

# Summerslam Count-Up – Summerslam 2016 (2017 Redo): Styles Has Arrived

## Summerslam 2016

Date: August 21, 2016

Location: Barclays Center, New York City, New York

Attendance: 15,974

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton, Mauro Ranallo, David Otunga, John Bradshaw Layfield

A year has passed since I saw this show and I can barely remember much about it. That's very telling when you look at how stacked this show really is. There are multiple top level matches here and it really wasn't clear what was going to close the show until the night of the event. Hopefully that means that this SIX HOUR show holds up. Let's get to it.

So here's a quick plug. I'm going through the pre-show and there's a three expert panel of Booker T., Jerry Lawler and Lita. Earlier this year, I met all three of them at WrestleCon. If you're ever at a Wrestlemania weekend, treat yourself to an amazing time and GO TO WRESTLECON. I met over 120 wrestlers in about four hours. Where else are you going to get to do something like that? Anyway, on with the show.

Pre-Show: American Alpha/Hype Bros/Usos vs.

Breezango/Ascension/Vaudevillains

Who would have thought that Breezango would be the most entertaining out of all these teams? This is pretty much the still titleless Smackdown tag division at this point as they had to bring in the Headbangers and throw together Heath Slater and Rhyno to be able to have a tournament. This is also a rematch from Smackdown, which shows how little effort they were putting into the tag division at this point.

Gable and Breeze start things and the fans are WAY into Gable. Chad twists around as only he can to escape a wristlock and it's off to Jey,

who is quickly driven into the corner. English comes in and says that he's what a man is. That earns him a right hand to the jaw and it's off to Mojo to work on a wristlock. Ryder comes in to quite the reaction as Mauro says the Hype Bros have more chemistry than the Periodic Table.

Everything breaks down (What took them so long?) and Ascension clears the ring, only to have American Alpha come off the top (the same corner) with double clotheslines (that's pure Steiner Brothers). English posts Ryder though and we take a break. Back with Gotch putting Ryder in a chinlock, followed by Viktor doing the same. The other heels take turns stomping on Ryder until Breeze grabs his own chinlock. Fandango adds a slingshot legdrop as this is going WAY longer than it needs to.

JBL thinks cold beer uniting the APA is more effective than furry selfie sticks uniting Breezango but maybe he's wrong. Ascension knocks the good guys off the apron but Viktor misses a charge in the corner, allowing Ryder to get in a neckbreaker on Konnor. The hot tag (with a limited reaction) brings in Jimmy to clean house.

Jordan gets the real hot tag and does his fired up sequence (which he really is awesome at) with a belly to belly getting two on Breeze. We hit the parade of secondary finishers as the referee is imploring them to tag. Mojo powerbombs Breeze and Viktor out of the corner and the Usos add stereo superkicks to set up stereo dives. Back in and Grand Amplitude plants Gotch, only to have Jey tag himself in for a Superfly Splash and the pin at 14:31. Gable is really not cool with that. Eh just wait until your team is split up for a pretty lame story where Jordan is Kurt Angle's son.

**Rating:** B-. If you cut out a few minutes from this, it's a heck of an opener. There are too many people in the match of course but they kept it moving fast enough (for the most part) to really get something fun out of it. Jordan's house cleaning spot is a heck of a way to fire the crowd up and it made the match more fun than it should have been. Tweak this a bit (eight/ten man tag or shorten the match a bit) and it's even better.

Pre-Show: Dudley Boyz vs. Sami Zayn/Neville

Sami works on D-Von's arm to start and it's off to Neville for more of

the same. Both of them get in more shots as we hear about the rivalry over the NXT Title. I do appreciate the history, especially when Graves should know about that match very well. Bubba is sent outside but D-Von breaks up a springboard dive, allowing Bubba to nail Neville from behind to take over. The fans want tables but a back elbow to Neville's jaw cuts them off in a hurry.

Back from a break with Bubba hitting his neckbreaker out of the corner. Things slow down even more as Bubba is talking even more than he usually does in a match. Bubba: "COME ON ENGLISH BOY! O-LAY! O-LAY!" The middle rope backsplash misses though and the hot tag brings in Sami. D-Von takes the Blue Thunder Bomb for two but the reverse 3D gets the same. Neville escapes the regular version though and we get some heel miscommunication. The Helluva Kick sets up the Red Arrow to put Bubba away at 7:55.

**Rating:** C-. That would be it for the Dudleys in WWE as they would have one more segment tomorrow night where Anderson and Gallows sent them packing. It's also pretty much it for Sami and Neville as a team, which is quite odd as you would think they would be a fine choice for a team. The match was nothing you wouldn't expect on Raw.

#### Pre-Show: Cesaro vs. Sheamus

You know, because two matches just weren't enough for the pre-show. This is the first match of the Best of Seven Series, which really wasn't too well received. After Cole says Cesaro is facing Cesaro and both Cole and Saxton say this is about establishing physical dominance, we're ready to go. Sheamus misses a very early Brogue Kick but the spinning springboard uppercut is blocked as well.

Cesaro charges into an uppercut but comes back with a dropkick for one. The ten forearms to the chest are broken up so Sheamus clotheslines him onto the apron instead. It's off to an armbar on Cesaro's chronically taped up shoulder but Cesaro lifts him up into that kind of reverse Angle Slam of his. They're certainly hitting each other hard here, which is pretty much the draw of the whole feud.

Sheamus hits a tilt-a-whirl slam and it's off to a break. Back with Cesaro fighting out of a chinlock because that rule even applies on pre-

shows that will never end. The Irish Curse gives Sheamus two as Cole runs down the pay per view card, which only makes me think that there are FAR too many titles in WWE. They fight over a suplex and fall out to the floor in a heap. Back in and Cesaro starts firing off the running uppercuts in the corner, capped off by a dropkick to knock him off the ropes.

The apron superplex (which wasn't from the apron) gets two but Sheamus counters the Neutralizer into White Noise for two. There's the super Regal Roll for two more and frustration is really setting in. Another Brogue Kick attempt is countered by one heck of a clothesline though and Cesaro adds a high crossbody for two of his own. Cesaro tries the Sharpshooter but Sheamus gets to the ropes. Back up and a poke to the eye sets up the Brogue Kick to give Sheamus the pin at 14:11.

**Rating:** B. They beat the heck out of each other and it was a fun match but it also brings up the problem: I'm not going to want to watch them fight six more times. No matter how good things are, having them happen so many times in a row over several weeks is going to get tiresome. It happens in all these series and it's happening here too.

And now, after more wrestling than you get on an average Smackdown, here's the actual pay per view.

The opening video looks at New York City, with the narrator telling you how AMAZING the city is. I'm not sure if New York City or Texas is worse about bragging about their home's greatness. As usual, this switches over to a series of quick looks at the biggest matches on the card.

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

Well duh. That's about as easy of a choice for an opener as you could ever find for this show. As you might expect, the crowd eats up the opening promo with a spoon and of course we hear a ton of New York City music references. Included are Frank Sinatra, Biggie Smalls and Jay-Z, plus more that probably go over my head. Cass adds in a few songs of his own as this is the only way this show could have opened. Since Graves is the best heel commentator in wrestling today though, he points out that Enzo is from New Jersey.

Jericho and Owens jump Enzo at the bell and the STUPID IDIOT chants start rolling. Enzo comes back with a crossbody and a running right hand to the jaw for two. It's off to Cass, who drags Owens inside for a beat. That's some scary power. Enzo gets launched into the corner to crush Jericho but the Canadians bail to the floor. That's fine with Cass who tosses Enzo over the top onto them in a huge crash. I've always loved that spot as it just looks cool.

Back in and Enzo ax handles Owens but turns into a middle rope dropkick from Jericho. The Canadian violence begins with Owens kneeing Enzo from the apron and doing his dance on the apron in a rather funny visual. Owens' comedic skills aren't given enough credit more often than not. It's back to Jericho for the Arrogant Cover and a chinlock with Owens telling Jericho to do it like he taught him.

Owens comes in and adds a gutbuster for two, followed by the running start for a chinlock. It takes real talent to turn a chinlock into an art form but Owens has somehow pulled it off. Enzo finally rolls away but Jericho is there to break up the diving tag attempt. Owens drops the frog splash for two and his stunned looked on the kickout is the usual awesome visual. Enzo gets pulled off the corner to make things even worse but, after blowing a kiss to Jericho, misses the Cannonball.

That means the hot tag to Cass and everything breaks down. Jericho dives into a big boot but Owens breaks up the Bada Boom Shaka Lacka. Cass gets posted on the floor and now the Cannonball against the barricade connects. Back in and Enzo scores with his top rope DDT on Jericho with Owens making the save. A pop up Codebreaker (didn't look great as Jericho was too far away) ends Enzo at 12:09.

**Rating:** C+. Odd choice for an ending aside (not surprising of course but odd), this was a good way to get the crowd going. I could have gone for another hope spot from Enzo and more of Cass cleaning house but that pop up Codebreaker could have been a heck of a finisher if done right. Nice opener, though would it have killed them to put Enzo and Cass over in Brooklyn?

Smackdown bosses Daniel Bryan and Shane McMahon run into Raw General

Manager Mick Foley to brag about how awesome their shows are. Former Daily Show host Jon Stewart and his son come in to ask what Foley is thinking to work with Stephanie. He rants about abuse of power but realizes she's right behind him. Stephanie yells at him about how great it is to abuse power but thankfully New Day comes up. As the Smackdown bosses and Foley munch on cereal, New Day asks Jon if he'd like to do something. He gets out as fast as he can and Stephanie isn't amused.

We recap Charlotte vs. Sasha Banks. Sasha won the Women's Title on the first exclusive show after the Brand Split and tonight is the rematch. The other big idea here is Charlotte never loses singles matches on pay per view and Banks has to recreate the magic one more time.

### Raw Women's Title: Sasha Banks vs. Charlotte

Banks is defending and we get the Big Match Intros. Some early WOOing sets up a slightly less early Bank Statement but Charlotte bails to the floor. Back in and Banks climbs the corner for a wristdrag before sending Charlotte face first into the middle buckle. Banks gets caught on top though and Charlotte basically drops her onto the ropes for a backbreaker which almost had to hurt horribly. The fact that Banks had a bad back coming in and Charlotte still did some rather sloppy moves like that got her in some hot water.

We hit a Gory Stretch on the champ for a bit but she comes back with a pair of running clotheslines. That just earns her another backbreaker and Charlotte stomps away at the back. The Figure Eight is broken up but Sasha misses a charge into the corner and gets caught in the Tree of Woe. Charlotte picks her up for a super Razor's Edge but since that would, you know, kill Sasha, she reverses into a hurricanrana to put them both down.

Back up and a WOO earns Charlotte a string of slaps before Sasha avoids a charge in the corner and hits the double knees to the back for two. Charlotte kicks her in the leg to break up a charge but gets knocked outside again, setting up the double knees from the apron. Back in and the Backstabber doesn't work but Natural Selection is countered into the Bank Statement (thankfully too as the Natural Selection clearly didn't send Sasha's head anywhere near the mat).

Charlotte makes the rope for the break and takes out the knee again. Natural Selection gives Charlotte two so she yells about being better than Sasha. Another Bank Statement goes on but Charlotte reverses into a rollup for the pin and the title at 13:52. Saxton: "Just like that?"

**Rating:** B. This was just a straight match and that's the key to the whole thing. The women are getting to show that they can have a good match without the smoke and mirrors, which never would have been the case otherwise. If nothing else it got the kind of time that a title match deserves to develop the story of Banks having a bad back (which would keep her on the shelf for about a month). Strong match here and another of many to come for these two.

Doctors Anderson and Gallows (oh man I had forgotten how stupid this was) run into AJ Styles for a Club reunion. Finn Balor comes up and doesn't think much of it. Somehow, this has still never gone anywhere.

#### Intercontinental Title: Miz vs. Apollo Crews

Crews is defending after winning a triple threat match. Miz comes out wearing a glittery Phantom of the Opera mask while Maryse is basically in a one piece swimsuit. In a sign of the changing times, Mauro talks about Miz's look instead of Maryse. Miz stomps away in the corner and gets two off a running kick to the chest. Crews gets the same off a rollup, only to walk into the short DDT as it's almost all Miz to start. We're already in the reverse chinlock before Miz sends him into the apron to cut off a comeback. Miz takes too long coming off the top though and dives into a dropkick to put both guys down.

A crossbody into a nipup has Miz in trouble as JBL rants about Otunga calling Crews a Jackrobat (jacked acrobat). The Toss Powerbomb is countered so Crews gets two off a tilt-a-whirl powerslam. An overhead belly to belly sets up a standing moonsault, which Otunga sums up perfectly: "A man with that kind of size and that kind of muscle should not be able to do that." Miz teases taking a walk but Maryse cuts him off, allowing Miz to post Crews. The Skull Crushing Finale retains the title at 5:36.

**Rating:** D+. Standard Smackdown match and something that could have been

cut, or at least put in the Kickoff Show in the place of the Dudleys match. Crews felt like an easy obstacle to overcome because there was nowhere near enough build to set the match up. Put some more effort into the title already people, as it's just not working.

We recap John Cena vs. AJ Styles. They set up the first match when Styles and Cena were in the ring together, only to have Anderson and Gallows interfere to turn Styles heel. Styles went on a great rant about how Cena was a fraud who couldn't hang in the ring with someone like him. Cena went into a great speech about how he's here out of love because it never gets old. AJ beat him at Money in the Bank with assistance from Anderson and Gallows, setting up a rematch between the two here.

### AJ Styles vs. John Cena

This just feels big. AJ grabs a waistlock to start but is easily knocked away. The announcers go out of the way to put over how AJ has been on big shows before but nothing this big. Oh I don't know. I remember him being at that Wrestlemania thing earlier in the year. The dueling chants begin and the AJ STYLES side is pretty clearly stronger.

Cena's headlock is countered and AJ scores with the dropkick but the bragging earns AJ a right to the jaw. A hard whip into the corner sends AJ down for a bit with Cena doing some rare trash talking. They head to the floor and the fans start belting out JOHN CENA SUCKS, only to have AJ turn it into some gasping with a suplex onto the apron. Cena is right back with a dropkick for two and it's time for some more right hands to the head.

AJ comes back with a forearm to the face, earning himself Cena's finishing sequence. It's way too early for the AA though as AJ hits a Pele, followed by the Styles Clash for a close two. The fans were actually more into the near fall than I was expecting as you would think they'd know better this early. The AA gives Cena two of his own and both guys are down again.

Styles slips out of the super AA and grabs the torture rack for the spinout powerbomb. They're trading bombs at this point and it's the only way they should be going here. Something like a Big Ending gives Cena two

but he can't get the STF. Instead it's the AA neckbreaker for two on Cena (not the same as the AA JBL) but the springboard 450 only hits mat.

A faceplant puts Cena down again though and AJ can't follow up. He manages the springboard forearm but Cena reverses into the worst STF I've ever seen. Thankfully AJ slips out and grabs a Crossface, which Cena powers out of as well. That's reversed into the Calf Crusher which AJ is smart enough to twist away from the ropes. Cena reverses that into another horrible STF (AJ's face is on the mat) so AJ is quickly up with the enziguri. A tornado DDT plants AJ and there's the top rope Fameasser for two.

Cena heads up again and gets taken down with a super hurricanrana (Mauro: "MAMA MIA!"), followed by the Phenomenal Forearm for a VERY near fall (drawing Mauro to his feet). It's Cena's turn now as he takes AJ up for the super AA and...it's two. NOW the fans know it's on as I don't think anyone has ever kicked out of that before. Cena is stunned and the AA is countered into another Clash. The Phenomenal Forearm puts Cena away clean at 23:10.

**Rating:** A. I know it's not going to sound good but a lot of this goes to Cena. At the end of the day, the crowd completely lost it when AJ kicked out of that super AA. AJ wins here not because he got a pin but because he beat Cena clean. That's a very, VERY short list and that's what makes it feel so important. Think back to how big of a deal it was when Warrior pinned Hogan clean. That felt like an era changing win, and while this isn't quite that big, it's the same idea.

Oh yeah and it's an outstanding match and possibly the Match of the Year. This was the heavyweight slugfest formula as they beat the heck out of each other with both guys hitting everything they could until one of them couldn't get up. That's a really hard match to pull off and these two did it in an incredible match. It belonged on the grand stage and gives Cena one heck of a mountain to overcome, which he somehow did in a better match at the Royal Rumble.

Post match Cena takes off his wristband and leaves it in the ring. He would do dark matches for a few weeks and then be back wrestling on TV in

less than a month so this didn't mean anything.

Some fans won a contest and got some stuff. In other words, let the fans have a breather.

Here's Jon Stewart for your celebrity appearance. He makes fun of himself for interfering in Cena's match last year and says the big lesson he learned was to tuck your shirt in when you're taking an AA. As for tonight though, he's here to be in New Day's corner to help deal with Anderson and Gallows. In honor of the moment, he throws on a unicorn horn and does Big E.'s (out injured due to getting crotched against the post) entrance.

#### Tag Team Titles: New Day vs. Anderson and Gallows

New Day is defending of course and unfortunately Anderson and Gallows are still doing their stupid doctor nonsense, complete with jars for Kofi, Xavier and Jon's testicles. I hear Paige can help you with one of those. Anderson headlocks Kofi down to start but he's right back up with the jumping back elbow to the jaw. Kofi flips onto his feet and gets two off the standing double stomp. You can tell the fans are still recovering from the previous match and it's off to Woods.

That goes badly as the he gets taken into the corner for a beating from Gallows. At least it does bring the fans back a bit with the rhythmic clapping. Gallows gets taken into the corner for the Unicorn Stampede (which they've kind of stopped doing in recent months) and the fans are really not responding. Woods sends him outside so Kofi can hit a running dive (while posing in the air) to take him down again. Back in and Gallows kicks Kofi in the head to take over for real this time with Anderson working on the arm.

That goes nowhere as the hot tag brings in Woods to clean house. Anderson sends him to the apron for an enziguri, setting up the rope walk elbow drop. Everything breaks down and Anderson kicks Kofi in the chest, setting up the Magic Killer. Stewart gets in though and it's time to crotch him as well. Hang on though as he has to tuck in his shirt first. Cue the returning Big E. for the save though and that's a DQ at 9:09.

**Rating:** D. I don't know if it was the previous match or what but sweet goodness the fans did NOT care for this one. It's not a good match in the first place as Anderson and Gallows aren't funny in the doctor roles, but the bigger problem here was the focus being on Stewart at the end. Oh and the ending sets up a rematch, which really isn't what they need to be going with here. Bad match but Big E.'s return did wake up the crowd.

Big E. drinks the fluid in the jar holding his "testicles". Stewart dances with New Day and the fans...well they care when Big E. dances at least.

We recap Dean Ambrose vs. Dolph Ziggler. Dolph won a six way match to earn the shot and then it all went nuts. Ziggler started talking about how he was tired of being told that he always either too good or not good enough. It was time to turn up the jets and become champion for the third time. Serious Ziggler was nice but I don't think anyone was buying him as having a real chance here. You know, because he's Dolph Ziggler.

#### Smackdown World Title: Dolph Ziggler vs. Dean Ambrose

Dean is defending and Shane and Daniel are here for no apparent reason. The fans are behind Ziggler and they trade some grappling on the mat with Ziggler getting the better of it (not exactly a surprise). The threat of a neckbreaker sends Ambrose bailing to the floor so Dolph splashes him against the barricade.

Back in and Ziggler's jumping DDT is countered with Dean throwing him outside again. Ziggler escapes a super Dirty Deeds so Dean slaps on a half crab of all things. You can tell Dean is playing the subtle heel here as the smark crowd is always going to cheer for Ziggler. Dean heads up top and gets dropkicked out of the air but he's right back with a double chickenwing facebuster.

Ambrose tunes up the band (which is now mocking Ziggler instead of anything involving Shawn Michaels) but shakes his head and tries Dirty Deeds instead. That's reversed into the jumping DDT and both guys are down again. A double collision gives us another lay down period until Dean is up first and hammering away.

The top rope elbow gets two so Ziggler grabs the sleeper, earning them both a tumble out to the floor. Ziggler gets in the superkick on the floor but it's barely two back inside. The Zig Zag gets the same but Dean pops back up with the rebound lariat. Ziggler catches Dean on top and pulls him back down, right into Dirty Deeds to retain the title at 15:22.

**Rating:** D+. And that people, is Ziggler choking again. This would lead to him saying he's never won the big one, which would turn into him never holding the World Title that long because holding the title is more important than winning it. The match was nothing all that good as we were just waiting on Dirty Deeds, which only happened so Dean could keep it warm for AJ next month. That was completely obvious the second AJ pinned Cena again and that's all this title needed to do.

Package on Summerslam weekend.

#### Natalya/Alexa Bliss/Eva Marie vs. Becky Lynch/Naomi/Carmella

Dang I didn't know the Glow was a year old. Actually hang on a minute as Eva Marie is suffering from exhaustion, anxiety and stress (likely brought on by reading too many Wellness Violation messages, which meant she would never wrestle again) so we have a replacement. At least we got that amazing entrance one more time.

#### Natalya/Alexa Bliss/Nikki Bella vs. Becky Lynch/Naomi/Carmella

So yeah, you know full well that Nikki is going to be all that matters in this match because IT'S HER BIG COMEBACK THAT EVERYONE TOTALLY CARES ABOUT BECAUSE WE LOVE HER SO MUCH! She does get one heck of a pop though, which is rather scary. During her entrance, Mauro declares her return "miraculous". Oh man this is going to be a long one.

Bliss rolls Becky up to start and gets in a hard slap for good measure. Naomi comes in to scare Alexa off so it's Natalya instead. A forearm puts Natalya down and the splits legdrop gets two. Carmella comes in for the Staten Island Shuffle before a missed charge sends Natalya outside. Back in and a powerslam out of the corner plants Carmella before it's off to Nikki, the heel, for a strong face pop.

We hit the chinlock but hang on as we need some Nikki pushups. Alexa chokeslaves Carmella down for the moonsault knees to the ribs as the crowd is dead all over again. The abdominal stretch keeps things slow until Carmella finally rolls over and makes the hot tag to Becky. All three heels are send into the corner for the springboard kicks from Lynch, followed by a Bexploder on Natalya.

Becky's top rope legdrop gets two with Nikki making the save. A blind tag brings in Naomi for the dancing kicks with the fans just not reacting at all. Bliss' springboard splash hits knees so it's off to Nikki vs. Carmella. A bad looking Bronco Buster gets two on Nikki and everything breaks down. Nikki's big forearm sets up the Rack Attack 2.0 (Nikki: "I'm back.") for the pin at 11:16.

**Rating:** D. This was all about Nikki's return and that's not enough to carry a dull match. Naomi's Glow stuff wasn't over yet, Becky was stuck around people who weren't up to her level and Carmella was showing that she didn't need to be on the main roster yet. The same was true for Alexa and Natalya was her usual self. Just not a good match and it showed the lack of depth to the division.

We recap Rusev vs. Roman Reigns. Rusev and Lana were married and so Reigns interrupted for no apparent reason to insult them and shove them into a cake.

Maria Menunos interviews Rusev and Lana, who don't like her questions about Reigns. They won't stand for this and Lana is sure that her husband will destroy Reigns.

We recap the Universal Title match. Basically we need a new title due to the Brand Split and Universal Title was the best they could come up with. Seth Rollins was put into the match as Raw's #1 draft pick and Finn Balor earned his way in by winning a series of matches. Not much else to it as there's no major animosity between them but it's better than pulling the title out of a suitcase.

Seth did get in a great promo talking about how he's done everything Balor has done but he's done it a little bit better. He's not wrong, though that's not the best thing to do when you have someone so new to

the main roster. Then Balor showed up as the Demon and scared Rollins to death.

### Universal Title: Finn Balor vs. Seth Rollins

Anything goes and the title (which isn't that well received due to a bad case of being hideous) is vacant coming in. Unless I'm forgetting something, to date this is the only time Balor has wrestled as the Demon on the main roster. We get the Big Match Intros and the title itself receives some hearty boos. Balor dropkicks him into the corner at the bell but it's too early for the Coup de Grace.

Instead Balor hits a suicide dive to the floor, followed by some kicks to the knee back inside. They head outside again with Seth getting in his first offense via a suplex on the floor. Balor is right back with something like a Phenomenal Forearm off the barricade. Back in again and Balor hits a basement dropkick for two as this is almost one sided so far. Finn stays on the leg as the fans are singing something.

Balor jumps over the ropes but Rollins slides between his legs and powerbombs him into the barricade, completely destroying Balor's shoulder and putting him on the shelf for the better part of eight months. We're less than four minutes in though and you can see the shoulder looking all messed up. Back in and Seth gets two off a backbreaker, setting up a chinlock. The chants are still going and it sounds like THAT TITLE SUCKS to the tune of John Cena Sucks.

Seth starts the trash talk and cuts off a comeback attempt. A snapmare into a kick to the back has Finn in even more trouble but Seth would rather walk around than follow up. It's back to the chinlock for a good while until the springboard knee to the head sets up Seth's frog splash for two. What looks like a Rainmaker is countered into a DDT to give Balor his first major offense in a long time and he follows up with some forearms.

A basement dropkick sets up the Sling Blade but Seth kicks him down without much effort. An enziguri stuns Balor but he's right back with the Pele, earning a very nice round of applause. If nothing else the chants about the title have stopped. 1916 (reverse implant DDT) gives Finn two

but the Coup de Grace is countered into a triangle choke of all things. Finn falls outside because rope breaks don't count (anything goes remember) and things slow down a bit.

Back in and the buckle bomb sets up the low superkick for two on Balor with Seth looking stunned on the kickout. A small package driver gets the same count and reaction so Seth goes up, allowing Balor to hit a very loud enziguri to put him on the floor. Balor adds a shotgun dropkick to send him into the barricade, followed by a top rope double stomp to the back of the head for two. The Coup de Grace misses and it's a Pedigree for two. Finn counters a second Pedigree into a double stomp, followed by the Coup de Grace for the pin and the title at 19:23.

**Rating:** B+. When you factor in that shoulder injury, this is quite the impressive performance. Above all else though, how good is it that Balor won the title here? If he loses his first major pay per view match and then goes away until April, he's lucky to come back to the cruiserweight division.

This was a heck of a match with both guys beating the heck out of each other. It took some time to get built up but once they finally got there, the fans really started to accept things, which is a very positive sign. Balor is someone who is going to get a very positive reaction no matter what and giving him the title here was entirely the right call.

Balor can barely move his right arm after the match but finally holds the title up. On his WWE 24 special, he said you could feel and hear the shoulder crunching and crackling as he lifted the title and it probably did more damage to the arm.

The pre-show channel chats a bit and throws us to a KFC ad with Dolph Ziggler dressing up as Colonel Sanders to beat up Miz dressed as a chicken. It's actually dumber than you remember it being.

Here's Lana to introduce Rusev, albeit while wearing half of a wedding dress, the bottom of which looks like a diaper. She's one of the most beautiful women on the roster but she looks ridiculous here.

US Title: Rusev vs. Roman Reigns

Roman is challenging and the booing is strong with this one. Rusev jumps him before the bell and they fight out to the floor with Roman being sent into the steps. The fans chant RUSEV MACHKA because they've given up on America over their hatred for Reigns. Roman gets in a Superman Punch as the bell hasn't rung yet. They fight over a chair with Reigns getting the better of it and destroying Rusev. Reigns finally leaves but comes back with a spear, all while the fans chant WE WANT SLATER. No match of course, likely due to time issues.

We recap Randy Orton vs. Brock Lesnar. This match was announced as Orton's return match from surgery and the build focused on Orton being able to hit the RKO anytime, including a sweet moment where Orton interrupted a Lesnar promo with an RKO. The hype video even includes some OVW clips as they came up through developmental together and debuted within a few months of each other. This had a heck of a build and felt like something important but the question was whether Lesnar would have an actual match or just do his usual Lesnar stuff.

### Randy Orton vs. Brock Lesnar

Heyman handles Lesnar's introduction, saying he's conquering out of the University of Suplex City. Brock seems to get into his MMA stance to start before driving Orton into the corner for the shoulders to the ribs. Orton escapes the first German suplex attempt but can't hit the RKO.

Now the first suplex connects (with Mauro knowing that it's the 33<sup>rd</sup> Lesnar has hit at Summerslam because he's awesome that way) and Brock follows with two more. Orton is almost out on his feet so Lesnar suplexes him again. It's nothing but suplexes at this point and it's already getting dull. They head outside for a much needed change of pace with Orton being thrown over the announcers' table.

Orton gets thrown from the front row through the table as this is dominance. The other table is loaded up but whatever Lesnar is trying is countered into the RKO onto (not through) the table. The hanging DDT plants Lesnar back inside and another RKO gets two. Orton realizes he has no choice and tries the Punt, only to have it reversed into the F5 (bad one) for two more.

That's enough for Lesnar so he takes off the gloves and pads and hammers on Orton. An elbow to the head actually busts Orton open VERY badly. Lesnar just keeps hammering on him while the fans chant GOLDBERG until the referee FINALLY stops it at 11:47. I've heard a bunch of answers about what happened but I believe this was the planned ending and a hard way opening.

**Rating:** D. Yeah this didn't work when it happened and it didn't work again this time around. Lesnar suplexing Orton for five minutes then selling a few big moves doesn't make me think it's an awesome main event. This was everything wrong with Lesnar's current WWE run in one match and that made for a really dull match, save for the odd finish that seemed designed to protect Orton. You know, after he was basically squashed.

Lesnar keeps hammering on him until the always intimidating Shane McMahon comes out, earning himself an F5 (which thankfully didn't lead anywhere). Heyman panics as they leave to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B-. If you cut an hour (or more) out of this, it's bordering on the classic level. As it is, this is just a good show that runs WAY too long. At some point you have to cut something out and WWE just refuses to do that. Cut out the Dudleys match or the women's tag and give us some breathing room here because sweet goodness this show could use it.

Now that being said, there's some outstanding stuff on here with the Styles vs. Cena match as an instant classic, the Women's Title being very good, a great Universal Title match and really only the Tag Team Title match being without much value. The show is certainly good and the positives outweigh the negatives but unless the show is a masterpiece, fans are going to start losing interest near the end. It's a solid show but cut out a good forty minutes to really make it great.

### Ratings Comparison

American Alpha/Hype Bros/Usos vs. Breezango/Ascension/Vaudevillains

Original: C

2017 Redo: B-

Dudley Boyz vs. Neville/Sami Zayn

Original: C

2017 Redo: C-

Sheamus vs. Cesaro

Original: B-

2017 Redo: B

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

Original: C+

2017 Redo: C+

Sasha Banks vs. Charlotte

Original: B

2017 Redo: B

Miz vs. Apollo Crews

Original: C

2017 Redo: D+

John Cena vs. AJ Styles

Original: A

2017 Redo: A

New Day vs. Anderson and Gallows

Original: D+

2017 Redo: D

Dolph Ziggler vs. Dean Ambrose

Original: B-

2017 Redo: D+

Natalya/Alexa Bliss/Nikki Bella vs. Becky Lynch/Naomi/Carmella

Original: C

2017 Redo: D

Finn Balor vs. Seth Rollins

Original: B+

2017 Redo: D+

Brock Lesnar vs. Randy Orton

Original: C+

2017 Redo: D

Overall Rating

Original: B

2017 Redo: B-

That's quite the drop on Ambrose vs. Ziggler and Lesnar vs. Orton. Some of them are spot on though and that's not the biggest surprise.

Here's the original review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2016/08/21/summerslam-2016-they-didnt/>

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# NXT – March 12, 2024: That Didn't Help

NXT

Date: March 12, 2024

Location: Capitol Wrestling Center, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Booker T.

We are less than a month away from Stand & Deliver and things are getting more interesting. Last week's Roadblock saw Tony D'Angelo crowned as the new #1 contender, with Trick Williams coming back to deal with Carmelo Hayes. That should set up a heck of a one two punch for the big show so let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

Roadblock recap.

Tag Team Titles #1 Contenders Tournament First Round: OTM vs.

LWO

This is the first of three first round matches with the winners going on to a triple threat match for the title shot at Stand & Deliver. OTM jumps them from behind in the aisle and it's Price taking over on del Toro inside. The LWO fights back and knock the villains outside for stereo dives. Back in and Wilde takes over on Nima, only to get caught on top. One heck of a one armed superplex gives Nima two as Baron Corbin/Bron Breaker are watching from the balcony.

We take a break and come back with del Toro coming in to strike away as commentary talks about the qualifying matches for the main roster Tag Team Titles. Del Toro sends Price into the corner with a bit of a sloppy headscissors, followed by a top rope missile dropkick for two. Everything breaks down and del Toro enziguris Price to the floor. That leaves Wilde to jump onto Nima's back and WAY into the air for a crash onto Price, who has to run up to catch him. Back in and a springboard 450 gives Wilde the pin on Nima at 10:40.

**Rating:** B-. As usual, a power vs. speed match works rather well and that was the case here, with the LWO bringing a bit of main roster star power. Watching the high spots and big dives will always be entertaining and Price/Nima were there to throw the LWO around as well. Nice opener here as they didn't break any new ground but played the formula rather spiffily.

Earlier today, Oba Femi arrived and almost got in a fight with Brooks Jensen (his challenger tonight). A bunch of people break it up, including Josh Briggs, with Jensen not being happy about it.

Thea Hail, with Chase U, is jealous about Jacy Jayne and Jazmyn Nyx hanging out without her but she has other friends. Cue Kelani Jordan, who will team with Hail tonight.

Here is Roxanne Perez to explain her actions last week. The sweet, innocent Perez is gone and her attacking Lyra Valkyria last week was the culmination of a year of frustration. She defeated Meiko Satomura last year and then collapsed, mainly because she carried this brand for a year. That came after carrying the weight of the women's division in all kinds of matches but people would rather talk about Tiffany Stratton or Becky Lynch. Not that it matters as she is the most decorated woman in NXT history at 22 years old. Then she helped Lyra Valkyria but never got the rematch that she deserved.

Now everyone wants to cheer her, but where were the people

when Indi Hartwell was holding her title? The NXT fans remind her of little innocent Roxanne Perez. What a difference a year makes: now it's Valkyria riding away in an ambulance and now it's time to vacate the title so Perez can be champion again. Cue Ava to say not so fast but here is Tatum Paxley to charge at Perez, only to be quickly broken up. That was a good, angry explanation from Perez, though her small stature and voice make the heel style a bit more difficult.

The D'Angelo Family welcomes Luca Crusifino, who has taken care of some things. Stacks played Trick Williams' music last week and now Tony D'Angelo is off to Stand & Deliver. Ilja Dragunov comes in and everyone but Tony leaves. Dragunov says Tony has everything but the title and that isn't changing at Stand & Deliver. D'Angelo says no matter what happens, he likes Dragunov, who is then put in a car and driven away by Stacks and Crusifino.

### Lexis King vs. Mr. Stone

Stone slugs away to start and is quickly beaten down, with King working on the ribs. A knee to the ribs and a rake to the back set up an abdominal stretch. That's broken up and Stone knocks him off the top, only to get hit in the face. The Coronation finishes Stone at 3:31.

**Rating:** C. This was more angle advancement than a match and that's not a bad thing. King messing with Stone and Von Wagner is a way to go for him as he continues to be something of an agent of chaos. At the same time, anyone can get the idea of a villain messing with someone's family, though it's likely going to be Wagner doing the beating instead.

Post match the beatdown is on but Von Wagner runs in for the save.

Logan Paul announced Summerslam will be in Cleveland.

Oba Femi is ready to slaughter Brooks Jensen. Dijak comes in

to say he'll be here after Femi is done playing around.

Ridge Holland is training but stops to call his family.

### North American Title: Brooks Jensen vs. Oba Femi

Femi is defending. They fight over a lockup to start and Femi shoves him outside, followed by a headlock back inside. Femi beats on him up against the ropes but gets caught with a clothesline as we take a break. Back with Jensen dropkicking him to the floor and hitting an elbow off the apron.

They get back in, where Femi hits a pair of Irish Curses for two as Josh Briggs comes out to watch. Jensen fights up and hits a quick superkick into a powerslam for two. Femi shrugs that off and hits a backdrop, followed by a rather powerful toss. He does it again and Jensen is barely still in this. The pop up powerbomb plants Jensen but Femi looks at Briggs, setting up another powerbomb to retain the title at 11:42.

**Rating:** C+. This was more about Briggs and Jensen's odd relationship and that could go in a few different directions. It would seem like they are destined to get back together and it wouldn't stun me to see them in the title picture around Stand & Deliver. On the other hand you have Femi, who seems to be in for a match against Dijak sooner or later.

Briggs checks on Jensen post match.

The D'Angelo Family lets Ilja Dragunov out of the trunk on a bridge. Dragunov goes up to Tony D'Angelo, who says this wasn't out of disrespect. The thing is Dragunov can't just walk into D'Angelo's restaurant uninvited. D'Angelo talks about bringing people to this bridge and leaving alone, but this isn't one of those times. He can end everything with a snap of his fingers, so Dragunov tells him to show what he can do. D'Angelo says have a nice walk back and goes to leave, but Dragunov says he always finds a way. The Family leaves and Dragunov looks at the title.

Muhammad Ali is going into the WWE Hall Of Fame.

### Arianna Grace vs. Gigi Dolin

If Grace wins, Dolin has to be more like her. Grace works on a headlock to start but gets sent outside without much trouble. Back in and Dolin hits a dropkick as Booker wonders why they can't get along. Grace sends her into the corner and stomps away before dropping an elbow for two. The chinlock goes on until Dolin fights up and hits an STO for two of her own. Grace grabs the tiara for a cheap shot but Dolin hits her low...for the DQ at 4:28 (Grace's face is rather amusing).

**Rating:** C-. Slightly odd ending aside, that wasn't the best match as Dolin's star has fallen a long way. She's barely done anything since Toxic Attraction broke up and now she is going to be stuck with Grace for a bit. Grace is slowly growing on me as a heel, but that might be due to her not talking here.

Karmen Petrovic is happy to have Sol Ruca back and Ruca wants Blair Davenport. Lola Vice comes in and gets in an argument with Petrovic. Brinley Reece comes in and is rather pleased with Ruca for breaking that up. Edris Enofe and Malik Blade come in to get Reece away. There was a lot in this one and good acting wasn't part of it.

### Kiana James/Izzy Dame vs. Thea Hail/Kelani Jordan

Hold on though as Kelani Jordan has been attacked so Hail is on her own. Cue Fallon Henley to be Hail's partner (that's who I thought she meant by having a friend earlier) and house is quickly cleaned. Henley takes James down and hits a springboard armdrag on Dame. Back up and Dame chokes her on the ropes before grabbing the neck crank.

Cue Jacy Jayne and Jazmyn Nyx, which has Hail rather annoyed on the apron. Henley fights up and brings Hail in to clean house as everything breaks down. Hail's Kimura to James is broken up and Jayne pulls Henley out of the way of a cheap

shot but Hail gets hit in the face instead. That leaves Jayne to Bankrupt Hail for the pin at 4:34.

**Rating:** C. I still don't get the appeal of James and Dame as a team but at least they're an established unit. They weren't the focus here as this was about Jayne messing with Hail, which has to be coming to a head sooner or later. For now, it wasn't a great match, but Henley was kept strong and that gives me hope for her future.

Post match Hail asks what Jayne is doing because this isn't who Jayne used to be. Hail thought Jayne was cool and her best friend but Jayne doesn't seem impressed. Hail ignored the bad things from Jayne and idolized her like a sister. She is done though because this is Jayne, who Hail doesn't want to be. The old Thea Hail is back and she runs around the ring to the Chase U fight song. Oh this should be fun.

Riley Osborne is rather pleased in the back when the No Quarter Catch Crew interrupts. The Crew isn't impressed and threaten the Catch Clause. Nathan Frazer and Axiom come in to talk about their success, with Axiom saying he's close to the first champion ("What ever happened to that guy?") and vague threats are made.

The Good Brothers are ready to win the Tag Team Titles because they don't think much of Bron Breakker and Baron Corbin.

Hank Walker and Tank Ledger know no one is taking them seriously so they're ready to go on to Stand & Deliver against the Wolf Dogs. Corbin and Breakker come in and give them something of a pep talk.

### Ridge Holland vs. Shawn Spears

Holland powers him into the corner to start and knocks Spears down a few more times. A missed charge lets Spears chop and punch away in the corner before he sends Holland outside. Holland picks him up for a ram into the post and Spears tells

him to do it, which has Holland second guessing himself. Instead Spears posts him and then gives him a lecture as we take a break.

Back with Holland fighting up but Spears ties him in the ropes. Spears yells about how Holland has let everyone, including his wife, down. Holland fights up and hammers away but seems scared of a DQ. Instead he sends Spears outside for a ram into the barricade before loading up the steps. A chokeslam through the announcers' table leaves Spears laying, which isn't a DQ. They go inside with Holland grabbing a chair but the referee takes it away and puts it in the corner for no logical reason. The C4 onto the chair gives Spears the pin at 9:41.

**Rating:** C-. I'm not sure what I just watched. It was like some weird psychological experiment with a match going on in the background. The idea of Spears wanting Holland to embrace his inner violence makes sense, but this was an odd way to go about it. It's different enough to overcome Spears' limitations in the ring, but I'm not sure how long that is going to be the case.

Here's what's coming next week.

Here is Trick Williams for a chat. He's having trouble putting this into words but he wants to know why Carmelo Hayes did all this. Williams went to Shawn Michaels' office because he wanted to be at Hayes' level. He had no idea it was going to go like this but Trick Willy was born. Then someone attacked him and Hayes lied to his face about it. Hayes has been lying for a long time and now they are going to have a match at Stand & Deliver.

Cue the Meta Four, with Noam Dar finding this interesting. Williams tells him to stay out of this but Dar talks about how they have both lost something. Dar says he is here to steal Williams' heat, with Williams saying Lash Legend seems to know

Williams has heat too. The match is made for next week and the brawl is on, with Williams stopping to kiss Legend (who does not seem to mind one bit). Williams stands tall to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C. I really wasn't feeling this show as the opener was the only good match, followed by a bunch of stuff that kind of came and went. The NXT Title match at Stand & Deliver got some build and we're one step closer to Williams vs. Hayes, but a lot of the rest didn't feel important. A sizable chunk of this show felt like it could have come at any time rather than less than a month away from Stand & Deliver and that's off for NXT.

### Results

LWO b. OTM – Springboard 450 to Nima

Lexis King b. Mr. Stone – Coronation

Oba Femi b. Brooks Jensen – Pop up powerbomb

Arianna Grace b. Gigi Dolin via DQ when Dolin hit her low

Kiana James/Izzy Dame b. Thea Hail/Fallon Henley – Bankrupt to Hail

Shawn Spears b. Ridge Holland – C4 onto a chair

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# Smackdown – September 1, 2023: Hurry Up And Stop

## Smackdown

Date: September 1, 2023

Location: Giant Center, Hershey, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Michael Cole, Kevin Patrick, Corey Graves

We are back to normal this week with the go home show for tomorrow night's Payback. That should be a big enough deal, but we're also getting the return of John Cena, who is going to be around for a long time to come. At the same time, we have the return of Jimmy Uso so the Bloodline is back. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

We open with a long recap of Jey Uso laying out the Bloodline and then quitting WWE.

Here is John Cena to get things going and yeah the fans still remember him. Cena is here to say thank you for everything he gets to do, including wrestling in India for the first time ever next week. As for this weekend though, he is going to be the host of Payback. As for tonight though, you saw the video about Jimmy Uso so tonight is about answers. Cena is about to say what he is doing tonight but here is Jimmy Uso to interrupt.

The fans want Jey but Jimmy says he did what he did out of love for his brother. Jimmy again explains that he didn't want Jey to get corrupted by the power like Roman Reigns...or Cena. Jimmy isn't pleased with the sky blue shirt but Cena seems to like the look. Apparently Cena and Reigns are exactly alike

(Cena: "Nah man.") because they both take and take but Cena does his with a smile. Cena thinks the pressure is getting to Jimmy and he has one (Cena does the one finger pose) thing to say: the wrong Uso quit. Jimmy tries a superkick but gets caught in the AA.

Grayson Waller and Austin Theory aren't impressed with John Cena being back. Now go watch them be the best tag team ever.

Jimmy Uso is livid.

### Rey Mysterio/Santos Escobar vs. Austin Theory/Grayson Waller

Escobar dropkicks Waller down to start and then launches Rey over the top onto the villains as we take an early break. Back with Mysterio in trouble and Escobar getting tripped off the apron. Rey manages to send Waller outside for a crash and then grab a tornado DDT. That's enough for the tag off to Escobar so the pace can pick back up. Everything breaks down and Theory takes out Escobar's leg (after Escobar shoved Rey out of the way). Rey and Theory go to the floor and the rolling Stunner gives Waller the pin on Escobar at 8:05.

**Rating:** C+. Waller getting the pin on Escobar here is a bit of a surprise as Escobar isn't on Payback and Waller is hosting a talk show on there. At the same time, I'm glad they didn't have a champion get pinned, even if it is Rey. For now though, nice opener and at least Waller FINALLY got a pin.

Michin is talking to Adam Pearce when Jimmy Uso interrupts. Pearce tells him off for being rude and that's that.

Post break Michin talks to the Good Brothers about Jimmy Uso disrespecting her. AJ Styles is going to deal with this.

Here is Bobby Lashley (rocking a suit) for a chat. Lashley acknowledges the fans liking him these days but he is here to talk about the only thing anyone wants to ask him about: what is up with him and the Street Profits? Lashley says that real

recognizes real so here are the Profits to join him. The Profits thank Lashley for everything he's done for them lately and they'll thank him with success. Lashley says they're coming for power, control and championship gold. As they're leaving here are Kevin Owens and Sami Zayn for their match, plus a staredown.

### Kevin Owens/Sami Zayn vs. Cruz del Toro/Joaquin Wilde

Non-title. Sami armbars Wilde down to start and hands it off to Owens for a Swanton. Back up and del Toro hits a rolling dropkick to send Owens into the corner. Del Toro misses a springboard dive and it's a pop up powerbomb to put him down. Del Toro gets kicked off the apron and the Helluva Kick into the Stunner finishes Wilde at 2:28. Total squash.

Post match Sami tells the Judgment Day to bring it tomorrow night.

Jimmy Uso is going to leave when he runs into AJ Styles. Arguing and shoving ensues, with Solo Sikoa running in to jump Styles. Jimmy says no one in the Bloodline can tell Jimmy a thing, then he leaves.

AJ Styles wants to beat up the Bloodline but the OC tries to calm things down. The attempts don't work out.

Here is the Miz for a chat. Miz talks about how much better he is than LA Knight, as he impersonated him so easily on Raw. Knight isn't on his level or even half of the star Miz was ten years ago. Cue Knight to interrupt and say Miz has impersonated stars such as the Rock, John Cena and now Knight himself.

Knight has done it all to get here from working nothing jobs to living in the roach infested apartments to cashing his checks at the payday loan place. Now Miz is talking about how Knight isn't on his level, but it's Miz who isn't on his level. Miz brings up Knight's failure on a reality show and

you might not remember it because he was the first eliminated. Miz was in the Marine series and has Miz and Mrs. because he succeeds everywhere he goes. Knight talks about how the star of Miz and Mrs. was Miz's wife because he just carried the bag that held his giblets.

Speaking of Maryse, he apologizes for sending her a broken husband after Payback, but Knight would be happy to fix her, YEAH. Miz laughs it off and says Knight is different than these people, who will settle for mediocrity. Knight is trying to do something but after Payback, he's sending Knight back to 2003, where he can cut promos into a hairbrush in his roach infested apartment. Knight says Miz will learn tomorrow and hits the catchphrase, but Miz jumps him with the Skull Crushing Finale. Knight gets up and chases after him but security breaks it up. They were both bringing it here and this was a fiery exchange.

### Shotzi vs. Bayley

The rest of Damage CTRL is here with Bayley. Shotzi ducks a big boot to start, as Cole asks "who thinks of shaving panthers." Bayley hammers her down in the corner but gets sent outside for a flip dive off the apron. We take a break and come back with Bayley tying her in the Tree of Woe for a bottom rope springboard elbow. Shotzi fights up so Bayley wants Iyo Sky's title. Cue Charlotte to take Sky out and Shotzi hits a DDT for the pin at 9:09.

**Rating:** C. Not much to this one, but somehow this wound up being more about Charlotte than anyone in the match. Shotzi's new look might not stand out as much but she did look rather unique with the change of pace. What mattered here was giving Shotzi a win though and hopefully she can go somewhere after years of floundering.

Video on Seth Rollins vs. Shinsuke Nakamura.

Payback rundown.

## AJ Styles vs. Solo Sikoa

No Paul Heyman this time. Sikoa runs him over with a shoulder to start but the running headbutt only hits knees. Styles hits his jumping knee and adds a running clothesline in the corner Heyman comes out. Sikoa's cheap shot doesn't work as Styles knocks him outside and hits the slingshot forearm as we take a break.

Back with Styles being sent ribs first into the post and a belly to belly gets two. Sikoa backdrops him but Styles is right back with the Pele. The running basement forearm and there's the corner clothesline to rock Sikoa again. The Phenomenal Blitz is countered into a pop up Samoan drop to give Sikoa two more. Styles knocks him right back down and hits a Lionsault of all things for two. Sikoa grabs the referee though and here is Jimmy Uso to break up the Phenomenal Forearm. Sikoa hits the Spike for the pin at 12:04.

**Rating:** B-. Kind of a lackluster main event here and you might as well have had a big sign counting down to Jimmy showing up again to interfere. This is the latest issue for the Bloodline as one guy seems to want back in but there is a chance that it's another big swerve. Styles and the OC going after the Bloodline is at least something fresh, but this wasn't a great way to bring Jimmy back.

Post match Heyman looks stunned and Jimmy hugging Sikoa makes it even more complicated. Sikoa shoves Jimmy away and goes to the floor, leaving Jimmy to drop Styles and hit the Superfly Splash. Heyman calls (presumably) Roman Reigns to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. This was a kind of all over the place show as they were trying to get Jimmy Uso back while having Cena pop in and give a hard final push towards Payback. It didn't help that last week was nearly a punt of a show (for good reason) but Payback is looking like a weak show and it isn't

like there was much excitement for the event in the first place. Not a bad show, but fairly skippable, as might be the case with Payback as well.

### Results

Austin Theory/Grayson Waller b. Rey Mysterio/Santos Escobar – Rolling Stunner to Escobar

Sami Zayn/Kevin Owens b. Cruz del Toro/Joaquin Wilde – Stunner to Wilde

Shotzi b. Bayley – DDT

Solo Sikoa b. AJ Styles – Samoan Spike

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# **Clash Of Champions 2016 (2023 Edition): Good Matches Don't**

# Make A Great Show

## Clash of Champions 2016

Date: September 25, 2016

Location: Bankers Life Fieldhouse, Indianapolis, Indiana

Attendance: 13,467

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

For some reason, this was requested back in the day so we might as well check it off the list. This is the first Raw exclusive pay per view after the Brand Split so the roster is a little limited. In this case, the main event is Kevin Owens defending the Universal Title against Seth Rollins. Let's get to it.

## Kickoff Show: Nia Jax vs. Alicia Fox

Jax showed up a few weeks ago and Fox didn't like it, leading to Fox freaking out. Then Jax beat her up in a match so we'll do it again. Fox dropkicks her at the bell to start fast and fires off kicks. That earns her some rams into the corner as Jax isn't having any of that. We're already in the chinlock for a bit before Jax sends her flying again. Fox slugs away in the corner though and hits a high crossbody. The ax kick gets two but Jax runs Fox over without much effort. The Samoan drop crushes Fox for the pin at 4:54.

**Rating:** C. This was about what you would expect here, as Jax shrugged off anything Fox threw at her and won pretty decisively. The match wasn't anything special, with Jax getting a big push as she is new on Raw. Fox is someone who could be destroyed without sacrificing much and keeping it simple and to the point was the right way to go here.

The opening video looks at what it takes to be a champion and how we got to the major matches.

## Tag Team Titles: New Day vs. Good Brothers

New Day, meaning Kofi Kingston and Big E. in this case, is defending. Before the match, Kofi talks about how a win here would make them champions for 400 days, but the Good Brothers want to break them up like Brangelina. Anderson and Gallows have never even had a big old bowl of Booty-0's!

The Brothers finally come out and it's a clothesline to Big E. on the floor, plus cheap shot to Woods. A Liger Bomb to Kofi for two and the champs are in early trouble. Gallows comes in for a kick to the head and hammers away in the corner. Big E. gets back up but Gallows knocks Kofi right back into the wrong corner. Kofi gets in a shot of his own though and the tag to Anderson takes too long, allowing Big E. to come in for the rapid fire suplexes. The Warrior Splash hits Anderson but he's able to cut off the spear through the ropes.

Gallows comes in off a blind tag and boots Big E. in the face, setting up the big boot/flapjack combination for two. The tag brings Kofi back in and he is quickly spinebusted for two more. Big E. is dropped again but Kofi breaks up the Magic Killer. Kofi manages Trouble In Paradise and Big E. is back in for the Big Ending but Gallows breaks it up. The referee yells at Gallows, meaning Woods can get in a Francesca shot to Anderson. The Midnight Hour retains the titles at 6:45.

**Rating:** B-. They crammed a lot into a rather short match here but New Day is always a good choice to open the show. You are going to get the high energy match that the fans will react to and that is a smart way to bring up the energy. The Brothers were viable challengers here and had New Day in a lot of trouble more than once before coming up short. It felt like a hot house show opener and this worked well in pretty much every aspect needed.

We recap TJ Perkins winning the Cruiserweight Classic to become the new Cruiserweight Champion.

TJ Perkins has been working to get here since 1998 and his

confidence is going to get him beyond Brian Kendrick.

### Cruiserweight Title: Brian Kendrick vs. TJ Perkins

Perkins is defending and I do miss his video game entrance (and Kendrick's I'm A Man With A Plan song). Not so much the purpose ropes, which was about all the identity the cruiserweight division had. They go with the grappling to start until TJP gets a headscissors. Kendrick switches that into a headlock but gets reversed into a kneebar, sending him straight to the ropes.

The fans are split as Kendrick ties him in the ring skirt and hammers away as commentary tries to get this division and its wrestlers over as much as possible. TJP is right back with a Muta Lock, sending Kendrick to the ropes again. Kendrick manages to send him outside to bang up TJP's neck but his own knee is hurt as well. Back in and Kendrick gets in a cross arm choke before missing a charge and crashing out to the floor. TJP fights out of another crank and hits a dropkick into a heel kick.

A jumping neckbreaker doesn't quite work for TJP but a double chickenwing backbreaker two two. With nothing else working, TJP snaps off a top rope hurricanrana to the floor for a double crash. Back in and Kendrick can't hit the Sliced Bread so TJP goes up, only to miss the 450. Kendrick can't get the Captain's Hook but TJP can't get the kneebar either. Now Sliced Bread gives Kendrick two but this time the Captain's Hook is reversed into the Detonation Kick. The kneebar retains the title at 10:33.

**Rating:** B-. This was turning into a heck of a match but there was no way around the fact that it means absolutely nothing. The Cruiserweight Title was introduced in the Cruiserweight Classic and that worked well enough, but after that it became clear why it was gone again. No matter how good the matches might be, and this was a rather good one, you can only get so

far with the purple ropes and a title for smaller wrestlers when Daniel Bryan was the hottest thing in the world just a few years ago.

Post match respect is teased but Kendrick drops him and walks off.

Cesaro, in his white tuxedo, is ready to finish the comeback and beat Sheamus to win their best of seven series. This series is about mental toughness and he is ready to show the Cesaro Section the biggest comeback in history.

We recap the first six matches, with Sheamus going up 3-0 but Cesaro has made a comeback to bring us to a winner take all match. The matches have been good, but egads it was hard to sit through this many matches between anyone.

### Cesaro vs. Sheamus

The winner gets an unspecified title shot. Cesaro wastes no time in hitting a dropkick but Sheamus is right back with the forearms to the chest. Those are broken up and Sheamus is knocked to the floor, allowing Cesaro to hit the running seated senton off the apron. Back in and Sheamus knocks him off the top for a crash though, setting up a middle rope knee. Some backbreakers stay on Cesaro's back and we hit the chinlock.

Back up and Sheamus hits a running spinwheel kick in the corner (that looked good) and a top rope clothesline gets two. Sheamus misses a charge into the post though and Cesaro scores with an uppercut to the back. A tornado DDT gets two on Sheamus and the Swiss One Nine (if that's not the name, it should be) sets up a high crossbody for two more. The Neutralizer is blocked so Cesaro hits a heck of a springboard corkscrew uppercut for another near fall.

It's too early for the Swing though and Sheamus gets two more off another backbreaker. Two Irish Curses combine for two (so

hit a third one then) but the Cloverleaf is countered into a small package to give Cesaro two of his own. Sheamus gets creative with a Razor's Edge dropped into a backbreaker (OUCH) but the Brogue Kick is countered into the Swing. Cesaro gets the Sharpshooter (while holding his back), sending Sheamus over to the rope.

The apron superplex is countered so Cesaro kicks him in the face instead, setting up one of those suicide dives which lands so badly that the referee runs out to make sure Cesaro isn't dead. Back in and a quick Brogue Kick gives Sheamus two (as we see the fourth replay of the dive, which looked TERRIFYING).

Cesaro grabs a Neutralizer for two of his own and they're both down again. Some uppercuts in the corner have Sheamus in more trouble until he cuts off a charge with a raised boot. Sheamus pulls himself up to the top but gets dropkicked down but Sheamus headbutts him right back off the top. A top rope clothesline to the floor hits Cesaro in the back and Sheamus hits White Noise on the floor. Cesaro clotheslines him into the crowd though and it's a no contest as they're both out at 16:30.

**Rating:** B+. This is a great example of a match where time has been kind. I couldn't stand this feud at the time and the reveal of them getting a Tag Team Title shot didn't help (though the Bar wound up being great) but this was an awesome fight. They didn't stop for almost any time during the match and I wanted to see what they were going to come up with next. Awesome stuff here and if they hadn't done the match to death, I would have liked it a lot more back in the day.

Post match Cesaro wants to keep going but Sheamus staggers out of the arena.

Bayley, still in the Hugger phase, is interrupted by Charlotte, still in...the only phase she has, who says Bayley

cheated to get her title shot tonight. Charlotte insists that Bayley isn't going to win tonight, with Bayley reminding her of that time she pinned Charlotte a few weeks ago. Charlotte: "You can't even beat Sasha."

### Sami Zayn vs. Chris Jericho

I do miss Sami's jaunty hat. Believe it or not, this is over Kevin Owens, who Sami doesn't like but is Jericho's new best friend. Therefore, this is about Jericho protecting his own honor after Sami said he was Owens' b\*\*\*\*. Jericho yells at the fans to start until Sami drives him into the corner and hammers away. The referee breaks it up and Jericho gets in the cheap shot.

Sami isn't having that and snaps off some armdrags into a leg lariat, meaning Jericho needs a breather. With Jericho on the floor, Sami follows him out and hits the moonsault off the barricade. Back in and the referee distracts Sami, allowing Jericho to hit the triangle dropkick to take over. A top rope elbow to the face gives Jericho two and he crotches Sami on top to cut off a quick comeback bid. Jericho loads up the bulldog but Sami sends him hard into the corner and sends him outside.

There's the big no hands running flip dive (that always looks great), followed by a Michinoku Driver for two on Jericho back inside. Sami misses a flying something off the top and Jericho is back with a step up enziguri. Jericho starts kicking him in the head but Sami pulls him down into a rollup for two more. The rope walk tornado DDT sets up the Helluva Kick but Jericho bails to the floor just in time.

The diving tornado DDT takes Jericho down again outside, only to have another Helluva Kick miss back inside. Instead Sami suplexes him into the corner but a third Helluva Kick misses, allowing Jericho to grab the Walls. Sami finally reverses into a rollup for two and the Blue Thunder Bomb connects for the

same. Then Jericho hits the Codebreaker for the pin at 15:21.

**Rating:** B. Were you expecting anything else from Jericho vs. Zayn in a fifteen minute pay per view match? Sami was fighting from underneath for most of the match, which is where he excels like few others. There is something about watching him try to survive against a bigger star and even get close to winning multiple times, only to come up short. Awesome match here, as this show has been pretty great so far.

Bosses Mick Foley and Stephanie McMahon come up to Raw World Champion Kevin Owens, saying if anyone can live up to the rest of the show, it's him. Owens isn't impressed and is ready to show them why they should have taken him over Seth Rollins with the #1 Draft pick. Rollins is no longer then man, but rather the mistake. Their mistake.

We recap the Raw Women's Title match with Charlotte defending against Bayley and Sasha Banks. Charlotte beat Banks to win the title at Summerslam when Banks had a bad back. Then Bayley showed up and beat Charlotte in a non-title match, setting up the title match.

#### Raw Women's Title: Charlotte vs. Sasha Banks vs. Bayley

Charlotte, with Dana Brooke (that didn't go very far) is defending. Banks chases Charlotte straight to the floor and starts the fight so Bayley kicks both of them in the face. Back in and Bayley rolls Charlotte up for some near falls but Banks isn't having that. Instead Bayley rolls her up for two but Charlotte pulls Banks down by the hair. We get the big three way standoff until Banks drops Bayley.

Charlotte grabs a neckbreaker to put Banks down but gets crotched on top. Bayley is back up and kicks Charlotte to the floor, setting up a twisting Stunner over the middle rope to take banks down. Brooke gets in a cheap shot on Bayley though, allowing Charlotte to knee Banks into the corner. There's a hard whip into the corner and Banks' back is getting a lot

more messed up.

Charlotte stops to deck Bayley again but Banks sends Charlotte into the corner to even things up a bit. The Bank Statement is broken up but Bayley is back in with a double high crossbody. Bayley misses a running knee in the corner though and Banks stacks both of them up, setting up the double knees. Back up and Banks breaks up the Figure Eight and Bayley hits the Bayley To Belly for two on Charlotte, leaving everyone down again.

With nothing else working, Banks and Bayley beat up Charlotte...who of course shrugs it off and sends Bayley into the corner again. If that's not enough, Charlotte drops Banks off the middle rope before doing the same to Bayley. Charlotte hits the moonsault onto both of them for two on Banks, who is right back up with the Bank Statement.

Brooke makes a save of her own and Bayley is shoved off the top for a crash. The Bank Statement has Charlotte in more trouble but Bayley breaks it up this time. Banks does the same thing with Charlotte and Bayley switching places, allowing Charlotte to send Banks hard into the barricade. Back in and Charlotte boots Bayley into Banks, followed by another big boot to retain the title at 15:28.

**Rating:** B-. Sweet goodness Charlotte was every bit as dominant back then and it was still not the most appealing thing. She kept shrugging off everything Bayley and Banks threw at her, including both at once, and then won the title by beating them both up without much trouble. Good enough match, but it was a lot of Charlotte, as tends to be the case.

The Kickoff Show panel recaps/previews the show.

Remember Nia Jax crushing Alicia Fox on the Kickoff Show? Here are some highlights, in case you were wondering about a near squash.

We recap Roman Reigns challenging Rusev for the US Title. Reigns, being kind of a jerk, interrupted Rusev and Lana's celebration and shoved her into a cake. They had been supposed to fight at Summerslam but got in a fight before the match so nothing happened.

### United States Title: Rusev vs. Roman Reigns

Rusev is defending and Lana handles his introduction. They fight over a lockup to start until Reigns knocks him outside. Back in and Reigns wins a slugout until Rusev spinwheel kicks him in the face for two. Rusev hammers away and whips him into the corner a few times as the fans are way behind Reigns. The clothesline comeback doesn't last long as Rusev knocks him outside for some rams into the barricade.

Rusev is sent into the steps for two and we hit the chinlock. That stays on for a good bit before Rusev hits a running headbutt and stops for some Bulgarian style glaring. A dropkick of all things drops Reigns again but he rolls away from a top rope headbutt (he learned from the first headbutt you see). The corner clotheslines rock Rusev, who crashes out to the floor and gets sent into the steps for a bonus.

Back in and the Superman Punch is kicked out of the air, setting up a hot shot for two. Reigns cuts off the Machka Kick and hits the Superman Punch for two of his own. Back up and the Lana distraction lets the Machka Kick connect and Rusev loses it on the referee for a bit. The Accolade (camel clutch) is broken up though and Reigns hits the spear, only to have Lana pull the referee.

That's good for an ejection and Reigns sends Rusev outside as well. The running dropkick hits Rusev but it's the Machka Kick to give him two back inside. Now the Accolade goes on but Reigns powers up and hits the spear for the pin and the title at 17:10 (it's as sudden as it sounds).

**Rating:** B-. This was the Reigns that does not have the best

reputation, as while the wrestling was good enough, it wasn't exactly exciting stuff and he kept shrugging off everything thrown at him. That doesn't make for the most interesting matches and the ending came out of absolutely nowhere. Not a bad match at all, but there was no point where I was getting interested or excited.

Seth Rollins runs into Stephanie McMahon and Mick Foley but he really doesn't want to hear anything from Stephanie. They bet on the wrong guy, and tell HHH that he bet against the wrong guy.

We recap the Raw World Title match. Finn Balor won the Universal Title at Summerslam but got hurt, meaning the title was decided in a fatal four way. HHH interfered and cost Seth Rollins the title, siding with Kevin Owens instead in quite the screwjob. Now Rollins wants revenge, as HHH (and Stephanie) bet on the wrong guy (as you might have heard all of a few seconds ago). In other words, it was a bunch of Stephanie getting to be all fierce with people while Owens was just kind of there quite a bit of the while.

#### Raw World Title: Seth Rollins vs. Kevin Owens

Owens is defending and they fight to the floor to start with Rollins getting the better of things. Back in and Rollins stomps away in the corner, setting up the running knee to the face for two. Stomping and chopping in the corner have Owens in more trouble and the middle rope Blockbuster gets two. The Pedigree is blocked though and Owens snaps off a DDT for two of his own.

Rollins is sent outside and comes up favoring his knee, allowing Owens to stomp away back inside (the fans approve). Owens kicks away at the knee and backdrops a charging Rollins out to the floor. An elbow off the apron crushes Rollins again and the backplash makes it worse. We hit the chinlock for a bit before Owens whips him hard into the corner to keep

Rollins down. Back up and Rollins starts the comeback, including the Downward Spiral into the middle buckle.

A running dropkick sends Owens outside and Rollins uses the chance to set up the announcers' table. Ever the smart champion, Owens bails back inside before anything can happen, only to get superkicked for two. Rollins misses a charge into the corner though and Owens kicks him in the knee again. The Cannonball gets two but Rollins is back up for an exchange of strikes to leave them both down.

Rollins' springboard knee is cut off so Owens can hit the pumphandle brainbuster onto the knee for two more. A super gutbuster into the frog splash gives Owens another near fall and they head back to the floor. Owens misses the splash through the announcers' table and it's another double down. Back in and Rollins hits a frog splash for two so cue Chris Jericho.

The distraction lets Owens hit the package side slam but Rollins is back with a Pedigree for the same, thanks to Jericho putting the foot on the rope. The referee gets bumped (of course) so there's no count for Rollins' Pedigree. Jericho comes in but gets backdropped to the floor, setting up the suicide dive. Stephanie McMahon pops up to send in another referee...so Owens can hit the pop up powerbomb to retain at 25:07.

**Rating:** B-. This was REALLY long and could have easily had ten minutes shaved off. It was one of those matches where it felt like they were just trying to fill in time rather than winning the match most of the time. On top of that, it also felt like it was a HHH style match of "ok, let's get everything done before we get to the shenanigans". That's not a great feeling, and it never came off like Rollins was going to win the title to make it even worse. Good action, but bad setup and execution.

**Overall Rating:** B. There's a lot of good stuff on here, but it does run a bit longer than it needs to. It also doesn't help that while the match quality is high, the show could not feel more second tier if it tried. Reigns winning the title was a moment that felt flat and other than that, there was nothing on here that came off like a game changing moment. It's definitely a pick and choose show where some of the matches are worth a look, but you might not want to sit through the whole thing.

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# Smackdown – May 5, 2023: A Really Big Preview

## Smackdown

Date: May 5, 2023

Location: Coliseo de Puerto Rico, San Juan, Puerto Rico

Commentators: Wade Barrett, Michael Cole

We are in Puerto Rico for the first time ever as Backlash will be held in the same venue tomorrow night. In addition, this is the final night for the old Smackdown roster as the Draft takes effect starting on Monday. We should be in for a big show tonight though, with what will likely be a red hot crowd. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

We open with a camera shot from outside, through the doors and into the arena (seemed like it was from a drone). That was a very cool shot and the arena looks GREAT (as well as packed).

Here is the LWO (with no huge video screen, making it look more like a house show for a change of pace) to get things going. Rey Mysterio addresses the crowd in Spanish and hypes up Bad Bunny and Zelina Vega. The latter goes to speak but is a bit overwhelmed, only to be interrupted by Judgment Day.

After the fans go nuts on Dominik, we get an argument in Spanish between the Mysterios. Rey switches to English and challenges Dominik to a Wrestlemania rematch but Ripley is between them. She'll fight Rey, but Vega gets involved as well. A mixed tag seems to be made and Dominik gets in a cheap slap on Rey before bailing.

### Viking Raiders vs. Good Brothers

Valhalla and the rest of the OC are here too, including AJ Styles on commentary. Erik and Anderson go to an early standoff so it's off to Ivar vs. Gallows. Ivar knocks him into the corner but Gallows fights out and hands it back to Anderson. That earns him a knock out to the floor, giving us a Michin vs. Valhalla showdown as we take a break.

Back with Gallows coming in to clean house, much to the fans' delight. Everything breaks down and Ivar's top rope splash gets two on Anderson. Gallows makes the save but is ready for Valhalla's attempted interference. Michin takes Valhalla down

and Gallows kicks Ivar. Erik gets knocked outside and the Magic Killer finishes Ivar at 8:07.

**Rating:** B-. This was your often required hoss fight and the Good Brothers showed that they can still do their thing when they're able to get in the ring. I'm not sure why they needed to be held out while AJ was gone as they are perfectly serviceable as a middle of the road tag team. The Vikings continue to lose and again I'm not sure why, as they could easily be used closer to the titles.

There will be a tournament for the inaugural World Heavyweight Title, with a pair of triple threats on each show. The winners will face off with each other, with the winners of the singles matches will face each other at Night Of Champions for the title.

We look at the recent European tour.

Here is Bianca Belair for a chat. She is happy to be here in Puerto Rico but she is focused on Iyo Sky. Belair has faced the best of the best and she will do it again right here tomorrow night at Backlash. That victory will make her the longest reigning Women's Champion of the modern era but here is Damage Ctrl to interrupt. Bayley talks about how Sky is going to end the title reign and Belair will need a ticket out of the ring. The fight is on with Belair getting to stare down Sky, only to get jumped from behind. Bayley escapes the KOD and Sky dropkicks Belair down. Raquel Rodriguez and Liv Morgan make the save.

Karrion Kross, with Scarlett, is ready to take out Shinsuke Nakamura tonight.

We look back at the Usos losing last week.

Solo Sikoa ignores Jimmy Uso and Jey Usos isn't happy about it. Sikoa heard him, but says he'll be doing his part tomorrow. They better do theirs, and he looks at the taped

thumb before leaving.

### Street Profits vs. Imperium

Imperium starts with a blind tag and Kaiser is able to kick Ford down. The referee didn't seem to see the tag so Vinci goes up top and dives onto both Profits. Back in and Vinci moonsaults Ford for two but he suplexes his way out of trouble. The hot tag brings in Dawkins to clean house. Dawkins plants Vinci and the Cash Out finishes for Ford at 2:41. They packed a lot into a short match here, to the point where I was surprised at how short it lasted.

Long video on Cody Rhodes vs. Brock Lesnar.

Here is Cody Rhodes for a chat. After addressing the fans in Spanish, Cody talks about some of Brock Lesnar's accomplishments. His old coach Double A talked about how the goal was to claim the Kingdom and Brock is the one guarding the door to that kingdom. There are ways to avoid facing Lesnar but Lesnar came after him. Lesnar still hasn't said why he did that but maybe Cody can beat it out of him tomorrow night as he claims his kingdom. Short and to the point here but Cody sold it hard.

Shinsuke Nakamura tells Karrion Kross to COME ON.

Riddle talks about beating the Bloodline at Backlash as Sami Zayn and Kevin Owens kind of stare. Riddle: "Am I talking too much?" Sami says there is nothing left for the two of them to say so they're ready for tomorrow.

### Karrion Kross vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

Scarlett is here with Kross, who knocks Nakamura outside for a powerbomb against the post. We take a break and come back with Nakamura kicking away and hitting the running knee in the corner for two. Scarlett offers a distraction though, allowing Kross to grab the Doomsday Saito for two of his own. Nakamura

slips out of a sleeper and kicks Kross in the head. Kinshasa is cut off with a clothesline but Nakamura is back with more kicks to the head. The second Kinshasa attempt finishes Kross at 8:48.

**Rating:** B. These two had some nice chemistry together and they beat each other up rather well in Nakamura's Smackdown farewell. Nakamura is someone who could easily be reheated for a run at a title sooner than later and he looked good in one of his first matches back after his hiatus. Kross was his usual self: looking intimidating and losing in a match, as he still can't really get going.

Video on the NXT stars coming up via the Draft.

Adam Pearce welcomes Cameron Grimes to Smackdown when Baron Corbin interrupts. Corbin mocks Grimes for being the last pick, but Grimes brings up the Corbin wasn't picked at all. The match is made for next week.

Backlash rundown.

Bad Bunny and Damian Priest got into it at the Backlash press conference.

### Zelina Vega/Rey Mysterio vs. Dominik Mysterio/Rhea Ripley

Finn Balor is here with Judgment Day. Vega ducks some shots to the face to start and hits Ripley in the jaw, which does not seem to be the best idea. Ripley misses a big stomp and gets taken down with a hurricanrana, allowing Vega to wave at her. It's off to Rey vs. Dominik, with the fans not liking the latter. Rhea's cheap shot from the apron doesn't do much as Vega comes in and loads up a 619 on Dominik, only to get kicked in the face by Ripley.

We take a break and come back with Vega hitting Ripley in the face, followed by a rolling kick to the head. Ripley drops her again and we hit the chinlock as Dominik hits the Eddie dance.

Vega jawbreaks her way out of a powerbomb attempt and kicks Ripley off, allowing the diving tag to Rey.

Dominik comes in as well and gets hit in the head for his efforts. A big spinning springboard crossbody drops Dominik again but he manages to send Rey face first into the buckle. Dominik hits a Michinoku Driver for two, with Vega having to make the save. Dominik tries the Three Amigos but Rey reverses the last one into a small package for the pin at 9:27.

**Rating:** B-. I don't think there was any secret about how this one was going to end as Rey had to win and Ripley wasn't going to take the all. Vega was doing her thing here and the evasive stuff and using her smaller stature to her advantage worked against the much bigger Ripley. She still doesn't have a real chance at the title, but points for giving her that little, tiny glimmer of hope.

Post match the beatdown, including Damian Priest, is on but Bad Bunny (in a sweet old WWF logo jacket), with kendo stick, and the LWO, come in for the save. Priest runs off as the good guys clean house. Bunny puts on the LWO shirt to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B. This show was about getting everything ready for Backlash and they made me interested in seeing the show. If nothing else, the crowd reaction and energy this show had made it feel that much more important and we should be in for a big night tomorrow. The place came unglued for Bad Bunny and if he can back that up in the ring, we should be in for a heck of a Saturday. There wasn't a bad match on the show and you can tell the fans were into what they were seeing, making this a rather fun and quality show.

### Results

Good Brothers b. Viking Raiders – Magic Killer to Ivar

Street Profits b. Imperium – Cash Out to Vinci

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Karrion Kross – Kinshasa

Rey Mystério/Zelina Vega b. Dominik Mystério/Rhea Ripley –

Small package to Dominik

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# Monday Night Raw – March 27, 2023: The 70 Year Old Special

Happy Birthday Pop.

## **Monday Night Raw**

Date: March 27, 2023

Location: Footprint Center, Phoenix, Arizona

Commentators: Kevin Patrick, Corey Graves

It's the go home Raw before Wrestlemania and that means it is time to get the final push for a lot of this show's weekend matches. In addition, we'll have Cody Rhodes facing Solo Sikoa before his final showdown with Roman Reigns on Smackdown. We might get one or two more additions to the card but there

isn't much left to do. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

Here is the Miz to get things going. He is fired up to be here and promises to get to the bottom of a very personal feud. This brings out Trish Stratus, Lita and Becky Lynch for a chat. Becky accuses Miz of having small testicles, with Miz saying his wife disagrees. Becky: "It must be comforting to know that Maryse didn't get around much before you were married." Lynch talks about how she respect these two but Miz asks Lita and Trish what it's like to be Becky's backup. Lita says she feels like a champion but here is Damage Ctrl to interrupt.

Bayley accuses Lita of meaning something 20 years ago but Trish says that title says she means something now. Bayley talks about how being in the ring with these two would be a dream 20 years ago. Now though, it's still a dream for people who can't accomplish anything. They want the titles back, which sends Becky into a rant about how many times Damage Ctrl loses, they keep coming back. The triple staredown ensues.

Becky Lynch vs. Iyo Sky

Lynch starts fast with a suplex to send Sky outside. With Damage Ctrl having a meeting, Becky grabs Bayley by the hair to bring her back in. Sky hits a running dropkick to take over but Becky is back with a running forearm for a double knockdown. With Sky on the floor, Lynch hits a baseball slide, followed by a forearm off the apron.

Back in and a layout reverse DDT gets two on Sky as we take a break. We come back with Lynch getting two off a suplex but Sky catches her on top. That means an Asai moonsault can drop Lynch on the floor for two back inside as the fans approve. Over The Moonsault misses though and the Manhandle Slam finishes Sky at 11:50.

**Rating:** B-. This was another good example of what happens when you have two talented stars going in there and getting to do their thing. Lynch is able to wrestle a good match when she is given the chance and Sky really can make the high flying work as well as probably any woman in the division. Good match here, and the six woman tag could have a lot of potential.

We look back at Cody Rhodes predicting that the Bloodline would turn on Roman Reigns.

Video on Asuka, with various Hall of Famers and legends talking about how awesome she really is.

We recap Logan Paul knocking out Seth Rollins last week. Then in the back, Paul stole the mic and shouted about getting to do it again at Wrestlemania.

Seth Rollins...is interrupted by Mustafa Ali, who wants Rollins to be more positive. Rollins laughs at the Positive Ali idea and the result is a match later tonight.

### Seth Rollins vs. Mustafa Ali

Ali forearms him in the face to start and Rollins seems annoyed. A clothesline turns Ali inside out and the stomping is on in the corner. Ali gets tied in the corner for a running stomp, followed by the regular version to give Rollins the pin at 2:07. The stomp in the corner looked painful.

Post match Rollins says if he can't beat Logan Paul at Wrestlemania, he's the joke. The match is on Paul's anniversary and Rollins wants to take him out, so sing that song!

Earlier today Baron Corbin was asking Adam Pearce what was going on with his losses when Chelsea Green interrupted. She wants to know why she isn't in the Women's Showcase at Wrestlemania. Pearce says she doesn't have a partner, but here is Sonya Deville to say Pearce is just jealous that she didn't

do as well as she did in this role. That's enough for Pearce, who puts them in a qualifying match for the showcase. Corbin is still there and asks "seriously?" but Pearce leaves.

It's time for a weigh-in between Omos (with MVP) and Brock Lesnar. Before Lesnar comes out, MVP talks about how Lesnar has done great things at Wrestlemania, including beating people like Kurt Angle, Goldberg, Roman Reigns and even...the Undertaker. Unlike those men though, Lesnar cannot suplex or F5 Omos. With that, Omos weighs in at 410lbs. Cue Lesnar, who goes right after Omos and even picks up the scale, only to get kicked in the face. That's enough for Lesnar to bail outside and look a bit scared. This was pretty quick but they got the point across.

Video on Charlotte being awesome over the years.

Finn Balor talks about Edge wanting to be inside the Cell with him and says there is nothing more dangerous than a caged demon.

### Street Profits/Braun Strowman/Ricochet vs. Alpha Academy/Viking Raiders

Valhalla is here with the Raiders. Dawkins takes Gable down to start but has to slip out of the ankle lock. Strowman comes in to clean house on the villains until Ford (with his own double bicep pose) comes in for some armdrags. Everything breaks down and we get the Ivar vs. Strowman vs. Otis showdown. Otis plants an invading Ford and the Academy stands tall as we take a break.

Back with Erik chinlocking Ford and handing it off to Otis, as Maxxine Dupri is watching in the back. Maxxine likes the Otis shirt coming off for a running elbow (with Otis telling her he's here). An enziguri gets Ford out of trouble and it's Dawkins coming back in to clean house. Strowman comes in to do the train around the ring. Ricochet Swantons off of Strowman's shoulders to hit Erik, followed by Ford (who tagged in) diving

OVER Strowman with the frog splash for the pin at 11:21.

**Rating:** C+. The ending looked great as Ricochet did his crazy flip and then Ford made it look even better. This was probably a lot more interesting than the showcase is going to be, as I still can't believe there isn't even a title shot on the line. For now though, this was a good match with a better finish so maybe they'll surprise me at Wrestlemania.

Cody Rhodes finds it interesting that he has to face the Bloodline's enforcer this week. The question has been if he has earned it and Cody says he has always earned it. Tonight he beats Solo Sikoa, and at Wrestlemania, it's Roman Reigns.

This week's parody trailer: the Bloodline are Goodfellas. At least that matches up.

Video on Bianca Belair coming up the ranks and becoming a major star. Belair really is one of the only women who has come up with no wrestling background and become part of the top group.

Earlier today, Austin theory was in the empty arena and talked about how John Cena allegedly humiliated him on the microphone a few weeks ago. The only thing Cena can't see is the future, because Theory is a star. It doesn't matter if Theory is in an empty ring or in a sold out stadium, because he'll show Cena what a star really is. Good stuff here, but Theory needs to win in a pretty dominant fashion on Saturday.

Stacy Keibler is going into the Hall of Fame.

Wrestlemania Showcase Qualifying Match: Sonya Deville/Chelsea Green vs. Michin/Candice LeRae

Michin gets taken into the wrong corner to start so Deville and green can take turns hammering on her. A double neckbreaker gets Michin out of trouble as everything breaks down. A quick Unprettier gives Green the pin on Yim at 2:57.

Paul Heyman gives a Roman Reigns vs. Cody Rhodes version of the 23rd Psalm before saying Rhodes isn't ready. Yes he needs to face Solo Sikoa tonight because Roman Reigns has been guided from being the Big Dog to the Tribal Chief. Rhode isn't ready for Sunday but needs to be ready to take a beating tonight and then another from Reigns. Be ready for pain, and to acknowledge the Tribal Chief.

Here are Dominik Mysterio and Damien Priest (who have been standing in the ring since before a break and Heyman's interview) with Dominik talking about what a horrible father Rey Mysterio really is. We see Rey punching Dominik and agreeing to face Dominik at Wrestlemania. He should have told his mother to shut up a long time ago and wishes Eddie Guerrero was his real father.

### Damien Priest vs. Rey Mysterio

Dominik Mysterio is here with Priest and we're joined in progress (19 minutes after Priest's music started to play) with Rey taking Priest down. Priest plants him with a lifting Downward Spiral for two but misses a big boot. The 619 is broken up with a heck of a clothesline but Rey super hurricanranas him down. Now the 619 can connect but Dominik crotches Rey on top for the DQ at 3:10.

**Rating:** C. This was about having Dominik screw over Rey before they fight at Wrestlemania so there wasn't much to expect from the match itself. They did as much as they could with the time they had so this was good enough to fulfill its purpose. Other than that, can we please find something for Priest to do? Or at least a feud of his own? It has been a long time now for him.

Post match the beatdown is on but Legado del Fantasma runs in for the save.

Video on Andre the giant, who has a battle royal named after him on Friday.

The Good Brothers and Johnny Gargano are in the Andre battle royal and go to do something else. Rick Boogs is excited about being in and Elias promises to win. Dexter Lumis and Bronson Reed both scare Elias, as does Bobby Lashley.

We look at the Usos jumping Kevin Owens and Sami Zayn on Smackdown.

Owens and Zayn talk about how this is going to be the biggest Tag Team Title match of all time. They have to win because the Bloodline has to be stopped.

### Gunther vs. Dolph Ziggler

Non-title and Imperium is here with Gunther. Ziggler hits a dropkick and the jumping DDT but Gunther gets him in the corner for the boot choke as we take a break. Back with Ziggler getting two off a Fameasser but getting chopped HARD out of the air. A German suplex and the powerbomb set up the Last Symphony to finish Ziggler at 5:43. Not enough shown to rate but Ziggler got in some offense before getting crushed by the monster that is Gunther.

Post match Gunther promises the same thing for Drew McIntyre and Sheamus.

### Cody Rhodes vs. Solo Sikoa

Paul Heyman is here with Sikoa. A dropkick hits Sikoa to start but he snaps off a Samoan drop for a breather. They head outside with Sikoa being whipped into the steps but he suplexes Rhodes back inside. That's enough to send Cody outside, where Sikoa can drop him onto the announcers' table as we take a break. The swinging Rock Bottom onto the table has Cody in trouble as we take a break.

Back with Cody fighting out of a nerve hold but getting clotheslined in the corner. Cod jumps over him in the corner and snaps off the powerslam, followed by the Disaster Kick.

The Cody Cutter connects and Cross Rhodes drops Sikoa again for a rather delayed two, with Sikoa getting a foot on the rope.

A moonsault misses for Cody but the Samoan Spike misses. Cody grabs another Cody Cutter but here are the Usos (with music), allowing Sikoa to hit a superkick. Spinning Solo gets two (Heyman is surprised) but here are Kevin Owens and Sami Zayn to brawl with the Usos. Another Samoan Spike is countered into Cross Rhodes to finish Sikoa at 12:53.

**Rating:** B-. Rhodes winning to shake Heyman (and presumably Reigns) up is a smart move and I don't think Sikoa is going to be ruined by having his first loss be to someone who very well could be World Champion next week. This was the best way to end Raw, as Rhodes only has Reigns left in front of him. We'll get a showdown on Friday and a match on Sunday, so nice job on setting things up.

A serious looking Heyman pulls out his phone to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. I'm sure there are going to be a lot of complaints about this show not being the most exciting or the highest quality and those are pretty fair. At the same time though, this is one of the few shows of the year that isn't about what takes place between the bells. This show is all about getting things ready for Wrestlemania and it went fairly well, with a few good matches thrown in. Good enough show, but none of it is going to matter once the bell rings on Saturday.

### Results

Becky Lynch b. Iyo Sky – Manhandle Slam

Seth Rollins b. Mustafa Ali – Stomp

Street Profits/Braun Strowman/Ricochet b. Alpha Academy/Viking Raiders – Frog splash to Erik

Sonya Deville/Chelsea Green b. Michin/Candice LeRae – Unprettier to Green

Rey Mysterio b. Damien Priest via DQ when Dominik Mysterio

interfered

Gunther b. Dolph Ziggler – Last Symphony

Cody Rhodes b. Solo Sikoa – Cross Rhodes

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# Impact Wrestling – September 15, 2022: The Road To The Road To The Road

## Impact Wrestling

Date: September 15, 2022

Location: The Factory, Dallas, Texas

Commentators: Matthew Rehwoldt, Tom Hannifan

We're rapidly approaching Victory Road and then Bound For Glory, meaning some of the shows' major matches have already been announced. With some of the bigger shows on the way, it would make sense to give them that much extra attention.

There's a good chance of getting some more added to the cards this week so let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

Opening recap.

X-Division Title: Mascara Dorada vs. Mike Bailey

Bailey is defending. They trade armdrags to start before both block one at the same time. An exchange of countered hurricanranas gives them a standoff and they chop it out until Bailey is knocked to the floor. The slingshot dive misses and Dorada wins a chop off outside. Back in and a heck of a suicide dive drops Bailey, setting up a missed top rope double stomp back inside.

Bailey pulls him into a kneebar but Dorada is in the ropes rather quickly. The running twisting shooting star gives Bailey two so Dorada sends him to the apron. That means the missed dive, allowing Bailey to hit the big springboard moonsault for the huge crash on the floor. Back in and Dorada catches him on top with an enziguri, setting up a jumping super hurricanrana for two. A Lionsault (minus the running) hits Bailey's raised boots though and Bailey kicks away, setting up the Ultimate Weapon for the pin at 8:06.

**Rating:** C+. This is Bailey 101 and it's still working well. Bailey is going to do the same stuff every week and have a pretty good match, though when you've seen one or two of them, you've probably seen them all. Dorada was built up with a win last week and then puts Bailey over here. That's a good enough way to go, but Bailey needs a big challenger soon or this is going to get stale.

Post match Bailey shows respect to Dorada. Cue Kenny King to jump both of them from behind and the beatdown is on.

We go back to Violent By Design (because of course we are)

where Deaner beats up one of the nameless guys in yellow. Someone else names Young the Designer and he's cool with that. Then they all say their name is Violence and Young seems pleased. This is a nightmare right? It has to be. There is no other reason for this stupid thing to continue so I'm convinced that I'm dreaming.

Scott D'Amore gives Mike Bailey a title defense against Delirious at Victory Road. At the same show, there are a bunch of people in a #1 contenders match, including Mia Yim and Frankie Kazarian. Bailey is happy.

Here's what's coming at various shows.

### Decay vs. Moose/Steve Maclin

Decay knocks Maclin into the corner to start and Taurus gets to stomp away. Moose gets in a cheap shot from the apron though and comes in to demonstrate proper stomping technique. Maclin comes back in but gets rammed into Moose, allowing Taurus to grab a rollup pin at 1:51. Well they got me there.

Post match Sami Callihan pops up to promise violence at Victory Road. We also see a clip of Moose saying he was going to screw Maclin over before Maclin can do it to him. Maclin promises to hurt Callihan at Victory Road, but Callihan has a clip of Maclin promising to screw Moose over. Violence ensues until Callihan comes in to leave them both laying.

We look at some miscommunication costing Taya Valkyrie a match against Chelsea Green last week.

Rosemary and Jessicka argue over the loss, with Taya Valkyrie thinking it might have been Rosemary's fault. Jessicka needs help though and Taya has an idea.

### Alisha vs. Killer Kelly

Tasha Steelz is on commentary. Kelly drives her into the corner to start but Alisha punches her way out. That earns

Alisha a choke on the ropes into a release fisherman's suplex as Stealz brags about herself nonstop. A missed charge in the corner looks to let Alisha grab a Backpack Stunner but Kelly grabs the rope. Kelly pump kicks her, setting up the Killer Klutch for the tap at 2:14.

Post match Stealz grabs a chair but Kelly takes it away and stares at her.

Some people are sitting around a dying man in a hospital bed. The man tries to say something...and Joe Hendry bursts through the door, turning it into a Hendry music video. The man dies but no one seems to notice.

Tag Team Titles: Josh Alexander/Rich Swann vs. Honor No More

Honor No More is defending. Bennett gets knocked into the corner by Alexander to start and Swann comes in with a running legdrop. Back up and Swann gets taken into the wrong corner so Taven can come in, allowing him to knock Alexander off the apron like a true villain should.

A catapult into a kick to the face gives Bennett two and we hit the corner stomping. Swann fights out of the corner and dives between the legs though, allowing the hot tag to Alexander. House is cleaned, including the running crossbody to the back to knock Bennett outside. Swann dives onto both champs and it's a spinning kick into a bridging German suplex for two on Bennett back inside.

The threat of an ankle lock sends Bennett over to Taven as everything breaks down. Just The Tip gets two on Alexander but he gets his knees up to block a Lionsault. Maria gets on the apron so Eddie Edwards can run in and kendo stick Alexander, only to have Heath come in with the Wake Up Call to Taven for the DQ at 6:58.

**Rating:** C+. The Heath issues with Alexander continue and I'm curious to see where that is going. They have built Heath up

rather well but at some point he needs to actually win something. The match was pretty good at least, which shouldn't be surprising given who was involved, though the Heath part is what matters.

Johnny Swinger and Zicky Dice bring a Serious Pizza to Jordynne Grace but accidentally suggest that Masha Slamovich is going to destroy her. This earns Dice a match with her next week.

Heath tries to apologize to Josh Alexander and Rich Swann but Scott D'Amore comes in and seems to make a six man tag. Maybe?

### Mickie James vs. Hyan

James gets rolled up for a fast two to start and a Wasteland into a legdrop gets the same. Mickie slips out of a suplex though and strikes away, including the flapjack into the top rope Thesz press. The MickDT finishes at 2:36.

Post match Gisele Shaw comes in to steal the spotlight, plus challenge her to Victory Road. Sure.

Vincent recharges PCO again.

Brian Myers talks about how he and Bhupinder Gujjar have a lot of similarities but he's ready to climb the ladder next week.

Here's what's coming up on various shows.

### Motor City Machine Guns vs. Good Brothers

Shelley and Anderson start things off as the fans seem more into the Brothers. With nothing going on, Gallows and Sabin come in with Sabin getting a boot up in the corner. The middle rope dropkick staggers Gallows and the Guns start the double teaming. Gallows finally kicks Shelley in the face and it's Anderson coming in to hammer away.

The big elbows set up Gallows' chinlock for as long as you

would expect a chinlock to last. Back up and Sabin avoids a charge in the corner, setting up the hot tag to Shelley. Everything breaks down and the Guns hit stereo baseball slides as we take a break. We come back with Anderson getting taken down with a dragon screw legwhip and then Shelley doing it again in the corner.

The Figure Four stays on the leg but Anderson grabs the rope for the break. Sabin goes old school with an Indian Deathlock so Anderson rakes the eyes to break it up again. Shelley grabs a front facelock but gets caught in a spinebuster to give Anderson a breather. Gallows comes in and gets to kick away, including a pumphandle powerslam.

Everything breaks down and Gallows is sent outside for some kicks to the face. A missile dropkick/Downward Spiral combination gets two on Anderson but Gallows is back in for the belly to back suplex/neckbreaker combination for two on Sabin. Shelley is back in for the Dream Sequence and the Skull and Bones finishes Anderson at 18:10.

**Rating:** B. It was a good match and felt like something of a dream showdown, which it more or less is given how successful both of them have been. At the same time, this feels like a match that was designed to write off the Good Brothers, who lost clean after losing their titles. That might be the best thing too, as there is nothing left for the team to do. As for the match, they pretty much tore it up, which is what happens when two good teams get to put in the time.

Too Sweets are exchanged to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B-. Solid show this week with the main event carrying things, as it tends to do. Other than that, they kept things moving with shorter matches that didn't drag things down too much. What matters here is getting things ready for Victory Road so we can move on to Bound For Glory, even if it is more than a little strange to have them back to back. Good

show here, and now we get to move on to the bigger stuff.

### Results

Mike Bailey b. Mascara Dorada – Ultimate Weapon

Decay b. Moose/Steve Maclin – Rollup to Maclin

Killer Kelly b. Alisha – Killer Klutch

Honor No More b. Josh Alexander/Rich Swann via DQ when Heath interfered

Mickie James b. Hyan – MickDT

Motor City Machine Guns b. Good Brothers – Skull and Bones to Anderson

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# **Impact Wrestling – September 8, 2022: Ok, Not ALL Of Them**

**Impact Wrestling**

Date: September 8, 2022

Location: The Factory, Dallas, Texas

Commentators: Matthew Rehwoldt, Tom Hannifan

We're still on the way to Victory Road and that means we should get some stuff being built up this week. That could go in a few different ways but we do at least have the main event set. In other words, it is probably time for Josh Alexander to keep dealing with Honor No More, who will be terrorized by Heath even more. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

Opening recap.

Ace Austin/Chris Bey vs. Aussie Open

Aussie Open is getting around as of late. The Aussies jump them to start and Bey is kicked out to the floor without much effort. Austin is right there for the save, including a handstand on the apron. Bey is back up with the big running flip dive but the Aussies catch them inside with a double spinebuster ram into each other. We settle down to Fletcher slamming Austin and running him over with a shoulder.

Back up and Austin avoids a charge in the corner, allowing the rolling tag off to Bey. A standing Sliced Bread drops Fletcher and everything breaks down, with Austin hitting the big running flip dive to Davis on the floor. That leaves Bey to frog splash Fletcher for two but Davis is back in to send Austin outside. Some forearms to the head rock Bey, setting up the Coriolis (kind of a double Death Valley Driver) for the pin at 7:05.

**Rating:** C+. Good start to the show here and a nice way to establish Aussie Open as big deals. The Bullet Club still means something and it is a good idea to have the Aussies beat them clean. Aussie Open already has exposure coming off of AEW so push them for a bit, especially if they won't be around that long.

Here's what's coming tonight and at Victory Road.

Honor No More is ready to keep winning, with Kenny King wanting the X-Division Title. Eddie Edwards is going to crush Heath once and for all.

The Good Brothers want their Tag Team Titles back but the Motor City Machine Guns come in to say they want the dream match. Let's do it at Bound For Glory. Or we'll make it next week.

### Mickie James vs. Raychell Rose

Mickie grabs a headlock and armbar to start but gets taken into the corner for a knee to the ribs. Back up and Mickie kicks her away and hits the top rope Thesz press for two. The MickDT finishes Rose at 3:15.

**Rating:** C-. Just a step above a squash here as Mickie begins her climb up through the ranks one more time. That is something that has some potential and now I'm wondering who else she is going to get to face on the way there. Nothing match of course, but it's the start of a long story.

Kenny King breaks up a chat between Scott D'Amore and Mia Yim because he wants another X-Division Title shot. D'Amore says not so fast but he'll have an idea next week. King is also getting a warmup match and it's next.

Steve Maclin insists that there is no alliance with Moose and he'll prove it.

### Kenny King vs. Yuya Uemura

King takes him down without much trouble and Uemura's shoulders have no effect. Uemura gets taken down by the head but slips up and drops an elbow for two. Back up and King pulls him off the top for a nasty crash though and we take a break. We come back with Uemura fighting out of a chinlock and hitting a dropkick. A Saito suplex gives Uemura two but King

is back up with a spinebuster for the same. They head outside with Uemura being sent into the steps but Mia Yim comes out to yell at King. A kick to the head rocks King, allowing Uemura to get up top for a high crossbody and the pin at 12:30.

**Rating:** C+. This was about getting Uemura a win to start his time around here and if it builds up Yim in whatever she's doing is a nice bonus. I'm not entirely sure where this is going but it is a good thing to have Uemura getting established. He is a guy with some buzz at the moment so let him see what he can do with a nice win to start.

Flashback Moment Of The Week: Bobby Roode b. Sting at Victory Road 2012.

Sami Callihan is ready for barbed wire at Victory Road.

Doering finds Eric Young and says he still believes in violence. Then a bunch of people in yellow hoodies come up behind Doering and shout VIOLENCE over and over. WHY IS THIS STUPID THING GETTING BOOSTED UP AGAIN???

### Taya Valkyrie vs. Chelsea Green

Rosemary, Jessicka and Deonna Purrazzo are all here too. Taya kicks her in the face to start and hits a running crossbody for two. Believe it or not, Taya talks trash but Green sends her outside. A running shot cuts Taya down though and Green chokes away back inside. Taya is back up with some strikes to the face, including a hard knee. Green kicks her in the head but Taya is pulls her down to go after the leg. That means a quick distraction so Purrazzo can trip Taya, setting up the Unprettier to finish for Green at 6:30.

**Rating:** C. This continues the issues between Rosemary/Jessicka/Taya, as the former two were nowhere to be seen when Taya was in trouble. The match wasn't much to see but Green getting the boost is a good sign. She hasn't quite been able to maintain momentum so seeing it keep moving

forward for another week is a good thing.

Jordynne Grace isn't intimidated by Masha Slamovich. She goes into her locker room and finds MASHA'S GONNA KILL YOU painted on a wall.

Vincent talks about resurrecting PCO and how their voices are in unison. They are together in Honor No More.

### Digital Media Title: Bhupinder Gujjar vs. Brian Myers

Myers is defending and gets taken down for some forearm to the face to start. A basement superkick gives Gujjar two but it's too early for the Gargoyle spear. Myers manages a quick posting and we take a break. Back with Gujjar hitting something like a Sling Blade and a Samoan drop gets two. Myers manages an enziguri and hits the implant DDT for two before going to grab the title. That doesn't work as Gujjar takes it away and belts Myers for the DQ at 8:31.

**Rating:** C. And so it continues. The Digital Media Title sounded like something that could have been a fun idea, or at least a nice change of pace, but it is nothing more than a lower midcard title with Gujjar vs. Myers being a boring feud. I'm sure we'll get something else between these two as this feud just has to continue.

Here's what's coming on various shows.

Gail Kim comes up to Savannah Evans and Tasha Steelz to put the latter on commentary, as per Killer Kelly's request.

Scott D'Amore makes a ladder match for the Digital Media Title in two weeks.

### Eddie Edwards vs. Heath

Edwards jumps him before the bell but Heath punches into the corner to get out of trouble. That doesn't last long as Edwards knocks him around and chokes on the rope for a bit.

Back up and Heath manages a toss to the floor and we take a break. Back with Edwards hitting a forearm to the face for two and grabbing a chinlock. Heath fights up and stereo crossbodies put them both down. Back up and Heath hits a DDT for two, followed by the Wake Up Call, which draws out Honor No More. The distraction lets Eddie hit a low blow so the Boston Knee Party can finish Heath at 12:15.

**Rating:** C+. Heath is a weird case as he is clearly in over his head against Honor No More but he is inspired to keep fighting because of what happened to his friend. That being said, there is no reason for him to be beating Edwards or really coming close to doing so. Let him go over other members of the team, but this was about as much as he should have been able to do against someone on Edwards' level

Post match Eddie grabs the mic and says Honor No More wants to know which side Josh Alexander is on in this war. Cue Alexander to say this isn't a war because no one is pulling any strings against Honor No More. Alexander says his side is across from Eddie so the fight is on. Cue Honor No More for the beatdown, with Heath and Rich Swann running in for a failed save attempt. The big beatdown ends the show.

**Overall Rating:** C. I wasn't really feeling this one as there wasn't much that kept my interest this week. The wrestling was fine and they advanced enough stories, but nothing was exactly jumping off the page. Victory Road isn't looking overly interesting and that isn't going to leave much time for Bound For Glory. Not a bad show here, but one of their weaker efforts in recent weeks.

### Results

Aussie Open b. Ace Austin/Chris Bey – Coriolis to Bey

Mickie James b. Raychell Rose – MickDT

Yuyu Uemura b. Kenny King – High crossbody

Chelsea Green b. Taya Valkyrie – Unprettier

Brian Myers b. Bhupinder Gujjar via DQ when Gujjar used the

title belt

Eddie Edwards b. heath – Boston Knee Party

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# Impact Wrestling – September 1, 2022: Nice And Steady

## **Impact Wrestling**

Date: September 1, 2022

Location: The Factory, Dallas, Texas

Commentators: Tom Hannifan, Matthew Rehwoldt

The road to Victory Road and then Bound For Glory continues and we're going big this week. Honor No More is finally getting its shot against the Good Brothers for the Tag Team Titles. This is a long time coming and now the question is how far Impact is willing to go with Honor No More. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

Opening recap.

Opening sequence.

Tag Team Titles: Honor No More vs. Good Brothers

They're starting fast and the Good Brothers are defending. The fans seem behind Honor No More as it's a slugout to start. Taven and Bennett take Anderson into the corner for a running kick to the head before we settle down to Gallows beating on Bennett in the corner. It's off to Taven for a kick to the face in the corner and a neckbreaker gets two on Anderson. Back up and Anderson fights out of a double team, only to get kicked back down for two.

Taven's Lionsault hits knees but Bennett is right there to cut Gallows off before the hot tag. That doesn't really matter as Anderson gets in another shot and hands it off to Gallows a few seconds later. House is cleaned, including a pumphandle spinning...something for two on Taven. Bennett breaks up the Magic Killer so Anderson gives Taven the spinebuster instead. Back up and Bennett sends Gallows to the floor and crotches Anderson on top, setting up the Proto Pack for the pin and the titles at 8:17.

**Rating:** C. This didn't have much time to get anywhere and it didn't really get out of second gear. The Good Brothers wrapping up with the company made this a pretty obvious conclusion but at least it was a clean win to give us new champions. On top of that, Honor No More HAD to win something before the team stopped meaning anything so this was long overdue.

Maria comes in to celebrate.

Video on Killer Kelly, who is feeling like a star since her debut.

Honor No More celebrates their win but Eddie Edwards is STILL on PCO. Vincent intervenes again.

Here's what's coming tonight and at Victory Road.

### X-Division Title: Kenny King vs. Mike Bailey

King, with Maria, is challenging and elbows Bailey in the head to start. A clothesline out of the corner puts Bailey down again and there's a snap powerslam for two. Back up and Bailey knocks him outside but a dive is broken up, allowing King to hit him with a headbutt. A t-bone suplex sends Bailey hard into the apron and we take a break. We come back with Bailey hitting a middle rope dropkick but Bailey kicks him down again. The running corkscrew shooting star press gets two on King but he's back up and accidentally kicks the referee down.

Bailey's Ultimate Weapon is broken up with a low blow and another referee comes in for the delayed two. Back up and Bailey tries a sunset flip but Maria grabs King's hands so he can get the pin at 12:11. And no of course not because the original referee saw Maria cheating so we're restarting and Honor No More is barred from ringside. King loads up the Royal Flush but Bailey reverses into a cradle to retain at 13:31.

**Rating:** C+. That was a big tease of a finish and it wouldn't shock me to see a rematch between these two at Victory Road. I'm not big on Bailey but they have been pushing him hard and making his reign feel like a big deal as he keeps racking up wins. Good match here, and the ending probably builds to something else so well done.

Brian Myers tells Scott D'Amore to get the Digital Media Title back but D'Amore says do it yourself. Then Bhupinder Gujjar drops Myers and leaves the title.

Rosemary, Jessicka and Taya Valkyrie have a drink together but Taya still isn't sure about Jessicka.

Flashback Moment Of The Week: Sami Callihan wins the World Title on the October 29, 2019 Impact.

Aussie Open is ready to win the Tag Team Titles and they'll start by beating the Bullet Club.

Moose and Steve Maclin argue again.

Eric Young rants at Violent By Design and Joe Doering walks off. Young does as well, but Deaner can decide who to follow. Get well soon Joe.

Here is the returning Mickie James for a chat. She seems rather pleased with the warm reception before talking about November being 24 years since she first set foot in a ring. The last few years have been a journey, from her sister's deathbed to being released to being thrown out like the trash to being told she was too old and fat.

That's good for a MICKIE chant before she talks about everything that has happened in her latest run for the company. She even headlined a pay per view but then she lost her Knockouts Title and was betrayed by Chelsea Green. It had her thinking that she couldn't do it anymore so she broke up with wrestling.

All she wanted to do when she first got into wrestling was to make it a better place for women and she thinks she has done just that. At one point though, she also promised herself that she was done if she didn't think she could do it at a high level anymore. Mickie isn't sure if she can do it anymore, but she isn't retiring right now.

Instead, she wants to earn it with dirt in her eyes and grit in her teeth, so the open challenge is on for everyone and she is going from the bottom of the roster to the top. But if she loses (Fan: "YOU'RE NOT GONNA LOSE!"), she's done and it ends one of two ways: as Knockouts World Champion, or her being gone for good. This was an emotional promo and Mickie's last

rodeo (her words) should be a heck of a ride.

Josh Alexander talks about how great Mickie James is but he's ready for Eddie Edwards at Bound For Glory. And no, he doesn't buy Honor No More's sales pitch, because no one is more Impact than him. Edwards comes in to say everyone knows Alexander is disrespected. He brings up Heath...who runs in and beats up Heath.

Post break (and after Tommy Dreamer and Lance Storm finish calming Heath down, because DREAMER WILL NOT JUST GO AWAY), Scott D'Amore gives Heath Eddie Edwards next week. That's cool with Heath, who goes to apologize to Josh Alexander. That's a problem though, as Alexander didn't like Heath cutting him off last week and walks away.

#### Mascara Dorada vs. Alex Zayne

Dorada is better known as Gran Metalik and the winner is the #1 contender to the X-Division Title. They trade running flips to start before stereo missed dropkicks give us a standoff. Back up and Dorada runs the ropes, setting up the middle rope hurricanrana to the floor. That works for Zayne, who sends him into the barricade and starts chopping away. Zayne drops an elbow on the apron and we take a break with Dorada in trouble.

Back with Dorada fighting up and hitting a rope walk flip dive (with Hannifan saying Dorada is turning this place into a house party). They get back in with Zayne cutting off a charge with an elbow in the corner, followed by a running knee for two. A 450 misses though and Dorada's tornado DDT sets up a Dorada Driver for the pin at 11:35.

**Rating:** C+. Another week, another good X-Division match as they throw two more guys out there and let them do their thing. On top of that, there was even something on the line here to make it feel more worthwhile. Dorada is someone people will recognize and that puts him ahead of most of the division. Good stuff here and another nice use of TV time, as

tends to be the case with these guys.

Jordynne Grace wishes Mickie James luck and would love to give her a title shot at the end of the line.

Yuya Uemura is here next week.

### Masha Slamovich vs. Deonna Purrazzo

Chelsea Green is here with Purrazzo and the winner gets Jordynne Grace for the Knockouts Title at Bound For Glory. They start a bit slowly until Slamovich gets her into the corner for some chops. That's fine with Purrazzo, who ducks a chop and hits a shot to the face of her own. A running hurricanrana drops Slamovich but she takes Purrazzo down by the hair and kicks her in the chest. It's too early for the Snowplow so Slamovich has to throw her back inside. Green's distraction lets Purrazzo get in a cheap shot though and we take a break.

Back with Slamovich getting out of a chinlock and hitting a dropkick through the ropes. One heck of a running spinwheel kick gives Slamovich two and she wins a slugout from their knees. Purrazzo is right back with a Russian legsweep into the Fujiwara armbar, sending Slamovich straight over to the rope. Back up and Purrazzo sends her shoulder first into the post, setting up the rolling German suplexes.

The Queen's Gambit is countered into an Air Raid Crash into the corner for two more. A Green distraction sets up the Queen's Gambit for two. Slamovich has had it with this and hits the spinning backfist, kicks Green to the floor, and hits the Snowplow for the pin at 13:59.

**Rating:** B-. This is the kind of match that Slamovich has been needing, as you can only go so far with having her squash people in a minute and a half. Beating Purrazzo, who has been the star of the division for most of this year, and taking out Green at the same time, makes her look like a killer and

Jordynne Grace could be in trouble at Bound For Glory.

Post match Jordynne Grace comes out and gives Slamovich a death warrant of her own to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B-. This show was focused on the X-Division until the big ending with the Knockouts. I liked how they didn't spend the entire night on the World Title situation, as the match is set and there is other stuff that needs the focus. Impact is getting the idea that they need a balanced card and what they are doing so far is working. Good show here, as Impact continues to produce quality TV.

### Results

Honor No More b. Good Brothers – Proton Pack to Anderson

Mike Bailey b. Kenny King – Rollup

Mascara Dorada b. Alex Zayne – Dorada Driver

Masha Slamovich b. Deonna Purrazzo – Snowplow

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# Summerslam Count-Up – 2016 (2017 Redo): We Have A New Hero

## Summerslam 2016

Date: August 21, 2016

Location: Barclays Center, New York City, New York

Attendance: 15,974

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton, Mauro Ranallo, David Otunga, John Bradshaw Layfield

A year has passed since I saw this show and I can barely remember much about it. That's very telling when you look at how stacked this show really is. There are multiple top level matches here and it really wasn't clear what was going to close the show until the night of the event. Hopefully that means that this SIX HOUR show holds up. Let's get to it.

So here's a quick plug. I'm going through the pre-show and there's a three expert panel of Booker T., Jerry Lawler and Lita. Earlier this year, I met all three of them at WrestleCon. If you're ever at a Wrestlemania weekend, treat yourself to an amazing time and GO TO WRESTLECON. I met over 120 wrestlers in about four hours. Where else are you going to get to do something like that? Anyway, on with the show.

Pre-Show: American Alpha/Hype Bros/Usos vs.  
Breezango/Ascension/Vaudevillains

Who would have thought that Breezango would be the most entertaining out of all these teams? This is pretty much the still titleless Smackdown tag division at this point as they had to bring in the Headbangers and throw together Heath Slater and Rhyno to be able to have a tournament. This is also a rematch from Smackdown, which shows how little effort they were putting into the tag division at this point.

Gable and Breeze start things and the fans are WAY into Gable. Chad twists around as only he can to escape a wristlock and it's off to Jey, who is quickly driven into the corner. English comes in and says that he's what a man is. That earns him a right hand to the jaw and it's off to Mojo to work on a wristlock. Ryder comes in to quite the reaction as Mauro says the Hype Bros have more chemistry than the Periodic Table.

Everything breaks down (What took them so long?) and Ascension clears the ring, only to have American Alpha come off the top (the same corner) with double clotheslines (that's pure Steiner Brothers). English posts Ryder though and we take a break. Back with Gotch putting Ryder in a chinlock, followed by Viktor doing the same. The other heels take turns stomping on Ryder until Breeze grabs his own chinlock. Fandango adds a slingshot legdrop as this is going WAY longer than it needs to.

JBL thinks cold beer uniting the APA is more effective than furry selfie sticks uniting Breezango but maybe he's wrong. Ascension knocks the good guys off the apron but Viktor misses a charge in the corner, allowing Ryder to get in a neckbreaker on Konnor. The hot tag (with a limited reaction) brings in Jimmy to clean house.

Jordan gets the real hot tag and does his fired up sequence (which he really is awesome at) with a belly to belly getting two on Breeze. We hit the parade of secondary finishers as the referee is imploring them to tag. Mojo powerbombs Breeze and Viktor out of the corner and the Usos add stereo superkicks to set up stereo dives. Back in and Grand Amplitude plants Gotch, only to have Jey tag himself in for a Superfly Splash and the pin at 14:31. Gable is really not cool with that. Eh just wait until your team is split up for a pretty lame story where Jordan is Kurt Angle's son.

**Rating:** B-. If you cut out a few minutes from this, it's a heck of an opener. There are too many people in the match of course but they kept it moving fast enough (for the most part) to really get something fun out of it. Jordan's house cleaning spot is a heck of a way to fire the crowd up and it made the match more fun than it should have been. Tweak this a bit (eight/ten man tag or shorten the match a bit) and it's even better.

### Pre-Show: Dudley Boyz vs. Sami Zayn/Neville

Sami works on D-Von's arm to start and it's off to Neville for more of the same. Both of them get in more shots as we hear about the rivalry over the NXT Title. I do appreciate the history, especially when Graves should know about that match very well. Bubba is sent outside but D-Von breaks up a springboard dive, allowing Bubba to nail Neville from behind to take over. The fans want tables but a back elbow to Neville's jaw cuts them off in a hurry.

Back from a break with Bubba hitting his neckbreaker out of the corner. Things slow down even more as Bubba is talking even more than he usually does in a match. Bubba: "COME ON ENGLISH BOY! O-LAY! O-LAY!" The middle rope backsplash misses though and the hot tag brings in Sami. D-Von takes the Blue Thunder Bomb for two but the reverse 3D gets the same. Neville escapes the regular version though and we get some heel miscommunication. The Helluva Kick sets up the Red Arrow to put Bubba away at 7:55.

**Rating:** C-. That would be it for the Dudleys in WWE as they would have one more segment tomorrow night where Anderson and Gallows sent them packing. It's also pretty much it for Sami and Neville as a team, which is quite odd as you would think they would be a fine choice for a team. The match was nothing you wouldn't expect on Raw.

### Pre-Show: Cesaro vs. Sheamus

You know, because two matches just weren't enough for the pre-show. This is the first match of the Best of Seven Series, which really wasn't too well received. After Cole says Cesaro is facing Cesaro and both Cole and Saxton say this is about establishing physical dominance, we're ready to go. Sheamus misses a very early Brogue Kick but the spinning springboard uppercut is blocked as well.

Cesaro charges into an uppercut but comes back with a dropkick for one. The ten forearms to the chest are broken up so Sheamus clotheslines him onto the apron instead. It's off to an armbar on Cesaro's chronically taped up shoulder but Cesaro lifts him up into that kind of reverse Angle Slam of his. They're certainly hitting each other hard here, which is pretty much the draw of the whole feud.

Sheamus hits a tilt-a-whirl slam and it's off to a break. Back with Cesaro fighting out of a chinlock because that rule even applies on pre-shows that will never end. The Irish Curse gives Sheamus two as Cole runs down the pay per view card, which only makes me think that there are FAR too many titles in WWE. They fight over a suplex and fall out to the floor in a heap. Back in and Cesaro starts firing off the running uppercuts in the corner, capped off by a dropkick to knock him off the ropes.

The apron superplex (which wasn't from the apron) gets two but Sheamus counters the Neutralizer into White Noise for two. There's the super Regal Roll for two more and frustration is really setting in. Another Brogue Kick attempt is countered by one heck of a clothesline though and Cesaro adds a high crossbody for two of his own. Cesaro tries the Sharpshooter but Sheamus gets to the ropes. Back up and a poke to the eye sets up the Brogue Kick to give Sheamus the pin at 14:11.

**Rating:** B. They beat the heck out of each other and it was a fun match but it also brings up the problem: I'm not going to want to watch them fight six more times. No matter how good things are, having them happen so many times in a row over several weeks is going to get tiresome. It happens in all these series and it's happening here too.

And now, after more wrestling than you get on an average Smackdown, here's the actual pay per view.

The opening video looks at New York City, with the narrator telling you how AMAZING the city is. I'm not sure if New York City or Texas is worse about bragging about their home's greatness. As usual, this switches over to a series of quick looks at the biggest matches on the card.

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

Well duh. That's about as easy of a choice for an opener as you could ever find for this show. As you might expect, the crowd eats up the opening promo with a spoon and of course we hear a ton of New York City music references. Included are Frank Sinatra, Biggie Smalls and Jay-Z, plus more that probably go over my head. Cass adds in a few songs of his own as this is the only way this show could have opened. Since Graves is

the best heel commentator in wrestling today though, he points out that Enzo is from New Jersey.

Jericho and Owens jump Enzo at the bell and the STUPID IDIOT chants start rolling. Enzo comes back with a crossbody and a running right hand to the jaw for two. It's off to Cass, who drags Owens inside for a beat. That's some scary power. Enzo gets launched into the corner to crush Jericho but the Canadians bail to the floor. That's fine with Cass who tosses Enzo over the top onto them in a huge crash. I've always loved that spot as it just looks cool.

Back in and Enzo ax handles Owens but turns into a middle rope dropkick from Jericho. The Canadian violence begins with Owens kneeing Enzo from the apron and doing his dance on the apron in a rather funny visual. Owens' comedic skills aren't given enough credit more often than not. It's back to Jericho for the Arrogant Cover and a chinlock with Owens telling Jericho to do it like he taught him.

Owens comes in and adds a gutbuster for two, followed by the running start for a chinlock. It takes real talent to turn a chinlock into an art form but Owens has somehow pulled it off. Enzo finally rolls away but Jericho is there to break up the diving tag attempt. Owens drops the frog splash for two and his stunned look on the kickout is the usual awesome visual. Enzo gets pulled off the corner to make things even worse but, after blowing a kiss to Jericho, misses the Cannonball.

That means the hot tag to Cass and everything breaks down. Jericho dives into a big boot but Owens breaks up the Bada Boom Shaka Lacka. Cass gets posted on the floor and now the Cannonball against the barricade connects. Back in and Enzo scores with his top rope DDT on Jericho with Owens making the save. A pop up Codebreaker (didn't look great as Jericho was too far away) ends Enzo at 12:09.

**Rating:** C+. Odd choice for an ending aside (not surprising of course but odd), this was a good way to get the crowd going. I could have gone for another hope spot from Enzo and more of Cass cleaning house but that pop up Codebreaker could have been a heck of a finisher if done right. Nice opener, though would it have killed them to put Enzo and Cass over in

Brooklyn?

Smackdown bosses Daniel Bryan and Shane McMahon run into Raw General Manager Mick Foley to brag about how awesome their shows are. Former Daily Show host Jon Stewart and his son come in to ask what Foley is thinking to work with Stephanie. He rants about abuse of power but realizes she's right behind him. Stephanie yells at him about how great it is to abuse power but thankfully New Day comes up. As the Smackdown bosses and Foley much on cereal, New Day asks Jon if he'd like to do something. He gets out as fast as he can and Stephanie isn't amused.

We recap Charlotte vs. Sasha Banks. Sasha won the Women's Title on the first exclusive show after the Brand Split and tonight is the rematch. The other big idea here is Charlotte never loses singles matches on pay per view and Banks has to recreate the magic one more time.

#### Raw Women's Title: Sasha Banks vs. Charlotte

Banks is defending and we get the Big Match Intros. Some early WOOing sets up a slightly less early Bank Statement but Charlotte bails to the floor. Back in and Banks climbs the corner for a wristdrag before sending Charlotte face first into the middle buckle. Banks gets caught on top though and Charlotte basically drops her onto the ropes for a backbreaker which almost had to hurt horribly. The fact that Banks had a bad back coming in and Charlotte still did some rather sloppy moves like that got her in some hot water.

We hit a Gory Stretch on the champ for a bit but she comes back with a pair of running clotheslines. That just earns her another backbreaker and Charlotte stomps away at the back. The Figure Eight is broken up but Sasha misses a charge into the corner and gets caught in the Tree of Woe. Charlotte picks her up for a super Razor's Edge but since that would, you know, kill Sasha, she reverses into a hurricanrana to put them both down.

Back up and a WOO earns Charlotte a string of slaps before Sasha avoids a charge in the corner and hits the double knees to the back for two. Charlotte kicks her in the leg to break up a charge but gets knocked outside again, setting up the double knees from the apron. Back in and the Backstabber doesn't work but Natural Selection is countered into the

Bank Statement (thankfully too as the Natural Selection clearly didn't send Sasha's head anywhere near the mat).

Charlotte makes the rope for the break and takes out the knee again. Natural Selection gives Charlotte two so she yells about being better than Sasha. Another Bank Statement goes on but Charlotte reverses into a rollup for the pin and the title at 13:52. Saxton: "Just like that?"

**Rating:** B. This was just a straight match and that's the key to the whole thing. The women are getting to show that they can have a good match without the smoke and mirrors, which never would have been the case otherwise. If nothing else it got the kind of time that a title match deserves to develop the story of Banks having a bad back (which would keep her on the shelf for about a month). Strong match here and another of many to come for these two.

Doctors Anderson and Gallows (oh man I had forgotten how stupid this was) run into AJ Styles for a Club reunion. Finn Balor comes up and doesn't think much of it. Somehow, this has still never gone anywhere.

#### Intercontinental Title: Miz vs. Apollo Crews

Crews is defending after winning a triple threat match. Miz comes out wearing a glittery Phantom of the Opera mask while Maryse is basically in a one piece swimsuit. In a sign of the changing times, Mauro talks about Miz's look instead of Maryse. Miz stomps away in the corner and gets two off a running kick to the chest. Crews gets the same off a rollup, only to walk into the short DDT as it's almost all Miz to start. We're already in the reverse chinlock before Miz sends him into the apron to cut off a comeback. Miz takes too long coming off the top though and dives into a dropkick to put both guys down.

A crossbody into a nipup has Miz in trouble as JBL rants about Otunga calling Crews a Jackrobat (jacked acrobat). The Toss Powerbomb is countered so Crews gets two off a tilt-a-whirl powerslam. An overhead belly to belly sets up a standing moonsault, which Otunga sums up perfectly: "A man with that kind of size and that kind of muscle should not be able to do that." Miz teases taking a walk but Maryse cuts him off, allowing Miz to post Crews. The Skull Crushing Finale retains the

title at 5:36.

**Rating:** D+. Standard Smackdown match and something that could have been cut, or at least put in the Kickoff Show in the place of the Dudleys match. Crews felt like an easy obstacle to overcome because there was nowhere near enough build to set the match up. Put some more effort into the title already people, as it's just not working.

We recap John Cena vs. AJ Styles. They set up the first match when Styles and Cena were in the ring together, only to have Anderson and Gallows interfere to turn Styles heel. Styles went on a great rant about how Cena was a fraud who couldn't hang in the ring with someone like him. Cena went into a great speech about how he's here out of love because it never gets old. AJ beat him at Money in the Bank with assistance from Anderson and Gallows, setting up a rematch between the two here.

### AJ Styles vs. John Cena

This just feels big. AJ grabs a waistlock to start but is easily knocked away. The announcers go out of the way to put over how AJ has been on big shows before but nothing this big. Oh I don't know. I remember him being at that Wrestlemania thing earlier in the year. The dueling chants begin and the AJ STYLES side is pretty clearly stronger.

Cena's headlock is countered and AJ scores with the dropkick but the bragging earns AJ a right to the jaw. A hard whip into the corner sends AJ down for a bit with Cena doing some rare trash talking. They head to the floor and the fans start belting out JOHN CENA SUCKS, only to have AJ turn it into some gasping with a suplex onto the apron. Cena is right back with a dropkick for two and it's time for some more right hands to the head.

AJ comes back with a forearm to the face, earning himself Cena's finishing sequence. It's way too early for the AA though as AJ hits a Pele, followed by the Styles Clash for a close two. The fans were actually more into the near fall than I was expecting as you would think they'd know better this early. The AA gives Cena two of his own and both guys are down again.

Styles slips out of the super AA and grabs the torture rack for the spinout powerbomb. They're trading bombs at this point and it's the only way they should be going here. Something like a Big Ending gives Cena two but he can't get the STF. Instead it's the AA neckbreaker for two on Cena (not the same as the AA JBL) but the springboard 450 only hits mat.

A faceplant puts Cena down again though and AJ can't follow up. He manages the springboard forearm but Cena reverses into the worst STF I've ever seen. Thankfully AJ slips out and grabs a Crossface, which Cena powers out of as well. That's reversed into the Calf Crusher which AJ is smart enough to twist away from the ropes. Cena reverses that into another horrible STF (AJ's face is on the mat) so AJ is quickly up with the enziguri. A tornado DDT plants AJ and there's the top rope Fameasser for two.

Cena heads up again and gets taken down with a super hurricanrana (Mauro: "MAMA MIA!"), followed by the Phenomenal Forearm for a VERY near fall (drawing Mauro to his feet). It's Cena's turn now as he takes AJ up for the super AA and...it's two. NOW the fans know it's on as I don't think anyone has ever kicked out of that before. Cena is stunned and the AA is countered into another Clash. The Phenomenal Forearm puts Cena away clean at 23:10.

**Rating:** A. I know it's not going to sound good but a lot of this goes to Cena. At the end of the day, the crowd completely lost it when AJ kicked out of that super AA. AJ wins here not because he got a pin but because he beat Cena clean. That's a very, VERY short list and that's what makes it feel so important. Think back to how big of a deal it was when Warrior pinned Hogan clean. That felt like an era changing win, and while this isn't quite that big, it's the same idea.

Oh yeah and it's an outstanding match and possibly the Match of the Year. This was the heavyweight slugfest formula as they beat the heck out of each other with both guys hitting everything they could until one of them couldn't get up. That's a really hard match to pull off and these two did it in an incredible match. It belonged on the grand stage and gives Cena one heck of a mountain to overcome, which he somehow did in a better match at the Royal Rumble.

Post match Cena takes off his wristband and leaves it in the ring. He would do dark matches for a few weeks and then be back wrestling on TV in less than a month so this didn't mean anything.

Some fans won a contest and got some stuff. In other words, let the fans have a breather.

Here's Jon Stewart for your celebrity appearance. He makes fun of himself for interfering in Cena's match last year and says the big lesson he learned was to tuck your shirt in when you're taking an AA. As for tonight though, he's here to be in New Day's corner to help deal with Anderson and Gallows. In honor of the moment, he throws on a unicorn horn and does Big E.'s (out injured due to getting crotched against the post) entrance.

#### Tag Team Titles: New Day vs. Anderson and Gallows

New Day is defending of course and unfortunately Anderson and Gallows are still doing their stupid doctor nonsense, complete with jars for Kofi, Xavier and Jon's testicles. I hear Paige can help you with one of those. Anderson headlocks Kofi down to start but he's right back up with the jumping back elbow to the jaw. Kofi flips onto his feet and gets two off the standing double stomp. You can tell the fans are still recovering from the previous match and it's off to Woods.

That goes badly as the he gets taken into the corner for a beating from Gallows. At least it does bring the fans back a bit with the rhythmic clapping. Gallows gets taken into the corner for the Unicorn Stampede (which they've kind of stopped doing in recent months) and the fans are really not responding. Woods sends him outside so Kofi can hit a running dive (while posing in the air) to take him down again. Back in and Gallows kicks Kofi in the head to take over for real this time with Anderson working on the arm.

That goes nowhere as the hot tag brings in Woods to clean house. Anderson sends him to the apron for an enziguri, setting up the rope walk elbow drop. Everything breaks down and Anderson kicks Kofi in the chest, setting up the Magic Killer. Stewart gets in though and it's time to crotch him as well. Hang on though as he has to tuck in his shirt first.

Cue the returning Big E. for the save though and that's a DQ at 9:09.

**Rating:** D. I don't know if it was the previous match or what but sweet goodness the fans did NOT care for this one. It's not a good match in the first place as Anderson and Gallows aren't funny in the doctor roles, but the bigger problem here was the focus being on Stewart at the end. Oh and the ending sets up a rematch, which really isn't what they need to be going with here. Bad match but Big E.'s return did wake up the crowd.

Big E. drinks the fluid in the jar holding his "testicles". Stewart dances with New Day and the fans...well they care when Big E. dances at least.

We recap Dean Ambrose vs. Dolph Ziggler. Dolph won a six way match to earn the shot and then it all went nuts. Ziggler started talking about how he was tired of being told that he always either too good or not good enough. It was time to turn up the jets and become champion for the third time. Serious Ziggler was nice but I don't think anyone was buying him as having a real chance here. You know, because he's Dolph Ziggler.

#### Smackdown World Title: Dolph Ziggler vs. Dean Ambrose

Dean is defending and Shane and Daniel are here for no apparent reason. The fans are behind Ziggler and they trade some grappling on the mat with Ziggler getting the better of it (not exactly a surprise). The threat of a neckbreaker sends Ambrose bailing to the floor so Dolph splashes him against the barricade.

Back in and Ziggler's jumping DDT is countered with Dean throwing him outside again. Ziggler escapes a super Dirty Deeds so Dean slaps on a half crab of all things. You can tell Dean is playing the subtle heel here as the smark crowd is always going to cheer for Ziggler. Dean heads up top and gets dropkicked out of the air but he's right back with a double chickenwing facebuster.

Ambrose tunes up the band (which is now mocking Ziggler instead of anything involving Shawn Michaels) but shakes his head and tries Dirty Deeds instead. That's reversed into the jumping DDT and both guys are down again. A double collision gives us another lay down period until

Dean is up first and hammering away.

The top rope elbow gets two so Ziggler grabs the sleeper, earning them both a tumble out to the floor. Ziggler gets in the superkick on the floor but it's barely two back inside. The Zig Zag gets the same but Dean pops back up with the rebound lariat. Ziggler catches Dean on top and pulls him back down, right into Dirty Deeds to retain the title at 15:22.

**Rating:** D+. And that people, is Ziggler choking again. This would lead to him saying he's never won the big one, which would turn into him never holding the World Title that long because holding the title is more important than winning it. The match was nothing all that good as we were just waiting on Dirty Deeds, which only happened so Dean could keep it warm for AJ next month. That was completely obvious the second AJ pinned Cena again and that's all this title needed to do.

Package on Summerslam weekend.

#### Natalya/Alexa Bliss/Eva Marie vs. Becky Lynch/Naomi/Carmella

Dang I didn't know the Glow was a year old. Actually hang on a minute as Eva Marie is suffering from exhaustion, anxiety and stress (likely brought on by reading too many Wellness Violation messages, which meant she would never wrestle again) so we have a replacement. At least we got that amazing entrance one more time.

#### Natalya/Alexa Bliss/Nikki Bella vs. Becky Lynch/Naomi/Carmella

So yeah, you know full well that Nikki is going to be all that matters in this match because IT'S HER BIG COMEBACK THAT EVERYONE TOTALLY CARES ABOUT BECAUSE WE LOVE HER SO MUCH! She does get one heck of a pop though, which is rather scary. During her entrance, Mauro declares her return "miraculous". Oh man this is going to be a long one.

Bliss rolls Becky up to start and gets in a hard slap for good measure. Naomi comes in to scare Alexa off so it's Natalya instead. A forearm puts Natalya down and the splits legdrop gets two. Carmella comes in for the Staten Island Shuffle before a missed charge sends Natalya outside. Back in and a powerslam out of the corner plants Carmella before it's off to

Nikki, the heel, for a strong face pop.

We hit the chinlock but hang on as we need some Nikki pushups. Alexa chokeslaves Carmella down for the moonsault knees to the ribs as the crowd is dead all over again. The abdominal stretch keeps things slow until Carmella finally rolls over and makes the hot tag to Becky. All three heels are sent into the corner for the springboard kicks from Lynch, followed by a Bexploder on Natalya.

Becky's top rope legdrop gets two with Nikki making the save. A blind tag brings in Naomi for the dancing kicks with the fans just not reacting at all. Bliss' springboard splash hits knees so it's off to Nikki vs. Carmella. A bad looking Bronco Buster gets two on Nikki and everything breaks down. Nikki's big forearm sets up the Rack Attack 2.0 (Nikki: "I'm back.") for the pin at 11:16.

**Rating:** D. This was all about Nikki's return and that's not enough to carry a dull match. Naomi's Glow stuff wasn't over yet, Becky was stuck around people who weren't up to her level and Carmella was showing that she didn't need to be on the main roster yet. The same was true for Alexa and Natalya was her usual self. Just not a good match and it showed the lack of depth to the division.

We recap Rusev vs. Roman Reigns. Rusev and Lana were married and so Reigns interrupted for no apparent reason to insult them and shove them into a cake.

Maria Menunos interviews Rusev and Lana, who don't like her questions about Reigns. They won't stand for this and Lana is sure that her husband will destroy Reigns.

We recap the Universal Title match. Basically we need a new title due to the Brand Split and Universal Title was the best they could come up with. Seth Rollins was put into the match as Raw's #1 draft pick and Finn Balor earned his way in by winning a series of matches. Not much else to it as there's no major animosity between them but it's better than pulling the title out of a suitcase.

Seth did get in a great promo talking about how he's done everything

Balor has done but he's done it a little bit better. He's not wrong, though that's not the best thing to do when you have someone so new to the main roster. Then Balor showed up as the Demon and scared Rollins to death.

### Universal Title: Finn Balor vs. Seth Rollins

Anything goes and the title (which isn't that well received due to a bad case of being hideous) is vacant coming in. Unless I'm forgetting something, to date this is the only time Balor has wrestled as the Demon on the main roster. We get the Big Match Intros and the title itself receives some hearty boos. Balor dropkicks him into the corner at the bell but it's too early for the Coup de Grace.

Instead Balor hits a suicide dive to the floor, followed by some kicks to the knee back inside. They head outside again with Seth getting in his first offense via a suplex on the floor. Balor is right back with something like a Phenomenal Forearm off the barricade. Back in again and Balor hits a basement dropkick for two as this is almost one sided so far. Finn stays on the leg as the fans are singing something.

Balor jumps over the ropes but Rollins slides between his legs and powerbombs him into the barricade, completely destroying Balor's shoulder and putting him on the shelf for the better part of eight months. We're less than four minutes in though and you can see the shoulder looking all messed up. Back in and Seth gets two off a backbreaker, setting up a chinlock. The chants are still going and it sounds like THAT TITLE SUCKS to the tune of John Cena Sucks.

Seth starts the trash talk and cuts off a comeback attempt. A snapmare into a kick to the back has Finn in even more trouble but Seth would rather walk around than follow up. It's back to the chinlock for a good while until the springboard knee to the head sets up Seth's frog splash for two. What looks like a Rainmaker is countered into a DDT to give Balor his first major offense in a long time and he follows up with some forearms.

A basement dropkick sets up the Sling Blade but Seth kicks him down without much effort. An enziguri stuns Balor but he's right back with the

Pele, earning a very nice round of applause. If nothing else the chants about the title have stopped. 1916 (reverse implant DDT) gives Finn two but the Coup de Grace is countered into a triangle choke of all things. Finn falls outside because rope breaks don't count (anything goes remember) and things slow down a bit.

Back in and the buckle bomb sets up the low superkick for two on Balor with Seth looking stunned on the kickout. A small package driver gets the same count and reaction so Seth goes up, allowing Balor to hit a very loud enziguri to put him on the floor. Balor adds a shotgun dropkick to send him into the barricade, followed by a top rope double stomp to the back of the head for two. The Coup de Grace misses and it's a Pedigree for two. Finn counters a second Pedigree into a double stomp, followed by the Coup de Grace for the pin and the title at 19:23.

**Rating:** B+. When you factor in that shoulder injury, this is quite the impressive performance. Above all else though, how good is it that Balor won the title here? If he loses his first major pay per view match and then goes away until April, he's lucky to come back to the cruiserweight division.

This was a heck of a match with both guys beating the heck out of each other. It took some time to get built up but once they finally got there, the fans really started to accept things, which is a very positive sign. Balor is someone who is going to get a very positive reaction no matter what and giving him the title here was entirely the right call.

Balor can barely move his right arm after the match but finally holds the title up. On his WWE 24 special, he said you could feel and hear the shoulder crunching and crackling as he lifted the title and it probably did more damage to the arm.

The pre-show channel chats a bit and throws us to a KFC ad with Dolph Ziggler dressing up as Colonel Sanders to beat up Miz dressed as a chicken. It's actually dumber than you remember it being.

Here's Lana to introduce Rusev, albeit while wearing half of a wedding dress, the bottom of which looks like a diaper. She's one of the most beautiful women on the roster but she looks ridiculous here.

## US Title: Rusev vs. Roman Reigns

Roman is challenging and the booing is strong with this one. Rusev jumps him before the bell and they fight out to the floor with Roman being sent into the steps. The fans chant RUSEV MACHKA because they've given up on America over their hatred for Reigns. Roman gets in a Superman Punch as the bell hasn't rung yet. They fight over a chair with Reigns getting the better of it and destroying Rusev. Reigns finally leaves but comes back with a spear, all while the fans chant WE WANT SLATER. No match of course, likely due to time issues.

We recap Randy Orton vs. Brock Lesnar. This match was announced as Orton's return match from surgery and the build focused on Orton being able to hit the RKO anytime, including a sweet moment where Orton interrupted a Lesnar promo with an RKO. The hype video even includes some OVW clips as they came up through developmental together and debuted within a few months of each other. This had a heck of a build and felt like something important but the question was whether Lesnar would have an actual match or just do his usual Lesnar stuff.

## Randy Orton vs. Brock Lesnar

Heyman handles Lesnar's introduction, saying he's conquering out of the University of Suplex City. Brock seems to get into his MMA stance to start before driving Orton into the corner for the shoulders to the ribs. Orton escapes the first German suplex attempt but can't hit the RKO.

Now the first suplex connects (with Mauro knowing that it's the 33<sup>rd</sup> Lesnar has hit at Summerslam because he's awesome that way) and Brock follows with two more. Orton is almost out on his feet so Lesnar suplexes him again. It's nothing but suplexes at this point and it's already getting dull. They head outside for a much needed change of pace with Orton being thrown over the announcers' table.

Orton gets thrown from the front row through the table as this is dominance. The other table is loaded up but whatever Lesnar is trying is countered into the RKO onto (not through) the table. The hanging DDT plants Lesnar back inside and another RKO gets two. Orton realizes he has

no choice and tries the Punt, only to have it reversed into the F5 (bad one) for two more.

That's enough for Lesnar so he takes off the gloves and pads and hammers on Orton. An elbow to the head actually busts Orton open VERY badly. Lesnar just keeps hammering on him while the fans chant GOLDBERG until the referee FINALLY stops it at 11:47. I've heard a bunch of answers about what happened but I believe this was the planned ending and a hard way opening.

**Rating:** D. Yeah this didn't work when it happened and it didn't work again this time around. Lesnar suplexing Orton for five minutes then selling a few big moves doesn't make me think it's an awesome main event. This was everything wrong with Lesnar's current WWE run in one match and that made for a really dull match, save for the odd finish that seemed designed to protect Orton. You know, after he was basically squashed.

Lesnar keeps hammering on him until the always intimidating Shane McMahon comes out, earning himself an F5 (which thankfully didn't lead anywhere). Heyman panics as they leave to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B-. If you cut an hour (or more) out of this, it's bordering on the classic level. As it is, this is just a good show that runs WAY too long. At some point you have to cut something out and WWE just refuses to do that. Cut out the Dudleys match or the women's tag and give us some breathing room here because sweet goodness this show could use it.

Now that being said, there's some outstanding stuff on here with the Styles vs. Cena match as an instant classic, the Women's Title being very good, a great Universal Title match and really only the Tag Team Title match being without much value. The show is certainly good and the positives outweigh the negatives but unless the show is a masterpiece, fans are going to start losing interest near the end. It's a solid show but cut out a good forty minutes to really make it great.

### Ratings Comparison

American Alpha/Hype Bros/Usos vs. Breezango/Ascension/Vaudevillains

Original: C

2017 Redo: B-

Dudley Boyz vs. Neville/Sami Zayn

Original: C

2017 Redo: C-

Sheamus vs. Cesaro

Original: B-

2017 Redo: B

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

Original: C+

2017 Redo: C+

Sasha Banks vs. Charlotte

Original: B

2017 Redo: B

Miz vs. Apollo Crews

Original: C

2017 Redo: D+

John Cena vs. AJ Styles

Original: A

2017 Redo: A

New Day vs. Anderson and Gallows

Original: D+

2017 Redo: D

Dolph Ziggler vs. Dean Ambrose

Original: B-

2017 Redo: D+

Natalya/Alexa Bliss/Nikki Bella vs. Becky Lynch/Naomi/Carmella

Original: C

2017 Redo: D

Finn Balor vs. Seth Rollins

Original: B+

2017 Redo: D+

Brock Lesnar vs. Randy Orton

Original: C+

2017 Redo: D

Overall Rating

Original: B

2017 Redo: B-

That's quite the drop on Ambrose vs. Ziggler and Lesnar vs. Orton. Some of them are spot on though and that's not the biggest surprise.

Here's the original review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2016/08/21/summerslam-2016-they-didnt/>

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