the floor and we get a switch, allowing Fernando to get a small package for two. The third blind tag of the night brings Diego back in for a top rope cannonball and a near fall. Diego goes up top as Cesaro sends Fernando into the barricade. Torito gores Cesaro and Diego pins Swagger with a high cross body at 3:25.

**Rating:** D-. Dang it why do these things have to be long enough to rate? I'd like to reiterate that Los Matadores and Torito simply are not funny. I know they're not aimed at my age bracket, but I do not find them funny in the slightest. The match was there for the Swing and Gore spots and that's not enough to carry something like this.

We recap the handicap match from Smackdown again.

#### Kofi Kingston vs. Ryback

Ryback shoves Kofi down to start but gets caught by a forearm to the face. A dropkick sends Ryback to the corner and out to the floor, allowing Kofi to hit a HUGE flip dive. Ryback barely caught him but Kingston appears to be ok. Back in and Kofi hits a hard clothesline to send him back to the floor and take over.

Ryback chops him against the ropes and puts on a bearhug. Kofi's cross body is countered into a suplex in a nice move but Ryback's middle rope splash lands on boots. Kofi comes back with a middle rope dropkick and the Boom Drop, followed by a nice springboard cross body for two. Ryback shrugs it off and drops Kofi face first onto the buckle. There's the Meat Hook and Kofi is Shell Shocked for the pin at 4:45.

**Rating:** C-. Not a bad power vs. speed match here but again it doesn't have time to go anywhere. Ryback getting a clean win is a good sign for him and as always, Kofi loses nothing by getting pinned. There's still money in Ryback if he's used properly, but WWE seems incapable of pulling that off.

Bad News Barrett's bad news: he's keeping the money.

Shield says Punk needs help because he's in pain. Rollins talks about how many times Cena and Punk have tried this before and they know the result. Reigns says Langston is in the deep end of the pool now. Believe in the Shield.

### John Cena/Big E. Langston/CM Punk vs. Shield

Cena and Rollins get things started with Seth's speed not being able to do anything of note on the power guy. Cena shoulder blocks Rollins down and it's off to Reigns for the big showdown. Right hands have Reigns staggered but he hits a Samoan drop to gain control as we take our last break. Back with Rollins scoring with a knee for two on Cena before bringing Ambrose back in.

Dean hooks a sleeper to get the crowd into things a bit. Cena cuts out the middle man by walking over to the corner and tagging Punk while still in the hold. Smart man that Cena. Punk comes in to clean house with the swining neckbreaker and knee in the corner to Ambrose. A Reigns distraction breaks up the Macho Elbow however and Ambrose suplexes Punk on the floor.

Back in and we get Shield cutting the ring off because old school tag team wrestling isn't dead. Reigns drops Punk with a knee to the ribs and smirks over to the good guys in the corner. I love little stuff like that. We get a bearhug on Punk followed by a chinlock from Reigns but he comes back with a belly to back suplex. Dean comes in without a tag to knock Cena to the floor and Reigns hits him with something the camera missed.

Punk finally breaks free and makes the hot tag so Langston can clean house. He doesn't get to fight Reigns though as everything breaks down and Reigns spears Cena down. The Big Ending looks to finish Ambrose but his partners make the save, drawing a weak DQ at 16:00.

**Rating:** C. This was just there to send the fans home happy and it worked well enough. Langston vs. Reigns has the potential to be something very special but more importantly they've both been protected. It's so rare

anymore to see guys actually get built up with few blemishes and the payoff will be sweet.

Ambrose and Rollins get an AA and GTS respectively, followed by all three good guys' musics playing to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. This was a very laid back and entertaining show but it overstayed its welcome a bit. The lesson to be learned here is that it's nice to have some time between PPVs where you can just have a throwaway show like this which doesn't mean much of anything long term. Having everything be serious all the time gets old fast so it was nice to mix things up a bit here. We got some decent matches and a fun Christmas match and that's all you can ask for on a show like this.

### Results

Total Divas b. Vickie Guerrero/Tamina Snuka/Aksana/Alicia Fox/Summer Rae/Kaitlyn – Sharpshooter to Aksana

Sin Cara b. Curtis Axel – Swanton Bomb

Wyatt Family b. Cody Rhodes/Goldust/Daniel Bryan – Sister Abigail to Rhodes

Fandango b. Dolph Ziggler – Fandango pulled down the present

Good Santa b. Bad Santa – World's Strongest Slam

Ryback b. Kofi Kingston – SHell Shock

CM Punk/John Cena/Big E. Langston b. Shield via DQ when Shield triple teamed Langston

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## **2013 Awards: Worst PPV**

This one really wasn't that hard. It's Battleground and I really didn't have to put a lot of thought into it. The show just didn't need to happen and felt like a cash grab. The Rhodes Brothers vs. Shield was a very good match, but other than that there's nothing of value on the show. Some of the matches were ok, but there's no reason for them to be on a full priced PPV. The main event made things even worse with the Bryan vs. Orton feud being dragged out for the sake of being dragged out. On top of that the midcard stuff sucked. I mean, is there ANY reason to have the Real Americans vs. Khali/Santino go seven minutes? Just an unnecessary show and not a good one either.

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# 2013 Awards: PPV of the Year

Leave the memories alone. There are a few nominees for this but the memories of one bring it up. First we'll look at the ones that were really good but not as great as another.

Payback. This took me awhile to get to (and gave me the greatest day I've ever had for views on here due to me not having the review up on time) but there's a problem with it: I don't remember most of the matches. I remembered liking Payback a lot but I didn't remember anything but Del Rio turning heel to beat Ziggler. Cena vs. Ryback was a nice match but it didn't leave any kind of an impression at all. It's a throwaway show and while good, it just doesn't mean anything at the end of the day.

Slammiversary. Yeah TNA gets a nomination this year as their anniversary show was pretty freaking awesome. AJ vs. Angle, a great four team tag and one of the best KNOCKOUT matches in years. What else do you want from a show out of these guys? On top of that there's a decent Sting brawl, which to be fair is all he can really do anymore. TNA can put things together and have a good show, but unfortunately they don't have PPVs for the most part anymore.

Royal Rumble. This was the runner up at a rating of an A-, the same as the winner. I really liked the Rumble and there wasn't a bad match on the show, but Rock beating Punk was the most obvious ending to a show as you'll ever see. The Shield interference helped a bit, but Rock might as well have carved his name onto that belt back in June when the title match was announced. Very good show but not as great.

And the winner...

Summerslam. This one really isn't all that surprising again as it had two A+ matches on the same show. That Punk vs. Lesnar match was as good of a brawl as you'll find anywhere and the Cena vs. Bryan match was the best rub you'll see this side of Austin passing out in the Sharpshooter. Bryan debuting that running knee and knocking Cena out cold was perfect and the ending of the show made it even better. I loved that delay right before Orton's music hit as it made you unsure if something was happening or not. On top of that there was a really good Christian vs. Del Rio match, making me think I underrated the show as a whole. Summerslam was show of the year and it was by a pretty wide margin.

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# Tables Ladders and Chairs 2013: Undisputed. Seriously.

## Tables Ladders and Chairs 2013

Date: December 15, 2013

Location: Toyota Center, Houston, Texas

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Jerry Lawler

We're at the final PPV of the year and the main story tonight is of course the TLC title unification match between Orton and Cena to give us one world champion. It didn't make a ton of sense when they did this in December of 2001 and it doesn't make the most sense in December of 2013. This could headline Wrestlemania, but I guess they want a big buyrate for December, so why not shoot everything they have at it and forget the incredible money it could draw four months from now. Let's get to it.

## Pre-Show: Fandango vs. Dolph Ziggler

How was Ziggler world champion six months ago? Fandango puts him down with a shoulder block but walks into a nice dropkick. Ziggler is sent tot

he floor and we take an early break. Back with Ziggler breaking out of a chinlock, only to get caught by a dropkick and rollup for two each. Dolph comes back with a quick Fameasser for two, causing Cole to say it's shades of Billy Gunn, even though Ziggler has done more with that move than Gunn could ever dream of.

Ziggler pounds away in the corner and gets two off a clothesline. The Zig Zag is countered into a falcon's arrow for two but he gets crotched going up top. Summer Rae distracts Ziggler though, allowing Fandango to hit the guillotine legdrop for the pin at 4:22. Too much was spent in the commercial to rate but the match was a glorified dark match with a surprise ending.

The pay per view opens with HHH and Stephanie coming to the arena. Vince was seen on the pre-show but is nowhere in sight here. Stephanie talks about what an important moment this is and acknowledges the crowd by saying YES, this is a huge moment. HHH says the World Championship dates back to Lou Thesz as champion (not true in the short version of a long story) and talks about how big tonight is.

The opening video talks about how the wrestling industry is defined by the champion and the future path of wrestling will be determined tonight. There will be only one if that wasn't made clear.

Cole confirms that the winner will be the WWE World Heavyweight Champion which is the easiest layup possible.

### CM Punk vs. Shield

Ambrose starts things up for Shield and feels Punk out a little bit. Punk wisely runs instead of being dragged into the Shield corner and shouts that he's beaten Dean twice already so give someone else a shot. It's off to Rollins so Punk bails to the floor to play some head games. Rollins chases him back into the ring and gets caught by some shoulders in the corner followed by three straight neckbreakers for two.

Seth fights up and brings in Reigns to throw Punk into the Shield corner. Rollins and Reigns make a wish on Punk's legs before Seth hits a neckbreaker of his own. Back to Ambrose for some rib stomps before it's

off to Reigns for a hard clothesline. Shield is taking their time here instead of their usual fast tagging. Punk is thrown to the floor but still has enough in him to avoid Reigns' spear over the announce table. Roman looks to have injured his eye when he went over the table.

Reigns is dazed but makes it back inside where Punk goes after his eyes. He rakes and punches away at it but Roman sends him outside again to get a breather. It's off to Rollins as a doctor looks at Roman's eye. A knee to Punk's head is good for two but he shoves Rollins into Ambrose, knocking Dean to the floor. The high kick gets two on Seth and Punk speeds things up with ax handles to the face.

A great looking running knee in the corner sets up a high cross body for two and the Anaconda Vice is on. Ambrose makes a diving save and comes in off the tag. Dean loads up a superplex but gets headbutted down, setting up the Macho Elbow. The cover is delayed as Punk had to take out Rollins and Dean kicks out at two. Rollins charges in but gets caught in the GTS. Punk goes after Ambrose, only to sidestep a charging Reigns who spears Ambrose down by mistake. Punk sends him to the floor and gets the upset pin on Ambrose at 13:10.

**Rating:** C+. To clarify, Punk just beat the unbeatable Shield by pin with no outside interference. Let me guess: this is great, whereas if say Cena did this, it would be him playing Superman again. The match was fine but more storytelling than anything else. It should be interesting to see where Punk goes now, as he's due for a return to the title picture after some time away.

AJ tells Renee that there's only one Diva that matters around here. She isn't on some silly reality show like Natalya and is going to be the one laughing after tonight. AJ is also counting days as champion now.

Divas Title: AJ Lee vs. Natalya

Natalya is challenging. AJ takes her down to start with a headscissors before Natalya reverses into an armbar. A low dropkick has Natalya in trouble so she heads outside, only to be distracted by Tamina, allowing AJ to send her face first into the apron. Off to a chinlock by AJ followed by a spinwheel kick to the jaw. Natalya comes back and sends AJ



into the corner, only to get caught in a nice guillotine choke.

The blonde powers out and hits a basement dropkick to the face followed by some clotheslines. Some suplexes set up the Sharpshooter and Natalya brings her back to the middle of the ring, only to have AJ kick free. The Black Widow goes on but Natalya rolls out, breaking it for the first time. A clothesline puts AJ down again but another Sharpshooter attempt is countered into a small package for the pin at 6:42.

**Rating:** C. There were some nice false finishes in there but I'm over Natalya challenging for the title. AJ has completely cleaned out the division except for Tamina, setting up the showdown whenever they go that way. I'm sure we'll hear about AJ vs. Total Divas again though, because just beating them about five PPVs in a row isn't enough proof of who is better.

The announcers play up that AJ pulled hair to get the small package.

We get a video package on the world titles that we've seen on Raw and Smackdown with Flair and Rhodes and others talking about what winning the title means.

#### Intercontinental Title: Big E. Langston vs. Damien Sandow

Before the match, Sandow tells the Texas crowd some assorted phrases that are worthless: y'all, ye if followed by haw, and Big E. Langston: Intercontinental Champion. Nice touch. Langston throws the challenger into the corner to start and hits a corner splash to keep Damien in trouble. They head outside with Langston in trouble, only to miss a charge into the post to change momentum.

Back in and Damien pounds away at Big E.'s head before putting on a chinlock. The Wind-Up Elbow gets two for Sandow and we're back to the chinlock again. Langston powers out of the hold and drops Damien with an electric chair. A belly to belly sets up the Warrior Splash for two but the Big Ending is countered into an Edge-0-Matic for two by Sandow. Another Big Ending attempt is countered into a small package for two but Langston is done messing around. He runs Sandow over with ease and the Big Ending is enough to retain the title at 6:25.

**Rating:** D+. The match was nothing you wouldn't see on Smackdown. These two did virtually the same match with the same story earlier this year for Langston's NXT Title so there was some practice coming in. Langston has a bright future and a title defense on PPV isn't going to hurt him at all.

Vince is in the back and shakes Orton's hand. They appeared to be talking but there was no sound.

We recap Kofi attacking Miz on the pre-show, setting up a No DQ match later tonight.

Tag Titles: Real Americans vs. Big Show/Rey Mysterio vs. Cody Rhodes/Goldust vs. Ryback/Curtis Axel

Rhodes and Goldust are defending and this is elimination rules. Ryback and Axel have both beaten the champions in the last few weeks while Big Show and Mysterio have teamed together I believe once. Ryback shoves Rhodes around to start but gets caught in a half crab, allowing Goldust to come in with an elbow to the back of Ryback's head. Off to Axel for a nice dropkick, only to get caught in a wristlock.

Axel fights up but Goldust makes a tag off to Big Show who keeps up the arm work. There's the skin ripping chop and the fans want it one more time. Show does it a third time and Axel sells it like he got shot. Mysterio comes in for some forearms but Axel sends him into the corner. Ryback gets the tag and pounds Mysterio down, only to bring Axel back in for something resembling stereo cross bodies to put both guys down.

Double tags bring in Ryback and Goldust with the champion scoring off the uppercut and a spinebuster. Ryback loads up a powerbomb but gets rolled up for the pin by Goldust, getting us down to three teams at 6:12. Cesaro comes in to pummel Goldust in the corner before it's off to Swagger for a front facelock. The fans start chanting WE THE PEOPLE as Goldust is sent to the floor for a clothesline from Swagger.

Back inside and Cesaro gets two off the gutwrench suplex and we hit the chinlock. Off to Jack again for a bearhug as Big Show plays cheerleader for Goldust. Goldie fights back with right hands and a springboard elbow

to the jaw. Cesaro easily takes him down and we get a short version Cesaro Swing. A Swagger belly to belly suplex puts Goldust down again and we get the Vader Bomb/double stomp sequence from the Real Americans for another two.

Antonio puts on another chinlock but this time Goldust escapes with a jawbreaker. Cesaro can't break up the tag but Swagger runs around the ring and pulls Cody off the apron. Cody is holding his knee as Big Show throws Swagger into the barricade and Goldust catches Cesaro with a hurricanrana. A powerslam puts Cesaro down again and the hot tag brings in Big Show. Cesaro is thrown all over the ring and a shoulder block turns him inside out. Both Americans get punched in the jaw and Big Show pins Cesaro for the elimination at 14:42.

So we're down to the two good guy teams but Big Show waits for the champions to get on their feet. A hard shoulder block puts Goldust on the floor and Cody gives him a somewhat angry pep talk. Goldust comes back in for a top rope cross body with Big Show waiting on the impact for about eight seconds. The chokeslam is countered into a DDT for two and it's off to Cody for a double suplex on Big Show for two. The fans are rapidly losing interest.

Big Show swats a Disaster Kick out of the air and it's off to Mysterio (remember him?) for a springboard seated senton to Cody. Now the Disaster Kick connects for two on Mysterio and Cody is getting frustrated. Cross Rhodes is countered into the 619 to both champions. Goldust is sent into the barricade by Big Show but Cody sends the giant into the post.

Cody tries a springboard dropkick but gets caught in a powerbomb by Rey (how often do you hear that?) for two. Cross Rhodes are countered again but the 619 is countered into an Alabama Slam which is countered into a sunset flip for a VERY close two. The third attempt at Cross Rhodes FINALLY connects for the pin to retain the titles at 21:06.

**Rating:** A-. This dragged a bit in the middle but man alive that ending was great. Cody and Goldust are just awesome right now and I'm so glad they didn't give the titles to another thrown together team. I have no idea why the Usos weren't in there somehow other than putting in two

bigger names. Really good match here though.

A bunch of people play with Brawling Buddies in a head throbbing segment. The payoff is Kane scaring everyone off and having the Brodus Clay Buddy beat up the Cena Buddy. Cole: "...Yep."

### Brodus Clay vs. R-Truth

Bonus match due to Brodus going nuts on Truth's buddy Xavier Woods on Raw. Truth takes him into the corner to start and scores with a dropkick, sending Brodus to the floor. A nice dive takes Brodus out again but he comes right back with a Banzai Drop for no cover. He finally drags Truth back into the middle for two before throwing him corner to corner again.

A running splash in the corner crushes Truth but he still won't go for the pin. They head outside with Tensai yelling at Clay to go for the win but instead Brodus puts Truth in the Tree of Woe. Tensai gets up on the apron for a shouting match before walking out. The Funkadactyls walk out as well and Truth hits a side kick into a rollup for the pin at 6:06.

**Rating:** D. This was much more of an angle than a match which is acceptable if they actually do something with Clay. The guy has a chance to be something interesting if he's pushed properly, but given how they've pushed him twice before I can't imagine it actually working. Good heel turn though.

Vince wishes Cena luck.

### Kofi Kingston vs. The Miz

No DQ and set up by Miz attacking Kofi a few times recently in addition to the pre-show stuff earlier. Kofi goes nuts on Miz with right hands to start with Miz being sent to the floor. A Kofi dive is blocked by a right hand but Kingston drives him into the barricade. Miz is shoved up against the post but Kofi's Trouble in Paradise hits the post, badly injuring his ankle in the process. Miz DDT's the leg onto the floor and gets two back inside.

Kofi is in trouble but gets two off a quick rollup for a breather. Lawler talks about telegrams for some reason as Miz goes after the bad leg for

some storytelling. Miz's cannonball down onto the leg is countered with a kick to send him to the floor, only to have Kofi miss a dive, sending him into the barricade. Back in again and Miz unhooks a turnbuckle pad, setting up something big. The Skull Crushing Finale into the pad is countered into a rollup for two as we get a breather. Miz goes up but dives into a dropkick as a boring chant starts up. Back up and Kofi quickly sends Miz into the buckle to set up Trouble in Paradise for the pin at 8:03.

**Rating:** D+. This was longer than it needed to be and the ending didn't do much for either guy. The leg stuff didn't go anywhere at all which is one of the things that drives me crazy in matches. This feud isn't going anywhere for either guy but they're still feuding for no apparent reason.

Tribute to the Troops ad.

We recap Bryan vs. the Wyatts with Bray wanting Daniel to join the Family but getting kneed in the face instead.

#### Daniel Bryan vs. Wyatt Family

Bray of course sits in the rocking chair to start. Rowan gets us going for the team and takes Bryan's head off with an elbow to the jaw. Daniel gets caught in the corner and it's off to Harper for a lot of yeah yeah yeah. Bryan comes back with the surfboard knee stomps and some kicks but a shot to the ribs gives Luke control. Back to Rowan for some shots to the gut and a bearhug to slow the match down.

Harper slams Daniel down and Bray stands up. Wyatt himself comes in and shouts that he could have helped Daniel before splashing him in the corner. Bray goes nuts on Bryan before stopping for that evil look of his. A suplex/toss sends Daniel flying and Bray does the incredibly creepy Exorcist spider walk over to the corner for a tag to Harper. Fans: "THAT WAS CREEPY!"

Luke puts on a chinlock before Rowan throws Daniel back into the corner. A big boot from Harper puts Bryan down and it's back to Bray who shouts about the fans. He offers Daniel his hand but Daniel kicks it away and pounds on Wyatt's jaw. Bray will have none of that though and runs Daniel

over before bringing Harper back in. Back up and Bryan avoids a charging Bray to send him into Rowan before avoiding a running big boot from Harper.

Daniel busts out an awesome belly to back superplex on Luke for two before firing off the kicks. The big one to the head sets up the swan dive but Daniel has to fire off the kicks to Rowan, tying him up in the ropes. A tag brings in Bray who gets rolled up for two but Wyatt runs him over again. Bryan is whipped into the ropes but he scores with the FLYING GOAT to Harper. Back in the missile dropkick drops Bray but he counters the YES Lock and pummels Bryan down. Sister Abigail ends Bryan at 12:25.

**Rating:** B-. I was digging this a lot by the end with Bryan giving it everything he had. The most interesting thing here though was Wyatt. He's the kind of guy who you just have to watch when he's on screen, which is a rare thing to find anymore. In a word, he's mesmerizing. As for the result, there's no way you can put both singles guys over in the handicap matches and it doesn't hurt Bryan to lose here at all.

The expert panel (Booker and Foley) talk a bit.

We recap Orton vs. Cena which has been covered already. It's to determine who is champion of champions and we get the video package of their parallel histories from Smackdown.

#### WWE World Heavyweight Championship: Randy Orton vs. John Cena

TLC match, winner take all. They have a ton of time to used for this too. Naturally we get big match intros and we're ready to go. They head into the corner to start and Cena grabs a headlock. The wrestling gets boring though and we get our first ladder and table with the wooden one being set up in the corner. Orton escapes an AA through the table and heads to the floor for a chair. Cena can't avoid the shot to the back and Randy is in control.

They head outside again but Orton misses a chair shot and hits the post, allowing Cena to pick up the chair. A series of chair shots puts Orton down and John loads up another table on the floor. The distraction lets Orton send him into the steps to take over again as the dueling Cena

chants begin. Orton tries to climb but Cena makes a fast save. The ladder is thrown to the floor and Orton headbutts him down. Some kicks to the ribs have Cena in trouble but he comes back with knees and right hands, only to walk into the powerslam.

Randy brings in another ladder but gets it rammed into his ribs, allowing Cena to climb. Orton quickly suplexes him down but misses a ladder shot, sending the ladder to the floor. That's fine with Orton though as he cracks Cena in the back with a chair before wedging it into the corner. Cena blocks the shot into the chair and comes back with his finishing sequence, only to have Orton poke him in the eye and send him into the chair. Another ladder is brought in but Cena makes yet another save.

They both fight on the ladder until Cena throws Orton over the top and through the table. He can't climb that fast though and Orton pulls him down for an RKO. Both guys are down again but it's Cena up first with a clothesline to send him to the floor. Cena blasts Orton in the head with the steps and Randy might be busted a little bit. John brings in another table, giving us two tables in opposite corners. With all of the metal stuff at ringside, Orton hits Cena in the head with the microphone to take over again.

Orton loads up the announce table but instead clears out a path to Cena. John avoids the Punt though and catches Orton in an AA through the table to put both guys down again. Cena very slowly gets back in and grabs both belts without pulling them down. Instead it's Orton shoving the ladder away to leave Cena hanging, allowing Orton a free shot with the chair. Cena comes right back with a spear through one of the tables and both guys are down again.

Randy heads outside again and starts peeling back the mats to find some hidden handcuffs. Cena gets tied to the bottom rope and Orton teases him with the key. This didn't work at Breaking Point but call backs to old matches are usually fun. Cena tries to break the chain as Orton goes to pick up the big ladder for some shots to Cena's ribs.

Randy goes back inside as Cena beats on the cuffs with a chair to no avail. Cena pulls hard enough to rip the bottom rope off and go up to

knock Orton off the ladder but he only has one free arm due to the rope. Orton grabs the rope and uses the power of gravity to pull Cena down, sending him head first into the table which DOESN'T BREAK. That looked bad. Orton goes up again and pulls down both titles for the surprise win at 24:35.

**Rating:** B. I liked the match and the ropes idea was good, but that ending came out of nowhere. Given how badly Cena's head went into that table, I wouldn't be shocked if he had an actual injury. Orton winning makes more sense but I'm kind of shocked it was clean. Well as clean as you can get in a TLC match of course. Good stuff here but the ending leaves a lot of doors open.

Post match here's the Authority and Vince to congratulate Orton with no drama to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B. This show was about one match and the match delivered. The handicap matches both worked quite well too and the tag match ROCKED. It wasn't a classic show or anything but it was much better overall than I expected. The ending sets up a lot of questions about where we're going, but that makes things all the more interesting. Good show here and a solid ending to the year.

### Results

CM Punk b. Shield – Punk pinned Ambrose after a spear from Reigns

AJ Lee b. Natalya – Small package

Big E. Langston b. Damien Sandow – Big Ending

Cody Rhodes/Goldust b. Real Americans, Big Show/Rey Mysterio and Ryback/Curtis Axel – Cross Rhodes to Mysterio

Kofi Kingston b. The Miz – Trouble in Paradise

Wyatt Family b. Daniel Bryan – Sister Abigail

Randy Orton b. John Cena – Orton pulled down the title belts



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