

Monday Night Raw – September 25, 2017: Everything You Need To Know

Monday Night Raw

Date: September 25, 2017

Location: Citizens Business Bank Arena, Ontario, California

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Booker T.

We're past No Mercy and that means we have about a month to go before Tables Ladders and Chairs 2017. That means it's time to build a card, which doesn't seem likely to contain Brock Lesnar. It does however include Roman Reigns, who defeated John Cena last night and Braun Strowman, who fell to Lesnar in the Universal Title match. Let's get to it.

Here's are the Miz and the Miztourage for MizTV. After a quick look at Miz retaining the Intercontinental Title last night and bragging about his victory, Miz brings out his guest for the evening: Roman Reigns. Miz talks about Reigns' accomplishments, including retiring Undertaker. Reigns says Cena carried the company for fifteen years and even an idiot like Miz can see that Reigns is the new guy.

That brings Miz to Jason Jordan, who isn't good enough to be in the ring with him. Reigns disagrees, and says Miz wouldn't win without the Miztourage. He tells Axel and Dallas to go get him a cold beer but Miz brings up Reigns having help in the form of the Shield. A match between the trios is teased and Reigns gets out of his chair, sending the Miztourage and company to the floor. Cue Kurt Angle to say Miz is facing Reigns tonight, but first the Miztourage will be facing Matt Hardy and Jason Jordan.

Matt Hardy/Jason Jordan vs. Miztourage

Jordan takes Dallas down without too much effort and northern lights Axel for two. It's off to Matt for a headlock before the Miztourage being

cleaned out as we take a break. Back with the Miztourage in control and Axel grabbing a chinlock on Jordan. That goes nowhere as it's off to Matt for the middle rope elbow to the back of the head. Everything breaks down and Jordan does his running shoulder in the corner, followed by the belly to belly on Axel. The Side Effect into the Twist of Fate puts Dallas away at 10:25.

Rating: D+. Well that happened. What in the world am I supposed to say about this one anyway? Jordan was thrown in there because Jeff was hurt and it's not like they have any other teams to throw in there. Heath Slater and Rhyno are available but they're pretty low level, even for something like this. In other words, MAKE SOME NEW TEAMS ALREADY!

Quick video on Lesnar vs. Strowman, trying to make it far less disappointing than it really was.

Elias vs. Apollo Crews

Rematch from last night's Kickoff Show. Apollo takes him down with a headlock and Elias can't do much from there. Back up and Crews snaps off a dropkick and a clothesline, drawing a rather hard chant from the fans. Crews dives over the top onto Elias and poses with Titus, only to have Elias kick Titus' knee out. Back in and Elias runs him over, followed by Drift Away for the pin at 2:42. That was Elias' only offense.

Titus beats up Elias post match.

Finn Balor thanks Bray Wyatt for pushing him to the limit and says he wants the Universal Title match.

Here's Curt Hawkins to issue a challenge to end his losing streak.

Braun Strowman vs. Curt Hawkins

Hawkins bails before Strowman gets in the ring so Strowman chases him through the crowd. Curt gets caught without too much effort and a chokeslam puts him through a table. Strowman takes him to the stage and powerslams Hawkins through the LED wall in a big crash. No match of course.

With Hawkins pretty much dead, Strowman goes to the ring and grabs the mic. After last night, he wants a real fight right now. Cue Dean Ambrose with a taped up shoulder to answer the challenge.

Braun Strowman vs. Dean Ambrose

Strowman throws him around to start and drives Dean into the corner. Dean stumbles backwards, slaps him in the face, and then falls down. The running powerslam is countered though as Dean grabs a sleeper. They fall out to the floor with Dean posting him, only to miss a charge back inside. Strowman gets knocked outside and Dean's suicide dive into a tornado DDT plants him with a loud thud. Back in and a basement dropkick staggers Strowman for two. A missed charge sends Braun into the post but the top rope elbow is countered into the powerslam to give Strowman the pin at 6:32.

Rating: C+. This was fun and a good way to get Strowman back on his feet but for what? Where is Strowman supposed to go from here? He's fought Reigns already so maybe Balor? Is that the most interesting thing in the world? Not that it really matters as we're just waiting on Lesnar to return for his title defense at the Rumble anyway, making the whole thing a pretty big waste of time. But hey, Roman vs. Lesnar II right?

Angle is telling the referee for the Miz vs. Reigns match to keep an eye on the Miztourage. Cue Enzo Amore to say he wants a celebration for tonight. Angle doesn't think so but once he can understand Enzo, he agrees to the idea. This is Enzo's first title so Angle asks if he'd like some advice from a Hall of Famer. Enzo: "Nah."

Seth Rollins brings Dean a bag of ice for his shoulder. Dean is still going to be at ringside for Rollins vs. Sheamus later. Seth is going to go request a match with Strowman for next week.

Here's Alexa Bliss for a chat. She considers all of the fans her friends and she has to be honest with them: she is VERY disappointed with each and every single one of them. This morning she got up and looked at some messages about her title win but everything was about Sasha, Bayley or Asuka. Alexa has cleaned out the entire women's division but here's Mickie James to interrupt.

Mickie brings up Alexa insulting her on Raw Talk after last night's show. Alexa says she's been watching her since she was a little girl and Mickie was even on her top eight on MySpace. There are still some fans who say Mickie still has it but she's worried about Mickie breaking a hip. Mickie brags about all the barriers and hearts she's broken since Alexa was still in a training bra. Mickie: "And that seems to still be working for you." Alexa calls her an old lady and gets slapped in the face, followed by a superkick for good measure.

Seth Rollins vs. Sheamus

Cesaro, even without the teeth, is here too. Sheamus throws him into the corner to start but gets sent shoulder first into the opposite post for his efforts. That means a suicide dive from Rollins, only to get caught in an Irish Curse back inside. Sheamus bends Seth's knee around his neck before getting two off a sitout powerbomb. After a Cloverleaf doesn't get him very far, Sheamus kicks the head out of Rollins' jaw for two. The Brogue Kick misses though and Rollins grabs the wind-up knee for the pin at 4:12.

Rating: C. This didn't have time to do much and felt like leftovers from last night's great match. Rollins winning makes sense when he's facing Strowman next week, though I'd like to see Rollins get back into the World Title scene. Of course, again, we need a champion around to fight and apparently we can't do that for a few months now. Eh I'm sure this won't be a problem whatsoever.

Balor comes up to Goldust, who isn't cool with Balor taking shots at him. Goldust didn't ask for nor does he need Balor's help. Finn apologizes but Goldust hits him in the face and beats him up anyway.

Video on Reigns vs. Cena. After last night's loss, Cena talked about his role changing in WWE and how much of a weight it felt like was being lifted off his shoulders when he lost. He's not sure he can continue at this pace and while he's not done, he's transitioning.

Miz vs. Roman Reigns

Non-title. Reigns pops him in the jaw to start and knocks Miz outside

without too much effort. Miz stays on the floor long enough to get Reigns to chase him, allowing a few shots as he gets back in. An Axel cheap shot lets Miz boot him in the face and we hit a chinlock. Reigns powers out but gets taken down by the Miztourage again.

Back in and Miz scores with the running corner dropkicks but Reigns pulls him out of the air with a Samoan drop. Yet another Miztourage distraction lets Miz get in the running clothesline and the YES Kicks. Reigns has finally had it and punches everyone in the face, setting up the apron dropkick. Axel offers ANOTHER distraction though and Miz's short DDT is good for two. Not that it matters as Reigns spears him down for the pin at 9:50.

Rating: C. They weren't exactly hiding what they were going for here and you can see the post-match stuff from here. However, as usual, they have no reason to have Miz job here when they could have just done a DQ. But hey, we can add Miz and the Intercontinental Title to things Reigns has conquered to the same level of reaction. Have I mentioned I'm REALLY not ok with the ending to last night's match?

Reigns tries to fight off the trio but gets laid out with a chair. The Miztourage goes to leave but comes back for some more shots, including another big one with the chair. They throw in the Shield pose to really make this one clear.

Goldust vs. Finn Balor

Goldust goes straight after him and sends Balor shoulder first into the post. Balor gets dropped onto the barricade and we take a break. Back with Goldust holding a waistlock and kicking Balor in the ribs. Balor kicks him down and stomps away, followed by the Sling Blade and the Coup de Grace for the pin at 7:24.

Rating: D+. This was as good as Finn Balor vs. Goldust was going to be. Not that I'm complaining about seeing Goldust getting some time at this stage in his career but it's not like there's any real reason to believe Balor was in any real danger here. Balor needs something to do that isn't Bray Wyatt but who else is he supposed to feud with at the moment?

Post match Bray's lights come on and what sounds like a kid sings He's Got The Whole World In His Hands. Yes, this is actually continuing for whatever reason they have this time.

Bayley and Sasha Banks are in the back before their tag match later. Bayley apologizes for costing her the title last night but says she wants to win it herself. Banks seems cool with that.

Enzo receives a no contract rule for his celebration, saying if any cruiserweight attacks him they can't have a future title shot. Angle finds him very annoying.

Emma/Nia Jax vs. Bayley/Sasha Banks

Nia and Bayley start things off with the monster knocking Banks off the apron and flattening Bayley with a clothesline. Back from a break with Nia cranking on Bayley's arm and sitting on it for good measure (Graves: "That won't just separate your shoulder. That will divorce it!"). Bayley finally kicks Emma away, sending her right into Nia. The hot tag brings in Banks to clean house with some bad dropkicks and a Regal Cutter to Emma. Everything breaks down and Nia gets double teamed on the floor, including a good posting from Bayley. Back in and the Bayley to Belly puts Emma away at 8:35.

Rating: C-. You know, at some point Nia has to actually win something and stop getting taken down every single time. At this point we're just waiting for Asuka though as she's going to be a complete game changer for the entire division. The match wasn't bad or anything but Bayley and Banks vs. Emma isn't exactly in doubt.

Here's Enzo for the closing segment. He says that it wasn't a dream and first of all it's time to talk about his morning. This morning, he woke up and looked at the title, which made him start reflecting. Over the last few months, there have been more than a cuppa haters. Those people were jealous, just like his former partner Big Cass. From the looks of Cass' knee, Enzo was the one holding him up. He's heard the YOU CAN'T WRESTLE chants and now it's time to retire his jersey.

Enzo pulls a sheet off a framed Certified G jersey and says that he's

done the impossible by making 205 Live relevant. This brings out the majority of the cruiserweight division and Enzo starts cracking jokes. Rich Swann is a bad dancer, Cedric Alexander is the man that charisma forgot, Gran Metalik has a big gut, Gulak's gear looks stupid...and here's Neville to cut him off, again looking like a zombie after he lost the title the last time.

Neville rips on Enzo for making everyone around him miserable. Enzo has been tormenting the entire roster for a year and now he's been dumped on the cruiserweights' doorstep. He's done nothing but make a joke out of everything and now it's time to pay. Neville charges the ring but Enzo brings up the no contact clause.

Enzo says that this is the first time the cruiserweights have closed the show in the last nine months and it's because of his star power. He moves more merchandise than all of them combined so he'll see everyone tomorrow night on the Zo Show. Neville kicks him low and sends him through the jersey. Enzo tries to bail but the division cuts him off so the beating can continue. The contract is put into Enzo's mouth and Neville superkicks him to applause from his fellow cruiserweights. The Red Arrow ends the show.

Overall Rating: D+. There were some good things on this show but sweet goodness it died in the last hour. That's been the idea they've been trying in the last few weeks and it's actually not the worst move in the world. People aren't watching in the last hour so why bother wasting something bit when then audience isn't around? The lack of a big story is hurting things but I guess we're using the Shield reunion as a stopgap measure. Let me repeat that: the Shield reunion is a stopgap measure. That should sum up this show's problem in a nutshell.

Results

Matt Hardy/Jason Jordan b. Miztourage – Twist of Fate to Dallas

Elias b. Apollo Crews – Drift Away

Braun Strowman b. Dean Ambrose – Running powerslam

Seth Rollins b. Sheamus – Wind up knee

Roman Reigns b. Miz – Spear

Finn Balor b. Goldust – Coup de Grace

Sasha Banks/Bayley b. Emma/Nia Jax – Bayley to Belly to Emma

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205 Live – September 19, 2017: More Than One Way To Cruiser Some Weights

205 Live

Date: September 19, 2017

Location: Oracle Arena, Oakland, California

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Nigel McGuinness

It's the go home show for No Mercy and its one cruiserweight match. As usual it's for the Cruiserweight Title and as usual it's Neville defending the title. This time it's against Enzo Amore and they'll be

going face to face tonight. Other than that we have the fallout from Jack Gallagher turning heel to join Brian Kendrick last week. Let's get to it.

We look at Enzo's debut and rise to the top of 205 Live, despite the fans starting to sour on him at least a little bit. This also includes Braun Strowman attacking him last night and leaving Neville to pick the bones.

Opening sequence.

Cedric Alexander vs. Brian Kendrick

Kendrick tries an early boot but gets elbowed in the face to start, followed by a baseball slide for good measure. Back in and the springboard clothesline misses so Kendrick knees him in the face for two. A butterfly suplex sets up a chinlock on Cedric for a bit, followed by a Japanese armdrag to send him into the corner again. That means a straitjacket hold but Cedric fights up again and hits the springboard clothesline. Kendrick is right back up with a kick to the ribs and Sliced Bread #2, only to have Cedric reverse into a rollup for the pin at 5:27.

Rating: C-. Not bad here and Cedric winning was the right call. Cedric continues to be one of the best stars around here and a nice addition to any show. Kendrick and Gallagher could be a good heel tandem but Gulak seems to be the star instead of Kendrick, which isn't the biggest surprise in the world.

Post match Kendrick runs his mouth, allowing Gallagher to run in for the double beatdown.

Post break, Gallagher says he saw the scars on his face after his loss to Kendrick and realized he would rather be a winner than a joke.

Here's Drew Gulak, with new music (thank goodness) to complain about his time in fashion jail last week. Breezango will be hearing from his attorney, which happens to be him. That brings him to last week, where he was interrupted while explaining his vision for a better 205 Live. After comparing himself to Galileo (another genius whose brilliant theory was held down), we continue the PowerPoint presentation! Slide #6 (of 277): no cell phones! Cue Akira Tozawa to cut him off again though and it's

time for a match.

Noam Dar vs. Akira Tozawa

Gulak is on commentary and ripping on Titus O'Neil. Tozawa starts fast with the backplash but Dar kicks the legs out and starts working on the leg (Gulak: "NOW he has a reason to scream!"). Tozawa fights up without too much effort and sends Gulak outside for a suicide dive. A running European uppercut gives Dar two but an enziguri puts him right back down. The top rope backplash puts Dar away at 4:01.

Rating: D+. Too short to mean much here but it advanced the feud well enough and it's not like Dar means anything in the first place. Tozawa is still one of the top stars on the roster and can be used to make someone like Gulak, who hasn't had the most success. At least he has a character now and that could go somewhere if they use it properly.

We recap Rich Swann defeating TJP last week.

TJP congratulates Swann for the win last week and says they have great chemistry together. Swann agrees but thinks they'll get a bit too intense. He already has Lince Dorado tonight anyway, which TJP understands.

Rich Swann vs. Lince Dorado

And never mind as Dorado is laid out in the back. Swann goes to see what's up and gets taken out by TJP. He even rips out part of Swann's hair and drops him over the barricade.

Here's Neville for the big closing talk. He talks about this Sunday's card, which will include some big matches and one comedy match as he destroys Enzo Amore once and for all. Enzo thinks he's ready to step up to his world and it's time for Neville to knock him down. Cue Enzo with a taped up shoulder but Neville cuts him off, accusing Enzo of "spelling like a chicken".

Enzo thinks Neville is jealous, which Neville finds funny when he's better in every conceivable way. That's true actually, but Enzo is twice the superstar that Neville will ever be. The fans aren't sure what to

think of that so Enzo rants about all of his merchandise and hanging out with celebrities.

Neville is a big fish in a small pond and Enzo is the shark that's invaded the water. Neville doesn't care about any of that because Enzo just can't fight. Enzo says that's true and kicks Neville low to end the show. So to recap, Enzo says he can't wrestle and doesn't really care about winning things because it's all about making money and hanging with celebrities. And he's the good guy in this whole thing?

Overall Rating: D+. Not a great show this week but it sets up some stuff for the future. Above all else, there are multiple stories going on at the moment and it makes for some good stuff. I'm worried about Enzo winning the title as all signs seem to point to it, though I'm really not sure if they'll go through with it. I know it sounded great on paper for the last several months but sweet goodness it's not doing much for me in reality. This wasn't the best show but it laid some much needed ground work, which is much more important.

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Monday Night Raw – September 18, 2017: The Slow Lane

Monday Night Raw

Date: September 18, 2017

Location: SAP Center, San Jose, California

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Booker T.

It's the go home show for No Mercy and that means we should be in for a hard push towards Brock Lesnar vs. Braun Strowman. I say should be because it's not entirely clear if that's going to be the case or not due to Lesnar's limited appearances. What we will be having though is Alexa Bliss facing Nia Jax for the first time ever. Let's get to it.

In Memory of Bobby Heenan. If there's not a long video package on him tonight, be patient. WWE has a tendency to like to wait until they have the time to set these up.

Here's Kurt Angle to open things up. He talks about Sunday's two big matches but gets cut off by Miz and the Miztourage. Angle congratulates him on his upcoming fatherhood but Miz cuts him off to say he doesn't want to hear it. This is the second straight pay per view where the Intercontinental Title won't be on the line. Not so fast though as Angle has a fatal four way planned for tonight to crown a new #1 contender.

Tonight it's Jeff Hardy, Matt Hardy, Jason Jordan and Elias facing off to get a shot on Sunday. Miz rolls his eyes about Jordan being in the title picture and says it's only because he's Angle's son. They get in an argument about who is the better father but here's Jordan to interrupt. Jordan wants his shot but Miz insults Angle, triggering a brawl. Jason fights off the Miztourage without too much effort and the Angles/Jordans/whatever you call them stand tall.

Post break Jordan is frustrated but Angle gives him a pep talk, basically saying it's ok to not fight back every time someone brings him up. If Jordan wants to get back at Miz, go take his Intercontinental Title.

Alexa Bliss vs. Nia Jax

Non-title. Alexa bails to the floor to start before completely failing at a waistlock. Nia chokes her a bit and Bliss goes up the ramp, only to be cut off by Sasha Banks. Jax runs Bliss over again and we take a break. Back with Nia going shoulder first into the post and a dropkick staggering her again. Bliss' high crossbody gets countered into a Samoan drop for the pin at 6:39. Not enough to rate but this was a squash. I'm not wild on a champion being pinned clean but it fights the story perfectly in this case and is a lot more acceptable.

Sasha comes in and gets tossed down as well. Cue the returning Bayley (hometown girl) to help Sasha and Alexa clear Jax to the floor. Bliss celebrates with them and gets beaten down as well. Sasha and Bayley celebrate a bit.

The announcers plug the Network with the easiest sales pitch they can have: sign up for free for thirty days and you get two free pay per views. That really has seemed to be the big solution to so many of their problems.

Curtis Axel and Bo Dallas are now in the #1 contenders match.

We see some Tweets from wrestlers about Bobby Heenan's passing.

Long video on Brock Lesnar vs. Braun Strowman, featuring video from Brock Lesnar from 2002 talking about how dominant Lesnar truly is. This turns into a video on Lesnar's current run with Heyman talking about how no one can conquer him. Then it's clips of Strowman manhandling Lesnar at Summerslam and laying him out multiple times. This turns into a more traditional look at the match with Heyman talking about how Lesnar isn't used to facing someone bigger or stronger than he is. The question comes down to whether or not Strowman is bad enough to take down the baddest man in the world.

Here are Sheamus and Cesaro for a chat before a match. Sheamus talks about the love of nostalgia and thinks it's kind of boring. You have the people wrapping themselves up in the blanket of the Hardys and pretending it's the good old days. They destroy nostalgia acts and you can ask the

Hardys for proof of those things. Cesaro says nostalgia will fade soon enough, just like the nostalgia for this reunion between Seth Rollins and Dean Ambrose. They'll be there to take the Tag Team Titles when the team falls apart because they are the bar.

Cue Ambrose and Rollins to call Cesaro and Sheamus a cross between Braveheart and Taxi Driver. Ambrose says they're brothers and sometimes brothers fight, but they would never let a brother leave the house dressed like that. Now it's Anderson and Gallows to say they're the good brothers. They call the champs nerds and that's a bit too much for Ambrose. No one calls him a nerd and the brawl is on. Ambrose and Rollins clean house without too much effort.

Asuka is coming.

Seth Rollins/Dean Ambrose vs. Cesaro/Sheamus vs. Anderson and Gallows

Non-title and one fall to a finish. Sheamus and Gallows slug it out for a good while before Seth springboards in with a clothesline. Ambrose and Rollins double team Sheamus until Sheamus runs Rollins over. It's off to Cesaro, who swings Ambrose into the barricade to take over.

Gallows drops a series of elbows until Ambrose rolls away, allowing the hot tag to Rollins. Everything breaks down and Seth's sunset powerbomb gets two. Ambrose breaks up a double powerbomb on Rollins and the Magic Killer gets two on Seth with Dean making another save. Back from a break with Cesaro knocking Rollins off the apron and into the barricade. We hit the chinlock for a bit before a 3D of all things gets two.

Back up and Seth sends Sheamus into the post, followed by a tornado DDT on Cesaro. The hot tag brings in Ambrose for a superplex on Anderson, followed by the top rope elbow. Ambrose and Rollins hit back to back suicide dies and everyone is down. Sheamus makes a blind tag right before Ambrose hits Dirty Deeds on Anderson. That's enough for Sheamus to slide in and steal the pin at 18:47.

Rating: B-. Good match but the usual problems abound. These matches just keep going because there's no one else for the teams to face and there's no reason for them to continue otherwise. Couple that with I'm supposed

to be interested in seeing them fight again just six days after they fought here. Not that it matters as they'll likely be fighting again the next month because they don't have anyone else to slide into the spots. Give us something fresh, even if it's for a month or so.

Miz gives Miztourage a pep talk but they're not thrilled. Dallas cites his history of giving motivational speeches and Axel talks about his family's history with the Intercontinental Title. Miz doesn't seem thrilled but wishes them luck.

Video on...the first Money in the Bank match at Wrestlemania XXI. Uh, sure?

Video on Roman Reigns vs. John Cena, focusing on how they were both prospects and rose up the ranks in a hurry. Cena was the guy and now Reigns wants to be the guy. Reigns doesn't like Cena being a part timer who gets all the credit for what Reigns does while Cena basically says Reigns can't fill his boots.

Goldust is in Angle's office without face paint. He wants one more shot with Bray Wyatt and he's asking as Dustin Rhodes. Angle gives in and grants the match.

Curt Hawkins is in the ring to say the Star Factory is closed. Instead it's the Curt Hawkins History Machine and tonight, his losing streak comes to an end.

Curt Hawkins vs. Apollo Crews

How sad is it that I knew it was going to be Crews because I knew this was the kind of spot he would be in? Hawkins takes him down and grabs a chinlock, followed by a rollup with trunks for two. The enziguri into the toss powerbomb ends Hawkins at 2:19. That's 116 losses in a row for Hawkins.

Lesnar and Strowman have a sitdown interview (in different places). Heyman doesn't think much of Lesnar being the underdog because that was the case when he conquered the Streak. Strowman is confident because he's destroyed people before and will do so again. Heyman talks about Lesnar

not being able to train for Strowman because there's no one like him.

Last week Strowman popped up from a German suplex so this Sunday, Lesnar will just have to take him to Suplex City all night long. Strowman doesn't care because he's in charge no matter what. Heyman goes into his usual speech about Lesnar's accomplishments but Lesnar cuts him off. He thanks Strowman for challenging him because that's when he's at his best. He'll see Strowman on Sunday in Suplex City.

Notice the difference between this and Reigns vs. Cena. Strowman has gotten one up on Lesnar and Brock seems like he has to go up a level on this one. It makes you wonder if Strowman's dominance will hold up or if Lesnar has that extra gear in him. That's an interesting story.

On the other hand you have Cena shutting Reigns down every time. Cena is the bigger star in the fans' eyes and hasn't seemed to break a sweat in this whole build. Reigns is completely overmatched by Cena on the mic but they've stuck him out there anyway. That's a very key difference and a rather dumb one at that.

Strowman can hang with Lesnar in the power/physical department so they've focused on that instead. Notice how short Strowman's statements were here. They didn't have time to expose his weaknesses and the actions from last week (popping up from the suplex and laying out Lesnar) spoke for themselves. Reigns and Cena haven't gotten physical for the most part and that doesn't make sense. Reigns is capable of keeping up with Cena in the heavyweight slugfest but they've focused on Reigns' talking and charisma, where not only is he not great in the first place but he's completely outclassed by Cena.

It's a completely different way of presenting the feuds and one of them is working a lot better than the others because it's been crafted to the participants' strengths and weaknesses.

Bayley has been added to the four way on Sunday, which is now a fatal

five way.

Here's Roman Reigns for a chat as this show is allergic to actual wrestling. Reigns gets booed but he thinks this should get booed anyway. Some people think Cena is the best talker of all time but sometimes he says some stupid s***. People have been talking about Reigns being the next Cena but he's not a white guy with a military crew cut. If he was, he wouldn't have a job here. If you don't believe that, just ask Alex Riley.

Reigns calls Cena a fake guy and shows us a clip from five years ago with Cena talking about Rock being a part timer who keeps bailing to Hollywood. Reigns asks if Cena should come out here and brings up the loss to Rock at Wrestlemania. Roman will see San Jose next time and says he'll see Cena on Sunday, movie star. This was FAR better from Reigns as he actually made a point and told a story (Reigns is the guy that Cena claimed to be and actually backs it up by being here) while also not having Cena (a far better talker than Reigns could ever hope to be) cutting him down every few seconds.

The Hardys talk about fighting each other for years so tonight isn't the biggest change in the world. Some mild tension is teased but they're cool with each other.

Asuka is coming.

Bray Wyatt vs. Dustin Rhodes

Dustin cleans house to start and hammers away in the corner before taking him outside for some whips into various objects. A bulldog on the floor has Bray in more trouble but he headbutts his way out of trouble. Back in and Goldust kicks at the leg, only to charge into Sister Abigail for the pin at 2:36. Bray barely had any offense.

Finn Balor pops up on screen and talks about growing up reading stories. Finn grew up to become a man who created a Demon, just like the ones he grew up reading about. If the Demon is the creation of a man, how dangerous does that make the man? Bray is going to find out at No Mercy.

More Tweets on Heenan.

The announcers talk about Heenan's greatness and legacy.

We get the big tribute to Heenan, including material all the way back from his AWA days. Thankfully we get a long sequence on his stuff with Gorilla Monsoon from Prime Time Wrestling, which is still some of the funniest stuff you'll ever see. His timing was absolutely perfect and some of those jokes were WAY too funny to be on a wrestling show.

Here's Enzo Amore to talk about the upcoming Cruiserweight Title match but Strowman comes out to maul him. A chokeslam and the powerslam crush Enzo and make Strowman all the more popular. Strowman leaves and here's Neville to add the Red Arrow for good measure. Neville: "HOW YOU DOIN?????"

Post break Enzo says he can compete with Neville on Sunday and is taking that title.

Neville vs. Gran Metalik

Cole: "Corey do you think Enzo has a chance on Sunday?" Graves: "Nope." Metalik gets in a dropkick to start and walks the ropes for a second one. They head outside with Neville getting in a kick to the chest and RIPPING THE MASK apart, with Metalik's face being exposed for a few seconds. Back in and Metalik kicks him in the face, followed by another springboard dropkick. A running springboard flip dive takes Neville down and a rope walk splash (not a crossbody Cole) gets two. Metalik's moonsault hits knees though and the Rings of Saturn is good for the submission at 3:24.

Rating: C+. This worked quite well with Neville showing some viciousness but the Enzo match is like Shelton Benjamin diving into Shawn Michaels' superkick. If he really is the best thing they can do for the division, then just get rid of the thing already. Enzo is getting more annoying by the week (if that's possible) and I'm really not looking forward to hearing him brag about being champion for the next eight months.

It's Hispanic Heritage Month so here's a video on Jennifer Lopez.

Here's Elias to sing his song about how horrible his opponents are, just

like everyone here in San Jose.

Elias vs. Jeff Hardy vs. Matt Hardy vs. Bo Dallas vs. Curtis Axel vs. Jason Jordan

One fall to a finish with Miz watching on the floor. It's a brawl to start with Jeff rolling Matt up for two to send us to an early break. Back with Elias in control until Jordan gets in a right hand. That's fine with Elias who jumps from the mat to the top, only to have the Miztourage shove him off. The Hardys come in for a Tower of Doom, drawing Elias back in to try and steal the pins.

Poetry in Motion hits Elias but Jeff walks into a Side Effect for two. Jordan starts cleaning house until Dallas sends him outside. Miz tosses Jordan over the barricade as the Hardys start working over Elias inside. Jeff's legdrop between the legs sets up the Swanon for two on Axel with Miz making the save. The distraction lets the Axhole plant Jeff, only to have Jordan come in with the wheelbarrow neckbreaker for the pin and the title shot at 11:46.

Rating: C. Total chaos for the most part here but it's amazing to see how much easier it is to sit through Jordan's super push than Reigns' was. It's almost like giving him time to grow into his singles role instead of just throwing him into the World Title picture is a really good idea. Jordan's matches have been good so far and it's reasonable to see him winning the Intercontinental Title. Do that instead of pushing him to the moon and it might actually work.

Miz and the Miztourage destroy Jordan and call him out for his, shall we say, questionable parentage to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. This show was kind of all over the place but they made do with what they could considering the lack of a live Lesnar or Cena in general. They did a good enough job at hyping up No Mercy, which is the entire point of this show. However, the wrestling wasn't exactly strong and that makes for a dull show. The first hour and a half was really weak but it picked up the pace a lot down the stretch, which was what mattered most. Not a terrible show, but it was dull for some long stretches.

Results

Nia Jax b. Alexa Bliss – Samoan drop

Cesaro/Sheamus b. Anderson and Gallows and Seth Rollins/Dean Ambrose – Dirty Deeds to Anderson

Apollo Crews b. Curt Hawkins – Toss powerbomb

Bray Wyatt b. Dustin Rhodes – Sister Abigail

Jason Jordan b. Bo Dallas, Curtis Axel, Jeff Hardy, Matt Hardy and Elias – Wheelbarrow neckbreaker to Axel

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205 Live – September 5, 2017: If You Don't Like It...At

Least There's Not Many Of You

205 Live

Date: September 5, 2017

Location: Denny Sanford Premiere Center, Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Vic Joseph

It's a big night here as we have a new commentator to replace Corey Graves, but more importantly we have a fatal five way for the #1 contendership to the Cruiserweight Title. The survivor of tonight's main event will be facing Neville for the title at No Mercy 2017 in what could be a very interesting match depending who gets the show. Let's get to it.

All five of the participants in the five way (Cedric Alexander, Tony Nese, Enzo Amore, Brian Kendrick and Gran Metalik) say they'll win.

Opening sequence.

TJP vs. Ariya Daivari

Rich Swann, with popcorn in hand, comes out for commentary. By that I mean he puts a chair on the table and has a seat. Daivari takes advantage of the distraction and stomps away in the corner, only to have TJP swing through the ropes to avoid falling to the floor. Back in and a kick to the leg ties TJP in the Tree of Woe, allowing Daivari to grab a reverse DDT for two.

We hit the double arm crank for a bit before TJP hits the spinning spring forearm into the nipup. They finally head outside with Daivari glaring at Swann for no apparent reason (must be a popcorn hater). Daivari misses the frog splash and gets caught with the Detonation Kick for the pin at 4:10.

Rating: D+. Just a step above a squash here as TJP vs. Swann continues. They're likely setting up a big blowoff match though I'm not sure how interesting that really is. There's no real hatred between the two of them and it's just likely to be a good match rather than an interesting one.

Post match Swann tells TJP he wants a match next week and throws in a dab.

We look back at last week's No DQ match with Kendrick beating Jack Gallagher to a bloody pulp.

Here's Drew Gulak for a chat before his match. After the CAPTAIN UNDERPANTS chant, Gulak talks about not being pleased with being left out of the main event. To explain his issues, he's got a PowerPoint presentation! He has a plan for a better 205 Live, starting with #1: no jumping off the top rope. Point #2: no jumping off the middle rope. #3: never mind as it's time for a match.

Drew Gulak vs. Akira Tozawa

I guess Tozawa is more of a notepad guy. Gulak headlocks him down to start before a dropkick sends Drew bailing to the corner. Tozawa follows him out but gets sent hard into the barricade as Gulak is being far more aggressive here than usual. A bow and arrow hold stays on Tozawa's back before a bottom rope stomp to the back (not the top or the middle mind you) keeps him down. Tozawa fights up and sends him outside for the suicide dive. A rollup gives Drew a breather, only to have Tozawa kick him in the head. The top rope backsplash gives Tozawa the pin at 6:39.

Rating: B-. Gulak was WAY better than usual here, partially due to some extra aggression. Or maybe because he had an upgraded opponent with Tozawa, who is certainly better than most of the cruiserweights with the resume to back it up. I liked this one quite a bit and again, if Gulak gets enough of a push, he could be something around here.

Enzo Amore says he has the gift of gab and will work "shmarker" to win the title shot tonight. Neville comes in to say he still doesn't think much of Enzo. Amore promises to win the title at No Mercy. Why are we bothering with the five way again?

Cedric Alexander vs. Tony Nese vs. Enzo Amore vs. Gran Metalik vs. Brian Kendrick

Elimination rules for the title shot at No Mercy. Everyone looks at Enzo

so he hits the floor, which should already tell you how this match is going to end. Cedric launches Metalik into a double dropkick to send both villains outside, leaving Alexander and Metalik to jump over each other. Metalik walks the ropes to dropkick Cedric but Nese pulls Gran outside for a staredown with Cedric.

That's fine with Alexander who scores with a dropkick as everyone else continues to vanish for long stretches at a time. You can still hear Enzo running his mouth though, just in case you were worried about his absence. Nese catches Cedric in a backbreaker but Enzo runs in to roll Tony up for two. Kendrick suplexes Enzo to the floor and FINALLY gets back in the ring to help Nese double team Enzo. You know, the real threat in this match.

A double superkick knocks Enzo outside so it's Metalik and Alexander diving back in. Cedric catches Metalik in a C4 to put everyone down. Alexander heads up top and of course that means it's a Tower of Doom with everyone not named Enzo involved, including Metalik adding a sunset bomb to really add some impact. Enzo's dive onto Kendrick and Nese is pulled out of the air and he's tossed over the announcers' table for a crash. Kendrick decks Nese from behind, setting a new record for fastest broken alliance.

Metalik dives onto Kendrick and we get the ultra rare (as in probably for the first time ever) 205 chant. Back in and Cedric hits a quick Lumbar Check to get rid of Nese and get us down to four. Metalik tries a handspring but dives right into another Lumbar Check to make it three (note that Alexander missed most of it but got a very deep cover to make up for it in a nice touch). Kendrick comes in with Sliced Bread and the Captain's Hook but Cedric FINALLY makes the rope for the break. The third Lumbar Check is good for the third elimination...and here's Enzo to roll Cedric up with a handful of trunks for the pin at 14:48.

Rating: B. This was exactly what you would expect. It's still entertaining but Enzo is the most recent obvious winner in the history of obvious winners and there's....well there probably is something wrong with that but I think you get the idea at this point. Alexander was really shining here and while I still think he would have been a great choice to

face Neville for the title, it's clearly Amore's time and there's no reason to not give him the shot.

Overall Rating: B-. I'm not sure what else you were expecting here as we move full steam ahead into the Enzo Amore era. The old system didn't work so this is probably the right course. You won't like this if you were a fan of the focus being on the in-ring product but it's not like many people were watching it in the first place. These changes were required and there's just no way around it.

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205 Live – August 29, 2017: Proof That It's Working

205 Live

Date: August 29, 2017

Location: Verizon Arena, Little Rock, Arkansas

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Corey Graves

We're officially in the Enzo Amore Era on 205 Live and that makes me

think doing my own dental surgery sounds like a good idea. It's pretty clear that Enzo is going to be the next big challenger to Neville and the title, which actually gives me a mixed reaction. He's already the biggest star on the show but that means he's around more often and egads that sounds like torture. Let's get to it.

The opening recap looks at Brian Kendrick vs. Jack Gallagher and the buildup to their No DQ match tonight.

Opening sequence.

The announcers chat for a bit.

Brian Kendrick vs. Jack Gallagher

No DQ and Gallagher is in street clothes. Kendrick says he's a fighter as Gallagher stands perfectly still. They stare each other down for the better part of a minute before Jack uppercuts him into the corner and scores with a headbutt. Gallagher even breaks an umbrella over Kendrick's back to put him outside as the violence starts cranking up. Some hard shots to Brian's face sets up a whip through some equipment cases.

The beating knocks Kendrick down the aisle as Gallagher looks completely calm the entire time. It's almost eerie really. Kendrick gets thrown onto the announcers' table for some hard right hands to the head. The announcers' table is loaded up but Kendrick comes up with a kendo stick to the ribs.

Brian sends him into the steps before tying Jack's foot in the wires underneath the ring skirt. Now it's time for the beating with the stick and Jack is busted open pretty badly. We stop for the medic to tend to Gallagher's head and Kendrick has to stand around for a bit. Kendrick drops him with a DDT onto the bell and puts on the Captain's Hook with the stick for the submission (though Gallagher is out) at 7:30.

Rating: C+. This needed more time but there's a good chance that it was cut off due to the cut. It was nice while it lasted though and showed a different side of Gallagher, which he really needs to show. At the same time you need to have Kendrick get a bigger win once in awhile as him

putting everyone over isn't going to work forever. Good brawl, cut short by time.

Noam Dar, Drew Gulak and Tony Nese are ready for the six man tag tonight. Dar insists that he beat himself for having a bit too much fun the night before. Gulak thinks Enzo is going to tarnish the 205 Live. He believe in a better 205 Live and you can bet your bojangles that Enzo isn't going to be a part of that. Nese says Enzo isn't on his level.

Rich Swann vs. Ariya Daivari

TJP, still on crutches, is out for commentary. Daivari dedicates this to another Iranian wrestler. They fight over a wristlock to start with Swann dancing/nipping up to escape. Swann's front flip into a dropkick gets two but Daivari starts in on the back. TJP talks about how he and Swann are both former champions.

The fact that he had to beat five people to become champion while Swann only beat one is just a detail. Swann's running flip Fameasser gets two and something like Rolling Thunder gets the same. They head outside with Daivari getting the better of it and stealing TJP's crutch, only to get small packaged for the pin at 4:08.

Rating: D+. Angle advancement instead of much of a match here as TJP vs. Swann continues. You know they're heading to a big match down the line, even if it isn't likely to mean anything. Well, at least until Enzo becomes the Cruiserweight Champion to turn the whole thing into a big comedy act.

Post match Daivari goes after TJP, who fights back with a variety of kicks and his knee appearing just fine. Swann watches all this in disbelief before handing TJP his crutch and leaving. TJP hits Daivari with the Detonation Kick.

Enzo comes in to see Cedric Alexander and Gran Metalik, offering some coaching tips on a dry erase board. Alexander says this isn't the same as Raw and the two of them have more experience. This turns into a discussion of Enzo's mother's cooking and Gran Metalik being named Pepper Jack. He's really not going to be able to stay a face long, or at least

he shouldn't.

Drew Gulak/Noam Dar/Tony Nese vs. Enzo Amore/Cedric Alexander/Gran Metalik

Before the match, Enzo calls this the realest in-ring debut in the history of 205 Live. Drew looks like Captain Underpants and Nese works at Chippendale's. Enzo and Gulak start things off with Drew imitating the dance. It's not like it's hard to make fun of. Gulak starts talking trash as he cranks on an armbar, sending Enzo bailing to the corner. There's no tag though so a front facelock takes Enzo down again.

Now it's off to Alexander as Neville is shown watching from the back. Tony comes in to pose a bit but Cedric speeds things back up into a headscissors and dropkick to take over. It's back to Enzo to eat a dropkick as the heels take over for the first time. A Downward Spiral gets Enzo out of trouble but everything breaks down with Metalik and Alexander hitting (well maybe as the camera went down too) stereo dives.

That leaves Nese to run Enzo over before he can dive (Corey: "I think, in a roundabout way, Tony Nese just saved Enzo's life.") and mocks the dance as well. Just in case you needed any more proof that Enzo is the star of this show and everyone else is chasing him. Cedric springboards in with a clothesline but gets sent outside so Gulak and Nese can hammer away while Enzo has the referee for reasons of general stupidity.

Cedric fights out of a chinlock and hits the handspring enziguri for a breather. The hot tag brings in Metalik for a superkick to Nese and the rope walk dropkick. Gulak saves Nese from a Swanton so Alexander takes Drew down, allowing for the hot tag off to Enzo. Eat Defeat (now the Jordunzo because of course it is) drops Dar (I had forgotten he was in this match) and a rollup with feet on the ropes pins Nese at 9:48.

Rating: C-. I'm not sure how to take this. For one thing I've talked for the better part of a year now about how I thought Enzo as a cheating cruiserweight would be great but sweet goodness now it's actually happening. The character in this form has a short shelf life but if they put the title on him and make him the Honky Tonk Man of the division, he'll be fine.

Here's the way you can tell it's working at the moment though: when else have I ever talked about someone on 205 Live this much? As you knew he would be, Enzo is instantly the biggest personality on the show and draws the most attention. If they could find some more people like him, this show could take off a bit more. As it is, it's Enzo, Neville and everyone else a few miles beneath them.

The winners dance to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. This show flew by and that's one of the better things you can say about 205 Live. They don't have the most interesting stories in the world but if they get in, do their stuff and get out, it's quite the entertaining way to kill most of an hour. The No DQ match was good and TJP vs. Swann is kind of interesting, though it would be nice if any of this stuff was going to mean anything. If Enzo gets the title though, those people will be getting a lot more attention in a hurry. Fine show this week though nothing worth going out of your way to see.

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205 Live – August 22, 2017: It Was The Best of Times and the Worst of Times at the Same Time

205 Live

Date: August 22, 2017

Location: Barclays Center, New York City, New York

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Corey Graves

For the first time in a long time we have a big time main event on 205 Live with Neville defending the Cruiserweight Title against Akira Tozawa for the third time in eight days. I'm sure the rest of the division being completely worthless and that being more and more a reality every single week has no connection whatsoever. Let's get to it.

We look at the previous two matches between Neville and Tozawa which set up tonight's rubber match (assuming you don't count the previous matches of course).

Opening sequence.

Cedric Alexander/Gran Metalik vs. Tony Nese/Drew Gulak

Rematch from last week. On the way to the ring, Nese rips on the crowd for never hitting the gym. Nese and Alexander start things off with Tony grabbing a rollup but walking into a dropkick to stagger him all over the place. It's off to Gulak who gets forearm square in the jaw before Metalik comes in some loud spot calling and a handspring backflip.

Gulak pops him square in the jaw to take over as Joseph offers some nice analysis by pointing out Drew's hypocrisy of criticizing high fliers for showing off and then teaming with a showoff like Nese. It's a good point and a nice catch. Metalik avoids a baseball slide from Nese and moonsaults down onto them in an impressive bit of timing. Back in and

Nese loads Metalik into the Tree of Woe for the Full Contact Cardio but Alexander is smart enough to move his partner out of the way before anything can start.

Metalik comes back with a high crossbody to set up the hot tag to Alexander as things speed up. The springboard clothesline gets two on Gulak as everything breaks down. Cedric launches Metalik into a dropkick on Gulak, followed by a springboard splash for two more. Stereo flip dives take the heels out again and it's the Lumbar Check to put Gulak away at 7:42.

Rating: B. These guys were FEELING IT here and they had a heck of a match as a result. I was having a great time with this one and they barely stopped the whole time. Metalik is a guy who I like more every time I see him and Alexander is still one of the top performers on the roster. Not that it's going to lead him anywhere but at least he's getting in good matches like this one.

Titus O'Neil gives Akira Tozawa a pep talk before his title match tonight. Titus: "Now give me two claps and a Ric Flair!"

Here's Jack Gallagher for his gentleman's duel with Brian Kendrick. Jack explains the idea behind the duel but says he hasn't been very gentlemanly as of late. Sometimes though, people just rub you the wrong way and you have to knock them out. If Kendrick is so afraid of what Gallagher can do with his fists, just imagine what he can do with the selection of weapons in the ring.

Kendrick pops up on screen and laughs off the idea because only a clown would have a duel. He's found Jack a suitable opponent though and here's an actual clown. The clown sprays Jack with water (Fans: "KILL THE CLOWN! STUPID IDIOT!") and gets beaten down for his efforts. Cue Kendrick from behind to attack Gallagher with an umbrella and powerbomb him through the table. Kendrick also issues a challenge for a No DQ match next week. This was long and bad as the clown stuff is really being forced into the whole thing. Just have them fight and be done with it already.

We look back at Rich Swann vs. Ariya Daivari from last week with TJP coming out on crutches to distract Swann to cost him the match.

TJP is playing video games in the back with his leg in a cast (Why did he show up tonight?) when Swann comes in asking for an explanation. It turns out that TJP hurt his knee in their match two weeks ago and was just coming out to see Swann win. TJP is willing to settle this with Swann if Rich can beat Daivari, presumably next week.

Cruiserweight Title: Akira Tozawa vs. Neville

Neville is defending. They start slowly with Neville working on the arm until Tozawa chops him against the rope. Oh yeah they've got a lot of time to use here. A headlock takes Tozawa down again before switching to a cravate. How British of him. The fans chant a rather rude term at Neville before neither guy can hit a kick to the ribs.

They trade some hard strikes as this is mostly even in the first few minutes. Neville snaps the bad shoulder across the top rope and it's time for a hammerlock with the leg. A dropkick to the shoulder puts Tozawa on the floor and a gorgeous moonsault takes him down again. The referee has to check on the shoulder but Tozawa says he can keep going. Neville sends him into various things but gets dropkicked off the top for a comeback.

The suicide dive connects and Tozawa snaps off a belly to back for two. Neville comes back with the superplex but Tozawa interlocks the legs into a small package for two more. I've always loved that spot, especially when it looks natural. Neville is up first with something like a sitout F5 and a heck of a kick to the head for two.

Back up and Tozawa nails him in the jaw to floor the champ, followed by a running boot in the corner. We hit a pinfall reversal sequence before Tozawa kicks him in the head again. The top rope backsplash misses though and the Rings of Saturn retains the title at 16:11.

Rating: B. Another good performance between these two but I'm kind of sick of seeing it. I also have no idea what the point was of having Tozawa win and then lose the title so soon when they could have just had the second title change here. I mean other than filling the Summerslam card up as much as they can of course.

Post match Neville says Tozawa's title reign was pathetic and nothing

more than a footnote. Cue Enzo Amore (Graves: "VIC DID YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS???") for his usual promo and to say this is now the realest show in the room. Neville sneers at him and leaves so Enzo calls him sawft to end the show.

Where do I even begin? First of all, this sums up everything wrong with 205 Live. You have those four in the first match going nuts and having a great match but none of them are getting anywhere near the title picture because, presumably, they're not interesting enough. Heaven forbid they get promo time or vignettes or something to build interest in them, because obnoxious catchphrases and a lack of anything interesting in the ring makes you a more worthy challenger.

That's one of the biggest problems around here and a great example of why the show isn't necessary: you have the champion, the title contenders (as in all two of them) and then EVERYONE else who comes off like they're several notches below two or three people at most. Even former champions like TJP and Rich Swann feel like they're miles beneath Neville and Tozawa. Enzo isn't going to be any better in that area as he's a glorified comedy guy most of the time.

That being said, Enzo is PERFECT for this show. He's instantly the biggest star on the roster and has more personality than the rest of the roster put together. It's also not like he has anything else to do on Raw now that Cass is on the shelf. He would never be seen as a physical threat to anyone on the show but there are some names here he could hang with. It's the right move for Enzo, but another example of why 205 Live doesn't work as a concept.

Overall Rating: B+. That's probably the best episode they've ever had though I have a bad feeling about where things are going. Enzo is going to become the focus of the show and since I wouldn't mind seeing him stampeded by a herd of wild buffalo, that might make things a bit hard to sit through. The rest of the show ranged from awesome to a clown show, which makes this a great week and a nice addition to a lot of the Brooklyn run.

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A Few Quick Raw Notes

Some are nicer than others. 1. Strowman vs. Lesnar is official for No Mercy. Freaking yay and the only way they could go.

2. Screw beach balls. Seriously, screw them. If you're that bored at a show, go do something else and quit messing with the fans who don't care about that nonsense.

3. It looks like Cass' injury is legit. There's no word on the severity but that would suck if he has to miss time. It also doesn't look good for Enzo either, as he doesn't have much else to do other than deal with Cass.

4. Again, screw beach balls and screw WWE for encouraging them.

Monday Night Raw – July 31, 2017: Hang On, We Have To Take A Break

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 31, 2017

Location: PPG Arena, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Booker T.

We're in Kurt Angle country tonight and it's already a stacked show. As announced last week, we'll be seeing Roman Reigns vs. Braun Strowman vs. Samoa Joe in a triple threat match, along with Jason Jordan appearing on MizTV. If that's not enough for you, Brock Lesnar is here too. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of last week's announcement of the four way for the Universal Title at Summerslam.

Opening sequence.

Here's Angle for the hero's welcome to open the show. Angle is glad to be here and runs down tonight's card. On a more personal note, it's twenty one years to the day that he won an Olympic gold medal WITH A BROKEN FREAKING NECK. He wouldn't be here without any of us and he thanks the fans before leaving...and here's Lesnar.

Heyman knows what Angle is up to and sees the "angle" that he's playing here. Kurt has to get the title from Lesnar so he put him into a four way with the most stacked heavyweight division in WWE history. There's the power of Strowman, the Undertaker slaying Reigns and the Samoan disgrace, the latter of whom Heyman thinks Angle favors.

Angle's bosses want to make sure that Lesnar loses the title so all three of the challenges are going to beat him down at once. Heyman thinks Angle has been told to pay the "ultimate" price so how about this: if Lesnar loses the title, he and Heyman are both gone from WWE. It won't matter

because Lesnar is going to be winning at Summerslam, whether Angle likes it or not.

Hardys vs. Anderson and Gallows

Revival is on commentary as we hear about the three way feud between these teams. Apparently Matt has been calling Dash an obsolete mule on Twitter. The brothers start in on Karl's arm with a variety of wristlock. House is quickly cleaned and Poetry in Motion to Gallows sends us to an early break.

Back with Jeff Twist of Fating his way out of trouble but Anderson breaks up the slowest crawl to a corner ever. Karl misses a charge though and Matt gets the hot tag to clean house. Another Twist is broken up and Gallows kicks Matt in the back of the head. Dash: "See, we would never fall for that." The Magic Killer is broken up and the Twist into the Swanton puts Gallows away at 9:09.

Rating: C. Not a bad match and the three way feud helps a bit, but I could still go for another face team besides just the Hardys. As long as this doesn't wind up with ANOTHER ladder match I'll be fine as the story isn't bad, but it could use a few tweaks to really make it work better.

Post match the Hardys get in a brawl with the Revival. Anderson and Gallows come up to the stage as well, only to have all four villains sent to the floor for a big dive from Jeff.

Renee Young asks Dean Ambrose if he's getting back together with Seth Rollins. Ambrose isn't sure but Rollins come up. Dean says the people might want it and even Dean does to a degree, but he's not getting burned again.

Post break Sheamus and Cesaro laugh at Seth for having no friends. He could even star in his own episode of Ride Along. Seth challenges either of them for tonight and Sheamus accepts.

Rich Swann/Cedric Alexander/Akira Tozawa vs. TJP/Ariya Daivari/Tony Nese

Only Tozawa gets an entrance. Cedric headscissors Nese around to start and snatches Ariya in an armdrag. Tozawa comes in and adds a backsplash

but Ariya goes after the bad arm to take over. Back with Daivari holding the bad arm in an armbar for a bit until the diving tag brings in Swann. House is cleaned and everything breaks down with Alexander and Swann busting out stereo dives to put Nese and Daivari down. Tozawa adds one of his own, leaving Swann to trade rollups with TJP. A big kick to the head sets up Tozawa's top rope backsplash for the pin at 8:48.

Rating: C. Not bad here, though Daivari continues to feel out of place with his really basic style compared to these high fliers. Tozawa is pretty clearly getting the next title shot against Neville, though I'm not sure he's going to be the guy to get the title off of him. Why Cedric can't get a shot isn't clear but it could make for a good story.

It's time for MizTV with the Miztourage out in full. Jason Jordan is brought out as the guest but Miz keeps cutting him off to ask about the fans booing Jordan. Jason says he's ok with the booing because he's just going to keep going. Miz likes the attitude and offers him a spot in the Miztourage. Jordan says thanks but he's good. We hear Miz's resume but Jordan passes again. That's cool with Miz, who thinks Jordan is cool with his dad handing him everything.

Jason would rather be chewed up and spit out than be associated with someone like Miz. That's not cool with Miz, who doesn't have to latch on to a different Olympian every week or rely on someone who was given a job out of pity. Jordan gets in Miz's face over the Kurt insults but Miz calls off the Miztourage. A charge at Jason is countered into a belly to belly, sending Miz straight into the Miztourage and Jordan bailing before he gets destroyed.

Good but not great stuff here from Jason, who is still finding his rhythm with the talking. Having him hit the one suplex and bail is a good idea as him cleaning house wouldn't have made the most sense. I could live with him winning the title, though a clean win over Miz would be a big stretch at this point.

Roman says tonight is about sending a message. No matter what those two do, the Big Dog isn't going anywhere. He's the only one who can beat Lesnar and tonight he's going to prove it.

Sheamus vs. Seth Rollins

Seth's music now features a voice screeching BURN IT DOWN. Just...no. I didn't like the song in the first place and that makes it even worse. Sheamus headlocks him down to start as the announcers compare their careers. A Cesaro distraction sends Seth outside though and Sheamus posts him to take us to an early break.

Back with Sheamus hitting a super Regal Roll for two, only to get sent face first into the middle buckle. An enziguri knocks Sheamus to the floor and there's the suicide dive. The Sling Blade sets up...a shot to knock Cesaro off the apron, followed by a rollup to put Sheamus away at 8:30.

Rating: C. I could go for these two having a longer high flier vs. power brawler match but as it is, this was just watchable. I don't think there's any secret to what's coming post match so the match was more along the lines of just a time filler to get to that point. Ambrose and Rollins vs. Sheamus and Cesaro should be fine at Summerslam but I hope we don't have a bunch of singles matches to get there.

The beatdown is on with Rollins being left laying. Ambrose FINALLY comes out for the save but takes a beating as well. Ambrose tells them to bring it so Cesaro beats him down some more.

Samoa Joe says he's been putting people to sleep for twenty years and that's what he'll do to Brock at Summerslam.

Video on a Special Olympian.

Here's Bray Wyatt for a chat. There is no escape for anyone, including Finn Balor. Everyone is held down by humanity's shackles, doing everything they can to deal with pain. You can't hide from him though because Bray Wyatt is everywhere. He's right there when the honest man tries to validate stealing and he's right there when everyone declares themselves as part of the Balor Club.

It's a sickness that makes everyone think their life can be special. People think they can be like Balor and rise from the ashes but Bray sees

Balor as the shell that he's always been. Bray laughs at this I CAN DO IT attitude and here's Balor, who appears behind Wyatt in the ring. Wyatt laughs at this as Balor poses with his back to Bray. An enziguri drops Bray to the floor and the brawl is on in a hurry. A dropkick sends Bray into the crowd and Balor stands tall without even taking off his jacket.

Strowman isn't like most men because he breaks things when he doesn't like people. Tonight he's turning Reigns into a pile of broken bones.

Roman Reigns vs. Braun Strowman vs. Samoa Joe

Strowman starts running both of them over in the early going, sending both of them out to the floor. Back with Strowman missing a charge and getting kicked in the head for his efforts. Joe kicks Strowman in the head and gets in a fight with Roman, who he pulls down into a Fujiwara armbar. The fight heads outside for a bit with Joe grabbing the Koquina Clutch on Strowman over the barricade.

Strowman is almost out but Joe lets go to fight Reigns inside. The Rock Bottom is broken up and Reigns loads up the Superman Punch, only to have Joe roll outside in a smart move. That's fine with Roman who hits the Superman Punch off the steps but Strowman is back up to block a spear with a big boot. Strowman LAUNCHES Reigns from the floor back inside but Joe gets in another kick.

The steps are put inside as Joe grabs the Clutch on Roman with Strowman making the save. There's the powerslam for two on Joe as Reigns has to make a save this time. Strowman is back up with the steps but a Superman Punch knocks them away. The steps knock Strowman outside and the spear ends Joe at 14:38.

Rating: B. I certainly don't think this means that Reigns wins at Summerslam but MY GOODNESS they have more guts than I thought if they actually go with that. Joe was the only option to eat the pin here (unfortunately) because you don't want Strowman losing more than he ever has to. Reigns winning is another attempt to troll the fans (in theory) but I'd really hope they don't mess this up at Summerslam.

We recap Big Cass vs. Big Show.

Enzo comes in to see Show and apologizes for getting him into this. Show says Cass needs to learn a lesson and he can teach that.

Here's Elias (yes just Elias now), who happens to be a hometown boy. He grew up here and it was the people of Pittsburgh that inspired him to write this song. Of course it rips on the town and its sports teams until Kalisto cuts him off for a match.

Elias vs. Kalisto

Elias starts fast and throws Kalisto to the floor for a break about a minute in because THAT'S HOW EVERY MATCH HAS TO GO NOW. Back with Elias holding a chinlock and booting Kalisto square in the mask. We hit an over the back backbreaker before Elias just drops him down. Kalisto gets in a few kicks and a springboard seated senton sets up the hurricanrana driver. He might have hurt his back though and it's a quick swinging neckbreaker (Drift Away) to give Elias the pin at 8:13.

Rating: D. Is it just me or has almost every match tonight followed the exact same formula, even down to the same time frame? Samson winning is a good thing though they actually had me believing they might pull the trigger on the upset. I'm still not sure what they're going to do with Elias but he's certainly being protected, at least a lot more than he was in NXT.

Alexa Bliss mocks Sasha Banks for the loss to Bayley last week. Banks isn't here tonight so there's no one to help Bayley against Nia Jax.

Rollins comes in to thank Ambrose for what he did but Dean still doesn't buy it. He knows Rollins wouldn't have done the same for him and walks off.

Bayley vs. Nia Jax

Nia throws her to the apron but Bayley slips back in and scores with a shot to the jaw. That just earns her a headbutt and an attempt at a powerslam. Nia slams her down hard and throws her outside for, say it with me, a break a little over a minute in. Back with Nia grabbing a double chickenwing and dropping Bayley flat on her face.

With Bayley on the floor, Nia throws her hair up in a side pony tail for a somewhat odd look. Bayley's arm is banged up but she's able to fight back with a bulldog and a dropkick. Another dropkick puts Nia on the floor and there's a crossbody from the apron. Cue Alexa for a failed distraction though and Nia goes into the steps for the countout at 8:39.

Rating: D+. As usual, WWE shows they have no idea how to use Bayley. Down in NXT, Bayley got over so strongly because they treated her like an underdog. Now on the main roster she's already had all those big moments (the title win, successful defense at Wrestlemania) and THEN lost to Bliss.

The problem though is instead of having her be the fallen hero who has to fight her way back to the top, she just started winning again and is suddenly in a huge match at a major show. Characters aside, that's poor storytelling. Outside of some videos on YouTube, we didn't ever hear Bayley talking about how she had to rise back up the card or how she had to get back to her roots or how devastated she was. It's Point A to Point D or so with nothing in between and that doesn't work.

Big Cass is ready to teach Show a lesson.

We recap MizTV.

Big Cass vs. Big Show

Before the match, Enzo says he'd rather eat a banana peel before he associates with Cass again. Show jumps Cass during the entrances and hammers away, including the loud chop in the corner. Cass can't whip him so Show sends him outside instead. It's too late for a break though so an elbow drop gives Show two. Cass starts taking out the leg though and it's off to a leglock. A big boot to the jaw just seems to wake Show up though and he chops Cass out of the air. Another big boot drops Show....and Enzo comes in for the DQ at 5:07.

Rating: D. What the heck was that? I guess we're setting up a handicap match at Summerslam, which could be a good win for Cass though I'm really not needing to see Enzo vs. Cass again. Cass has already proven himself over Enzo and there's no need to keep doing the same thing over and over

again.

Post match Cass throws Enzo down but walks into the KO Punch to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. The show really needed some variety and it was showing badly here. There were five matches that all ran within about 45 seconds of each other in time and each one featured a toss to the floor leading to a break about a minute to a minute and a half in. The other problem is that if they kind of ran out of stuff to do after the triple threat as the last hour or so really wasn't that interesting. They also need to start add some more stuff to the pay per view because the title matches are only going to carry them so far. Not a horrible show here but it REALLY needed to lose an hour or so.

Results

Hardys b. Anderson and Gallows – Swanton Bomb to Gallows

Rich Swann/Akira Tozawa/Cedric Alexander b. TJP/Ariya Daivari/Tony Nese – Top rope backsplash to TJP

Seth Rollins b. Sheamus – Rollup

Roman Reigns b. Samoa Joe and Braun Strowman – Spear to Joe

Elias b. Kalisto – Drift Away

Bayley b. Nia Jax via countout

Big Cass b. Big Show via DQ when Enzo Amore interfered

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Main Event – July 20, 2017: Finding Their Footing

Main Event

Date: July 20, 2017

Location: Bridgestone Arena, Nashville, Tennessee

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Corey Graves

I'm going to go on a limb here and assume that we'll be hearing a lot about the Kurt Angle/Jason Jordan story. On top of that, I'm digging this whole grab bag approach to who might show up around here. It's such a nice change of pace and something that makes the show so much easier to sit through. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

R-Truth vs. Curt Hawkins

Hawkins is rather perplexed by Truth's gyrating and dancing, which Joseph attributes to Dance Dance Revolution. Curt takes him down and hammers away before we're in an early chinlock. Truth fights up with the clothesline and gordbuster, followed by the Lie Detector for the pin at 4:47.

Rating: D. This was actually weaker than most Main Event openers, which is covering a lot of ground. Truth is still a fun act and Hawkins is the kind of guy who can lose over and over like this and still be fine. Nothing to see here as far as wrestling goes but then again, this is the

working definition of a dark match and it was fine in that regard.

From Raw.

Here's Enzo Amore for a chat. He knows he lost at Great Balls of Fire but he knows you have to keep getting up if you believe in what you're fighting for. He's not done with Big Cass, who may be much bigger and stronger but Enzo has the heart. Cass threw him fourteen feet to the floor but Enzo got back up and kept going. They were friends for years with Enzo making sure Cass stuck with it because Cass is S-A-W-F-T like a big comfy couch.

Cue Cass to chase Enzo off because Enzo says he's smarter than the average bear. Enzo grabs a seat in the crowd with an Enzo fan to watch this. Cue Big Show for a brawl but Cass kicks him in the face. The fight is on with Show getting the better of it via a hard chop to the chest. Cass sends him into the post twice in a row though and Show's ribs are hurt. Kicks to the ribs make them even worse and Show is down. Enzo tries to come in and eats a big boot for his efforts.

From Monday again.

Here's Angle for the announcement. Everyone is supporting him in this decision and he's glad to get this off his chest. When he was in college he was dating a woman but then they broke up. Then nine months later, she had a child, which Kurt didn't find out until recently. It turns out that the kid was a very talented athlete who had several offers to play various sports.

Instead he went to college and earned a degree, followed by pursuing a career in professional wrestling. That son is now a WWE superstar and the newest member of the Raw roster. His name is.....Jason Jordan! Jason comes out and hugs Kurt several times but nothing is said.

Heath Slater/Rhyno vs. Anderson and Gallows

Rhyno and Anderson get things going with Karl being run over with a shoulder. Gallows comes in and eats a middle rope shoulder before it's off to Slater....who gets his head kicked off. Back from a break with

Slater still in trouble (as always) via some stomping, followed by a chinlock. A leg lariat allows the hot tag to Rhyno as house is cleaned. Slater gets pulled off the apron though and Rhyno takes a kick to the back of the head. The Magic Killer puts Rhyno away at 9:49.

Rating: D+. Another match with nothing to see here but the fans loved Slater and Rhyno, as they always do. Sometimes you have a fun act like those two and they're going to get a reaction no matter what they're doing. Anderson and Gallows are starting to find their footing, which I assure you has nothing to do with getting rid of the horrible comedy segments.

From Raw one more time.

Samoa Joe vs. Roman Reigns

Winner gets Lesnar at Summerslam. They trade shoulders to start and it's Joe being knocked outside as we take an early break. Back with Joe hitting his enziguri in the corner and we're off to the neck crank. That eats up a long time until Reigns fights up and hits a running clothesline for two. That's some of Reigns' only significant offense so far as this has been almost all Joe in the first half.

They head outside with Joe clotheslining him so hard that Reigns lands on the apron. Reigns hits a clothesline of his own to put both guys down as we take another break. Back with Joe talking trash until Reigns comes back with a Samoan drop. One heck of a boot to the face drops Joe again but he's right back up and blocking a belly to back suplex.

The Rock Bottom is broken up and there's the Superman Punch for two. With both guys down, cue the returning Braun Strowman to pull Joe out and beat up Reigns for the no contest (though it should be a DQ victory for Joe, who was the first one to be touched) at about 19:00.

Rating: B-. This was definitely the kind of match where they were filling in time until the storyline ending and there's nothing wrong with that. Neither guy was pinned and it was pretty even when Strowman came in. This is likely setting up what could be a very interesting four way at Summerslam and I'm ok with that.

Reigns and Joe beat on Strowman but both eventually fall victim to powerslams.

Overall Rating: D+. The wrestling drags this one down a good bit as the Raw segments were only ok at best. It's odd as Monday's show was a lot more entertaining than this but trimming it down didn't do it any favors for once. Hopefully things pick up as we get closer to Summerslam. Watchable enough show but it's more skippable than usual.

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Main Event – July 6, 2017: The Latest Show I Forgot to Remember

Main Event

Date: July 6, 2017

Location: Talking Stick Resort Arena, Phoenix, Arizona

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Corey Graves

This show is starting to improve as I can't remember what happened last week. Far too often the shows would be almost interchangeable with the same talent appearing over and over. Now though, things are being mixed up enough that I can't even guess what was on here last week. Therefore, hopefully we can have another show that I forget by Sunday again. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Rich Swann vs. Ariya Daivari

Daivari misses a shot in the corner and Rich dances away as only he can. A dropkick gives Swann two but Daivari rolls away before the Phoenix splash can launch. Instead he sends Swann hard into the post and stomps away back inside. We hit the neck crank before Daivari puts on something like a Sharpshooter with his arms, only to have Swann make the rope. Shame too as that was a cool looking move. A big kick to the head knocks Daivari silly and a rollup gets two. Daivari grabs a reverse DDT and the frog splash gets two. Another kick to Daivari's head sets up the Phoenix splash to give Rich the pin at 5:41.

Rating: C-. As dull as Daivari is, Swann continues to be one of the most energetic members of the roster. Sure his big thing is dancing but that's become background information to the solid matches he's put on. The problem is he's stuck here on Main Event or in unimportant matches on 205 Live. At least the matches are still good though, which is a great reason to keep him around.

Long recap of Enzo Amore vs. Big Cass.

From Raw.

Here's Enzo to open the show. He lists off all the bad things that have happened to him in the last year and says that all happened while Cass was behind his back. Cass watched all that time because he never had Enzo's back. Cass wanted to take advantage of the silver tongue but now he has to face the fists that come with it.

Enzo is grateful for everything that's happened to him and he'd shove his

dad down a wishing well before he joined the dark side. He's grateful to every kid out there wearing his gear. They're the people who help put food on his table because he believes in the good that he's doing. It's something you just can't teach. He walks in and out of a room with confidence because he knows who he is and he knows where he's going. He's been in holes a lot deeper than seven feet before and Cass is nothing more than a catchphrase that Enzo wrote.

Cass said his mouth writes checks that he can't back up but no one goes harder than him. Next time, don't be surprised if that merchandise check is for ZERO DIMES. Unless he starts wearing a Casshole shirt. Enzo is ready to go but comes back to say he's ready to fight on his own because it's all him now.

Also from Raw.

Samoa Joe and Brock Lesnar are live via satellite for a sitdown interview. Joe rants about being tired of answering questions because he's ready to fight. Lesnar calls him a coward but Joe says Brock can never get his hands on him. Joe is ready to fight so Lesnar lists off all the names he's beaten. That's fine with Joe, who has a list of names he's choked out. Lesnar and Heyman chuckle so Joe walks out and goes to find Brock. Angle tries to talk him down but security pulls Joe away from Lesnar's room.

Kalisto vs. Scott Dawson

And Revival isn't on Raw...why? Dawson sends him into the corner to start so Kalisto slaps him in the face. A dropkick sends Dawson outside and that means a teased dive. Dash Wilder tries to offer a distraction but Dawson's rollup only gets two. A knee to the shoulder works a bit better and we take over with Kalisto in trouble. Back with Kalisto knocking him off the ropes and getting two off a middle rope crossbody. Dawson comes back with a slingshot suplex (ala Tully) but Kalisto counters into a small package for the victory at 8:10.

Rating: D+. Did I mention I don't know why Revival is here instead of on Raw? They were one of the big surprises on the post-Wrestlemania Raw and for some reason they can't get back on Raw no matter how much the tag

division could use them. The match was nothing to see but Dawson isn't exactly known for his singles work.

We look at Braun Strowman threatening to hurt Roman Reigns on Raw.

From Raw one more time.

Apollo Crews vs. Braun Strowman

Crews does what he can to start but is quickly thrown outside as soon as Strowman gets his hands on him. We hit the neck crank before Crews is sent outside again. Titus fires him up enough that two enziguris stagger Strowman. The standing moonsault is broken up with Strowman kicking Apollo across the ring in an awesome block. Three straight powerslams finally put Crews away at 4:13.

Rating: D. This was just a step above a squash and that's all it needed to be. Strowman is gearing up for the second biggest match at Sunday's pay per view and it makes sense to have him squash someone. At least it was someone fresh and not the same stuff we've seen a dozen times.

Post match Titus tries to save Apollo from a worse beating but takes one himself. Apollo gets thrown into the ambulance but it won't drive away. Of course Reigns is the driver (Thanks for having Crews' back earlier you jerk) and he spears Strowman off the stage. Strowman is on his feet before the show is over.

Overall Rating: C. The Raw stuff more than saves the show from a pretty dull week of original wrestling. Dawson and Wilder being stuck here makes my head hurt and spin at the same time but until something changes, they're not going to be on Raw for whatever reason. I'm sure it's asking too much to push one of the top teams in the world when you already have so many heels on Raw. Clearly turning or depushing one of those teams (or moving American Alpha over to Raw) is out of the question so we're stuck with things like this for now. Dang I really get annoyed at the tag division.

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