

205 Live – December 13, 2016: You Can Feel the Vince

205 Live

Date: December 14, 2016

Location: Wells Fargo Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, Corey Graves, Austin Aries

This is turning into a more traditional WWE show week by week. Tonight's main event is focusing on setting up Sunday's triple threat match for the Cruiserweight Title instead of tonight's match standing on its own. The main event here is Rich Swann vs. TJ Perkins in a non-title match so let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week's main event where Swann defeated Brian Kendrick to retain the title. Perkins was on commentary during the match and got into it with Swann to end the show.

The announcers preview tonight's main event and Sunday's title match.

Jack Gallagher vs. Drew Gulak

Gulak accepts the handshake and they hit the mat to start, meaning Gallagher can do his handstand to escape a headlock. After rolling around for some near falls, Gulak gets tied up in the Windsor Knot for the running kick to the back of the trunks. Drew's answer is to kick Jack in the jaw and then start in on the bad knee. Jack will have none of that though and blasts Gulak with that headbutt. The running dropkick in the corner puts Gulak away at 5:52.

Rating: C. I know Gallagher does the same stuff almost every match but he's just so darn likeable. How can you not smile when you see someone this into his gimmick? Pushing him towards the title and putting him in a feud with someone whose personality he can bounce off of will be a great springboard for his character. Good enough here though and that's all it needs to be.

Perkins tells Swann that the luck is about to run out.

Tajiri is coming.

Gallagher is talking about his victory when Ariya Daivari comes up. Jack is willing to call it even but Daivari says no way and starts speaking his native language before leaving.

Mustafa Ali vs. Lince Dorado

Ali says he won't be defined by our ignorance. A great looking springboard hurricanrana takes Ali down to start but a hard kick to the head puts Dorado down. We're already in a chinlock before a dropkick sends Ali into the corner. They're certainly moving out there. A Tajiri handspring into a Stunner...uh, stuns Ali and Dorado sends him outside. An Asai moonsault crushes Ali again and both guys are down long enough for the double countout at 3:35.

Rating: C+. Now that was more like it with a standard cruiserweight style. It's cool to have Gallagher and Gulak doing their mat work but sometimes you need two guys to fly around and look impressive. I liked this more than I was expecting to and it's a good idea to establish as much talent as they can.

Ali goes for a post match cheap shot but gets kicked out to the floor.

Noam Dar hits on Alicia Fox but she isn't interested.

Long video on TJ Perkins.

Rich Swann vs. TJ Perkins

Non-title and as you might expect, Kendrick comes out to join commentary. They trade wristlocks to start with both guys flipping out of the others offense. A double dropkick means a double miss into a double nip up and a standoff. Swann finally kicks him in the jaw to take over but Perkins tosses the champ outside for a slingshot dropkick.

Back in and Swann scores with Rolling Thunder for two but another trip to the floor sees Swann tweak his knee. Perkins is no fool and dropkicks the

knee out for a near fall of his own. A kick to the head puts TJ down but the knee is too banged up for Swann to capitalize. Perkins' Detonation Kick is countered into a tiger bomb for two, only to have the knee give out again. The kneebars make Swann tap at 10:01.

Rating: B-. It's a good sign that these guys are showing themselves capable of wrestling a match instead of just doing a few minutes of high spots. Perkins needed a big win heading into the pay per view but I can't imagine they would actually change the title. Swann was fine here and while I'm rarely a fan of champions losing, the knee injury gives him an out.

Kendrick comes to the ring but eats a superkick.

Overall Rating: C+. This was better and having something to build towards is a really positive step. However, the same problem as last week persists: I don't know how long they can keep this show going with just one set of talent. It works in NXT with a revolving door but this is a bit more limited and it's going to start showing in a hurry. Still though, they're in the very early days and this was an entertaining way to spend about forty minutes.

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205 Live – November 29, 2016 (Debut Episode): It's All About the Presentation

205 Live

Date: November 29, 2016

Location: Colonial Life Arena, Columbia, South Carolina

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, Austin Aries, Corey Graves

Remember the Cruiserweight Classic being all awesome? Now do you remember the cruiserweights being equally awesome on Monday Night Raw? Odds are you don't, because the division has floundered on Monday nights and it's already time for the show to have its own show on the WWE Network. This debut episode could range from good to a mess so let's get to it.

Also, these are probably not going to be done on Tuesday nights. I'll have them up as soon as possible every week though.

The opening sequence says tonight it's time to defy expectations. There are very few clips from Raw here with almost everything coming from the tournament. I'm as shocked as you are.

Opening sequence.

It should be interesting to see how the crowd looks as this was taped after Smackdown went off the air.

Austin Aries, currently out with an eye injury, is a surprise commentator. He teases winning the title once he's healthy.

The roster (or at least tonight's roster) is on stage for introductions. We have Rich Swann, TJ Perkins, Jack Gallagher (SWEET), Hoho Lun, the Bollywood Boyz, Noam Dar, Tony Nese, Drew Gulak, Ariya Daivari, Cedric Alexander, Lince Dorado, Akira Tozawa, Mustafa Ali, Gran Metalik and Brian Kendrick. This minute long series of introductions is already more than we got on Monday Night Raw and gives me some hope.

Video on the Bollywood Boyz, Harv and Gurv Sirah. They grew up watching Bret Hart and want to bring the Indian culture to America. Again, HUGE improvement over what we got on Mondays.

Bollywood Boyz vs. Drew Gulak/Tony Nese

The Boyz do a lot of dancing and are clearly the faces here. The fact that they're fighting heels was your second clue. Aries doesn't get the point of the handshakes and I still can't disagree. Gurv (who is in trunks instead of tights like his brother) works on Drew's arm to start before it's off to Harv for more of the same.

Drew takes Harv's head off with a running dropkick as Ranallo is, say it with me, a big improvement over what we've had in recent weeks. Harv gets taken down into the corner with Gulak working over his leg like a technical mat wrestler should do. Nese's chinlock doesn't last long and a neckbreaker gets Harv over to the corner for the hot tag to his brother.

Everything breaks down and we get the eternally stupid spot with Gulak being thrown into Nese, who DDT's his partner because he's incapable of letting go of his partner's head. Harv springboards into a crossbody to take Gulak down outside but Nese slams Gurv to take over again. Back in and a DDT sends Nese outside, setting up a double superkick to pin Gulak at 7:04.

Rating: C+. Let's see: characters, good action, defined faces and heels and a better reaction from the crowd. This is how you start a show and introduce some new talent, which seems to be more over with the crowd than almost anyone else has accomplished in the last few months.

Gulak and Nese say the Dancing with the Stars rejects won because of greasy ropes. That sounds like the start of a story, which again puts this one up on Raw.

Video on Noam Dar.

Kendrick says you should gamble on him tonight because he's going to capitalize on Swann's mistakes. Perkins comes in and wants his rematch so he wishes Kendrick luck.

Video on Gran Metalik. These are a bit long but you only have to air them once and people will catch on in a hurry.

Ariya Daivari vs. Jack Gallagher

Gallagher is a wrestling gentleman and got a very strong reaction in his Cruiserweight Classic run. Jack does his fancy spin to counter a wristlock before bending both arms around in ways other than nature intended. Even Graves has to appreciate how awesome Gallagher really is.

Gallagher handstands his way out of a headlock by walking on his hands. Another headstand in the corner has Aries freaked out and it's time to tie Daviari's limbs up in so much of a knot that Gallagher stands off to the side and smiles at him. A running kick to the back of the trunks annoys Aries because it wasn't great.

Daivari comes back with some basic wrestling, including a neckbreaker and chinlock, which finally slows Jack down. Some dropkicks have Daivari in trouble again and a headbutt knocks him into the corner. One of the hardest running dropkicks I've ever seen puts Daivari away at 5:28. Even Aries calls it impressive, partially because that's one of his signature moves.

Rating: B-. Here's the simple point: Gallagher works because he's unlike anyone else on the roster. As I've said for a long time: if you do the same thing over and over again with the only difference being the name attached, no one is going to notice. If you do something completely different, people are going to notice. That's what Gallagher did here and that's why people will be talking about him.

Ranallo: "Austin, what do you think of 205 Live so far?" Aries: "Well I'm here so it's great."

Lince Dorado video. He's your standard masked luchador.

Video on Rich Swann, who lost his parents young and has traveled the world wrestling anyone he can.

Cruiserweight Title: Rich Swann vs. Brian Kendrick

Swann, billed as outlandish for some reason, is challenging and they're absolutely insane if they don't change the title here. We're ready to go after the Big Match Intros and the standard handshake. They trade wristlocks to start before it's time to speed things up, including a hard dropkick for two on the champ. A tiger bomb drops Kendrick again and he bails to the floor for a breather.

Back in and the champ snaps off a hard belly to back suplex but it's too early for the Captain's Hook to really work. A similar suplex does the same to Kendrick but Swann takes too long going up and gets caught in a neckbreaker onto the buckle. Kendrick has a target now and a bridging dragon suplex makes things even worse. It's off to a straitjacket hold for a bit, only to have Swann grab something like a Michinoku Driver.

Brian's eyes are bugging out (great visual) but he gets the knees up to block the standing 450. The long form Captain's Hook gives us the dramatic crawl to the ropes and Kendrick's frustration continues. It only gets worse when Sliced Bread #2 gets two, allowing Swann to hit three straight spinning kicks to the head for the pin and the title at 13:31.

Rating: B. This felt like a big title change and that's exactly what it needed to be. There's no other way to put it: Brian Kendrick is one of the least interesting heels in a very long time. He was on a great nostalgia run in the tournament and the big idea was to turn him heel because...well I have no idea actually. Swann as the new face champion has potential and whoever beats him can actually be the big bad that this division needs. Good match here, which is what they needed.

Swann dedicates the win to his mother and Kendrick says you shouldn't get used to this.

A replay of the title change ends the show.

Overall Rating: B. As Paul Heyman said, it's all about the presentation. On Raw, the cruiserweights are wedged in on a show where they don't fit in the slightest. It's basically the new Divas match so people can go get nachos (Hopefully with barbecue sauce. Try it.) and that's not worth keeping around.

This show actually felt like it mattered and even if it's just a low level show for the sake of validating the talent being signed, it's WAY better than giving them ten minutes in front of a crowd that doesn't want to see them. On top of that, the talent was actually introduced to the fans so we can get to know them a bit.

Look at what we had here: two guys from India who like movies, a British wrestling gentleman and a fun guy who loves to dance winning the title. In other words, something other than a bunch of guys doing a similar style with no charisma (Perkins and Kendrick for example, meaning the top two names in the division).

I don't think this show is going to blow the doors off of anything but giving them their own show is the only possible option if they want the division to be a success. It's not a great show or anything but it's different enough to be entertaining and that's the important thing. I liked what I saw here as it felt like a weekly episode of the Cruiserweight Classic. If they just have to keep the division on Raw for awhile so be it, but their best bet is right here.

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Superstars – October 28, 2016: The Kickoff Preview

Superstars

Date: October 28, 2016

Location: Target Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

I can get through this. I can get through Darren Young vs. Jinder Mahal IV. Normally I wouldn't believe they would actually go there but I said that after their first match and again after their second match. At least my therapy has been going well since then. Mahal was on Raw this week though so he's at least in the building. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Neville vs. Titus O'Neil

This could be a disaster as Titus was one of the only people who could drag Neville down when they were in NXT. Neville wisely gets the crowd going by moonsaulting over Titus to start and kicking him in the face to actually do something to him. A good looking flip dive takes Titus down again but he kicks Neville in the face with a bit more force. We hit the chinlock for a bit before Titus tries to start a LET'S GO NEVILLE chant. Back up and Titus charges into raised boots in the corner and the Red Arrow finishes him at 4:30.

Rating: D. It takes a lot to mess up a power heel vs. a speed face but they managed to make it boring. I don't know how someone with Titus' look can be this bad but he pulls it off every single time. Above all else though, Neville is going to get a pop from the crowd no matter what because that Red Arrow just works every time.

We go back to Raw for the first time.

Here are Brock Lesnar and Paul Heyman with something to say. Heyman does his usual schtick about how Lesnar will smash Goldberg, only to have the

Goldberg chants cut him off. Heyman calls out the fan that started them and says they're getting on Brock's nerves. After their match, all of the chants in the world won't be able to put Goldberg back together again.

Suplexes are promised and the fans go back and forth with SUPLEX CITY/GOLDBERG chants. Heyman rips on them and the chant turns into GOLDBERG SUCKS....to wrap this up. Ok then. There was NOTHING here and it didn't need Brock at all. Even Heyman looked rattled by the reaction.

Back to Raw again.

Mick Foley is in the ring for the contract signing between Sasha Banks and Charlotte. They talk about how big of a moment this is going to be, only to have Foley go into his annual rant about how evil the Cell is. Charlotte calls Sasha an entitled second rate talent who will learn respect from the Queen this Sunday. Sasha is ready to crawl up the ramp broken and bloodied as long as she has the Women's Title. They trade insults but Foley cuts them both off to say he's their future. Dude if the Cell is going to turn them into 6'4 men with long beards, maybe we should cancel the match.

As expected, the fans chant for Foley, thereby completely missing the point of this segment. Foley met Charlotte as a child and his kids gave Sasha their signed photo of Eddie Guerrero. More insults and a double signing FINALLY wrap this up. Charlotte vs. Sasha in a major gimmick match is fine but no one, like NO ONE, buys that the match is going to be all violent and career threatening like Foley is pushing and that kills the idea.

Sin Cara/Lince Dorado/Cedric Alexander vs. Tony Nese/Ariya Daivari/Drew Gulak

Cara and Nese start things off with the masked one starting in on Tony's arm. A facebuster puts Cara down and it's off to Gulak as the fans get a lot more quiet. Daivari of all people gets a reaction so Cara armdrags both Drew and Ariya at the same time. Dorado comes in and gets knocked off the apron and into the barricade as we take a break.

Back with Lince still in trouble thanks to a chinlock and armbar. Gulak

misses a charge though and it's off to Alexander to really wake the crowd up. Everything breaks down with Cara knocking Nese and Gulak to the floor for a big dive. Back inside, the Lumbar Check knocks Daivari out for the pin at 8:09.

Rating: C. This was your run of the mill cruiserweight six man and it's about as good as you're going to get with no story or reason for them to be fighting. The match was fine enough and hopefully they can improve it when they do the same match again as the Kickoff match on Sunday.

We wrap the show up with Monday's main event.

Seth Rollins vs. Chris Jericho vs. Kevin Owens

Non-title. They play keep away to start until Owens gets kicked out to the floor. A Blockbuster gets two on Jericho but Owens pulls Seth outside. The champ is sent into the barricade but Jericho throws Seth into the crowd. Back in and Owens scores with a clothesline, only to have Rollins avoid the Cannonball. The Pedigree doesn't work on either Canadian but the Lionsault hits Seth's knees.

Owens saves his buddy from a Pedigree and it's time for the double teaming. The handicap portion continues until Owens is low bridged to the floor. Jericho eats the low superkick and Rollins dives onto Kevin. Seth misses the frog splash and eats a Codebreaker for two. Owens comes back in and slaps Rollins a lot as the STUPID IDIOT chants kick in. Rollins escapes a double superplex and pins both guys at the same time with a double rollup at 10:00.

Rating: C+. The match was fun but it's WAY too late in the night to really matter. Rollins pinning the champ is appropriate as Owens has been a huge afterthought in this entire story. That also makes four straight times that Rollins has pinned Jericho so you certainly can't say he's getting too many wins.

Post match Owens and Jericho destroy Rollins by sending him hard into the steps. We're still not done though as Rollins runs up the ramp and dives at Owens, only to get beaten down again. Owens gives him the Apron Bomb and walks back up the ramp to get his title so some posing can end the

show.

Overall Rating: C+. Yeah this was fine. Aside from Rusev vs. Reigns, this was a solid preview for Sunday's show. I would have gone with ANYTHING other than the Lesnar/Heyman promo though and I really don't get why they decided to air that mess again. The exclusive wrestling was fine for a pair of glorified dark matches and that's all Superstars is supposed to be.

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NXT – October 19, 2016: I Love NXT and I Don't Know How Else To Say It

NXT

Date: October 19, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

We're getting closer to the second round of the Dusty Rhodes Tag Team

Classic and it's also the start of a fresh taping cycle. The other interesting story is the return of Shinsuke Nakamura to go after Samoa Joe. It's fairly obvious that they'll be facing each other again in Toronto. Let's get to it.

We open with a look back at Nakamura being laid out about a month ago but coming back last week to go after Samoa Joe.

Opening sequence.

Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic First Round: Rich Swann/No Way Jose vs. Tony Nese/Drew Gulak

It should be interesting to see this work so much better here than it would on Raw. Rich and Drew start things off as the fans aren't sure which good guy to cheer for. It's time for some fast flipping to start with Rich bouncing over Drew and handing it off to Jose for the big guy dancing. Nese comes in and eats a big flapjack (that sounds good) for two. Some quick kicks put Jose down for two but it's back to Rich for some kicks to the chest. They head outside and it's Nese superkicking (of course) Swann as we take a break.

Back with Gulak and Swann clotheslining each other for a double knockdown. That means a double tag off to Jose and Nese with the dancing one turning Tony inside out off a clothesline. Gulak gets thrown into the air and punched right in the jaw (better than most Superman Punches) for two with Nese making the save. The full nelson slam ends Gulak at 10:40.

Rating: C+. I've said it before and I'll say it again: Jose is WAY too talented for this dancing party guy gimmick. He looked even more like a star than usual here as he was towering over the other three and was able to show off with the power game. It really is amazing how much more interesting the cruiserweights are when they're in front of a crowd that actually wants to see them.

Rich and Jose are ready for the Authors of Pain, who better not look past them. Dancing ensues.

Quick discussion of Hideo Itami's injury, meaning he's out of the

tournament.

We look back at Glorious Ten splitting up.

Tye Dillinger has requested and been granted a match against Bobby Roode in Toronto.

Austin Aries would rather talk about potassium instead of his surprise partner. The tournament isn't for everyone, such as Hideo Itami. Hideo is out because an MRI revealed he doesn't have a spine.

Bobby Roode vs. Sean Maluta

Maluta actually grabs a rollup for an early two but Roode takes his head off with a clothesline. A hard whip into the corner makes it worse for Sean, followed by a spinebuster to break up his comeback. An implant DDT ends Sean at 3:07.

Rating: D+. Just a squash here, which is a good role for some of the lower level cruiserweights. We've seen what they can do in the tournament so these wins are more impressive than the ones you see over the run of the mill jobbers. Maluta has a good look and can be pushed if the need ever arrives, just like so many of the other people NXT has been using lately.

Roode laughs off Dillinger's complaints because Tye was the one who begged Roode to team up for the Dusty Classic. All Roode wanted to do was bring Tye up to a GLORIOUS level. After a line about Klingons, Tye comes out and clears the ring. The fans, who went nuts over Roode's entrance, give Tye a huge TEN chant.

Liv Morgan is in the back when Peyton Royce and Billie Kay jump her from behind. Morgan is dragged out to the stage and laid out again, leaving Kay and Royce to brag about how this is their division.

Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic First Round: Austin Aries/??? vs. Tucker Knight/Otis Dozovic

Aries' mystery partner is.....the debuting Roderick Strong, who teamed with Aries to win the ROH Tag Team Titles as part of Generation Next. The

announcers put Strong over hard, mentioning his matches against people like AJ Styles, Samoa Joe, Daniel Bryan and Kevin Owens. Otis throws Aries around to start before it's off to Tucker for some hard chops to Strong.

Everything breaks down and Aries has to break up a Vader Bomb from Otis. Aries and Strong start trying to chop down the massive Dozovic but he pretty easily suplexes them both at the same time. The hot tag brings in Knight for a double splash in the corner but he misses a charge and falls outside. Back in and the Sick Kick knocks Knight silly for the pin (ignore the shoulder being up at one) at 6:15.

Rating: B-. It's strange to see the smaller, faster guys as the heels but this was a better match than I was expecting. Dozovic and Knight are two big power guys and I'm always entertained by seeing guys their size chopped down. Aries/Strong vs. TM61 should be a lot of fun, which is the cool part about tournaments like this one.

Andrade Cien Almas attacked Cedric Alexander over a lack of respect. Now it's time to take the respect for himself.

Nikki Cross vs. Danielle Kamella

Cross is just as crazy as she used to be and throws Danielle with a suplex. After biting and scratching herself, Nikki ends this with a fisherman's neckbreaker at 1:20. Total squash.

Nikki keeps beating on Danielle so the referee reverses the decision.

Here's Shinsuke Nakamura with a message for Samoa Joe. Nakamura confirms the rematch with Samoa Joe in Toronto because he'll beat Joe with no mercy. This brings out Patrick Clark, who wants the title shot for himself. Instead he gets a kick to the head, only to have Joe come out for the big staredown. Joe stays on the ramp while Clark eats Kinshasa to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. I had a really good time here as they covered almost everything that's likely to be taking place at Takeover: Toronto in less than an hour. We had good tag wrestling, a debut, story advancement and a

hot ending. In other words, things you rarely get on Raw and/or Smackdown and in even less time. NXT knows how to turn on the jets whenever they need to and that's exactly what they've done again here.

Results

No Way Jose/Rich Swann b. Tony Nese/Drew Gulak – Full nelson slam to Gulak

Bobby Roode b. Sean Maluta – Implant DDT

Austin Aries/Roderick Strong b. Tucker Knight/Otis Dozovic – Sick Kick to Otis

Danielle Kamella b. Nikki Cross via referee's decision

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Monday Night Raw – September 26, 2016: I Didn't Want It To

Be This Way

Monday Night Raw

Date: September 26, 2016

Location: US Bank Arena, Cincinnati, Ohio

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

We're past Clash of Champions and this is going to be an interesting show. The key here is Raw's competition as they're up against Monday Night Football and a Presidential debate that is likely going to break a lot of viewership records. Kevin Owens is still Raw World Champion and Roman Reigns picked up the US Title from Rusev last night it's time to start looking towards the Cell. Let's get to it.

One more note: I was in the arena for the show last night so this is my second time seeing this.

There's no intro as we're heading straight for the opening match.

Translation: PLEASE DON'T CHANGE THE CHANNEL YET! I can completely accept this.

US Title: Roman Reigns vs. Rusev

Rematch from last night with Reigns defending. The fans want Lana as Rusev takes him down with a front facelock. That's going to keep the people from watching the debate. Reigns is cheered quite strongly as he kips out of a headscissors but gets double legged back to the mat.

Rusev gets one off a suplex and starts in on Reigns' back. The nine corner clotheslines get Reigns out of trouble but he can't lift Rusev up for the powerbomb because of the back injury. We take a break and come back with Rusev putting on a bearhug to keep up the simple psychology. A dropkick hits Reigns in the mouth and some gutwrench suplexes get two. Back to the waistlock as the match slows down again.

Reigns fights up with more clotheslines and a big boot but the Superman Punch is countered, sending them both falling out to the floor. We come back from another break with Reigns headbutting him off the top and

hitting a middle rope clothesline. Geez man enough with the Lex Luger style offense.

Reigns still can't powerbomb him so Rusev gets in a spinwheel kick. More headbutts and another kick to the head give Rusev another two. Reigns' latest comeback is stopped with a superkick and the fans are really getting into this in a way you almost never hear for a Reigns match. The Accolade is broken up but Lana offers a distraction to break up the Superman Punch. The apron kick staggers Rusev (and gets a great reaction from the crowd) and they fight into the crowd for a double countout at 25:38.

Rating: B. The match was another good outing for the two of them and the ending sets up a rematch in the Cell, which is going to receive a divided reception depending on your taste in Cell matches. Maybe it was just the Cincinnati crowd or maybe it's because he's in the midcard instead of the main event but Reigns was getting a great reaction here. This is the kind of role he's made for: an athletic freak who can take a beating and give out one of his own. Good match here.

Post match Rusev gets a chair and hits Reigns over the back. They get inside and Reigns gets in a spear to put Rusev down. Reigns sits in the chair and poses with the belt before hitting Rusev with the chair to even things up.

WWE2K17 ad with Ambrose's appearance getting a huge pop.

Here's Mick Foley for a chat about last night's Cesaro vs. Sheamus match. The thought of the series ending in a draw seemed to be a mathematical impossibility (not really) but that's what's happened. Foley brings out Sheamus and Cesaro with Sheamus almost immediately cutting him off to say this was about physical dominance.

Cesaro talks about doctors holding Sheamus back last night and an argument breaks out over who was more dominant. Foley cuts them off to say they're both right and they're both getting a championship opportunity....which they're getting together as they're fighting for the Tag Team Titles. Cesaro: "SAY WHAT???" Foley tells them to get over it and just team together because that's his decision.

I had a very bad feeling that this was where they were going and while it's not the worst idea in the world (Raw is dying for tag teams at the moment), it feels like the TNA way of getting here: a bunch of matches that did nothing but fill time until we get to the end result. Sheamus and Cesaro had some good matches (even one very good one) but they drove the feud into the ground to the point where I didn't care how good the matches were since I had absolutely no desire to watch them.

And now, none of that matters because they're basically saying the whole thing was a tie and we're just going to do something different. It comes off as lazy booking and a way to fill in time, which is one of the worst things you can do in wrestling. I'm sure they'll be a decent team but they better not cut New Day's title reign off this close to the record.

Tag Team Titles: New Day vs. Anderson and Gallows

New Day is defending in a rematch from last night after Xavier Woods used Francesca II. The match starts fast with Kofi having to dodge a diving Anderson. It's off to Big E. for the Unicorn Stampede with Woods blowing the trombone in time with the stomps. Gallows, apparently not a music fan, pulls Big E. out to the floor and superkicks him in the face.

Anderson adds a running kick to the face for two and the champs are in quick trouble. Gallows gets in a chokeslam and we take a break. Anderson's powerbomb gets two and we hear about Demolition's title reign being in reach. A kick to the head finally allows the hot tag to Big E. for the suplexes. Big E. misses a charge into the post though and a running boot to the face gets two.

That's enough of being on defense for Big E. so he spears Anderson through the ropes, setting up the Midnight Hour for two with Gallows making the save. Kofi is sent shoulder first into the steps and the Magic Killer gets a very close two on Big E. They had me on that near fall. A VERY bloody Kofi comes back in and hits Trouble in Paradise to pin Anderson and retain the titles at 11:03.

Rating: C+. They're doing really well at making me buy into the title changes here and that's hard to do when it comes to a regular TV title defense. Anderson and Gallows are done as challengers now and I'm really

not sure where they go from here. Sheamus and Cesaro are fine for placeholder challengers but New Day really should break the record when they're this close. It would be a waste of time not to.

We look at Kevin Owens injuring Seth Rollins' ribs in their match at Clash of Champions. Stephanie McMahon sent a second referee down for the count, seconds after Rollins would have had the title won. After the show ended, HHH arrived and asked Stephanie how it went ("Great.").

Sheamus and Cesaro (back in his suit) are bickering when Foley comes in. Mick starts yelling about how much potential these two have together because they could shake up the tag division. He'll even give them a chance tonight in a tag match. Foley showed a lot of fire here, as is his custom. Remember that.

Bayley vs. Anna Fields

Fields chokes her on the ropes to start and we hit an early chinlock. Bayley comes back with her elbows and clotheslines, setting up a quick Bayley to Belly for the pin at 2:04.

Post match Bayley says she's not done with Sasha and Charlotte after that triple threat because she wants to hug that Women's Title.

And now, the bad part of the show. Foley goes in to see Stephanie and asks about the referee issue in last night's main event and telling HHH it was great. Stephanie ERUPTS on Foley, talking about how it should have been his responsibility to get a new referee out there. Instead, he was probably with Sheamus and Cesaro because he thinks with his heart instead of his head. She hired him because of his mind as a businessman (Huh?) and wants him to be more like her. Instead of showing the fire he had earlier, Foley just stands there and takes this because she's Stephanie.

This is every problem with Stephanie rolled into one promo. Not only is it part of a story that is taking WAY too long to go anywhere (I'd be shocked if we get any real resolution before the Royal Rumble) but this is Mick Foley, a three time WWE World Champion and a WWE Hall of Famer. He's one of the best talkers with some of the best fire of all time but he's standing here cowering in front of Stephanie because that's what

happens to people around her.

Brock Lesnar, Charlotte, Sting, Roman Reigns and now Mick Foley all have nothing to say back to her because she's Stephanie and the most intimidating presence of all time. Oh except for when she's fun Stephanie who dances with kids and is just a regular soccer mom. This has been going on for years now (keep in mind that Stephanie debuted SEVENTEEN YEARS AGO and first became an authority figure in 2000) and if we're lucky she gets one bit of comeuppance a year. Other than that it's all Stephanie browbeating everyone else and if you don't like it, deal with it because she's Stephanie.

Rich Swann/Cedric Alexander vs. Drew Gulak/Lince Dorado

Swann and Alexander get an inset promo talking about how they're here to have fun but they're not underestimating their opponents. This didn't air in the arena and it would have helped quite a bit. Gulak and Dorado get their Cruiserweight Classic videos and again they're better than nothing. We get the big handshake to start for a compliment to the purple ropes, which take forever to set up and take down.

Dorado and Swann trade headscissors to start and nip into a stalemate. Everything breaks down and Dorado moonsaults onto all three as we take an early break. Back with Drew holding Swann in a chinlock before it's back to Dorado for some chops. The hot tag bring in Alexander for some forearms and a running kick to Gulak's head. A Lumbar Check sends Dorado to the floor and Swann sunset flips Gulak for the pin at 8:25.

Rating: C. This was the big popcorn break match of the night and it's still not hard to see why. Again, the wrestling is fine but the whole division is being wedged into a show that is already bloated. Swann and Alexander have some personality but Dorado and Gulak are just warm bodies in the eyes of the fans. It's better than last week but they still need some adjustments to make people care.

Cesaro/Sheamus vs. Nick Cutler/Willis Williams

Cesaro takes Cutler over with a one armed delayed vertical suplex but Sheamus drops to the floor instead of tagging in. For some reason he gets

on the apron with his back to the ring so Cesaro can tag him in with a slap. The ten forearms make it even worse for Cutler and it's off to Williams, who is taken down with a hard clothesline. The jobbers actually start working on Cesaro's arm for a few seconds before Sheamus Brogue Kicks both guys. Cesaro pins the unconscious Williams at 3:33.

Rating: D+. This was exactly what it needed to be, though it's still forced and something that should have come months ago without the long feud in the first place. We haven't had a wacky partnership that went somewhere important since Kane and Daniel Bryan so this is as good as anything else they have.

Video on TJ Perkins.

TJ talks about wanting to be here for eighteen years but here's Brian Kendrick to interrupt. Kendrick says it's his title to win because Perkins owes him for his career. A brawl is teased and they'll fight at some point in the future.

Here are Charlotte and Dana Brooke for a chat. Charlotte says last night was another chance for everyone to be disappointed because that's what she does time after time. She's not the huggable Bayley or the internet darling Sasha Banks. Cue Sasha to say that's her title because Charlotte didn't beat her last night. Sasha is owed a one on one match and she wants it right now. Charlotte tells the YESing fans to be quiet so she can tell Sasha that she'll get her rematch...next week. Sasha cleans house and the villains leave.

Rollins is on his way to the ring to interrupt the upcoming Highlight Reel but Foley cuts him off because Seth isn't medically cleared. All Rollins can hear are Stephanie's words coming out of Mick's mouth.

TJ Perkins vs. Tony Nese

Non-title with both guys being TNA castoffs because they're dumb that way. The much stronger Nese throws Perkins around to start and he cartwheels out of TJ's ankle scissors to show off. An early kneebar attempt doesn't work for TJ as Nese sends him outside for a superkick and a big dive to take us to a break. Back with Perkins grabbing a Black

Widow but getting planted with a reverse gutwrench suplex.

The fans chant for Harambe (the gorilla who was shot at the Cincinnati Zoo, which was a recurring trend all night long) and CM Punk as TJ fights back with uppercuts and a jumping neckbreaker out of the corner. A gutbuster looks to set up a tornado DDT but Perkins is draped over the top rope instead. TJ is right back up with the fireman's carry into an enziguri (Fans: "RANDY SAVAGE!") and the kneebar makes Nese tap at 8:50.

Rating: C+. I know the fans don't care but this was entertaining stuff, partially because we have a reason to care about Perkins. Something as simple as being the champion tells us more about him than we know about anyone else and the announcers did a good job of building Nese up as the perfect athlete who could take down the champ. Good little match here, though the fans really didn't care.

Hispanic Heritage Month video on Pedro Morales.

Sasha vs. Charlotte and Perkins vs. Kendrick for the respective titles next week.

Ashton Kutcher and Danny Masterson are going to be in Los Angeles next week to take care of Chris Jericho and Kevin Owens.

It's time for the Highlight Reel. Jericho tells us to be quiet about a dozen times because this is the most anticipated Highlight Reel in WWE history. Before Owens comes out here though, Jericho has a bone to pick with Masterson and Kutchner, who have the nerve to claim that they're better friends. Jericho: "THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!" That's so unthinkable that they're both about to make the List of Jericho.

It's almost time for Owens to come out but Jericho yells at the cameraman for shooting him from the wrong side, which means HE MADE THE LIST! Rollins is on there too because he got hurt again last night. Owens comes out and praises the Jeritron 5000 but says he's not about to wear a suit for a place like Cincinnati, Ohio. What kind of town can this be when it created Dean Ambrose? Jericho: "HE STILL OWES ME \$17,000!"

Owens moves on to Rollins and says the rib injury is karma after all the

people Seth injured over the last year and a half. Cue Rollins but security and Foley pull him back. Instead here are Enzo Amore and Big Cass to interrupt and ask Jericho how they're doing. Jericho says they're just fine but Enzo and Cass ARE ON THE LIST.

After Owens corrects Jericho's spelling, Cass accuses Jericho of being Santa Claus. Jericho: "Maybe I am Santa Claus! Maybe I'll come down there and sit on your lap!" Cass points out that people sit on Santa's lap but Jericho said he was going to punch Cass in the face. A fan poll makes Jericho even angrier but as it turns out, Foley just made a match between these four.

Enzo Amore/Big Cass vs. Chris Jericho/Kevin Owens

Jericho and Enzo start us off but first we need to pause for the scarf removal. An armdrag has Jericho so frustrated that he crawls over for a hug from Owens. Kevin comes in and gets dropped by Cass so it's time to launch another human being over the top rope as a projectile. Sidewalk slams have the Canadians in trouble but Jericho sidesteps a charge to send Cass outside as we take a break.

Back with Enzo pounding on Jericho in the corner and getting two off a high crossbody. Owens offers a quick distraction though and it's time for the villains to take over. Thankfully that means Owens doing Enzo's dance across the apron because he knows how to mock a crowd. Jericho and Owens take turns beating on Enzo with Owens handling the trash talking ("THAT'S THE LEAD SINGER OF FOZZY!").

Enzo blocks a superplex but dives into a dropkick, setting up Owens' backplash for two. Owens to the referee: "I'm the Universal Champion!" Referee: "It was two!" Owens: "But he shouldn't even be out of NXT yet!" Enzo finally gets in a right hand to make the tag off to Cass for the house cleaning. For some reason Jericho decides to slap Cass, earning himself a boot to the face. The two of them head outside and it's Enzo hitting his middle rope DDT for two on Owens. The powerbomb puts Amore away at 16:37.

Rating: C. Owens' trash talking aside, this was just your standard main event tag. Enzo and Cass are fine for this role and it's already more

entertaining than seeing them talk about buying a timeshare in Puerto Rico. They're still making sure to protect Cass and it's way too early to even think about a split so this is about as good as it's going to get for them at the moment.

The show wraps up just after the match ends. Post show, Owens and Jericho kept beating on Enzo until Sami Zayn came out for the save. Posing ensued to close out the night.

Overall Rating: D+. This show suffered had the same problem as so many others: burnout. The first half hour was a good, hard hitting match, followed by an entertaining Tag Team Title match. Then it was Stephanie treating Foley like a dog who tracked mud into her house and a cruiserweight tag match that didn't need to be on the show.

The main event was a nice pick up but they really need something to fire the crowd up in the middle. Maybe a Sami Zayn match instead of putting him on Superstars? At the end of the day, three hours is too much on TV and it's even worse when you're watching it live. The show has good stuff on it but that good stuff is dragged down by so many other things, the biggest of which is just time itself. It wasn't a horrible show but you could tell when the debate came on because the show just gave up.

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NXT – September 14, 2016: And That's Ok

NXT

Date: September 14, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

We're slowly making our way to Toronto but first we need to get to the end of this taping cycle. The big story here is still Samoa Joe vs. Shinsuke Nakamura, which is probably going to headline the next Takeover. Other than that we have Bobby Roode vs. No Way Jose in a match that could have the crowd reacting in multiple ways. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's Samoa Joe to get things going. Joe talks about how a man reaches a point where he knows something has changed. As NXT Champion, he was a disgrace. He ran roughshod over NXT for a year because he wanted to be the champion of the hottest brand in the WWE Universe. Joe requests and receives an appearance from Shinsuke Nakamura. They said a lot of things leading up to their match in Brooklyn and Joe meant every bit of it, including saying that Nakamura was an undeserving contender.

Standing here now though, he knows Nakamura is a worthy champion. Joe has a guaranteed rematch but instead of cashing it in, he wants to ask Nakamura for the shot man to man. The champ says it's on and very tentatively shakes Joe's hand. Joe leaves Nakamura to pose but comes back out and jumps the champ on the stage. Nakamura is whipped into and Rock Bottomed onto the steps as Joe shouts that he did this to Shinsuke. Joe leaves and Nakamura is taken out on a stretcher. Even William Regal and Corey Graves come out to check on Nakamura as he's wheeled away.

Graves and Phillips talk about how serious this is. It actually feels

better here as this almost never happens around here, which is the case with almost every big angle they do.

Regal goes to find Joe but he pulls away in a car.

Liv Morgan vs. Rachel Fazio

Rachel used to be known as Rachel Ellering. Morgan works on a front facelock to start as we hear that Nakamura has been taken to a medical facility. A running dropkick staggers Rachel but Liv doesn't seem to know what to do next. Morgan grabs a guillotine choke (which she barely keeps on) for the tap at 1:51. This really didn't work with Liv looking very sloppy.

Post match Liv grabs the mic and yells at Rachel for tapping out. The word on the street is that the NXT Women's division needs more challengers so she's throwing her hat in the ring to face Asuka.

Hideo Itami vs. Drew Gulak

Gulak gets in his face to start and they hit the mat for some submission attempts. Drew goes with a slap to the face so Itami gives him one right back. It's time for some kicks to the face with Itami getting in a running boot but running into a dropkick for his efforts. Drew starts in on the leg but thinks it's a good idea to slap Hideo in the face. The beating is on in a hurry and the GTS ends Gulak at 4:55.

Rating: C+. They kept it simple here by having Itami strike as hard as he can and Gulak trying to do the submissions to keep Itami in check. Itami is going to be a big deal in NXT but I'm still not entirely sold on him. He really doesn't have a character aside from hard striker and while he does that as well as anyone else, I don't know how far it's going to take him.

Authors of Pain vs. Doug Sessa/Chris Payne

Razar drops Sessa with a spinning elbow to the face and it's off to Akum for forearms to the chest. Payne (not named until after the match) tries to come in and gets a double powerbomb. The running clothesline/Russian legsweep combo ends Doug at 1:51.

Tye Dillinger is ready to prove that he really is a perfect ten.

No Way Jose vs. Bobby Roode

Roode is introduced on a spinning pedestal and the fans sing his song. His entrance in Toronto is going to be amaz....perfec....blast it why can't I think of the right word for it? Roode takes him down to start and does a pose, sending the fans into song. A headlock doesn't do anything for Roode so Jose slam him to take over. Fans: "YOU'RE NOT GLORIOUS!"

Jose sends him outside for a running forearm off the apron and we take a break. It's good to hear the No Way Jose song as the commercial starts as Jose deserves some cheering despite being against the hottest act in the promotion. Back with Roode sending Jose into the buckle and getting two off a delayed vertical suplex. Jose fights out of a chinlock and puts on the airplane spin. The Baseball punch misses and Roode finishes with an implant DDT at 11:00.

Rating: C+. Fine match here with Roode doing just enough to win while Jose doesn't lose any face by going down against a bigger name. Roode is red hot right now and they would be crazy to not give him something big at the Toronto Takeover. I'd like to see Jose as something a bit more serious though as there's a lot of potential there. Good stuff here and probably most importantly: Roode changed finishers. The implant DDT isn't great but it's way better than a pumphandle slam.

Overall Rating: C. This show was a bit off as it felt like the first and last segments should have been swapped. Roode winning is fine but the opening segment took a lot out of the crowd, especially in the next match or two. Still though, it was a show that up some stuff going forward and let some people get needed wins. It's more effective than good and that's ok for a week.

Results

Liv Morgan b. Rachel Fazio – Guillotine choke

Hideo Itami b. Drew Gulak – GTS

Authors of Pain b. Doug Sessa/Chris Payne – Running clothesline/Russian

legsweep combo to Sessa

Bobby Roode b. No Way Jose – Implant DDT

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Cruiserweight Classic – August 24, 2016: A Surprise

Cruiserweight Classic

Date: August 24, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Daniel Bryan, Mauro Ranallo

We're wrapping up the second round tonight and after this show we'll have the final eight competitors. There are only three weeks left before the finale and it's hard to imagine that this isn't going to be around much longer. The wrestling has gotten even better as the tournament goes on, which really is amazing given where they started. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the tournament via a HHH voiceover as well as seeing the (really simple) trophy being unveiled.

Look back at last week's show.

Preview of tonight's three matches.

Opening sequence.

The announcers talk about last week and tonight.

Lince Dorado is here because it's all he's ever wanted to do and he's a hybrid wrestler.

Rich Swann says wrestling saved his life.

Second Round: Lince Dorado vs. Rich Swann

Puerto Rico vs. USA here. The goofy Swann gets his traditional ALL NIGHT LONG chant to start us off. They start fast with some nice early near falls and neither guy being able to pull off a headscissors. Dorado keeps cutting off Rich's dancing so he can do an Alex Wright style dance.

Swann sends him outside and does some dancing of his own until a springboard missile dropkick knocks Rich outside as well. A HUGE dive from Dorado takes Swann down again but he comes right back with a neckbreaker. That means more dancing before he lifts Dorado up for a suplex but kneels down and bends Dorado over his neck for a hold. That's certainly new.

Unfortunately it can't last long due to the laws of physics so it's time to strike it out. Dorado blocks a top rope hurricanrana and they hit bicycle kicks at the same time for a double knock down. Back up and Dorado gets in a few kicks to take over until Rich gets two off a DDT. The standing 450 only hits Dorado's raised knees and Swann is planted with a reverse hurricanrana. Lince misses his shooting star press though and Swann's Phoenix Splash lands on Dorado's face to send him to the final eight at 8:15.

Rating: C+. Swann is an NXT guy and almost guaranteed to make a run in this thing and the lighthearted character is starting to grow on me. Not everything needs to be this big serious moment so throwing a dancing guy who can wrestle so well in there helps a lot. Good enough match here but

nothing compared to some of the other stuff they've done.

We look at Johnny Gargano/Tommaso Ciampa losing to the Revival at Takeover.

Gargano, with Ciampa next to him, says he doesn't want to lose again.

Drew Gulak likes to hurt people.

Zack Sabre Jr. knows how to wrestle and can escape anything.

Drew Gulak vs. Zack Sabre Jr.

USA vs. England. Gulak won't shake hands to start and tries to take it to the mat early on. Drew actually gets the better of it with a straitjacket choke, only to have Zack take him to the mat and crank on both arms at the same time. The more aggressive Gulak chops him in the corner and works on a double arm hold of his own. Sabre tells him to come on so Gulak slaps him in the face. Gulak's top rope clothesline is countered into a Fujiwara armbar but it's reversed into a Gory Special with Sabre's arms being bent so far backwards that they cross behind his back.

Sabre gets out and puts on an octopus hold which is quickly reversed into an ankle lock. Drew can't hang on to an electric chair so Sabre reverses into a Kimura with a bodyscissors. Gulak slams him down to escape until a penalty kick to the chest gets two for Zack. A slap to the face knocks Sabre silly but the dragon scissors is countered into rollup to pin Gulak at 8:28.

Rating: B. Now that's more like it as they were just countering everything and turning it into one hold after another until someone finally got caught. That's an important word as Gulak didn't so much get defeated as much as he got caught in the end. It's good to see Sabre get tested like this after looking so dominant in the first round. Good stuff here and really fun to watch.

Drew shakes hands after the match.

TJ Perkins is a high flier and one of the best in the world.

Johnny Gargano is one of the best in the world period and had a great match against Tommaso Ciampa to get to the second round.

Second Round: TJ Perkins vs. Johnny Gargano

Philippines vs. USA. They're playing up the idea that Gargano is four days removed from Takeover so he might not be 100% coming in. Perkins takes him to the mat to start and grabs a Muta Lock for a bit. Back up and Gargano sends TJ outside for a suicide dive but his knee is banged up again. Perkins comes right back with that rocking horse hold of his, followed by a surfboard for good measure.

Gargano gets out of a headscissors and spears Perkins through the ropes for no cover. A big sitout powerbomb plants Johnny and we get a BOTH THESE GUYS chant. They head outside with Johnny hitting a running flip dive but his leg crashing into a table. Back in and they slug it out even more with Perkins hitting a springboard dropkick to the face. A kneebar doesn't work as Gargano reverses into a modified crossface. Perkins is sent face first into the middle buckle with authority for two more and both guys are spent. TJ is smart enough to kick the leg out and roll into a kneebar for the submission at 12:18.

Rating: B. Now THAT is a surprise as Gargano was probably one of the major favorites to win this whole thing. I really like the storytelling here though as they set up the knee injury from a show that hadn't even taken place yet and tied it together here. Gargano giving up because of the knee makes sense and it made for a great story as a result. That kind of thing amazes me and they pulled it off really well here.

Here are the quarterfinal matchups:

Akira Tozawa

Gran Metalik

Zack Sabre Jr.

Noam Dar

Brian Kendrick

Kota Ibushi

TJ Perkins

Rich Swann

Overall Rating: B+. Another night of great wrestling with a huge surprise to wrap things up. Those last eight names should make for an amazing final three weeks and I'm really looking forward to whatever they have planned going forward. There's almost no way the next few rounds won't be great as this show has proven that they can pull off almost anything in the ring.

Results

Rich Swann b. Lince Dorado – Phoenix Splash

Zack Sabre Jr. b. Drew Gulak – Rollup

TJ Perkins b. Johnny Gargano – Kneebar

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Cruiserweight Classic – July 27, 2016: A Lot Of Wrestling

Cruiserweight Classic

Date: July 27, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Daniel Bryan, Mauro Ranallo

We're still in the first round but since this tournament is structured rather well, we'll be done with it next week. This show has become a very refreshing change of pace with nothing but wrestling and almost no storylines. I know that wouldn't work long term but it's really fun in the short version like this. Let's get to it.

We look at tonight's four matches.

Opening sequence.

Tyson Dux used to wrestle in WWE and then destroyed his knee.

Zack Sabre Jr. says Harry Potter isn't the only wizard from England.

First Round: Tyson Dux vs. Zack Sabre Jr.

Canada vs. England. I've actually never seen a Sabre match. The fans are entirely behind Sabre here as he takes Dux down by the leg. Bryan talks about Sabre being well educated in the art of escapology, meaning he knows how to get out of every possible hold. Sabre keeps spinning around from one body part to another with some sweet movements, each one frustrating Dux even more. You can almost hear Bryan drooling over every single thing Zack does.

Dux tries to grab a headlock but gets caught in an armbar on the mat. A slam and some chops stagger Sabre a bit but he comes right back with European uppercuts. Some kicks to the arm only seem to tick Dux off and he grabs a fisherman's buster. Zack's stunned look as he lands is great.

Dux puts on a Fujiwara armbar but Zack gets to his feet and grabs an

octopus hold. Tyson gets the ropes so Zack hits a running kick to the chest for two. A quick DDT gets two for Dux and he clotheslines Zack's head off. Sabre comes right back with a Kimura before taking him down into something like the YES Lock but he bends Dux's fingers back for the submission at 9:23.

Rating: B. This was exactly the way they should have had Sabre make his debut: Instead of having him just run through Dux, Sabre had to actually break a sweat here and that makes for a more interesting match. It means that Sabre might have to actually put in some work as he moves forward, which makes for something worth watching. Just having Sabre tie Dux up and make him tap in four minutes would have worked short term but this is putting in some early effort for a better payoff later. That's so rare these days and it's nice to see a change.

Drew Gulak is a submission expert from Philadelphia.

Harv Sihra was inspired by Eddie Guerrero to embrace his heritage.

First Round: Drew Gulak vs. Harv Sihra

America vs. India. Sihra is part of the Bollywood Boys and his brother is also in the tournament. They're quickly on the mat with Gulak grabbing a bodyscissors, only to have Harv tie the legs up to send Drew crawling to the ropes. The fans didn't seem to see what was going on though and there wasn't much of a reaction. Gulak comes right back with a middle rope clothesline for two, only to be backdropped to the floor. Harv gets in a nice twisting cross body to the floor and grabs a superplex back inside. With Gulak down, Harv goes for the ankle but gets caught in a dragon sleeper for the tap out at 5:24.

Rating: C. Gulak isn't as flashy as Sabre but you can tell he certainly knows his submissions. That dragon sleeper looked great and he looked completely in control of Sihra out there. Sabre vs. Gulak in the second round should be excellent, especially if they give it enough time to go somewhere.

Tony Nese says he's a complete athlete.

Anthony Bennett is from Philadelphia and has very large hair.

First Round: Tony Nese vs. Anthony Bennett

America vs. America here and Bennett's hair has its own sunglasses. Bennett dances around to start and Nese will have none of that nonsense. They head outside with Bennett hitting a quick cannonball off the apron but is easily taken down for a springboard middle rope moonsault. A suplex plants Bennett, who pops back up for a dropkick. Bennett's guillotine choke doesn't get him very far so Tony slams him again...and the referee stops the match to check on him. We get the all clear and Nese hits a 450 for the pin at 6:33.

Rating: D+. I wasn't feeling this one as well with Bennett's size being a bit too much to overlook. Nese is fine but a bit too much of your standard "I'm awesome and athletic" cruiserweight. The 450 looked good though and made for a good ending to a not so great match. Eh they can't all be great.

Raul Mendoza grew up idolizing Eddie Guerrero who was small but became champion.

Brian Kendrick is here to get his second chance.

First Round: Brian Kendrick vs. Raul Mendoza

America vs. Mexico. Kendrick is looking very skinny and you can see a lot of his bones here. They trade leapfrogs to start with Kendrick being sent out to the floor. Back in and Mendoza slaps on something like a reverse Texas Cloverleaf, only to swing Brian around before taking him down into a leglock on the mat. Cool indeed. Kendrick suckers him in for a big boot before putting Mendoza's mouth on the ropes, which he then kicks for good measure.

Mendoza is bleeding from the mouth but quickly says he's ready to continue. Raul comes right back and sends him outside for a f

lip dive, only to miss a springboard 450 back inside. A big running kick to the face drops Raul but Kendrick takes too long getting up top, allowing Raul to crotch him into the Tree of Woe. Mendoza goes way big

with a Coast to Coast dropkick but a backbreaker only gets two. We get some old school goldbricking as Kendrick fakes an injury, only to pull Mendoza down into a choke (apparently the Bully Choke) for the submission at 7:35.

Rating: C+. I would have gone with Mendoza here as Kendrick is a big name but he's not exactly a big enough name that he has to go forward here. Raul was a sweet high flier here and that's something we haven't seen much of tonight. I get why they went with Kendrick but I hope he doesn't go much further than this.

Overall Rating: B-. This show worked but I would have gone with Sabre as the main event. It's clear that he's going to be a big deal in this and I don't know why they wouldn't go with him last. They had a good show with four good to watchable matches though as this tournament is flying by. The first round wrapping up is a good thing as we can now see big names facing off, which is the point of a tournament. Another good show this week, as has become the norm.

Results

Zack Sabre Jr. b. Tyson Dux – Double arm lock

Drew Gulak b. Harv Sihra – Dragon sleeper

Tony Nese b. Anthony Bennett – 450

Brian Kendrick b. Raul Mendoza – Bully Choke

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