

New Column: Beyond the Brackets

The good and the bad of tournaments. You might know which side I'm on already.

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Monday Night Raw – November 9, 2015: It's A Tournament! Uh, Yay!

Monday Night Raw

Date: November 9, 2015

Location: Manchester Arena, Manchester, England

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

We're across the ocean for the annual European tour and for once it's a big night as the World Title tournament begins. Seth Rollins is out due to a torn ACL, meaning it's time to have a tournament for the vacant title. The brackets will be revealed tonight and it should be interesting to see what they have planned. Let's get to it.

We open with the title on a stand in the middle of the ring as Cole recaps Rollins' injury.

Here's HHH to address the title situation. HHH thanks Seth for always living up to the expectations the Authority had and pauses for a THANK

YOU SETH chant. There's going to be a tournament set up with the winner becoming the new champion at Survivor Series. A few weeks ago though, we crowned a new #1 contender so HHH would like Reigns to come out here right now.

While it's true that there's a tournament, it seems unfair to HHH that Reigns should have to walk through the tournament with no advantage. Instead, HHH offers to let Reigns advance to Survivor Series to face the winner of the tournament. The reality is that the Authority was thinking about giving Reigns the spot before they picked Rollins. HHH saw so much potential in Reigns and thinks he could have been the biggest star in the business.

Could Reigns have fought and beaten Brock on his own and then held the title as long as he wanted? It would have been interesting to see. What HHH has seen is Reigns going up against wall after wall and never quitting. All Reigns has to do now is be HHH's man, which Reigns calls selling out.

HHH doesn't like that term and says forget all these morals because he could be given everything that he deserves. He even gets more serious by bringing up Reigns' family. Roman could secure his daughter's daughter's future by just saying yes. The fans still say NO and Reigns says the same because he wants to do it his way. HHH thanks him for reminding him why he didn't pick Reigns in the first place, so welcome to the back of the line. Reigns' first match is right now. This opens a few doors as Reigns could change his mind or someone else could take the spot instead. Most interesting indeed.

WWE World Title Tournament First Round: Roman Reigns vs. Big Show

Show headbutts him down to start and they go to the floor with Show throwing him over the bottom rope and back inside. See, Show is big and strong. That makes him entertaining in case you haven't gotten it in the last nearly seventeen years. Reigns dives into a chop to the chest and gets whipped across the ring as this is one sided so far. Show's splash gets two and he throws Reigns down again as we take another break.

Total dominance so far but at least we're getting this thing out of the

way in the first round instead of sitting through a bunch of Show wins. Back with Reigns firing off right hands but getting caught in a bearhug (that felt like they came back a few seconds early). Reigns throws him off and grabs a Samoan drop, followed by the corner clotheslines. That earns Roman a chokeslam for two but the Superman Punch and spear advance Reigns at 11:57.

Rating: C-. Remember all those other matches they've had before? This is the most recent one. There's nothing interesting between these two and no one on the planet believed Reigns wasn't advancing here. At the end of the day, Roman Reigns vs. Big Show is the most simple idea that they have anymore and it's really not working. Find someone else for Reigns to beat up because this match is already rammed into the ground.

Here are the full brackets.

Roman Reigns

Cesaro

Sheamus

Alberto Del Rio

Stardust

Kalisto

Ryback

Titus O'Neil

Kevin Owens

Neville

King Barrett

Dolph Ziggler

Miz

Dean Ambrose

Tyler Breeze

That's uh...pretty lame. You can almost see the finals from here, save for a quick swerve. If they do turn Ambrose heel against a face Reigns, sweet goodness they've lost their minds even more than I thought they had.

Quick video of Undertaker and Kane during their most dominant days. The Wyatts will be paying respect to them later.

Wayne Rooney of Manchester United is here.

WWE World Title Tournament First Round: Titus O'Neil vs. Kevin Owens

Non-title of course. Before the match, Owens says you can buy his theme music on iTunes and put some change in his pockets. "And yes, I actually have pockets on my wrestling gear. That's how awesome I am." Owens talks about how WWE needs change right now and what better place than in the smartest fans in the world here in England. However, Owens thinks they're dumb for following something like the Royal Family. The change is all about Owens though, because this is his show.

Kevin fights out of the corner to start but gets kicked in the face to knock him outside. We take an early break and come back with Titus fighting out of a chinlock. Titus is told that he isn't on Kevin's level and pounds away in the corner, followed by the dog bark and a missed charge. The Pop Up Powerbomb ends Titus at 6:56.

Rating: D. Well at least it's over. This was just an extended workout for Owens and the kind of match he should win with ease. I'm glad we're getting these lame matches out of the way in the early rounds and at least they're keeping them quick. Owens could make a real run in this thing and I hope he doesn't lose clean whenever he's eliminated.

Owens steals JBL's hat. Thank goodness that won't lead to a feud.

Paige thinks Becky Lynch is a rat and the only thing better than beating Baby Flair for the title is beating the B and then taking out the C. I kind of dig that.

Clip of Undertaker beating Sid for the title at Wrestlemania XIII and one of Kane cashing in Money in the Bank to win the title at Money in the Bank 2010.

Paige vs. Becky Lynch

So do they keep the #1 contender strong or have her lose at home instead? They brawl to start with Becky in trouble against the home country star. The fans quiet down until THIS IS MY HOUSE wakes them up all over again. Paige puts her in the Tree of Woe and pulls back on Becky's arms in an incredibly painful looking hold. They trade abdominal stretches until Becky charges into a superkick (of course) for two. The Rampaige gets the same as Becky is too close to the ropes. Paige loads up the PT0 but Becky rolls her up for the pin at 5:00.

Rating: C. They had two options here and they picked the stupid one because this is WWE and that's all they know how to do. Becky and Paige could do something great but that's hard to do in just five minutes. It's very nice to see Becky get a win for a change though as she hasn't won anything on her own on TV since August.

Post match Paige puts Becky on the table for the PT0 (It's like the same move! BUT ON A TABLE!) until Charlotte makes the save.

Video on Wrestlemania tickets going on sale.

WWE World Title Tournament First Round: Dolph Ziggler vs. The Miz

They start fast with Ziggler grabbing a leg but having to escape the Skull Crushing Finale. Miz bails from a superkick but walks into a clothesline. Dolph misses a charge into the corner and Miz starts in on the knee. Now it's Miz's turn to have a charge hit buckle and Dolph gets two off a backslide. Miz kicks him in the head and puts on the Figure Four though. Dolph finally makes the rope, pops up and superkicks Miz for the pin at 5:07.

Rating: D+. Logical story with the leg work aside, I really wasn't feeling this one. The ending felt completely out of nowhere as Ziggler just popped up and hit his secondary finisher. Shouldn't it at least have

been weakened due to the knee injury? Not the worst match here but it's clear that this generation (as in the pre-NXT generation) really doesn't get how to put a match together.

Dolph holds up the title. I wouldn't get used to that Ziggy.

Undertaker dominated people at Survivor Series 2005 and Kane won the Tag Team Titles with Daniel Bryan at Night of Champions 2012.

Here's MexAmerica to say they don't want England around because they're just so hateful. Now England is listening to Germany and Russia and they're despised around the world. Del Rio calls them all haters and Zeb thanks HHH for the first round title match on Smackdown. Wow that's not something you hear on Raw anymore. And when is the last time we saw a promo with no action?

Natalya vs. Naomi

Natalya's epic FACEBOOK challenges continue as she keeps trying to figure out who leads Team Bad. Naomi accepted the challenge on Twitter, which may or may not be on the same footing. Natalya helps the fans with the WE WANT SASHA chants. They go to the floor very quickly with Sasha sending Natalya into the post and messing up her leg. Back in and we're already on the chinlockery until Natalya fights up with a clothesline. Natalya: "WE WANT SASHA!" The Rear View misses and Natalya sends Naomi into Tamina for a rollup at 2:05.

Sasha comes in post match and is put in the Sharpshooter until Tamina saves for a beatdown.

Undertaker beat up Edge in the Cell in 2008 while Kane destroyed a wedding in 2005.

WWE World Title Tournament First Round: Sheamus vs. Cesaro

The winner gets Roman Reigns and King Barrett is in Sheamus' corner. During the break after Sheamus' entrance, Barrett got in an argument with Wayne Rooney to continue a Twitter feud they had earlier in the year. They brawl into the corner to start as is their custom, while JBL goes on about European sports that most Americans don't care about as is his

custom. Sheamus comes back with a quick throw and pounds away with the forearms to the chest as we take a break.

Back with Cesaro fighting out of a chinlock but getting crotched on the top. Cesaro spins around Sheamus' arm and runs him over, only to have both guys fall out to the floor in a big crash. Cesaro is holding his arm and both guys dive in to beat the count at nine. Sheamus drives him into the corner and loads up a Brogue Kick but Cesaro ducks under a Brogue Kick and tries the Sharpshooter, sending Sheamus bailing to the ropes.

Cesaro uppercuts with the bar arm and dropkicks Sheamus off the top to the floor. There's another uppercut against the barricade but Sheamus and Barrett start arguing with Rooney. Wayne slaps Barrett in the face and a running uppercut sets up Cesaro's arm trap small package for the pin at 15:35.

Rating: B-. Take two big, strong guys and let them hit each other for a long time. Sometimes you just need a power brawl and that's what you got here. Cesaro has no chance against Reigns so we'll call this his latest win to make you believe he might be a player a few times before he loses three or so in a row. Good stuff here though, as always between these two.

Tyler Breeze calls Renee ugly and wants to get rid of Dean Ambrose's ugly clothes.

WWE World Title Tournament First Round: Dean Ambrose vs. Tyler Breeze

This is Breeze's main roster debut. Tyler ducks a clothesline to start and hides in the ropes. Dean loads up a suicide dive but Summer takes Tyler's place and screams to stop Dean. Ambrose takes him down on the other side of the ring and lays on the barricade as we take a break. Back with Dean hammering away in the corner until Breeze throws him to the floor and takes over. Cole lists off all of Breeze's nicknames and we get a nice pinfall reversal sequence.

A rollup out of the corner with feet on the ropes gives Tyler a two count. Dean goes up for a missile dropkick but stuns himself on the landing, possibly injuring his shoulder. If it wasn't hurt though, Tyler

sends him into the post twice in a row to make sure it's hurting. A Fujiwara armbar makes Dean scream but he makes the rope for the break. Tyler gets kicked to the floor and a kid who sounds about five says "THAT'S WHAT YOU GET FOR MESSING WITH DOLPH ZIGGLER!" Back in and Dean grabs a small package for the pin at 11:05.

Rating: C+. Good debut for Breeze here, save for the whole losing thing. Why they would put him in a match like this for his debut can only be summed by "WWE is stupid and doesn't get it" but at least it wasn't a squash. You have to assume Ziggler vs. Breeze for Survivor Series, which should be a Tyler win but stupider things have happened.

Here are the updated brackets.

Roman Reigns

Cesar

Alberto Del Rio

Stardust

Kalisto

Ryback

Owens

Neville

King Barrett

Ziggler

Ambrose

The next Undertaker/Kane moments are Wrestlemania XXVIII for Undertaker and the 2001 Royal Rumble for Kane.

The other three first round tournament matches will take place on Smackdown.

Here's New Day to complain about being left out of the tournament. Big E. declares it outrageous that they're being treated like outcasts, even while they stand here so fresh and clean. It wasn't long ago that they laid out Dolph Ziggler (Big E. faints here), took out their childhood favorites the Dudley Boyz and put out John Cena. This match is for their captain Seth Rollins, so get your horns out. Actually never mind because European magic is gar-bage. Kofi: "And Harry Potter sucks."

Neville/Usos vs. New Day

A chop sends Woods to the floor and we take a break 32 seconds in. Geez just don't start the match then. Back with Jimmy caught in the Unicorn Stampede but being able to avoid the Warrior Splash. It's off to Neville for the fast kicks and a standing moonsault to Woods, followed by the double superkicks and dives from the Usos.

Neville dropkicks Woods onto his partners and it's time for a big corkscrew moonsault off the top to the floor. Big E. runs over an Uso and Neville goes up for the Red Arrow, only to have the trombone thrown in for a distraction. Big E. shoves Neville off the top and Xavier grabs a rollup with feet on the ropes for the pin at 8:37.

Rating: C. This was exactly what you would expect when you have these six in there. It's good enough with the high flying and fast tags but New Day is much more entertaining when Woods is on the floor being goofy. The Usos will get their rematch and probably the titles back and I'm ok with that at this point. Fun match here but nothing great, ignoring Neville, as in a guy in the tournament, taking a pin of course.

We see the Wyatts taking out Undertaker and Kane recently.

Here's Bray Wyatt to eulogize the Brothers of Destruction. Bray says change is a part of life and determines who you are. They have been the benchmark for over twenty years and they have reigned supreme. He asks us to bow our heads in remembrance but calls the fans fools for chanting Undertaker's name. There was no passing of the torch because Bray took the torch and burned both of them into ashes.

Now he controls the thunder and lightning and the demons respond to his

commands. The apocalypse is here. Bray kneels and an Undertaker and Kane highlight video starts playing in reverse before going normally. Bray looks upset and Undertaker's voice says REST IN PEACE. Lightning makes fire come out of the posts and the gong sounds.

Cue Undertaker and Kane to scare Bray even more. They stare him down but the lights go out again (pay your bills you deadbeats) and the other three Wyatts are here. Undertaker punches Bray down and Harper and Rowan are punched away as well. Strowman gets in and takes off his mask but Harper and Rowan have to be chokeslammed first. A double clothesline to the Brothers just causes a double situp and Strowman is sent to the floor. Bray is all alone but Braun has to be sent over the announcers' table. Bray gets chokeslammed to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. I don't like tournaments. They're a fun idea in theory but you wind up seeing the same people fight multiple times and dragging out a concept longer than it needs to go. Now this show did a good job of keeping things moving and at least seemed to set up the semi-finals and finals at Survivor Series. Some of the matches are lame and you can see where they're going with it, but at least the final match should be fun and there are several seeds being planted for later. Good, efficient show this week but the big stuff is coming soon.

Results

Roman Reigns b. Big Show – Spear

Kevin Owens b. Titus O'Neil – Pop Up Powerbomb

Becky Lynch b. Paige – Small package

Dolph Ziggler b. The Miz – Superkick

Natalya b. Naomi – Rollup

Cesaro b. Sheamus – Arm trap small package

Dean Ambrose b. Tyler Breeze – Small package

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Thought of the Day: Keep This In Mind

In case you haven't been paying attention this week, the big story is Seth Rollins tearing his ACL and being forced to vacate the WWE World Title. This has set up a tournament at Survivor Series 2015 for the vacant belt and there's a really popular theory out there about the result. Here's something to keep in mind about it.

So the theory is that Roman Reigns turned corporate/heel and wins the tournament, possibly beating Ambrose in the finals. That's the theory I'm going with (meaning it's likely wrong) and so are a lot of other people because it makes a lot of sense. However, this brings up a problem.

With so many people predicting it, don't think that it's a bad idea. Assuming it happens, don't think that it's stupid booking just because people guessed it was going to happen. This is a good idea, no matter how many people figure it out because it opens the door for a lot of stories and sets up a bunch of matches down the line. Reigns isn't great as a face but imagine him with that smug grin saying something like "You knew it was happening one day and now it's happening whether you like it or not."

For some reason, people think predictable is bad. NXT is one of the most predictable shows in wrestling but it's also entertaining because they don't do crazy things just to fool the audience. As usual, I'll go back to Wrestlemania XIV: would you have Austin lose to Michaels and not win the title just because everyone knew he was winning that night? Of course not, because it would be a horrible decision. People knew it was coming and it kicked off some of the most profitable times the company and business have ever seen.

Just because you've figured out the ending doesn't make it stupid. That's like saying a mystery isn't a good story because you read the clues properly and solved it. It means you're thinking logically and picking up on the clues like you were supposed to. Keep that in mind as we head to Survivor Series.

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**Smackdown – November 5, 2015:
The Calm Before The**

Tournament

Smackdown

Date: November 5, 2015

Location: World Arena, Colorado Springs, Colorado

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Rich Brennan, Booker T.

As inconsequential as Smackdown is most of the time, this show is even moreso than usual. Last night at a house show in Ireland, Seth Rollins ripped his knee to shreds and is out until next summer. The title has been vacated for a tournament at Survivor Series but this show was already taped in advance so most of this isn't going to matter. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

There's another Survivor Series match tonight with the Prime Time Players and Lucha Dragons vs. the Wyatt Family. So yeah, they've built up the Dragons and now they're feeding them to the Wyatts three days later.

Here's MexAmerica to open things up. Colter talks about how there will be no hatred in MexAmerica. We don't need borders in our lives because we will all be one great nation. There are black hearts out there who lie about hating at least one person in the world and they don't belong. Viva MexAmerica.

Alberto Del Rio vs. Neville

Non-title. Del Rio starts with the kicks in the corner and another to the back for an early two. A quick headscissors takes Alberto down and Neville gets two of his own off a standing shooting star, only to have a Backstabber send him to the floor. Back from a break with Del Rio in control until Neville sends him outside for a moonsault to the floor. Neville slams him on the top of his head with a hurricanrana (intentionally, called a spike rana by Brennan). He tries a few too many flips though, allowing Del Rio to kick him off the top and into the Tree of Woe, setting up the double stomp for the pin at 9:46.

Rating: C+. Fun back and forth match here and I'm very glad that Del Rio isn't using the superkick as often as he's done before. It's kind of odd that they would have that move get him the big win against Cena and then he goes with something else for most of his matches. Maybe the superkick is supposed to be his big finisher that he only uses for major matches?

Post match Del Rio hits the low superkick. So much for any rhyme or reason. Neville gets put in the cross armbreaker but Jack Swagger makes the save.

Usos vs. Ascension

Again the booking makes little sense. You can throw Ascension out here to job but you can't put them out against the Dragons on Monday and sacrifice Barrett and Sheamus instead? Jimmy and Viktor start and after ducking Viktor's leapfrog, it's time to dance. Viktor doesn't like dancing (there's a Footloose joke in there somewhere) and sends Jimmy to the floor, followed by a catapult into Konnor's spinebuster.

Booker talks about training the Usos in an interesting bit as we hit the chinlock. An enziguri gets Jimmy out of trouble and it's the double tag as everything breaks down. Here's the finishing sequence: superkick, double superkick, double superkick, Superfly Splash to Viktor for the pin at 4:14.

Rating: C-. I am so, so sick of superkicks. There are now at least ten people on the active roster that uses them in one form or another. I mean.....do something else! The Usos looked good here and should be a nice set of challengers for the New Day. They've been out long enough that they feel fresh again and can certainly back it up in the ring.

We look at Bray's speech and fireworks display on Monday.

Wyatt Family vs. Prime Time Players/Lucha Dragons

Survivor Series rules but they still don't know if 4 on 4 or 5 on 5 is the traditional format. Rowan throws Young around to start and it's off to Harper vs. Titus. We get the traditional reference to Lawler's mini Kings as Bray comes in to destroy Young. With the situation well in hand,

it's back to Harper for a catapult into the bottom rope. The announcers bring up the idea that the Wyatts injured Orton's shoulder for a nice surprise.

Bray hits Darren in the face to stop a comeback and it's off to Strowman who has really cooled off in the last few weeks. Strowman chokes Young off on the apron but drops him at five, giving us a countout elimination at 5:13. Back from a break with Titus as the next designated victim. Harper takes him into the corner where Titus tries a comeback, only to get dragged to the bad corner again.

O'Neil finally escapes and makes the tag off to Cara as things speed way up. A suicide dive takes out Rowan and a hurricanrana gets two on Harper. Rowan breaks up another cover but Kalisto knocks him to the floor. The discus lariat knocks Cara out cold for the elimination at 12:54. Kalisto comes in for his kicks but walks into a half nelson suplex. It's back to Rowan for his fist head vice for a bit before Kalisto manages to low bridge him to the floor.

Strowman pulls Titus off the apron, leaving Kalisto to kick Harper down. A handspring into an enziguri staggers Bray but Rowan gets in a full nelson slam to put Kalisto out at 16:01, leaving Titus alone 4-1. Rowan starts so Titus fires off right hands and a clothesline. The Clash of the Titus puts Harper down but Bray and Erick make the save. Strowman chokes him out and Sister Abigail FINALLY ends this at 19:59.

Rating: D-. What the heck was the point of this? This is supposed to make me want to watch Survivor Series? A twenty minute squash where you knew what the lone high spots were Kalisto and Sin Cara doing their stuff before getting squashed as you knew they were going to be? Bad idea here in a match that should have taken half as long.

Ambrose talks about waking up this morning at 11am for a chat with the spirit of John Denver, who gave him a new song and told him that he would have a match tonight. Owens comes in to say Dean is annoying Renee and remind him of what he has to do tonight to be a champion. Tonight won't be like the ten man circus on Monday. Dean: "John Denver warned me about that guy."

King Barrett vs. Ryback

They're on the floor in a hurry with Barrett posting him a few times in a row. A big boot gets two for the King and a Boss Man Slam gets the same. We hit the chinlock for a bit and Barrett even jumps onto his back, only to be moved over into the Shell Shock for the pin at 2:20. Raise your hand if you believed Barrett's latest push was going to make it a month before falling apart.

Recap of Team Bad beating Natalya down last week.

Team Bad laughs at Natalya for getting annoyed at the attack last week. Natalya has gone nuclear and gone to FACEBOOK to challenge Team Bad's leader. Sasha seems to think that's her so I guess that's our match.

Natalya vs. Tamina

This is decided after a brief argument between the other two. Tamina runs Natalya over to start and drops a knee. Booker: "When you need a job done, you call Tamina." There's a lot of truth in that. Fans: "WE WANT SASHA!" Tamina: "YOU CAN'T HAVE HER!" You know what they can have though? A superkick! Off to a chinlock for a bit before Natalya hits a quick discus lariat. Sasha's distraction breaks up the Sharpshooter though and it's a Samoan drop to put Natalya down again. The Superfly Splash hits knees though and Natalya grabs a rollup for the pin at 3:49.

Rating: D. Well she certainly did the job. I'm hoping this leads to the end of Team Bad and the teams in general as there's has been no reason for them to exist for the last several months. Keep in mind that they've only been around for about three months now and I think you get the idea.

Recap of the Survivor Series match from Monday.

We get an inserted announcement of Rollins' injury and the tournament.

Dean Ambrose vs. Kevin Owens

Non-title because of course it is. This is another thing I don't understand: assuming Ambrose doesn't pin him here, why not make this a title match? Dean pinned him on Monday so why not do it here and

potentially build to a rematch at the pay per view? Either that or don't do this match here. Lawler: "Owens has been in the hospital several time for narcissism treatment. He keeps checking himself out." Dang it why did that make me chuckle? They trade headlocks to start (Kevin: "My headlock is better than yours!") and Dean armdrags him to the floor.

Back from a break with Dean cranking on an armbar before clotheslining Owens over the top. Kevin sends him hard into the barricade to take over though, followed by the backsplash inside. Owens takes too much time yelling at Lawler though, allowing Dean to get in a superplex. The standing elbow drop gets two and a missile dropkick puts Kevin down again. Owens superkicks him into the ropes for the rebound lariat (thankfully not called the Lunatic Lariat) but Owens claims a low blow off a kick and that's a DQ at 13:47.

Rating: C+. I could see these two having a really good feud if they're allowed to go off the rails a little bit with the promos and build. Then again it's hard to say if the match is going to happen as these two are strong candidates for the upcoming tournament. Good enough here though and I liked the twist on the ending instead of Owens just walking out.

The replay shows that the kick was way above the waist. Dean goes after him but Owens bails into the crowd to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. That Survivor Series match really brought this show down as the rest of it was pretty good. As I said though, it's really hard to know where Survivor Series is going as a lot of the show is going to be dedicated to the tournament, but there's not much else they can do. Good enough show here though as Smackdown has been doing a bit better lately.

Results

Alberto Del Rio b. Neville – Top rope double stomp

Usos b. Ascension – Superfly Splash to Viktor

Wyatt Family b. Prime Time Players/Lucha Dragons last eliminating Titus O'Neil

Ryback b. King Barrett – Shell Shock

Natalya b. Tamina – Rollup

Kevin Owens b. Dean Ambrose via DQ when Ambrose kicked him low

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Monday Night Raw – November 2, 2015: Surviving The Superkick Party

Monday Night Raw

Date: November 2, 2015

Location: Pepsi Center, Denver, Colorado

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

We're still in the build towards Survivor Series and tonight we might find out who is likely to join Undertaker and Kane in what seems to be a Survivor Series elimination tag against the Wyatt Family. Other than that it's time to build towards Roman Reigns vs. Seth Rollins for the World Title. Let's get to it.

Here's Roman Reigns to say he's glad to be here as the #1 contender and the next World Champion. Rollins on the other hand is a brown nosing kiss up and his luck runs out at Survivor Series. This brings out Rollins who knows that Reigns is good. If he wasn't good then Seth wouldn't have recruited him into the Shield. Rollins hits the verbal recap button (can we please get him to cut that out) as he brings up Wrestlemania but Reigns wants to fight right now.

The champ starts towards the ring and it's the Authority to make sure nothing happens without their approval. Stephanie teases doing the match tonight but says you'll have to watch Survivor Series. So they're heels this week. HHH thinks we should have a five on five elimination tag right here tonight (because building that up for NEXT week is such a bad idea) with Reigns and Rollins as captains.

Kevin Owens vs. Dolph Ziggler

Non-title. In an inset promo, Owens says he doesn't care about people booing him because no one can beat him. Owens starts right in on Ziggler's bad knee and mocks him as only the champ can do. Ziggler misses a charge in the corner and bangs up the knee again (Owens: "THIS CLOSE!"). Kevin misses the backsplash though and the running knee sends him to the floor. Tyler Breeze and Summer Rae come out as we take a break.

Back with Breeze and Summer in their roped off seats as Owens chinlocks Ziggler. Dolph finally jawbreaks his way to freedom and limps into a neckbreaker to put Owens down again. A couple of rollups get two each for Dolph but he stops selling the knee so Kevin sends him flying with a release German suplex. The Cannonball is blocked with a superkick but the camera cuts to Tyler and Summer taking pictures instead of watching the near fall. Well to be fair Summer is streaming on something and that's what matters in WWE. Tyler's distraction lets Owens grab the Pop Up Powerbomb for the pin at 11:02.

Rating: C-. Not great here and I could have done without hearing about Summer streaming video on whatever she was doing. Back in my day, you watched the video of the match during the match instead of trying to find

some video on the internet. Owens is still on a roll though and Breeze gets to mess with Dolph even more so well done.

Post match Tyler goes to pose over Ziggler but gets punched in the face. That earns Ziggler a Beauty Shot as Summer continues to stream.

We look back at 1987 when the first Survivor Series took place on Thanksgiving night. That was a great show.

Rollins recruits Owens for his team tonight with promises of a title match at Wrestlemania.

We look at Paige going full heel last week.

Becky Lynch says the only B in PCB was Paige. Brie comes up and says she's winning the four way for the #1 contendership instead of Charlotte's wacky sidekick. Becky calls Brie her sister's doormat and Renee finds this awesome.

Cesaro vs. The Miz

Byron: "I've got to get me a section like Cesaro." Cole: "Byron no one likes you." Cesaro nips up out of a wristlock to start but gets sent into the post and barricade to put Miz in control. Back in and we hit the chinlock as Stardust and the Ascension are still watching from the crowd. The Skull Crushing Finale is broken up and we hit the Cesaro Swing for a LONG time. The Sharpshooter makes Miz tap out at 4:49.

Rating: C. Not bad here and it's nice to see Cesaro get a win, even if it's not going anywhere anytime soon. It would be nice to see this Cesaro vs. Stardust thing go anywhere other than just watching for weeks on end but I'm sure that's coming soon enough. I miss the days when you would have matches that didn't have much of a meaning like this one. You can't do that all the time but it's nice once in a while.

Here are the Wyatts with something to say. Bray says every night is special but tonight he wants to give the people something even more important. Everyone here has recently seen Bray and his brothers taking care of Undertaker and Kane but it's not about taking their bodies. The bodies are temporary but their souls live forever.

Unless the souls are consumed by a higher power (there would be a Vince joke here but all of the good ones are probably already covered) like Bray, who has already harvested the souls of Undertaker and Kane. Bray summons the thunder and lightning (thunder rolls and purple lightning comes out of the posts) because he now controls the powers of darkness. A bunch of fireworks go off and we see a highlight video of the Brothers of Destruction. Cool segment but go win something.

Lucha Dragons vs. King Barrett/Sheamus

We actually get a video on the Dragons before the match so they must be the next New Day challengers. Kalisto kicks at Sheamus' leg to start but gets shoved away. It's off to Barrett for a kick to the head before Cara monkey flips Kalisto into a 450 for two. The King finally gets going and sends Kalisto outside and into the barricade as we take a break.

Back with Sheamus hammering Kalisto in the corner but he rolls away and makes the tag off to Cara for some house cleaning. A suicide dive takes Barrett out and Sheamus misses a charge into the post. Barrett knocks Cara off the top and onto Sheamus' knees before driving Cara back first into the barricade for two. We hit the chinlock for a bit before Barrett does his kick to the ribs in the corner.

Sheamus gets two off a suplex before it's back to Barrett for the knees against the ropes. The King even does the Dragons pose with a EU-ROPE chant. Cara counters Sheamus' suplex into a DDT and it's back to Kalisto with the real hot tag. A quick rollup gets two but Barrett takes him down and loads up the Bullhammer, only to charge into the Salida Del Sol for the pin at 13:38.

Rating: C+. Who had three weeks in the "how long before Barrett gets pinned in an upset" pool? You knew it was coming, I knew it was coming, Barrett knew it was coming. I liked that they're getting the Dragons ready, but you have the Ascension on the roster for this same match. Oh wait we can't do that because having teams go across to a different story might get too complicated.

Jack Swagger comes in to see Zeb Colter and doesn't like the idea of MexAmerica. Colter puts over the idea while also taking a jab at Canada.

The camera pans over to Del Rio, who tells Swagger to stay away. Was he just standing there the whole time and no one acknowledged him? Well it makes sense on sitcoms and WWE is a step beneath those so this works.

Alberto Del Rio vs. R-Truth

Non-title and in case Del Rio squashing him on Smackdown wasn't enough for you. Truth charges to start and Alberto goes to the floor. Back in and Del Rio grabs the armbreaker across the top rope. Truth comes back with some clotheslines (he wasn't in the armbreaker that long) followed by the ax kick for two. Del Rio kicks him in the head and ties Truth in the Tree of Woe for some kicks to the chest, followed by the top rope double stomp (and yes Truth is still in the Tree of Woe for those of you who ask me if Del Rio is using Finn Balor's move every time) for the pin at 3:23.

Rating: D. This could be subtitled "Even we don't watch Smackdown" because it's the same match (plus two minutes) that these two had last week. As usual it makes me wonder why I waste my time on that show when they're not even going to mention it on Raw and just do the same match. Boring match both times too.

Clip of the Raw vs. Smackdown Survivor Series match in 2005.

Rollins lets Big E. and Kofi (still no Woods) join the team if they can find a fifth man. They hold up the unicorns and look like they have ice cream headaches until Xavier returns to complete the team. A TEAM ROLLINS dance party starts but Seth walks off.

Sasha knows the fans want her because she's the Boss. She also reminds JoJo that Halloween was Saturday.

Sasha Banks vs. Brie Bella vs. Becky Lynch vs. Paige

Winner gets the shot at Survivor Series. No Nikki, who is out with an injury. Brie and Sasha shove each other around to start until Becky dropkicks them down and nips up. Sasha and Becky trade some rollups for two each but Becky starts going after the knee to take over. Brie finally comes back in with a double middle rope dropkick. We get some running

BRIE MODE (which now means no facial expressions instead of getting smashed) knees but Paige superkicks Brie down.

Becky and Paige get in a brawl with Lynch going into the steps. Sasha gets two off the double knees in the corner but gets sent throat first into the middle rope. Brie misses the middle rope dropkick and Paige gets a quick two as we take a break. Back with Brie doing the YES Kicks because she doesn't know how to be a heel.

After taking their sweet time we get a Tower of Doom with Sasha taking the superplex and Becky powerbombing everyone down. The Disarm-Her has Brie in trouble but Sasha makes the save and gets two on Becky off a neckbreaker. The Bank Statement has Becky in trouble (she looked like she was tapping) but Paige breaks it up and hooks the Rampaige to pin Becky at 13:18.

Rating: B. Now that was more like it. This wasn't about teams or ESTABLISHING CONTROL or who started a revolution because the stupid Stephanie part was erased from existence. This was four women fighting for a title and personal issues, which makes a match so much more interesting than what we've sat through for months.

Paige says anyone who cheered for any of the other three is a loser. Anyone who cheers for Charlotte will be a loser too because she's going to lose at Survivor Series. Simple words here but it got the point across.

Clip from last year's Survivor Series main event with no mention of Sting. So the show debuted, then nothing happened for 18 years, then it was last year.

Team Rollins vs. Team Reigns

Seth Rollins, Kevin Owens, New Day

Roman Reigns, Unknown, TBA, TBD, A mystery partner

Elimination rules and New Day comes out first. Woods: "You know we're going to talk so SHHHH!" Big E. talks about surviving the Dudleyz and Kofi says the New Day's favorite band is Survivor. Their favorite reality

show? Survivor. Their favorite Destiny's Child song? Survivor. Favorite book and movie? Lone Survivor. Woods: "Technically Last Unicorn but regardless."

First up for the partners: the returning Usos. During their entrance, Cole sounds shocked, until he announces that they'll be on ESPN tomorrow night. The other two are Ryback and Ambrose, neither of which are any sort of surprise. Not that there's anything wrong with that. Woods charges into a superkick to start and Jey adds the Superfly Splash for the elimination at 37 seconds.

Back with Jey taking the rotating stomps in the corner which JBL names the Unicorn Stampede. I can't stand JBL but that's the best name I've heard in years. Owens hits the Cannonball but Jey escapes a chinlock and dives over for the tag to his brother. Big E. gets low bridged to the floor and the double dive takes New Day out. Back in and a frog splash eliminates Kofi at 7:45 to make it 5-3.

An enziguri and a superkick drops Big E. but he crotches Jey on top. The Big Ending makes it 4-3 and a Pop Up Powerbomb takes Jimmy out to tie things up at 9:02. Reigns comes in to clean house and everything breaks down until Owens superkicks Reigns and takes us to a break. Back with Rollins coming in to stomp on Reigns like a good heel should do. After a long chinlock it's back to Owens for a backsplash and some hard right hands to the head.

Reigns slugs away at Rollins but Seth is smart enough to knock Ambrose off the apron to make the hot tag a bit more difficult. It's a double tag to bring in Ryback and Big E. and everything breaks down again. Ambrose does his slide under the bottom rope into a clothesline on Owens but gets sent into the steps. Ryback slips out of the Big Ending and Shell Shock gets rid of Big E at 21:30. Rollins is right there to Pedigree Ryback at 21:50 and we're down to Ambrose/Reigns vs. Ryback/Rollins.

Ambrose gets thrown in for a fight with Rollins and the top rope standing elbow gets two on the champ. Back to Owens for a fireman's carry gutbuster and a lot of trash talk. I could go for Owens vs. Ambrose, even if it's them playing Parcheesi. Seth's top rope knee to the head gets two

on Dean and the frustration sets in. Owens stops the comeback with a superkick but Seth knees his partner by mistake.

Dirty Deeds gets rid of Kevin at 27:30 and it's Ambrose/Reigns vs. Rollins. Seth tries to run but keeps getting caught and the beating is on. Rollins is finally caught in the corner for the rapid fire clotheslines. He manages to escape the Doomsday Device but Ambrose keeps him out of the crowd. Rollins grabs a chair though and it's a DQ at 30:03.

Rating: B-. First of all: the following people use superkicks.

Paige

Jimmy Uso

Jey Uso

Alberto Del Rio

Luke Harper

Seth Rollins

Dolph Ziggler

Rusev

Kevin Owens

Tyler Breeze

And I might be forgetting some. I know the company edict is that Shawn Michaels is the greatest of all time but LEARN SOMETHING NEW. Even the Young Bucks do something else every now and then.

The match itself was a good, long Survivor Series match and that....doesn't make a lot of sense. The ending is fine, but why in the world would you do a thirty minute main event style match here when you have a pay per view for them in twenty days? This is the annoying thinking that WWE has lately and it drives me crazier every single week.

Put the eight guys into a match at the pay per view with title shots on the line or something but don't do it this way. The action was good though and the Usos are clearly going for the titles sooner rather than later.

Rollins cleans house with the chair but Reigns gets in a Superman Punch to send him running to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. This show had some major faults and it's really not as good as last week. The main event was a fun idea but again: WHY IS IT HAPPENING THE NIGHT IT'S ANNOUNCED??? Give both guys a week or two to set up their teams and do it on the go home show or something but stop announcing the match and doing it in the same night.

The Wyatt promo was good but I'm always skeptical about believing in Bray's latest push. Let him win something big and I'll buy into him more but until then I'm waiting on the loss in the big match. The Divas match was good and logical, probably because Nikki wasn't there to be treated as the star of the whole thing.

This show worked but the whole idea of having a Survivor Series match three weeks before Survivor Series makes my head hurt. It's the same old WWE booking theory: let's give them the same thing over and over again and then ask them to pay to see it again on a different night. The show is still WAY better than it was a few weeks ago though and that's a good sign going forward.

Results

Kevin Owens b. Dolph Ziggler – Pop Up Powerbomb

Cesaro b. The Miz – Sharpshooter

Lucha Dragons b. Sheamus/King Barrett – Salida Del Sol to Barrett

Alberto Del Rio b. R-Truth – Top rope double stomp

Paige b. Becky Lynch, Sasha Banks and Brie Bella – Rampaige to Lynch

Team Reigns b. Team Rollins last eliminating Seth Rollins

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Smackdown – October 28, 2015: A Holiday Treat

Smackdown

Date: October 29, 2015

Location: Talking Stick Resort Arena, Phoenix, Arizona

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Rich Brennan, Booker T.

We're coming off a good Raw and we now have a fresh #1 contender in Roman Reigns. The other big story however is Bray Wyatt kidnapping both the Undertaker and Kane in order to feast on their souls. It's pretty clear that this is leading to a Survivor Series match but the Brothers of Destruction need partners. Let's get to it.

We open with a narrated recap of the Wyatts' recent actions.

The Wyatts say the spirits that fueled the Brothers of Destruction now belong to him. To celebrate the fallen sons on the day of the dead, Bray issues a challenge to any three souls brave enough to face his monsters. Fitting for a Halloween show. Rowan says he was never allowed to dress up for Halloween because it was too sinful. Harper says evil is very real and these aren't costumes. Bray wishes his condolences to anyone who

faces them and pulls out Kane's mask. He hands it to Strowman, who promises annihilation awaits. Run.

Opening sequence.

The arena is full of Halloween decorations to give it a more festive feeling.

Here's Reigns to open things up. Reigns has had one goal since he's been here and that is to be the WWE World Heavyweight Champion. He's been knocked down a lot but he's dusted himself up and now he's back in the fight. The only man left in front of him is Seth Rollins but here's Kevin Owens to add himself to the mix. Owens says Reigns stole one from him on Monday. "YAY! YAY! EVERYBODY YAY! GO ROMAN!"

Monday wasn't Reigns overcoming the odds because it was just a fluke. Roman must know that he was a second away from being powerbombed and pinned. Believe that. Reigns thinks that sounds like an excuse because it was straight skill that beat Owens. Kevin can whine Owens whine, or he can come in here right now and fight Owens fight.

Roman Reigns vs. Kevin Owens

Non-title. A quick point before we get going: as Owens came out, Brennan said they were scheduled for a match tonight. I'm so glad they actually announced that for once instead of just having a spontaneous match. It helps the show feel realistic for a change and that always helps. Reigns shoulders him out to the floor to start and scores with a neckbreaker as we take an early break. Back with Reigns putting him on the floor again but getting sent into the barricade this time around.

Owens throws him with a fall away slam for two back inside but Reigns kicks him in the face for two. See? There are moves other than clotheslines. Owens one ups him with a superkick but Roman breaks up the Cannonball with a clothesline. The threat of the Superman Punch scares Owens to the floor but he escapes a Samoan drop. Roman breaks up the swinging fisherman's superplex (I miss that move) and Superman Punches Kevin to the floor. That's enough for Owens and it's a countout at 11:15.

Rating: B-. Well done here by not having Owens get pinned. You can tell when the company has flipped the switch and gone back to work because they don't do stupid stuff like having their champions get pinned in a meaningless match. Reigns winning via countout is fine here and leaves the door open for a bigger rematch down the line. Owens looked competitive here which is all you can ask for against a main event star.

Ambrose, describing himself as ruggedly handsome, tells Renee (in a green fairy costume) to ask if he's going to accept the Wyatts' challenge. Of course he is because he slays monsters. He'll be waiting to find out who is joining the ghostbusting monster squad but he'll fight alone if he has to. Dean leaves and a ghost comes up behind Renee. It's B00 Dallas, who promises to scare someone tonight.

Dudley Boyz vs. Ascension vs. Lucha Dragons vs. Sheamus/King Barrett

This is called Tag Team Terror which means fatal four way. New Day comes out on commentary and they now have unicorn horns. Kofi doesn't like the four teams not wearing costumes because it means it means they don't believe in magic. Big E.: "SHAME!" Kofi and Big E. join in on commentary as Kalisto headscissors Sheamus down. Bully and Barrett come in as New Day does their reporter voices.

The Dragons dropkick Ascension and the good guys clear the ring as we take a break. Back with Bubba yelling at New Day (Kofi: "THIS IS NOW THE HALLOWEEN SPIRIT!") and D-Von elbowing Sheamus in the face for two. Kalisto comes in and is promptly stomped down by the pasty one (Big E.'s words), followed by a chinlock. Big E. thinks Sheamus is a carpenter because he's hitting Kalisto like a hammer. Kofi: "YOU SEE WHAT HE DID THERE??? YOU SEE WHAT HE DID THERE???"

Off to Viktor for a spinebuster on Kalisto as Big E. tells Brennan to take notes. Konnor goes shoulder first into the post and it's Sin Cara coming in off the hot tag. Cara's hurricanana gets two on Konnor but everything breaks down with the Dudleyz coming in to hold Sheamus and Barrett for a double What's Up. The Dragons get backdropped onto Ascension as Kofi and Big E. have completely taken over commentary with their nasal voices. A blind tag brings in Kalisto for a Salida Del Sol

from the apron to pin Viktor at 10:32.

Rating: C. Another entertaining match with the Dragons getting a nice win. As usual though, New Day stole the show here as they jumped from their usual commentary to some hilarious comedy with the voices. Kofi's was shockingly good and I forgot who I was listening to at times. Oh and again: the up and comers don't get pinned. Fun match, outstanding commentary.

Lawler has an idea for a costume: write LIFE on a shirt and hand everyone lemons. Brennan: "Why not pennies?" Lawler: "You idiot."

Ambrose can't figure out Cesaro's costume. Cesaro is in a suit and sunglasses but that's just how he normally dresses. He offers to be Dean's partner tonight but Dean insists that Cesaro swing them around so many times that their beards fly off. Cesaro: "You can be Jason Vorhees or something." Dean: "I'll just be me." They leave and B00 Dallas appears again.

We recap last week's MizTV with Tyler Breeze debuting to beat up Dolph Ziggler.

Dolph Ziggler vs. The Miz

Trick or Treat street fight, meaning the ring is surrounded by Halloween decorations, including about twenty pumpkins around the apron. Lawler says Ziggler is dressed as Nikki Sixx. Miz kicks some pumpkins around to start but Ziggler holds onto the ropes to block a catapult. As Ziggler pulls himself back in, Miz finds a plastic sword. That's fine with Ziggler who has a kendo stick painted like candy corn.

The duel goes to Dolph and he shoves Miz's face into a bowl of apples and water. That's not enough as Ziggler puts a pumpkin over Miz's head and breaks it up with a superkick. Miz has had enough of these shenanigans and starts going after the knee with a stick shot. The leg is wrapped around the post and Miz crushes it with a chair. It's Figure Four time but Ziggler counters into a small package for the pin at 4:48.

Rating: C-. This was fine. They kept the jokes short enough that it

didn't seem corny and it was fun enough while it lasted. Ziggler pinning Miz doesn't mean much as Miz can bounce back in no time and Ziggler is moving on to Breeze anyway. The match was fun enough and they didn't get stupid like they so often do with these theme matches.

Ziggler is down post match so here's Breeze to go after the knee with the kendo stick.

We recap Paige going full heel on Monday.

Paige vs. Natalya

Paige superkicks Natalya at the bell and slowly stomps her down in the corner. Natalya comes back with a quick suplex to put Paige on the floor but here's Team Bad to say Natalya has their attention. The distraction lets Paige grab a Rampaige for the pin at 2:16.

Post match Team Bad lays Natalya out. This includes Tamina becoming the fourth person tonight to use a superkick.

Breast cancer segment from Monday.

Ryback offers to be the third partner. Dean: "Yep, you'll do."

Here are Del Rio and Colter with something to say. Colter calls Del Rio virtuous and is so proud to be one of the first citizens of MexAmerica. That title now represents MexAmerica and Del Rio promises to make it great by renaming it the MexAmerica Championship.

Alberto Del Rio vs. R-Truth

Non-title. Truth starts fast with the gordbuster but Alberto goes after the arm to take over. Del Rio goes up top and ties Truth in the Tree of Woe for the double stomp and the pin at 1:27. I like the move but there's a danger of it becoming like the 619 where there are only so many realistic ways to set it up.

B00 Dallas tries to scare Mark Henry and gets punched in the face. I guess that ends the joke.

Ryback/Dean Ambrose/Cesaro vs. Wyatt Family

Bray is the odd man out here. Ryback shoulders Harper down to start and Luke's shirt is torn. It's off to Strowman but Ryback goes right after him with right hands to stagger the monster. A suplex doesn't work so well but Braun easily suplexes him down. We take a break and come back with Harper getting two on Ryback off a slingshot hilo. Back to Rowan for the double fist head vice but Ryback fights up (because it was a lame hold) and grabs a quick spinebuster.

Ambrose gets the tag to give the fans something to cheer for. Dean sends Harper and Rowan to the floor for the big dive off the top but Rowan kicks him in the face (NOT a superkick for a change) for two. Dean fights up again and makes the tag off to Cesaro for your athletic freak of the night phase. Harper takes the running uppercuts and that reverse Angle Slam that needs a name.

There's the crossface from Cesaro as everyone else fights on the floor. A suicide dive knocks Strowman against the announcers' table and Ryback knocks him over for good measure. The crossface goes on Cesaro again but Rowan makes the save, only to get nailed by Dean. The superkick party continues with Harper kicking Dean's head off but walking into the springboard discus uppercut. Strowman gets up for a distraction though and the discus lariat ends Cesaro at 11:48.

Rating: C+. Nice main event here as the Wyatts get to look dominant over a thrown together team. They did a good job of keeping Strowman looking like a monster again as Ryback could barely move him. It's going to be a big deal when someone beats him if they do it right and so far that's where we're going. There was little doubt as to who was winning this given what the Wyatts are doing at the moment and that's not a bad thing.

Overall Rating: C+. I had a good time with this show as you can see that the company is taking things seriously again, likely due to their perceived break being over. It's still not must see TV or anything but at least we had a fun two hours for a change instead of the same stuff we get every week.

Results

Roman Reigns b. Kevin Owens via countout

Lucha Dragons b. Dudley Boyz, Ascension and King Barrett/Sheamus – Salida Del Sol to Viktor

Dolph Ziggler b. The Miz – Small package

Paige b. Natalya – Rampaige

Alberto Del Rio b. R-Truth – Top rope double stomp

Wyatt Family b. Cesaro/Ryback/Dean Ambrose – Discus lariat to Cesaro

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The Open Challenge Was Answered By.....

A surprise....AND HIS NAME IS ALBERTO DEL RIO!!!! As managed by none other than Zeb Colter. This is quite the surprise but why not.

Smackdown – October 22, 2015: Prince Pretty's Here

Smackdown

Date: October 22, 2015

Location: Frank Erwin Center, Austin, Texas

Commentators: Booker T., Jerry Lawler, Rich Brennan

It's the final show before Hell in a Cell and we might get some build towards the World Title match after it got little more than lip service on Monday. Aside from that I'd assume we're in for a lot of video packages on the other big matches and maybe another cryptic promo from Bray, possibly including the prophecy he was supposed to give on Monday. Let's get to it.

We open with Seth Rollins walking through the back when he runs into Kane. That would be Corporate Kane, not Demon Kane, Harlem Heat Kane or Kane the Undertaker. Kane has a match for him tonight and threatens violence if Rollins tries to run again. Rollins leaves and Kane finds Kofi and Big E., both of whom have XW bands on their arm. Those dastardly Dudleyz put Woods through a table on Monday and now there are just two unicorns. Kofi: "What do you see in front of you right now?" Kane: "Men with fingers on their heads." Kane plays a tiny trombone for them and makes the two of them vs. Ambrose/Reigns for later.

Seth Rollins vs. Cesaro

Non-title. Cesaro takes him to the mat and rides the champ before gutwrenching him for two. Seth bails to the floor and we see Stardust and Ascension in the Stardust Section again. The champ grabs his belt and thinks about leaving but changes his mind and goes back inside for the running uppercuts instead. Another bailout attempt is broken up by Cesaro but Seth sends him into the steps as we take a break.

Back with Seth getting two off the springboard knee to the head. It doesn't seem to have much effect though as Cesaro dropkicks him off the top and out to the floor, followed by the running uppercut against the

barricade. Back in and Seth's enziguri sets up the low superkick for two, only to charge into Swiss Death. The Crossface doesn't last long and Rollins breaks up the apron superplex, followed by the Pedigree for the pin at 10:35.

Rating: C+. This was the entertaining match you would expect from these two when they're given a bit of time. Cesaro loses of course because that's all he knows how to do these days. The big thing I took away from this though was the Pedigree is so out of character for Rollins. He's a high flying striker and the Pedigree really doesn't fit that style. I know it's going to be part of the HHH vs. Rollins feud, which is still going to start any day now right? Like any day.

The Stardust Section mocks Cesaro.

Miz promises that MizTV will be awesome, unlike Renee's hair.

Breast cancer time.

Here's Paige to address trying to reform PCB and being accused of attacking Natalya last week. Paige says she only cares about what Charlotte and Becky think of her so she'd like them to come out here for her explanation. Becky doesn't care to hear it but Paige talks about being happy when the two of them made it to the main roster. That's all well and good, but Becky doesn't believe it after everything Paige has said and done.

Charlotte says she's going to talk now. Paige had her moment over a year ago and all Charlotte wanted was her own moment to share with the two of them. It's clear that Paige doesn't respect Charlotte because it's not all about Paige for once. Cue the Bellas with Nikki talking about her record and Brie saying this feels like Pretty Little Liars. Charlotte wants a fight but Paige says Nikki has to fight her first. Nikki accepts because she's fearless or whatever.

Nikki Bella vs. Paige

Lawler says Paige has made it all about herself again as Nikki takes over with a facebuster to start. Booker brings up winning the TV Title and how

it messed up Harlem Heat. I'm sure Stevie being out for five months had nothing to do with it either. Nikki sends Paige shoulder first into the post and we take an early break. Back the bad arm going around the post again as Booker thinks Nikki knows about pressure points.

Nikki mocks THIS IS MY HOUSE before slamming Paige down on the arm. Paige comes right back with a superkick for two but walks into a spinebuster for the same. The Rack Attack is broken up and Paige gets two off a fall away slam. Brie: "STAY FEARLESS!" We get what looked like a quick edit to get to an Alabama Slam from Nikki for another two. Nikki finally drills her with the forearm and the Rack Attack is good for the pin at 11:20.

Rating: B-. I'm no fan of the Bellas but this was actually good. They were trading big moves and it worked really well all things considered. It's amazing how much more entertaining these women are when they cut out all the stupid cattiness and just beat each other up. I'm really hoping they don't put the belt back on Nikki but this was one of her best matches to date.

It's time for MizTV with guests Dolph Ziggler and Summer Rae, with Dolph coming out after a long recap of the story since Lana and Rusev's engagement was announced. Miz brings up Ziggler being tossed aside by TMZ of all places despite having more relationships than almost anyone in WWE. Lana is a grown woman who can do whatever she wants and Summer was just trying to use Dolph ("Which I'm usually into") but he wants nothing to do with it. Miz isn't convinced so here's Summer to make it more interesting.

She gets right to the point and suggests that she wants to propose to Dolph. Dolph: "I'm just not that into you bro." Actually that's not what she meant because she's found a new man: Tyler Breeze, complete with NXT theme and entrance. After a quick NXT chant, Breeze says he needs no introduction but Dolph needs someone to bring him beyond 1985.

Tyler has been hearing of Dolph treating his Summer Rae of sunshine so poorly so he flew in from Monte Carlo. Ziggler calls him a whiny millennial but Breeze decks him (and rightfully so. That's quite the insult.) and drives the still injured throat (still injured? It is?) into

the buckle. Referees help Ziggler up so Breeze adds a Beauty Shot before posing for a picture with Summer.

Sheamus/King Barrett vs. Lucha Dragons

Rusev is at ringside. Cara starts with Barrett and kicks him to the mat before monkey flipping Kalisto into a 450 for two. That was cool. It's back to Cara who gets shoved off the ropes and grabs his knee. The knee is fine enough for Sheamus to throw him into the barricade though and a powerslam gets two. Barrett's pumphandle slam is broken up and Cara scores with an enziguri, allowing the tag off to Kalisto. A quick hurricanrana driver plants Sheamus but Rusev pushes Barrett out of the way of a suicide dive. Kalisto dives onto Barrett but the distraction sets up the Brogue Kick for the pin at 4:17.

Rating: C. There's always room for a foreign heel stable. It's like Jello. Besides it's not like most of them are doing anything else so why not throw them together? It worked for Road Dogg and Billy Gunn so maybe it works here too. Good enough match here and it makes the monsters look good before they lose on Sunday for the sake of setting up a rubber match that no one wants to see.

Clip from Raw of Reigns and Ambrose cleaning house of the Wyatts.

Here's Bo Dallas with something to say. He accepts the US Open Challenge for he and his fellow Bo-Americans. His version of Bo say can you see is interrupted and it's time for a match.

Ryback vs. Bo Dallas

Ryback throws him around to start but gets his throat snapped across the top rope as we see Owens watching in the back. Not that it matters as the Meat Hook and Shell Shock end this at 1:39. Nice job of rebuilding Ryback after the totally unnecessary loss on Monday.

Owens says Ryback is a lot of things Owens isn't, including champion. Renee takes this as Owens being arrogant but Owens thinks it means he's better than Ryback. This Sunday it's the Kevin Owens show and he's walking out Intercontinental Champion. Trust him.

Long video on Lesnar vs. Undertaker, which Booker compares to Ali vs. Frazier.

Roman Reigns/Dean Ambrose vs. New Day

Non-title. Eden introduces this as a tag team match which will probably get her in hot water backstage. No Woods here due to being put through a table on Raw. It's been far too long since someone was off TV to sell a short term injury like this. A loud NEW DAY ROCKS opens things up as Kofi does the unicorns pose. Ambrose headlocks Kofi to start and brings in Reigns for the jumping clothesline.

Big E. comes in for the hip swiveling and a shoulder to put Roman down. Reigns gets driven into the barricade and it's time for a break. Back with Reigns breaking out of an abdominal stretch and making the tag off to Dean for some right hands. A quick Kofi trip puts New Day back in control though and it's time for the rotating stomps. Big E. sounds like he's on a microphone as he shouts encouragement.

Kofi loads up the Boom Drop, shouts HOPSCOTCH, does a little hopping, and lands on Dean for two. Ambrose makes the quick tag and it's off to Roman to clean house. There's an apron boot to Big E. and another one on the announcers' table to Kofi. Ambrose comes back in with a missile dropkick to Big E. and the champs bail, only to run into the Dudleyz. Back in and Big E. takes a Doomsday Device, followed by a Superman Punch to Kofi. The spear puts Kingston away at 12:07.

Rating: C-. It's really kind of amazing how much less entertaining the New Day is without Woods out there. They're just a basic power and speed team and the HOPSCOTCH thing wasn't enough to get me really into the match. Woods is the heart and soul of the team and I never would have guessed that when they got together in the first place.

Bray pops up on screen and says Roman can't outrun his fear.

Overall Rating: D+. Totally standard go home episode of Smackdown as they've found the safest formula they can come up with and aren't moving away from it until USA drags them to a new night. It was another two hours that came and went with the Divas match actually being the

highlight of the show. Smackdown continues to be the definition of “just there” and I’m getting more and more indifferent to it every single week.

Results

Seth Rollins b. Cesaro – Pedigree

Nikki Bella b. Charlotte – Rack Attack

Sheamus/King Barrett b. Lucha Dragons – Brogue Kick to Kalisto

Ryback b. Bo Dallas – Shell Shock

Roman Reigns/Dean Ambrose b. New Day – Spear to Kingston

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Reviewing the Review – Monday Night Raw: October 12, 2015

Aside from the important shows, my favorite reviews to look back on are the shows where people say I got the ratings totally wrong. I’ve changed my opinion on shows before via a second look so maybe that’s going to happen here. This week’s show was pretty much hated but I had a decent

enough time with it. Let's get to it.

We start immediately with the big story of the night: the Authority isn't here (and won't be here despite saying they're trying to make it all night). Therefore Corporate Kane is in charge and gets to book the show on his own so he makes himself vs. Seth Rollins in a lumberjack match. Why doesn't he make this a title match you ask? Plot convenience of course.

Throughout the night, the Authority keeps trying to get hold of Kane and ask him what the main event is but bad reception keeps cutting them off. Why doesn't HHH send him a text or an e-mail so he can get the information when the reception is good and doesn't have to be on his phone at that time? Plot convenience of course. Granted it wouldn't matter in this case as the Authority found out about the match and told Kane he had to change it.

Naturally this gave us Demon Kane vs. Rollins because that's still supposed to be different. This wasn't the best idea, especially given that the fans aren't thrilled to see them fight in the first place, so now they get to fight twice. Monday Night Football was a weak game and they had a chance to do something good, but we get Rollins vs. Kane I instead of the only match at the pay per view. I know I defend this company a lot, but there are times where they do stuff that boggles my mind.

Ambrose and Orton had a male bonding segment that was interrupted by New Day. As usual New Day stole the show with pure charisma and asked why Orton has been a part of so many groups. This led to a very long tag match (by Raw standards at least) that didn't do much for me but could have been far worse. If my best option is nearly twenty minutes of pretty good wrestling, I'll gladly take it over the drek that Raw is capable of putting on any day. Even on a new day, like the team that won the match due to some face miscommunication.

Things aren't boding well for Orton/Ambrose heading into the pay per view. For one thing they lost here and even worse they're actually on the pre-show. That screams angle for later in the show to me, as they've been

in one of the biggest stories on the show and the card currently has six matches. I could easily see a fight breaking out to set up Orton vs. Ambrose on the show, because why build what could be a solid midcard pay per view match when you can throw it out there with an hour of build?

Video on Undertaker vs. Lesnar, which would air again (or at least a very similar version) later in the night. Well that's nice of them. It's not like either guy can be bothered showing up and making me want to see the match so I'll take what I can get.

Nikki beat Naomi in a nothing match but the fans chanted for Sasha to fill in most of the time. The more I think about it the more I'm glad they haven't added Sasha to the title match in the hopes that we get past Nikki's rematch and move on to something else, because you know this company loves itself some rematches.

Dolph Ziggler answered the US Open Challenge and lost like everyone else does. It was another good match but when are they going to pick something for Cena to do at the pay per view? Word on the street is that he's leaving for a few months after the show but at the moment there's no one to challenge for the title and no real prospects, unless they throw Big Show in there again. Would that really be a big surprise at this point? You would think Ziggler wins it here but I guess this was the payoff to the accidental superkick. Every day that goes by scares me even more that we'll get something stupid at the pay per view.

The Dudleyz squashed the Ascension. At least they're on TV.

Sheamus and King Barrett beat Neville and Cesaro in a nothing match. Barrett has said he wants to be a tag wrestler and Sheamus/Barrett would be fine enough for a team. I'd like to see Cesaro/Neville actually win something but they seem to be the latest acts on the doomed bulletproof list.

Roman Reigns came out and gave a big speech about how Bray was trying to take away his livelihood. This has been described as horrible but I really liked it. What was far worse was the obnoxious Chicago crowd jeering the whole thing because they can't shut up for five minutes. They decided a long time ago that they don't want to see Reigns (they'll take

anyone but him I assume) and no matter what he says, they're going to boo. This gets annoying quickly and unfortunately that's often what decides everyone's reactions to the speech. Roman got to the point and delivered, which is a big improvement over his usual stuff.

In something I really don't like, Reigns beat Braun Strowman by countout. I could live with this if it was like Strowman's debut match against Ambrose where it was a squash, but in this case Roman hung with Braun the whole way and basically knocked him out to win. That shouldn't happen for months but this is WWE where the idea of CHILL OUT AND WAIT is sacrilegious. Not a good brawl either and that's not a good thing, especially with Braun losing and being made to look beatable this early.

Here's the column on the Lana/Rusev/TMZ fiasco:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2015/10/14/new-column-the-worldwide-leader-in-not-knowing-the-difference/>

Then Ryback beat Rusev in about three minutes because Vince loves publicity as long as it's controlled publicity.

Kevin Owens squashed Kalisto to end one of the best uses of the mini feuds that I've seen in a long time. They don't need to do their usual tropes so let Owens beat up a midcard tag team instead. The story works fine and Owens vs. Ryback is built up even more. Simple, yet effective. I love that idea.

Brie Bella pinned Charlotte in a tag match because the way to get someone new over in the division is to give them the title and then have them lose almost every match. Paige and Natalya fought a bit to pad out the match. I do like the idea that they have more than one Divas story going at the same time, but they could have better ideas than Brie Bella pinning the Divas Champion.

Kane pinned Seth Rollins off a tombstone. This really doesn't surprise me at this point and it shouldn't surprise you either. Neither should Rollins retaining the title in a boring pay per view match.

So...yeah I'm not sure what I was thinking. Ziggler vs. Cena was good but

not good enough to make up for a lot of the boneheaded moves going on here. This is looking like the weakest pay per view I've seen in a long time and WWE really doesn't seem interested in making anything of it. Lesnar vs. Undertaker might as well not even be happening because neither guy seems interested in building it, leaving us with a main event of Kane vs. Rollins. Which we saw here. And it sucked.

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Smackdown – October 15, 2015: The Weekly House Show

Smackdown

Date: October 15, 2015

Location: US Bank Arena, Cincinnati, Ohio

Commentators: Rich Brennan, Jerry Lawler, Booker T.

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

Opening sequence.

Roman Reigns vs. Bo Dallas

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

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

Cesaro/Neville vs. Sheamus/King Barrett

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

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

Rating: C-. This match is a good example of everything wrong with Smackdown. Not only have we already seen it on Raw with the same result

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

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

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

Kevin Owens vs. Zack Ryder

Non-title and Ryback is at ringside. Owens shrugs off an early flurry and stomps Ryder down. A quick missile dropkick doesn't have much staying power for Ryder as Owens hits a Meathook, shouts FINISH IT and plants Ryder with the Pop Up Powerbomb for the pin at 1:39. Total squash but effective.

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

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

Dolph Ziggler vs. Rusev

Summer Rae is guest referee and Dolph doesn't seem to mind when she takes her hair down. Rusev stomps Ziggler in the corner to start as Booker confuses Sherri Martel for his wife Sharmell. Ziggler gets knocked off the apron and into the barricade for a nice crash. Back in and Rusev

charges into an elbow, followed by an elbow for a fast two. We get a Danny Davis reference, followed by Dolph's superkick being countered into a catapult into the corner. Rusev's jumping superkick gets the slow count required in a match like this, followed by a slap to knock Rusev into the Zig Zag for the pin at 4:26.

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

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

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

Wyatt Family vs. Prime Time Players

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

Charlotte vs. Alicia Fox

Non-title. Fox takes over with a quick backbreaker and we hit the chinlock. We see Team BAD watching in the back as Alicia's northern

lights suplex gets two. Both of them try big boots at the same time but it's Charlotte up first with the spear and the Figure Eight for the submission at 3:10.

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

Team Bella attacks post match but Paige makes the save.

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

Video on Lesnar vs. Undertaker.

New Day vs. Dean Ambrose/Dudley Boyz

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

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

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

in a trombone shot for the DQ at 9:35.

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

New Day lays out the Dudleyz to end the show.

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

Results

Roman Reigns b. Bo Dallas – Spear

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

Kevin Owens b. Zack Ryder – Pop Up Powerbomb

Dolph Ziggler b. Rusev – Zig Zag

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

Charlotte b. Alicia Fox – Figure Eight

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

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