

# Money in the Bank 2015

## Preview

We're up to another show here and I'm not the most interested. However, this is more like the TLC and Extreme Rules shows: if you just let the gimmicks carry the show, everything should fall into place (and off the top of the ladders). Hopefully we get a cash in on the night of the show so we don't have to have the briefcase carried around all year. Let's get to it.

On the pre-show, I'll go with Barrett over Truth. I know Truth has been doing some funny stuff lately, but I have to have faith in the wrestling world. I know they'll likely job Barrett again and chuckle at the idea that people believed in him for the dozenth time, but I have to believe that it can happen just one time. I mean....please?

Now for the matches that people actually care about, that might actually get more than five minutes, and won't involve a bag of rubber spiders.

I'll take Cena to win over Owens, but not by pin or submission. They seem to be taking care of Owens and the other rookies, so hopefully they just have him walk out or get disqualified this time. There's nowhere near enough heat for this rematch to take place so soon and it's really holding things back. This should have been at Summerslam to build up Owens even more and take away some of the awesome memories of the first match. Still though, this should be fun and something very interesting depending on the ending.

As weak as it is, I'll take Reigns for the Money in the Bank briefcase. It's such a simple idea that you would think they might mix things up, but there's really no reason to have anyone but Reigns take it down. Kingston and New Day would be awesome for a moment before you remember they're the Tag Team Champions. Neville isn't ready. Orton doesn't need it. Ziggler, Sheamus and Kane are Ziggler, Sheamus and Kane. Reigns is tied in and the logical move, which is why it probably doesn't happen if WWE tries to get cute. I'll go safe here though and hope that Reigns

cashes in very soon.

I've already gone into the World Title scene but I think Rollins retains and brags about it tomorrow night on Raw, only to have Brock come back as the biggest monster face in the history of monster faces to chase the belt. I know a lot of people have been wanting to see Ambrose win the title and that's still a possibility, but the Lesnar factor changes so many things.

You combine that with the possibilities of something interesting happening with a Shield reunion and there's almost no way of telling where this goes. Well I mean between the two people who are possible winners so it's really 50/50, but saying there's no way of telling sounds better, despite it not really being that hard to tell. I'll take Rollins retaining and Ambrose turning heel as a result, because why listen to the crowd cheering for someone they love when you can turn Reigns heel and let him build himself up for a year or so down the line.

New Day retains the belts. I've been chuckling at the Prime Time Players and Darren is actually showing some potential, but I don't see them being the team to beat New Day for the titles. New Day is getting even stronger as kind of associates of the Authority, which is even further of a miracle than they were expecting.

Ryback keeps the Intercontinental Title. As easy as a Big Show joke would be here, let Ryback retain and build himself up a bit more with a Shell Shock on the giant. You remember that move. They did it on Raw because why save it for the pay per view when you can show 18 replays of it on Raw. Odds are Ryback moves on to feud with Miz after this, or maybe back to Wyatt, who beat him so recently.

Oh and Nikki retains as the march to 295 continues, meaning she can pass AJ Lee as the longest reigning Divas Champion ever so WWE can put her in montages with Trish and Lita, because it's totally the same thing.

This is a show that is going to be based entirely on the strength of the ladder matches and little more. Cena vs. Owens is a big match, but it's going to be dealing with the big expectations that the previous match built up. Other than that though, the Money in the Bank ladder match

should be a big fun mess and Ambrose vs. Rollins could be great. The interesting thing is going to come the following night though as an angry Lesnar is going to be back to go a Rollins hunting.

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## Some Quick Fantasy Booking

About WWE's main event scene. WWE is in a weird place this weekend, and unfortunately it looks like it's ending with another Ambrose loss on pay per view. Let's take a quick look at this.

Here's how I see it going down/what I want to see, and no this isn't meant to be some grand plan that is some huge insight/shocking prediction.

My guess is Rollins, all by himself, cheats to win on Sunday and keeps the title. The following night on Raw, Rollins is bragging about doing it all on his own....."OH MY GOD OH MY GOD OH MY GOD!" "THE BEAST IS BACK MAGGLE!" This leads to Brock vs. Rollins at Battleground and, with Rollins in trouble,

SIERRA

HOTEL

INDIA

ECHO

LIMA

DELTA

Does it make sense? Not really. Is it likely to happen? Eh possibly as there have been far dumber reunions before. This sets up Lesnar doing something at Summerslam and then Shield fighting in the triple threat for the title. I firmly believe the first part is happening but the Battleground ending is much more fantasy booking.

The problem here is they've set up Lesnar vs. Rollins at some point and much like Ryback in 2012, there's no place for Ambrose at the top of the card. Well not on his own at least as they could put him back together with Shield. Either that or they'll have Ambrose turn on Reigns because it's as stupid of an idea as they could have and do Reigns vs. Ambrose at Summerslam and do Lesnar vs. Rollins for the title again there, assuming it's at Battleground.

Either way, Ambrose isn't getting the title, or at least isn't going to keep it very long.

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# Smackdown – June 11, 2015: Ho-Freaking-Hum

## Smackdown

Date: June 11, 2015

Location: CajunDome, Lafayette, Louisiana

Commentators: Byron Saxton, Tom Phillips, Jerry Lawler

It's the last show before we get to Money in the Bank, meaning it's the

last time we have to cram an entire pay per view build into two weeks for a very long time. The big story coming out of Monday is Ambrose using Instagram (just go with it) to warn Rollins that he was coming, only to lay Seth out again to end the show. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's Ambrose, wearing a ton of Mardi Gras beads, coming through the crowd to open things up. He holds up the title and says let the good times roll because he's been having a good time on Bourbon Street. Ambrose takes us through the Instagram pictures from Monday, thankfully pointing out that the ticket wasn't real and that Reigns just saved him a seat. After a clip of the main event from Raw, Ambrose promises to drop Seth on his head with Dirty Deeds and take the World Title for real this Sunday.

Cue Rollins who says Ambrose is just like all the other scum in this arena: not in his league. Rollins wants the title back and Dean drops it right in the middle of the ring. The champ picks it up but realizes it's just a replica because the title is somewhere between here and New Orleans. Dean: "It's been a blurry few days. It still feels like Tuesday to me." Kane comes out and brings up Mercury and Noble beating Rollins on Monday when he was all alone. Tonight he gets to be alone all over again against Dolph Ziggler. As usual, Ambrose and Rollins have a great promo when people just leave them alone.

### Ryback vs. Miz

Non-title. Miz bails to the floor to take off the sunglasses and has his sunset flip attempt countered by having his head slammed into the mat. A ridiculous 26 seconds vertical suplex sends Miz outside again but he throws Ryback over the announcers' table as we take a break. Back with Ryback fighting out of a chinlock and hitting a backpack Stunner. A powerslam gets two for the champ but Miz kicks him in the head to set up the Figure Four.

That goes nowhere (just like always because it's a horrible move for Miz to use) as Ryback powers out, only to take a short DDT for two more. The threat of a Meat Hook sends Miz to the floor but Ryback runs him down out

there just as easily. Back in and Shell Shock is countered into the Skull Crushing Finale for two and Miz is stunned. Ever the genius, Miz tries a Meat Hook of his own but takes the real thing, setting up Shell Shock to give the champion the pin at 7:44.

**Rating:** C. This was fine for what it was and served the purpose of giving Ryback a nice win. Miz is settling into this midcard role as he loses his matches but is able to talk himself right back into being hated all over again due to pure delusion. Ryback vs. Big Show isn't going to be anything great but at least the Shell Shock at the end will be good. Assuming of course WWE doesn't feel the need to feed someone else to Big Show for reasons I'll never fathom.

Post match here's Big Show who says he doesn't impress easily with over twenty years of experience (not quite as he debuted in October 1995). The Shell Shock was fine on Monday but this Sunday ends with one of these right hands. He's holding up his left hand but close enough. Ryback says he'll have the fans in his corner on Sunday so bring it right now, little man. As expected, Show turns him down.

Tough Enough finalists, including former OVW TV Champion Michael Hayes (not that Michael Hayes. This one only has one leg).

#### Jack Swagger vs. King Barrett

R-Truth is on commentary before his pre-show match with Barrett on Sunday and has decided that he should be King after beating Barrett recently. He also thinks he's in the ladder match on Sunday. Barrett stomps Jack down in the corner to start as Truth puts on the robe. The distraction breaks up the Bullhammer and Jack nails a big clothesline on the floor followed by a Vader Bomb for two. The Patriot Lock is broken up and the Bullhammer gives Barrett the pin at 2:23.

Truth has disappeared.

More Tough Enough finalists.

We recap the Bellas' Twin Magic from a few weeks back and Paige being sick of the whole thing.

Alicia Fox yells at Paige and there's going to be a match later. I really wish WWE would mix up this kind of thing. We're long past the suspension of disbelief that a package on the Divas would air then there just happened to be a camera on Paige when Fox came up to challenge her. All you need is to say this happened earlier in the day.

This week's sitdown interview is with Lana, who says she and Dolph read books together and talk about things. Rusev comes in again and says don't ruin this. Ziggler has been with a bunch of other women but Rusev has only been with her. Lana says it's over and leaves so Rusev scares Cole away.

### Dolph Ziggler vs. Seth Rollins

Non-title and Seth is on his own. The champ takes it to the mat with a headlock but Ziggler counters into an armbar to send Seth to the ropes. Back to the headlock on Dolph for a bit before the threat of a superkick sends Rollins out to the floor. They're still in first gear here as Rollins takes a breather. Back in and Dolph hammers away in the corner, only to get caught in an electric chair for two. The standard chinlock kills some time as the fans want Lana. Speak for yourselves. I don't want her and Ziggler anywhere near each other.

Dolph fights up and a Cactus Clothesline puts both guys outside, where Rollins catapults him over the barricade as we take a break. We come back with Ziggler slugging away until Rollins drops him with a Sling Blade for two. Well at least it wasn't another chinlock. Ziggler comes back with a backdrop to put Rollins on the floor, followed by the running DDT for two. The Buckle Bomb is countered into a rollup for two and the Fameasser gets the same. Dolph keeps speeding things up and goes to the top for a high cross body but Rollins rolls through and grabs the trunks for the pin at 13:53.

**Rating:** B-. Nice main event style match here with Rollins getting the kind of a win he should be getting. Ziggler doesn't lose anything either and everyone comes out looking fine. It's very nice to see them breaking from the same pattern that they've been having for months for Rollins as it was getting repetitive.

Remember the two times we've seen Tough Enough finalists already? Make it three.

### Paige vs. Alicia Fox

Paige takes her down to start and cranks on a reverse chinlock for a bit before Fox takes her down and puts on a chinlock. They aren't exactly dishing out the creativity. At least Fox adds in some knees to the head to mix things up. A big boot to the face gets two on Paige but she snaps Fox's throat across the ropes. This is her house, which makes me wonder how much a Diva makes since Paige must have 40 houses around the country. The PT0 makes Fox tap at 4:46.

**Rating:** D. They did a good enough job of making Paige look good going into Sunday but I don't buy her as having a chance at taking the title because All Hail the Bellas. It didn't help that the match was nearly half chinlock. You really shouldn't need two of those in a match that doesn't last five minutes.

Long recap of Owens vs. Cena to set up the rematch on Sunday. The first match was great and I really hope Owens just walks out on the second because he has nothing to gain.

The Prime Time Players say they're like butter because they're on a roll. Whole wheat and gluten free that is. They incorporate the clap into the Millions of Dollars dance and even Renee joins in.

Final batch of Tough Enough finalists, including the Big O.

### Roman Reigns/Randy Orton/Neville vs. Sheamus/Kane/Kofi Kingston

Those are quite the interesting teams. Reigns decks Kofi to start before Neville comes in and eats a right hand to the face. Neville flips over Sheamus and tags in Orton, because we haven't seen Orton vs. Sheamus enough lately. The good guy keeps control for a bit until a Kane distraction lets Sheamus nail a tilt-a-whirl powerslam to take over. Back from a break with Orton fighting out of Sheamus' chinlock.

The lukewarm tag brings in Neville to clean house with his variety of kicks but Kane breaks up the Red Arrow. Kane comes back in for some weak



stomping and a big side slam for two as this isn't exactly inspiring stuff so far. Kofi comes back in to fire the New Day up again with Woods declaring him the greatest of all time. A dropkick gets two and Woods says he's getting annihilated right now. Sheamus gets two of his own off the Irish Curse and it's off to the chinlock.

Neville avoids a charge into the post though and it's a hot tag to Reigns, who runs Kofi over in a hurry. The New Day is easily dispatched but Kane counters a Superman Punch with a chokeslam, which earns Kane an RKO, followed by a Brogue Kick, followed by a dropkick from Neville, followed by Trouble in Paradise. Reigns is back up though and the Superman Punch connects to Kofi, only to have the New Day come in for the DQ at 13:25.

**Rating:** C-. This was boring. That's the best word I can come up with for it. We were sitting around and waiting on the big parade of finishers to close things out and it eventually came and went. It's not a terrible match or even bad but I never came close to being interested in what was going on.

Reigns takes a Midnight Hour and it's ladder time. Cue Dolph with a ladder of his own but Neville climbs the ladder and dives onto everyone who was nice enough to brawl right beneath him. Neville pulls down the briefcase to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C. Totally average show here as they talked up the pay per view a bit but didn't do much to make me care about what I was seeing. Money in the Bank is a show that sells itself with the big ladder match and it gets very difficult to build towards it as the singles matches and tags don't change anything. As for the rest, it was just a standard Smackdown: watchable wrestling, nothing important, two hours gone.

### Results

Ryback b. Miz – Shell Shock

King Barrett b. Jack Swagger – Bullhammer

Seth Rollins b. Dolph Ziggler – Rollins rolled through a cross body and held Ziggler's trunks

Paige b. Alicia Fox – PT0

Roman Reigns/Randy Orton/Neville b. Sheamus/Kane/Kofi Kingston via DQ when New Day interfered

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# Monday Night Raw – June 8, 2015: Half A Billion Ways To Get On My Nerves

## Monday Night Raw

Date: June 8, 2015

Location: Smoothie King Center, New Orleans, Louisiana

Commentators: John Bradshaw Layfield, Michael Cole, Byron Saxton

It's the go home show for Money in the Bank and the ladder match is set with all seven of its competitors. As announced on WWE.com, six of the participants will be in singles matches tonight, including a rematch from last week with Orton vs. Sheamus. Hopefully we get more solid mic work

from Ambrose and Rollins as well. Let's get to it.

Before we get started, on a completely unrelated note: thanks for everything Unc. I'll always remember you.

Here's Cena, with a broken nose, to open things up. Cena talks about some of the biggest events in WWE: Hogan vs. Rock, the Streak and the Money in the Bank ladder match. That's uh, quite the collection. Those in the ladder match are fighting for an opportunity on the same night two people will be fighting in the same ring with one getting an opportunity of his own.

Kevin Owens thinks Cena's time is up and his time is now but this Sunday Cena will be fighting for everyone that believes in him as well as those people who think he sucks. This Sunday he proves that he is still the face that runs this place because he is John Cena. Cue Owens who says that Cena is just proving his point. Cena is delusional if he thinks he's winning on Sunday or if the fans are interested in seeing an open challenge for the US Title.

People have been watching Cena come out to open Raw for ten years now and some people must be sick of it. Instead, let's have an NXT Title Open Challenge instead. Cena loves the idea and says he accepts. Owens says no because Cena is already facing him on Sunday so no match tonight. They accuse each other of being delusional and Cena issues his own Open Challenge and looks right at Owens as he says come get some.

Owens has another idea: whoever comes down the ramp next gets to pick which title they want to fight for. Cue Neville, who says he would love to fight John Cena....one day. Owens is a prize fighter, but Neville knows what it takes to hold that prize. Therefore, Neville will take that NXT Title shot right now.

#### NXT Title: Kevin Owens vs. Neville

Owens is defending of course and John Cena is making a rare appearance on commentary. The champ goes right to the floor but Neville follows him out for some kicks to the ribs. Back in and a nice running hurricanrana sends Owens back to the floor for the big moonsault dive. They get back in

again and Owens just slugs Neville down and hits a wicked Cannonball for two.

We hit the chinlock and Cena gets in a great line by saying no one talks about the minor league home run champion because they'd rather talk about Babe Ruth. A backsplash gets two for Kevin and a belly to back gets the same as Cena is coming off as one of the most polished commentators I've ever heard. Back with Neville countering an AA into a DDT to get a breather.

The big Asai moonsault barely grazes Kevin's arm (it wasn't clear who screwed up) so Neville has to settle for a middle rope dropkick for two. Back up and Owens ducks a kick and grabs the arm, lifting Neville up into something like a brainbuster onto the knee. Owens doesn't use that one often but it looked great. Neville comes back with the delayed German but Owens crotches him to break up the Red Arrow. The Pop Up Powerbomb retains the title at 14:00.

**Rating:** B. This was as good as you would have expected and I'm looking forward to seeing Cena and Owens tear the house down again on Sunday. Owens plays a great power brawler and we've been lacking a good powerbomb for a long time now. Fun match here and it's awesome to see the NXT guys getting their shot on the main roster.

Video on Rollins vs. Neville at Elimination Chamber and the resulting aftermath that set up Sunday's ladder match.

WWE praises itself for having a half billion social media followers because that means they're awesome and TOTALLY EQUAL TO EVERY OTHER MAJOR ENTERTAINMENT COMPANY EVER.

Rollins comes up to the Authority and implies they're all in trouble on Sunday but Stephanie brings up what Rollins said last week about not needing the two of them. They'll be there on Sunday but not at ringside. However, tonight Seth can pick his own opponent.

We recap Paige getting screwed by Twin Magic last week and her ensuing promo ripping into the Bellas dominating the Divas division for way too long. She's promised to change the division forever.

Nikki Bella says Paige is projecting her frustration onto the twins and is sure the Bellas have never held anyone back. Maybe this is Paige's house, but it's the Bellas' world.

### Summer Rae vs. Nikki Bella

Non-title. A quick rollup gets two for Nikki but it's time for some pushups. Summer comes back with a cobra clutch for a bit before Nikki fights up and hits the Rack Attack for the pin at 2:19.

We recap Reigns having to win three times last week to retain his Money in the Bank spot.

Here's Reigns with something to say. He talks about hating that briefcase for so long because of who it was attached to. Now it doesn't sound so bad though because he's going to pull it down and cash in against Dean Ambrose some day down the line. Cue Kane who says he's in the ladder match on Sunday to protect the Authority's interests. Reigns offers Kane a chance to come in right now for a demonstration in breaking jaws but here's Dolph Ziggler to interrupt.

Kane isn't getting in the ring right now because the Authority hasn't pulled his strings. After taking forever to call Kane a tool, Ziggler says he's going to win on Sunday. Kane reminds Dolph about the dangers of certain tools and reminds him that everyone is in singles matches against each other tonight. Well minus Neville of course. This brings out R-Truth for some reason but a confused Kane tells him that he isn't in the match. R-Truth: "Are you sure?" Kane: "Yeah." Truth: "My bad." And he's gone.

Kane tries to continue but gets cut off by New Day. They promise that Kofi will pull the briefcase down using the power of positivity, making all of them Mr. Money in the Bank because NEW DAY ROCKS! This brings out Sheamus, who laughs at the idea of anyone else winning this Sunday. He'll be one Brogue Kick away from becoming champion all over again. Kane finally gets to introduce Orton, who comes out as scheduled. This was basically just a way to remind us of who is in on Sunday.

### Randy Orton vs. Sheamus

Rematch from last week where Sheamus was disqualified. Orton quickly takes it to the floor for some shots tot he ribs before hitting the Stomp back inside. Sheamus bails outside again and is whipped hard into the barricade for his efforts. Back in and a neck snap across the top rope gives Sheamus control so he slaps on an armbar. Quite the power brawler indeed. Orton fights back but gets knocked to the floor as we take a break.

Back with Sheamus driving a knee into the ribs and slapping on a chinlock to slow things down again. Sheamus slowly walks around so Orton slugs away and hits the t-bone suplex. The elevated DDT connects but both guys miss finishers. Instead it's a clothesline to send Sheamus outside, only to have Sheamus throw him over the table. Just like last week, Sheamus busts out a chair but eats a right hand to the ribs. Orton throws the chair at Sheamus' ribs and that's a DQ at 13:13.

**Rating:** C-. Bleh. I still cannot find a way to care about these two having a match. They're two of my favorites but they're just not a pairing I want to see. It didn't help that the ending was the same thing they did last week to cap off doing almost the entire same match from last week. Was there no one else you could put in there? Like, Zigler vs. Orton perhaps?

Post match Orton stomps Sheamus' head on the steps (insert your own Curb Stomp joke here) and hits an RKO.

The Stooges annoy Rollins as they ask to be in his corner on Sunday. They're huge morons and he doesn't need them on Sunday, so Jamie says screw you. They're Shield 2.0 with Mercury as an upgrade over Reigns and Noble being better than Ambrose. Rollins is a son of a gun and would be nothing without the Authority. That's enough to earn the Stooges a match against the champ tonight. Jamie and Rollins slap each other and Mercury has to break it up before threatening Rollins for later.

### Kane vs. Dolph Ziggler

Neither guy gets an entrance and it's Ziggler starting fast, only to be uppercut out of the air. With Lana looking on we hit the chinlock to slow the match down again. Kane slugs him down in the corner as the crowd gets

even quieter with every Kane right hand. A side slam gets two and we stop to look at Lana again. Kane boots Dolph's head off for two and we take a break. Back with Ziggler fighting out of a bearhug and nailing a superkick to put both guys down. Lana applauds and here's Rusev to distract her, causing Lana to fall off the ramp and hurt her ankle. The distraction lets Kane nail a chokeslam for the pin at 9:46.

**Rating:** D. I had forgotten how much I hated these singles matches leading up to a big multi-man match, even though it was driving me crazy just a few weeks back. It doesn't help that it's more of Rusev getting on my nerves with the whole broken man thing. At least he didn't seem upset when he hurt Lana.

Lana gets her ankle checked and is prescribed ice.

It's time for MizTV, starting with a clip of Ryback and Big Show getting into it last week. Naturally Ryback and Big Show are the guests tonight, starting with Ryback who interrupts Miz's introduction. Miz lists off his resume and Ryback cuts him off again because he's sick of hearing all these lines over and over again. They argue a bit until Big Show cuts them off as only he can.

Show talks about how he can take everything he wants anytime he wants so Ryback says come get this title. They stare each other down and Big Show yells at Miz, who jumps the giant. Miz is thrown down so Ryback Shell Shocks Show. Why they didn't SAVE THAT FOR THE FREAKING MATCH is beyond me but then again Big Show and Kane are featured in big matches in 2015 so I shouldn't be that surprised.

We recap the makings of the handicap match.

Luke Harper/Erick Rowan vs. Los Matadores

Rowan throws Diego around to start and brings in Harper to run over Fernando. Back to Rowan to knock Torito off the apron, meaning there's no one for Fernando to tag. A 3D (The Way) ends Fernando at 2:15.

Harper gets a mic and says tick tock tick tock because the time to pay for your sins is coming. The judgment is waiting at your door. Rowan says

it's ok to be afraid because you should be.

Kane comes in to see Rollins and laughs about the Instagram photos Ambrose has been posting of himself with the title all around New Orleans. Yeah I've ignored these stupid things all night but they're little more than WWE saying HEY! DID YOU KNOW WE HAVE A LOT OF FOLLOWERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA??? BECAUSE WE TOTALLY DO! Kane threatens to cash in on Sunday and they bicker. Again.

More social media stats and another Ambrose picture. These are now being used to announce that Dean will be here tonight. Ignore that the ticket in the picture clearly says COMP.

Trailer for Ted 2.

### Big E. vs. Titus O'Neil

Woods calls Big E. the Minister of Mass. E. gets a quick two off a belly to belly and hammers away at the bald head. An abdominal stretch lets Big E. slap Titus' stomach for the NEW DAY ROCKS clap. Titus fights back with some chops in the corner and an old Pounce ala Monty Brown, only to have the partners get in a fight on the floor. That distraction lets Big E. hit the Big Ending for the pin at 3:13.

**Rating:** D. This show has drained me of any interest in any more mini versions of matches I'm going to see on Sunday. Also, nice job of having the challenger lose to make sure I buy into his team having a chance going into their title match on Sunday. It's already not a great match in the first place and this didn't help.

### Roman Reigns vs. Kofi Kingston

Kofi's wristlock doesn't work very well and Reigns wristlocks him to the floor. The other New Day members offer a distraction to let Kofi take over but Reigns fights back again and sends Kofi outside one more time. The apron kick looks to set up Reigns' big dive but he has to settle for a running clothesline off the steps to take out Woods. Kofi slides back in for a nice baseball slide and we take a break.

Back with Reigns fighting out of a chinlock so it's right back to another



chinlock. Kofi goes up for a nice top rope ax handle as Woods will not shut up (in a good way). Reigns makes his comeback with a bunch of clotheslines and a tilt-a-whirl slam for two. The SOS is countered into a sitout powerbomb for two more but he has to take out Woods and Big E. A rollup gets two for Kofi but he dives into the Superman Punch for the pin at 12:07.

**Rating:** C+. I liked this more than I thought I would as Kofi is more than capable of making a match like this look good. Reigns fighting off the trio works fine as they're not losing in a tag match so it's no real loss. Fun match here, even though the ending wasn't ever really in any doubt.

Reigns grabs a chair and Ambrose comes to sit down, carrying popcorn and a Pepsi.

#### Jamie Noble/Joey Mercury vs. Seth Rollins

Kane is out with the Stooges. Mercury spins out of a wristlock to start but Seth does the same thing and sends Joey into the mat. The Stooges take a breather on the floor but Kane offers a distraction to let them get in some double teaming. Ambrose pours popcorn on Seth's head, allowing Joey to nail a nice dropkick for one, followed by an armdrag into an armbar. Seth throws him outside and laughs at Dean a bit before putting on a chinlock at 11:08pm.

Rollins misses a charge in the corner and the hot tag brings in Noble to clean house, completel with his little dance. The swinging neckbreaker gets two and the Stooges try the Rick Rude Wrestlemania V pin for a VERY close two, but Jamie eats a low superkick to change control again. Mercury gets buckle bombed into his partner and Seth loads up the Pedigree, only for Dean to get up and throw the title in. The distraction lets Joey get a rollup for the pin at 9:00. Yes, this match that started in the overrun got NINE MINUTES.

**Rating:** D+. Yeah the match was entertaining enough and I get the point but maybe they could have been done with this earlier if they hadn't had to spend half an hour patting themselves on the back for their win. Not a bad match here but it just kept going when it could have been done in

about half the time.

Dean hits Dirty Deeds to take the title back and climbs a ladder to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** D. This show wasn't great but unlike the disaster of two weeks ago, there isn't one (or two) major problems bringing it down. Instead this was like death by 1000 stab wounds as so much of the show was about the stupid Instagram/social media stats and most of the people in Money in the Bank having singles matches that mean nothing. That's the big problem with matches like these: there's nothing important and you know the ladder match is down to at most two people. Cut the thing down and make it more interesting instead of having this big of a mess. Not a good show this week but it did have some fun parts.

### Results

Kevin Owens b. Neville – Pop Up Powerbomb

Nikki Bella b. Summer Rae – Rack Attack

Sheamus b. Randy Orton via DQ when Orton threw a chair

Kane b. Dolph Ziggler – Chokeslam

Luke Harper/Erick Rowan b. Los Matadores – The Way to Fernando

Big E. b. Titus O'Neil – Big Ending

Roman Reigns b. Kofi Kingston – Superman Punch

Jamie Noble/Joey Mercury b. Seth Rollins – Rollup

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# Reviewing the Review – Monday Night Raw: June 1, 2015

We're past Elimination Chamber (I won't be doing a Reviewing the Review for that as I pretty much said everything I was going to say on the last podcast) and less than two weeks away from Money in the Bank, which means we already know most of the people in the ladder match because we have to get there as soon as possible. Tonight is the first part of the rushed build to the show so let's get to it.

We open with the Authority (YAY!) to complain about Ambrose stealing the title last night but get Roman Reigns instead. A ladder match is set up for Money in the Bank with Rollins defending against Ambrose and Seth saying he doesn't need the Authority. This would be the teenage rebellion years against Mommy and Daddy Helmsley. Stephanie went into full on evil Stephanie mode against Reigns but HHH called her off and said Reigns had to defend his Money in the Bank spot right now.

This wasn't the worst opening segment as thankfully they kept it to the point and didn't let Stephanie take Roman apart for a change. Ambrose vs. Rollins was set up in a hurry but you have to do that on the two week build. It's not a bad way of getting things done but, as usual, Stephanie added nothing here.

Reigns successfully defended his spot against King Barrett because Barrett can take yet another loss right? Then he successfully defended it against Mark Henry because who cares about Henry? Then he successfully defended it against Bray Wyatt because his push is as up and down as Barrett's. This was the old Chris Jericho Intercontinental Title marathon idea (also involving Stephanie actually) and it worked well enough. If they build up Reigns as someone who has to keep overcoming the odds, they

might get people to care about him for a change.

Ryback didn't have a match against Miz because Big Show returned and set up a title program. I can live with Big Show in this role FAR easier than in the main event, though I'm still not thrilled with seeing him. If he's just there to put Ryback over though, everything should be fine for the most part. If Ryback can Shell Shock him, the place will come unglued. Well probably mostly glued together but there will be cracks.

Now we get the really good moment of the night as Kevin Owens came out and delivered an amazing victory speech about how he proved himself to be the better man last night as he pinned John Cena in the middle of the ring. Owens talked about his son being a John Cena fan and how last night, he defeated Super Cena in the middle of the ring because he's a real man and role model who does everything he promises to do.

Cena came out and gave his Serious Cena speech about how Owens isn't a real man because he got so obsessed with being a role model that he stopped acting like a man is supposed to. Cena talked about how he does things for kids, including one in the crowd wearing Cena gear and holding a sign saying "I'm beating cancer." I've heard people saying this was faked or staged and it just makes me shake my head. Not everything is some concocted work people. Stop looking for things that aren't there and enjoy a cool moment. Anyway John says he won't give up and is ready for Money in the Bank. Outstanding.

New Day came out to talk about having Kofi winning Money in the Bank and retaining their Tag Team Titles, complete with sound effects. This led to Kofi losing to Dolph Ziggler and New Day losing a six man tag to Ziggler and the Prime Time Players, who would go on to become #1 contenders (in case that wasn't COMPLETELY OBVIOUS ALREADY) a few days later on Smackdown.

Now we get to the stupid part of the show, as Nikki Bella successfully defended her Divas Title against Paige by seemingly turning heel yet again (assuming you considered her a full on face) by having her sister do Twin Magic with her. Yes, Brie Bella, who is mostly pale by comparison and lacking various surgical augmentations and with different color hair,

is apparently still close enough to her sister's looks that the referee couldn't tell the difference between the two of them. I've heard that this was damage control from the whole "all black wrestlers look alike" backlash from Payback and that's not the most out there theory in the world.

Sheamus beat up Orton with a chair for a DQ in a Money in the Bank preview match. I'm a fan of both guys but these two have some of the most horrible main event level chemistry I've seen in a long time. They can have good matches against almost anyone else but they just don't work against each other.

Rusev said he was a broken man. My heart is the thing that's breaking.

Neville beat Bo Dallas in a shortened version of their Elimination Chamber match.

Ambrose came out to save Reigns to end the show after the Wyatt match.

Other than Cena and Owens, this show was pretty uneventful. It's part of the problem of setting up your major matches in the first ten minutes: after that, what else is there to do for the rest of the night? Well other than have non-twins act like twins all over again because referees are that stupid. This show was much more dull than last week, but I'll take dull over rage inducing any day. I'm looking forward to the night after Money in the Bank so we can FINALLY get to a normal schedule again because this is starting to get old.

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# Smackdown – June 4, 2015: Fighting All The Way To The Bank

## Smackdown

Date: June 4, 2015

Location: Toyota Center, Houston, Texas

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Byron Saxton, Jerry Lawler

In something I could get used to, the big story tonight continues to be Kevin Owens, who will be issuing an NXT Title Open Challenge in the same vein as John Cena's US Title Open Challenges. Owens has only had one match on the main roster so far so it's going to be interesting to see how they treat him here. Let's get to it.

We open with stills of Sunday's main event with Ambrose winning via DQ but leaving with the title anyway.

Here's Rollins to get things going, of course without the title but carrying a chair. A year ago to the day, he took a chair to Ambrose and Reigns to dismantle the Shield. Rollins sits down in the chair and talks about being asked "why" so many times over the last year. Why did he do what he did and destroy what he created? From the day he arrived, he said his goal was to be the very best in this industry.

After all the time in the Shield, he got tired of sharing the glory with two chumps beneath him. That led him to the Authority, who groomed him to be the future of the WWE. Then he won the Money in the Bank ladder match all by himself. Around the time of the Royal Rumble, he had a vision to defeat Brock Lesnar and Roman Reigns at the same time. To execute a plan

like that took a genius (So people like Kane and Jack Swagger are geniuses?) because now the Beast is off licking his wounds and Reigns is living in Seth's shadow.

Rollins stands here as the greatest champion of all time but with no title around his waist. That brings him to Dean Ambrose, who wants all of the fans to think that stealing a title makes you a champion. Well allegedly it made him the Intercontinental Champion so why not try it with the big belt too? Rollins can take care of Ambrose without any member of the Authority, including Stephanie or HHH. Cue Ambrose on the screen, standing under a ladder, to say Rollins either has a bad memory or is a liar.

The fans saw Ambrose pin him on Sunday and now he knows the Authority is going to send everyone that they can to keep this title from slipping through their fingers. At Elimination Chamber, Ambrose climbed to the top of the mountain and at Money in the Bank, he'll climb to the top of the ladder and claim the WWE World Heavyweight Championship that rightfully belongs to him or he'll die trying.

This right here was a great example of why the Authority really isn't needed most of the time. Yeah they helped set up the story, but this was one of the better promos these two have ever had, which happens to come off the heels of another of their best promos ever last week. The Authority bogs so much stuff down with HHH taking twice as long as any human to speak and Stephanie has to get in her buzz words because saying "WWE World Heavyweight Championship" and "Money in the Bank pay per view" is how you sell a show instead of letting the wrestlers who hate each other talk the fans into the building.

#### Prime Time Players vs. Ascension vs. Lucha Dragons

#1 contenders match. Darren and Sin get things going with Cara being taken down to the mat but nipping up to his feet. Off to Kalisto who eats a clothesline for two as the fans are just silent here. Viktor tags himself in to stay on Kalisto as New Day is watching in the back. Kalisto kicks Konnor out to the floor and sends Viktor out to the floor as well, setting up a nice double suicide dive to get the fans into things a bit.

We take a break and come back with Ascension working over Kalisto, including Viktor dropping an elbow for two. Kalisto finally gets a boot up in the corner and takes Viktor down with a middle rope ankle scissors. Saxton: "Kalisto is like a real life Sonic the Hedgehog." No Byron, he isn't.

Ascension breaks up a hot tag attempt but Kalisto knees out of a delayed vertical suplex, allowing Titus to tag himself in and clean house. Everything breaks down with Titus kicking Konnor in the face and throwing Kalisto at him to put both guys on the floor. The pumphandle powerslam from Titus is enough to pin Viktor at 9:29.

**Rating:** C. Fun triple threat match here though the continued depush of Ascension makes my head hurt. They're a good power team and we even got a nice little tease of that on Sunday, so it's time for them to get pinned again here. To say they were in trouble coming out of the gates is an understatement, but WWE hasn't done them any favors.

Renee Young asks New Day about their future now that they know their #1 contenders. Woods continues to be amazing with a line of "Renee, our future is as bright as a morning sun.....rising over a new day." Their plan for the Prime Time Players: dispose of the Prime Time Players and their greed, clap and then watch Kofi Kingston win Money in the Bank. Kane comes in and makes Kofi vs. Neville for tonight.

Sonic auditions.

### Ryback vs. Stardust

Non-title. Ryback throws him into the corner to start but runs into a boot to the face. A reverse DDT gets two for Stardust and a running knee to the face gets the same. Off to the chinlock for a bit before it's the Meat Hook and Shell Shock to give Ryback the pin at 2:11. Nothing to see here.

We recap the Bellas using Twin Magic on Raw, which is still a horrible idea.

Renee Young brings Paige out for a chat. Paige says it feels like things



are never going to change around here because the Twin Magic has been done for years. The Bellas come out here every week and talk about giving Divas a chance but they know it's all about them and they make sure to hold the rest of the Divas back. Their lives are all about being celebrities but Paige's life is consumed with what happens in that ring. She'll never buy into the idea of if you can't beat em, join em. Instead, it's up to her to change the world she's in. Good stuff here but it's the same story AJ did before the Bellas took over the division.

Harper and Rowan say they're different because they're family.

Stills of Owens vs. Cena on Sunday.

Here's Kevin Owens for the NXT Title Open Challenge. Before the match, Owens talks about everyone knowing him after what he did this past Sunday. He's the man who defeated John Cena in his first match in WWE. However, Owens' son is still a John Cena fan because he's seven years old and doesn't know any better. On Monday, Owens heard the emotion in Cena's voice and learned something: John Cena is completely delusional.

Cena actually believes all the nonsense he spews out. Cena stood out here and said Owens isn't a real man, so there is no way Kevin can let his son be influenced like this anymore. The fairy tales that Cena force feeds kids around the world have to stop and Owens is glad to be the one to step up and do just that at Money in the Bank. That brings him to tonight and the NXT Title Open Challenge starts right....well he isn't wearing a watch so just get out here.

NXT Title: Kevin Owens vs. Zack Ryder

We even get big match intros. Owens is all over him to start but a single forearm sends him out to the floor. Ryder is right back on him but Owens knocks Zack into the barricade. Back in and Ryder scores with a middle rope dropkick but the Pop Up Powerbomb ends this in 1:12.

Owens gives him the Cannonball and another powerbomb post match.

Sheamus enjoyed giving Orton a beating on Monday and he's going to do it to everyone in the Money in the Bank ladder match in ten days before

going on to become WWE Champion. Simple yet effective again.

Tough Enough videos.

### Neville vs. Kofi Kingston

This has potential. Kofi kicks him down to start but Neville flips forward into the cross body out of the corner. Lawler: "Neville has so many moves that when I try to call his matches, I'm more confused than a chameleon in a bag of Skittles." That's Lawler's one clever line all year. Kofi sends him to the floor for some cheap shots from the New Day and we take a break.

Back with Kofi getting two off a reverse suplex but Neville kicks him right back. A standing shooting star gets two on Kofi and Neville plants him with a tornado DDT. Big E. pulls Kofi away before the Red Arrow can launch, but Neville just dives on both of them with a big moonsault. Back in and Neville counters a rollup into one of his own for the surprise pin at 8:04.

**Rating:** C+. Neville continues to impress and it's cool to see him fight off all three guys and pick up a win with something other than the Red Arrow. You don't want to overuse the big spots and risk burning the fans out on them, because there comes a point where even Neville can't top himself with the high spots.

It's time for MizTV with special guest Lana, who has her own Titantron video. We look back at the breakup and Rusev being all devastated as a result. Lana says Rusev didn't respect him so he doesn't deserve her. This gets a standing ovation from Miz, who describes Lana as good. He calls it a good business decision, but Lana, with the accent melting word by word, says that it was purely personal. If Miz keeps suggesting otherwise, she'll either leave or Miz will get slapped.

That brings out the second guest: Rusev, who slowly limps to the ring. Rusev is here as a broken man and blames it on his upbringing. He didn't know what he had until it was gone and he knows Lana loves that song. Rusev asks for one more chance and would like her to be his crutch while he can't walk. Lana tells him where he can stick his crutch so Rusev

erupts all over again and calls her stupid. Cue Ziggler to get Lana out before things get bad. Rusev as the crushed ex-boyfriend is perhaps the worst usage of someone with potential that WWE has had in years and it's just sad at this point.

### Roman Reigns vs. Sheamus

This could be good. Sheamus goes right to the ribs to start and knees Reigns to the floor, only to eat a big clothesline. Sheamus keeps the power game going by driving him into the apron and throwing him over the announcers' table as we take a break. Back with Sheamus driving knees into the ribs and slapping on a chinlock. The Regal Roll gets two but Roman fights out of the ten forearms. Roman misses the apron kick (has he ever done that before?) and Sheamus takes over again, only to miss a charge into the post.

Back up and Roman fires off some clotheslines in the middle of the ring and in the corner but the Samoan drop is countered. They head outside again and this time the apron kick connects with Sheamus standing on the floor. Back in and here are Kane and the Stooges for a distraction, setting up the Irish Curse for two. The Brogue Kick misses and Reigns hits the Superman Punch, only to have Kane come in for the DQ at 10:40.

**Rating:** B-. I liked this as much as I expected to with both guys hitting each other over and over until we got to the obvious ending. It's getting really tiring to see Kane and the Stooges come in for the DQ or interference, especially when they barely have anything to do with the match in the first place. Fun power match here though.

Kane chokeslams Sheamus to shock the Stooges. He announces himself as the final entrant in the Money in the Bank ladder match and chokeslams Reigns to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. This show was one of the more entertaining episodes they've had in a good while as they let the stories progress naturally instead of forcing everything in. The wrestling was decent enough and the two hours went by very quickly. I can live with Smackdown like this, especially with such a good opening promo instead of the Authority droning on and on.

## Results

Prime Time Players b. Ascension and Lucha Dragons – Pumphandle powerslam to Viktor

Ryback b. Stardust – Shell Shock

Kevin Owens b. Zack Ryder – Pop Up Powerbomb

Neville b. Kofi Kingston – Rollup

Roman Reigns b. Sheamus via DQ when Kane interfered

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# Elimination Chamber 2015: The Future Is Here

## Elimination Chamber 2015

Date: May 29, 2015

Location: American Bank Center, Corpus Christi, Texas

Commentators: Michael Cole, Booker T., Jerry Lawler

It's another pay per view just two weeks after Payback but the card has

been put together fairly well this time. The main event this time is WWE World Champion Seth Rollins defending against Dean Ambrose, plus the Tag Team Titles and Intercontinental Title being decided inside the Chamber, both for the first time ever. Let's get to it.

#### Pre-Show: Zack Ryder vs. Stardust

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

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

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

It's time for MizTV with special guest Daniel Bryan. We look at Bryan vacating the title and Miz said that was hard even for him. In his time away, Bryan has written a book but his career isn't over. Miz thinks he can help Bryan with marketing and merchandising and it's only going to cost him 10% of the profit.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Torito gets thrown into Fernando, setting up the Fall of Man on Diego for the first elimination. Did anyone buy Los Matadores as a real threat anyway? Kalisto, thankfully able to walk, climbs the corner but gets

pulled down as well for another Fall of Man to get rid of the Dragons. There goes my pick of course. So we have Ascension vs. Kidd/Cesaro at the moment but the Prime Time Players are added...with Ascension nailing them as soon as their pod opens.

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### Divas Title: Nikki Bella vs. Naomi vs. Paige

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

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

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

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

#### Kevin Owens vs. John Cena

Alright WWE. This is your chance. You can elevate someone or go with the same old stuff. Owens is very fired up to be in there and actually doesn't drop to the floor at the bell as is his custom in NXT. A quick



shoulder puts Owens down but he takes Cena into the corner and puts a boot in his face. Cena gets punched to the apron so Kevin can rip at his face like a villain should.

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

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

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

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

**Rating:** A. My jaw dropped on the pin. This is EXACTLY the way they should

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

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

Pre-show panel chat.

### Bo Dallas vs. Neville

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

Off to a cravate on Neville to slow things way down as the announcers talk about football from the 1960s. Back up and Bo elbows him in the head, only to be sent out to the floor. Bo's stunned look is great. Neville comes back with kicks to the head and a running forearm, followed by a standing shooting star for two. The Bodog is countered and the Red Arrow connects for the pin at 9:07.

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

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

The Chamber is lowered.

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

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

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

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

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

Ryback's Meat Hook is countered by a superkick and all three are down. With all three down, Sheamus takes out the Celtic cross that he had put

in the door to keep the door stuck shut. Well that was smart. A Brogue Kick gets rid of Henry in a hurry and we're down to three. Ziggler counters a suplex into a small package for two but Sheamus counters the running DDT. The second attempt gets two but a quick Brogue Kick gets us down to Sheamus vs. Ryback.

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

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

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

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

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

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

WWE World Title: Seth Rollins vs. Dean Ambrose

Dean is challenging but has to deal with Kane and the Stooges at ringside. Rollins grabs a headlock to start but Dean counters into an armbar. Back up and the champ stomps away in the corner until Dean goes back to the arm to take over again. Dean drapes him over the middle rope

for a Fameasser but the Stooges offer a distraction so Seth can crotch him into the Tree of Woe.

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

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

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

**Rating:** C. I don't buy for a second that this is going to stand so I'm not going to bother treating this very seriously. This felt like a long Raw match instead of something worth watching, and the ending is clearly there to set up a rematch at Money in the Bank. The match was decent but it had the recurring problem of all WWE pay per views: you don't bother caring about the meat of the match because you're just waiting on the wacky finish.

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

**Overall Rating:** C+. I liked the show for the most part but this could

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

## Results

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

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

Kevin Owens b. John Cena – Pop up powerbomb

Neville b. Bo Dallas – Red Arrow

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

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

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# Reviewing the Review – Monday Night Raw: May 25, 2015

Oh boy it's this show. I've been putting this off for as long as I can because this show drove me up the walls, down the walls, to the grocery store and then halfway to Oklahoma. It's very rare to find a show with two different parts that get under my skin this badly but this show managed to pull it off. Let's get to it.

I'm going to do this one a little bit differently as there are two major pieces I'll be spending far more of my time on. Therefore, I'll get those out of the way and then cover the rest of the show. You can probably guess what these two major segments were (hint: I wrote a column about one of them) so we'll start with the one that went on longer: the Dean Ambrose arrest story.

The basic idea is simple: Ambrose has until the end of the show to sign the contract for the match with Rollins on Sunday (why the Authority didn't say "you have four seconds to get out here and sign this starting now" isn't clear) so the Authority ran some trickierations and had Dean arrested for punching an innocent cameraman. Later in the show, it was revealed that Rollins shoved the cameraman into Dean so he wouldn't make it back to the show in time. Naturally, with the Authority celebrating at the end of the show, Dean came back (in a police van) and signed the contract just as the show ended (complete with overrun of course).

Now let's stop for a minute and think about this. Monday Night Raw is a wrestling show. We have to accept that a lot of really, really questionable things happen, but WWE has built a universe where it's plausible that these things could happen. In other words, fans are willing to suspend their disbelief to accept that we're watching crazy people do crazy things because the show has made it possible for that to happen.

Look at it from a comic book perspective. I can believe that Superman can fly because he's an alien under a yellow sun. Those are the rules that DC comics have established and as long as they play by those rules, I can go along with them. However, if one day Superman can suddenly turn people into chickens and the justification is "well he's an alien and has powers", it's unacceptable because this comes out of left field and doesn't gel with the story of the character.

This past Monday with Dean just happening to make it out of jail on time and just happening to be there at the very end of the show to sign the contract was WWE suddenly being able to turn people into chickens. There were WAY too many coincidences and perfect timing for me to accept that this was going to be the case. It didn't help that they were basically saying "yeah you know he's getting back and signing" and it was just a matter of time before the big evidence showed up to save Dean.

I said this in the review but it felt like the end of any given sitcom episode. Our hero is in big trouble for doing whatever and he can't prove his innocence, but here's some deus ex machina to save him and give us all a happy ending while the villains are left kicking and screaming and promising to get Ambrose next time Gadget, NEXT TIME!

The word to sum it up was staged. This felt like it was designed to be completely fake and set up the whole way through instead of trying to be realistic. Look at Lucha Underground for a counter example. They have some completely over the top stories (including a man who was the spirit of a dragon and a monster killing a wrestler) but they play it totally seriously and it never fails to work. This story felt like WWE was winking at the camera the entire time and making it as clear as they could that Ambrose was going to be there at the last second to save the day, making the entire three hour story a big waste of time.

That's the other big deal for me: what did this whole thing change? Ambrose came into the show with a title shot and left with a title shot. All that happened in between was the Authority looks bad and Rollins doesn't really do anything else. Instead of a serious promo exchange or making me want to see the match more, the show was a big stand alone story that changed nothing and got on my nerves. It's bad writing and bad



booking and something that really didn't need to happen.

Now on to the other stupid idea of the night: Rusev turning into a big, emotional goon instead of the brute that he's been for over a year now. I understand the idea that he would be upset over Lana leaving him for an American, but the reaction was all wrong. Rusev should have been stomping and raving and FIGHTING ZIGGLER but instead he was asking to hold Lana's hand and talking about all the dreams they had in Bulgaria.

As I ranted about in the column I wrote (which I know you've all read of course), this was missing the point of the character. Rusev is a monster and they're trying to give him emotions. It's all wrong for him and doesn't fit anything that they've set up over the past year plus for him. It goes back to the Superman example earlier: you can't just throw in a polar opposite set of characteristics for someone without any sort of foundation for them. Rusev getting all emotional has no background, Lana or no Lana.

Oh and now Rusev is injured and could be out for more than a month, so the last thing people are going to remember from him is the big change scene with the song from the trailer from every bad romantic comedy ever. What a great followup to the four pay per view series with Cena. But hey, at least Rusev is a more three dimensional character, because a guy named the Bulgarian Brute was just dying for a soft side right?

As for the rest of the show, Ambrose pinned Rollins in a tag match, which should have ended the show and been the main focal point of their feud that night. I'll stop myself there.

Rusev squashed R-Truth in 59 seconds. Again, I'll stop myself there.

The other major story of the night was a trio of matches between the six participants in the Elimination Chamber match for the Intercontinental Title. In addition to Truth vs. Rusev, we had Ryback beating Barrett (shocking!) and Sheamus Brogue Kicking Ziggler. This is another example of tired booking ideas that need to be replaced. Only Sheamus vs. Ziggler broke four minutes, making these matches, which really change nothing for Sunday's match, more like a waste of time than anything else. Consolidate these into a long six man instead of three singles or have a tag match or

two three ways or ANYTHING but this boring idea.

The cast of Entourage was here to fill in time, including a segment where they mentioned Ronda Rousey in front of Stephanie. That's something of note was well: notice that a lot of the bad writing and bad structuring take place when Stephanie is back full time. We had a bunch of bad filler segments and more of her talking with proper nouns (you don't have to say the exact name of the title, wrestlers or pay per view every ten seconds Stephanie. We're not going to care more or start Tweeting about it because WE'RE ALREADY WATCHING THE SHOW).

Neville beat Stardust (who had a pre match staredown with Stephen Amell of Arrow, allegedly setting up a showdown at Summerslam. Seriously. To his credit though, Amell is in great shape so it could be passable) and was beaten down by Bo Dallas post match. They're still playing up the knee injury which is fine for a quick story.

Cena's Open Challenge speech was talking about the fans who boo him and want someone to knock him down for good. Kevin Owens has his chance on Sunday but it's not going to happen. As usual, this was Cena owning the fans as only he can and chuckling as they think they own him.

Zack Ryder answered the challenge and had a very fun four minute match (complete with Ryder missing a 450 of all things) before Cena pinned him. This was the right call as Ryder is a Long Island guy and this was the last show in Nassau Coliseum on Long Island, which was played up a lot during the match. As usual, this was the best part of the show as Cena continues to be amazing when they just let him go out there and do his thing. Post match Owens, now in more proper gear, laid Cena out again. They better not screw this up on Sunday, but I'm sure they will.

Tamina, the bodyguard for one of the challengers for the Divas Title on Sunday, pinned the other challenger for the Divas Title on Sunday. The stupidity was flowing through this entire show.

To cap it off, let's throw all psychology out the window and have Kane (for no apparent reason) book New Day in a 3 on 1 handicap match, because the way to get heels booed is to put them against impossible odds. This lasted less than a minute before the big brawl.

Do I need to sum this one up for you?

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# Elimination Chamber 2015 Preview

It's time for a "let's get people to watch the Network and hope they don't remember to cancel their free month in the hour they have after the show goes off the air" show that they're calling a pay per view. This is going to be an interesting show as they only have two weeks before Elimination Chamber, which means we might get something interesting short term to set up for a change down the road. Let's get to it.

There's no pre-show match this time but Daniel Bryan will be on MizTV. There's nothing to see here other than Miz returning and Bryan plugging the book/DVD/whatever else he has coming out. I can't imagine he's coming back to the ring already and he probably shouldn't yet either. I'll be glad to see Miz back as yes, I still like the guy.

Now we'll go with the bigger matches as we start with the Tag Team Title Elimination Chamber match. Given that it's under elimination rules, we'll look at each team and eliminate them one by one.

Los Matadores – Just no.

Ascension – I'd love to see these guys just massacre everyone in this thing and win the belts like they should have when they debuted before....I'm going to stop myself there because I'll rant all day on them all over again. Ascension won't win, even though they should be a force in this match.

Prime Time Players – They're funny and I dig the team, but I don't picture them winning the titles in one of their first matches back together.

Lucha Dragons – They're the dark horses to win here as they've been pushed strong since debuting and clearly have the offense to get the fans into any of their matches. Why Los Matadores still exist with these guys around is beyond me.

Cesaro/Tyson Kidd – You would think these guys would have a good shot but I just don't see it happening again.

New Day – I've loved the team and it's hard not to, but there's only so long you can keep the joke going. These guys work well together to steal pins, but having them survive five other teams might be a bit too much to ask.

So who do I have winning? This might come as a surprise, but I'm going with the Dragons. I don't see New Day surviving that many teams without someone catching them and Cesaro/Kidd don't feel right. The other teams are filler so yeah, I'm actually picking the Dragons.

Off to the other Chamber for the vacant Intercontinental Title so let's do the same format.

R-Truth – I think I have a better chance of winning the title than he does.

Dolph Ziggler – He has Lana. Don't get greedy. Also there's nothing for him to win here as he's held the title a bunch of times before and doesn't gain anything by winning it again.

King Barrett – He's already jobbing to R-Truth clean in less than three minutes. Heaven help him if he wins the title back and is getting rolled up by El Torito next. Pass here and that's the best for everyone involved.

Ryback – I just can't see it. They're playing up that he hasn't won a title yet so maybe he chases the belt, but I can't see him winning it here.

Rusev/Bray Wyatt – This is in case Rusev can't go due to his leg injury, and it certainly seems that he can't. Wyatt would be a very good option here but again I don't see it. He'll take a Shell Shock to even the "feud" with Ryback and no one will care.

Sheamus – This has been the odds on pick for a while now and he probably does make the most sense. Sheamus has been doing well since he got back and throwing another title on him isn't the worst idea in the world. I'll take him.

Neville defeats Dallas because there's really no reason for him not to.

I'm really tempted to go with Ambrose over Rollins for a two week title reign but I don't see it happening. I think they'll just go with the safe story of having the interference be too much for Dean to overcome and keep the title on Seth, even though Reigns has nothing to do and probably should come out and help his buddy.

Uh....Naomi takes the Divas Title and feuds with Paige for a bit, even though Tamina pinned Paige on Raw in another really dumb booking decision.

Now we get to the match I'm looking forward to the most and the match with the best build: John Cena vs. Kevin Owens in a non-title match. These two have been trading shots for two weeks now and it's going to be a huge moment if Owens somehow pulls off the win. Notice that I said somehow, as there's no need for him to win the match clean. All he has to do is survive it and hang on long enough to win by countout, DQ or maybe a fluke pin.

This is one of the very rare situations where I'm thrilled by the possibilities and really looking forward to the match for a change. Owens is a great bully character and having him win will instantly make everyone more credible. If Owens is sticking around on the main roster, give him the win here and let him become a star. Cena is going to be fine about ten seconds after the match so does it really matter? Just let Owens win and be done with it. Look at Mick Foley winning his first World Title: everyone remembers the win and no one remembers that he dropped it less than three weeks later because only the win matters.

Overall, I'm looking forward to this show, but there's a good chance it's going to be a massive disappointment. There's only so much you can expect from WWE without them rounding back into form, just like they did this past Monday on Raw. There's bound to be something good on the show though and if there's more than a few good things, Sunday could be really, really special.

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# Smackdown – May 28, 2015: Padding With A Good Match

[Smackdown](#)

Date: May 28, 2015

Location: Mohegan Sun Arena, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Byron Saxton, Jerry Lawler

I've been saying this too often lately but it's the go home show for a pay per view. The big stories going into this Sunday are the two Elimination Chamber matches as well as the World Title match between champion Seth Rollins and challenger Dean Ambrose. They haven't really had time to put together a great story so I'm assuming tonight is going to have some hard selling. Or some lame matches that keep everything where it was coming out of Raw. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's Dean Ambrose to recap the arrest angle from Raw that magically ended right before the show went off the air because that's how wrestling works these days and the words "TUNE IN NEXT WEEK TO FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED!" are all four letters long now. Ambrose was sitting in his cell and thought he had one person to call: Roman Reigns. He asked Reigns to buy him some time so he could figure out a way out of the cell.

The help he needed came from WWE's Youtube channel because it was clear that Rollins shoved the cameraman into him. That was more than enough to clear his name and since he's been in a lot of metropolitan jails in this country, it only took some pictures and autographs to get a police escort to back to the arena on time. Tonight there's a rematch of Raw's tag match, but this Sunday there's going to be a fight for the finest prize in this industry. Stupid story on Monday aside, this was a good promo that got to the point for Sunday.

#### Tyson Kidd/Cesaro vs. Lucha Dragons

The other four teams in the Chamber match are lumberjacks. Cara and Kidd get things going with Tyson bouncing off the ropes (upside down that is) to counter a wristlock into an armdrag to send Cara to the floor. Cesaro comes in off a blind tag for a European uppercut into a German suplex from his partner followed by a half crab to slow Sin down. That goes about as far as a half crab can go so it's off to Kalisto, who is launched into the air for a hurricanrana, sending Cesaro outside.

Back in and Kalisto tries a springboard cross body, only to be caught in a vertical suplex. Cesaro doesn't put him down though as he walks Kalisto around the ring, tags Kidd in and points to him for about ten seconds as Kidd goes up top for a cross body. The announcers completely undersell this freakish display of strength but it was amazing to see. Sin is quickly tagged in to throw Kidd outside for a but Los Matadores throw him back in without doing anything.

Tyson tries a monkey flip but Kalisto dives through Kidd's legs, lands on his hands and backflips into a headscissors of his own. Dang this guy is good. We take a break and come back with Kalisto fighting out of Cesaro's chinlock but being thrown to the floor. The Players don't get in any cheap shots before throwing him back in for a double tag to Kidd and Cara. Tyson makes a blind tag and tosses Sin into the corner for the running European uppercuts. Cara comes back with the La Mistica mat slam for two and Kalisto's corkscrew crossbody gets the same.

That's enough flipping for Cesaro as he just muscles Kalisto over with something like a belly to belly, setting up Kidd's springboard elbow for two more. Kalisto kicks Kidd in the head but Cesaro slides in with a headbutt for the save. That looked cool as he just slid in and let his head hit Kalisto.

Kidd reverses a hurricanrana into the Sharpshooter but Cara springboards in with a clothesline to break it up. Everything breaks down and Cesaro superkicks Kalisto, only to be backdropped onto a bunch of the lumberjacks. With his partner down, Kidd is distracted by Woods, setting up the Salida Del Sol to give Kalisto the pin at 13:19.

**Rating:** B+. I might be rating this a bit higher than some would but I had a blast watching this. Kalisto and Cara are so good as a high flying pair and maybe the best at that style since the Hardys. On the other hand you have Cesaro who is so freakishly strong it's unreal. The only issue here were the lumberjacks as they didn't really need to be there, but they hardly dragged the match down. Anyway this was a really, really fun match with both teams busting out some crazy spots. Check this out if you get the chance.



Rollins runs his mouth to Kane about Ambrose, prompting Noble to go into a story about his aunt hearing voices and being crazy, but her cobbler was good. The looks from everyone in the room are rather amusing. Kane is looking forward to having fun in the tag match tonight and promises a plan to make sure Rollins has nothing to worry about on Sunday.

### R-Truth vs. King Barrett

Barrett kicks him right in the face to start and slugs Truth in the face for two. We're already in the chinlock before Barrett's kick to the ribs in the corner gets two more. Back up and Truth ducks the Bull Hammer and hits Little Jimmy for the completely clean pin at 2:26. Such is the life for someone like Barrett. I know the line is that no one remembers individual wins and losses (which I don't agree with for the most part) but they certainly do remember loss after loss after loss after loss.

Sheamus comes out and Brogue Kicks both guys.

We recap Lana and Rusev's big spat from Monday. The less said about this the better.

Lana seems sad about having to leave Rusev but she's happier with Dolph. Rusev comes up and says he doesn't need to throw another fit because he's already had his way with Ziggler. Whatever Lana and Dolph do, it doesn't bother him. If Ziggler has to suffer because of Lana, so be it. This was much better from Rusev as he was more condescending than pitiful.

### Rusev vs. Ryback

Well, it's a few months later but at least we get to see it. Ryback grabs a waistlock to start but Rusev counters into a headlock. The Bulgarian's shoulders have no effect so Ryback lifts him up for a delayed vertical suplex for two. Ryback pounds on him with some forearms but a big clothesline changes control. Rusev slowly kicks Ryback around the ring but he gets distracted by a WE WANT LANA chant. There's a decent story in there if they can find a better way of presenting it.

A backdrop sends Rusev to the floor (probably where he injured his leg) but he's still able to hit the fallaway slam as we go to a break. Back

with Rusev limping around before putting on a chinlock. They slug it out and Rusev hobbles from rope to rope. He can put very little weight on it and falls down when trying to slide out of a powerslam. Rusev posts him a few times and that's a DQ at 11:56, which was probably going home quickly due to the injury.

**Rating:** C-. It's hard to grade this one as the injury clearly changed where the match was going. The rumor is that if Rusev can't go then he'll be replaced by Bray Wyatt, which is probably the best possible option. The injury didn't seem to be Ryback's fault but it happened so fast that it was hard to tell. Not a bad power match until the injury but they didn't have time to go very far with it.

Quick recap of Paige vs. Naomi.

#### Paige vs. Naomi

Naomi throws some leg kicks to start so Paige shoves her into the corner for forearm to the jaw. Some knees to the chest send Naomi to the floor, because THIS IS MY HOUSE! From the floor, Naomi sends the arm into the post and starts working over the arm in the corner. Ignore the fact that it's not the arm she sent into the post but at least she's trying. Paige comes back with some clotheslines and a kick to Tamina before catching a cross body in midair and countering it into the Rampaige for the pin at 3:12.

**Rating:** D+. Nothing to see here but the time didn't let them go anywhere. That's the problem with so many of the Divas' stories: they're supposed to tell full stories in about a third of the amount of time that their male counterparts receive. That being said, there's only so much time you can give to them when the division's top heel can't remember right from left.

The Bellas come to the stage to pose.

Tough Enough package.

Michael Cole brings Kevin Owens to the ring for a chat. Owens cuts Cole off when he says that Kevin has been in WWE for two years because he's

been around the world for fifteen years. Now he can be on the WWE Network for just \$9.99. He knows Cena's numbers: fifteen World Titles, two Royal Rumble, fifty seven different t-shirt designs and over a thousand ways to suck.

Cole asks about Cena saying Owens has to finish the fight on Sunday so Owens shows us a clip of him destroying Sami Zayn at Takeover last week. If he'll do that to his best friend, what will he do to John Cena? Just watch Sunday and you'll see it first hand. After you do that, you'll see that the champ is here.

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

Rematch from Raw. Ambrose passes by Owens on his way to the ring and doesn't pay him a bit of attention. Rollins gets in a cheap shot on Reigns to start, allowing Kane to get the early advantage. Seth quickly comes in and stomps Roman down in the corner where he sits on his chest for an odd choice of offense. It's back to Kane who gets suplexed down for the tag to Ambrose as we're still in the first minute.

Reigns and Ambrose chases them to the floor and we take a break. Back with Rollins tagging in Kane to keep Ambrose in trouble. We hit the nerve hold on Ambrose for a bit before Kane pulls him off the middle rope for a big crash. Dean gets beaten down in the corner even more and Rollins hits a running back elbow for two. Back to the reverse chinlock for a bit until Dean fights back and takes out the Stooges, only to have to break up a Rollins superplex attempt.

A tornado DDT plants Kane and that's enough for the hot tag to Reigns. Kane blocks a Superman Punch like he always blocks a Superman Punch, but Dean takes him down with the standing top rope elbow. A rollup by Rollins is countered into a powerbomb but Seth slips out, only to eat the Superman Punch, drawing in the Stooges for the DQ at 12:03.

**Rating:** C-. There was nothing to talk about here because I saw almost this exact same match with a different ending on Monday. I'm not a fan of having these rematches so soon as this is exactly what happens: what are they supposed to do that they didn't do on Monday other than how the match ends? Not bad or anything but really dull.

Ambrose and Reigns clean house until the New Day of all people come out to beat on Ambrose, only to have Reigns hit his big over the top rope dive to take everyone out. Woods eats Dirty Deeds and Kofi gets Superman Punched out of the air. Kane and Rollins get back in though and Rollins Pedigrees Ambrose to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. Not a bad go home show but as usual, there's not much to see here other than a really good tag match to start things off. However, with that great match comes a headache inducing R-Truth win over King Barrett. I was sold on the Chamber from the minute the matches were announced though so this was really just padding with a good match included.

### Results

Lucha Dragons b. Cesaro/Tyson Kidd – Salida Del Sol to Kidd

R-Truth b. King Barrett – Little Jimmy

Ryback b. Rusev via DQ when Rusev sent Ryback into the post

Paige b. Naomi – Rampaige

Roman Reigns/Dean Ambrose b. Kane/Seth Rollins via DQ when Joey Mercury and Jamie Noble interfered

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