

Monday Night Raw – July 4, 2016: Half A Cheer For The Red Monday Night Show

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 4, 2016

Location: Nationwide Arena, Columbus, Ohio

Commentators: John Bradshaw Layfield, Michael Cole, Byron Saxton

Now this should be interesting as it's another show where almost no one is going to be watching, meaning WWE isn't likely to put much, if any, effort into the show. There's a US Title match between Rusev and Titus O'Neil plus a big US vs. The World elimination tag match which will likely get a lot of time. Let's get to it.

We open at the roster's Fourth of July party with Golden Truth rapping in the background. The Vaudevillains take their place with English singing the Declaration of Independence, only to have food thrown at him. Miz and Maryse (who should wear red more often) go into a rant about how this is why we can't celebrate holidays anymore, which turns into an ad for Smackdown going live in two weeks.

A massive food fight breaks out with Kane and Big Show getting into a chokeslam battle until Heath Slater throws something at them, earning himself a chokeslam through a table. Everyone else leaves with only Kevin Owens sitting at a table. Owens: "This would never happen on Canada Day." Someone hits him with a pie and Owens freaks out. Total filler but it's tradition at this point.

Opening sequence.

Lillian Garcia sings the National Anthem as we have red white and blue ropes again.

US Title: Rusev vs. Titus O'Neil

Rusev is defending and yes this is actually happening again. Titus is

dressed like Apollo Creed for a nice touch. This is joined in progress after a break with Titus throwing Rusev around with ease before being tossed/suplexed out to the floor. Back in and we hit the chinlock for a bit before Titus fights up for the slugout. Some shoulders and a big boot put Rusev down, followed by a powerslam for no cover. The Clash of the Titus gets two and the announcers basically admit that it's over. Rusev gets in some kicks to the head and the Accolade ends this at 5:53.

Rating: D+. Next. Like please, find ANYTHING to go with from here because this feud has been over from the second the match was announced in the first place. Titus was fine (ok that's a stretch) enough for a one off match but this is something like four times that we've seen Rusev beat up Titus, save for a lame countout. This needs to end the whole thing though because it's not interesting and never really was.

Miz vs. Ambrose tonight in your weekly Smackdown rematch.

Here are the Social Outcasts dressed as minutemen but are quickly cut off by Enzo and Big Cass. Enzo thinks we should have some star spangled banter because they're stars and take meteor showers. Amore lists off the Presidents in order and it's time for a match.

Enzo Amore/Big Cass vs. Social Outcasts

Bo and Curtis since Heath is still banged up from earlier. Enzo gets beaten down for all of a minute before Cass comes in to clean house with the usual. A big boot sets up the Bada Boom Shakalacka for the pin on Dallas at 2:03. In other words, the people dressed as the old school Americans get squashed.

Here are Charlotte and Dana Brooke with something to say. Charlotte talks about people being jealous of her and the proof is around her waist. It must be eating Sasha alive that Charlotte is the champ and all she has is a WE WANT SASHA chant. There is no one that has done more than Charlotte this year because Sasha is all hype.

Cue Sasha to say Charlotte can be champion but she'll never be Sasha. Charlotte doesn't want to be here but Sasha says she would be champion if not for Charlotte's daddy. We get the very good question of what it means

to be the boss. Charlotte has been champion for most of the time since they debuted in WWE a year ago so she's the legit boss. Sasha talks about how a boss fights all the time and is about to fight now but Dana's distraction lets Charlotte kick Sasha in the face. That earns her a Bank Statement with Dana making the save before Charlotte can tap.

Dean Ambrose vs. The Miz

Non-title and another Smackdown rematch that won't be billed as a rematch because Smackdown means nothing. Dean starts fast and clotheslines Miz out to the floor for a whip into the barricade. Miz reverses a whip and we take an early break. Back with Ambrose fighting back but getting dropkicked in the knee for his efforts.

We hit the Figure Four for a bit as JBL goes on his same rant about how you can't put Ambrose's face on billboards or have him on Jimmy Fallon, even though NO ONE BUT CENA (and occasionally Reigns) EVER DOES ANY OF THAT STUFF. Miz's top rope ax handle is countered and Dean sends him outside for the suicide dive. Ambrose is nice enough to hold his leg after the dive connects. Back in and Miz kicks him in the face, only to walk into Dirty Deeds for the pin at 9:42.

Rating: C-. The match was fine, albeit a shorter version of the exact same match that we saw back on Smackdown because that show is a dress rehearsal for whatever they're doing on Monday. JBL continues to get on my nerves with his whole HE CAN'T BE CHAMPION thing because as usual, it makes no sense.

Post match here's Seth Rollins for his match and a quick staredown with Ambrose that goes nowhere. Dean changes his mind and comes back to do commentary as it's time to rip off Dean Ambrose from a few months ago.

Seth Rollins vs. Dolph Ziggler

Non-title and Dean switches from Spanish commentary to English as they get started. They hit the mat to start with Ziggler sending Rollins outside. Seth comes back in for some stomps and an enziguri to knock Dolph to the floor as we take a break. Back with Dolph getting a faceplant off the top for two, followed by Rollins' low superkick getting

the same. Ziggler evens the superkick score for another near fall, only to have the Zig Zag countered into the Pedigree for the pin at 11:18.

Rating: C+. This was fine and a better use of Ziggler than you normally see. Ziggler is going to be fine no matter how many times he loses and it's a good idea to have Rollins win matches clean like this one. Rollins is a much bigger star so this really doesn't hurt anyone in the short or long run.

Post match Rollins gets on the announcers' table to rant about his legacy. He still thinks Reigns should be taken out of the triple threat because Reigns hasn't worked for anything a day in his life. Ambrose gets on the other announcers' table so Rollins can yell at him a bit before the fight is on. Rollins gets the worst of it though and it's Dirty Deeds onto the table, which doesn't break.

We get an old school Wyatt Family video with them talking about how New Day's reality doesn't really exist. They invite New Day into their world because the power of positivity is a myth believed only by fools and children. Join them.

Video on Baron Corbin. You don't see this kind of thing often enough.

Here's Vickie Guerrero to say she should be in charge of Smackdown. This goes on for a good while until security takes her away. Cole calls this very strange, despite it happening every week for the last month.

Big Show gives Team America (Zack Ryder, Kane, Dudley Boyz, Apollo Crews, Mark Henry and Jack Swagger) a pep talk about how it doesn't matter where you're from. Naturally the Battle Hymn of the Republic is playing in the background.

Vickie is being taken away when she runs into ex-boyfriend Dolph Ziggler...who says he's never seen her before so she should be taken away.

Golden Truth vs. Vaudevillains

Breezango is at ringside. Truth and Gotch start things off with Simon taking a kick to the face. A double tag brings in Goldust to work on

English, including a bulldog for no cover. Everything breaks down and Truth tags himself in, setting up a powerbomb/side slam combo (Solid Gold) for the pin on English at 1:31. I'm so glad they brought the Vaudevillains up for something like this. Breezango did nothing.

Bob Backlund wants Darren Young to live a problem free life. His advice is to make his problems bend to his will. Then he asks about Young's finisher, which is still the Gut Check. Backlund isn't cool with the fact that Darren doesn't have a submission hold so he suggests the Crossface Chickenwing, which he officially gives to Young. See, Backlund believes in Darren and wants him to be great again.

Here's John Cena to suggest that the crowd isn't as fired up as they normally are. They seem a little disappointed tonight but maybe they need to find that energy they had the first time he stood face to face with AJ Styles. We were waiting fifteen years for the big showdown but then AJ failed to stand on his own two feet. It wasn't a big surprise though as Cena always knew he'd have to fight all of the members of the Club if he wanted to fight one, which is why he got laid out last week.

Cue the Club with AJ talking about the Club making their return to Tokyo this past week but the posters were all about John Cena. The Club runs Tokyo and soon they'll run WWE, but first they have to get rid of Cena himself. AJ knows that Cena is loading up that shovel to get rid of him but last week there was no one out to save Cena when he was in trouble. It's because no one relates to him because he's this top star. Instead people relate to the Club, because they have the guts to get it done.

The Club is going to beat him up week after week, including on Labor Day and Halloween, even if it means dressing up like Bushwhacker Luke and Brutus Beefcake. Then on Christmas Day, Anderson is going to wrap presents with his hot Asian wife (his words) and then beat up John Cena. The Club comes down to the ring to beat him up now and the attack is on until Enzo and Big Cass of all people make the save. That's certainly better than the Usos.

The Shining Stars are actually still a thing.

Summer Rae vs. Becky Lynch

Natalya is watching from the back as Summer chokes in the corner to start. We hit the chinlock less than a minute in before Summer botches a suplex, basically dropping Becky on her head. Some clotheslines set up the Bexploder for two before the Disarm-Her makes Summer tap at 2:58.

Chris Jericho wishes the Multi-National Alliance (Yes really. That would be Jericho, Alberto Del Rio, Cesaro, Sami Zayn, Sheamus, Kevin Owens and the Lucha Dragons) a happy Canada Day but a multilingual argument breaks out.

Enzo and Cass shill Sonic.

Here's New Day to talk about the Wyatt Family. We get Deliverance jokes before New Day promises to bring them a bowl of Booty0's. The Wyatts pop up from their compound and say New Day's screams are music to their ears. Bray issues the challenge to come to the compound. Kofi accepts but Woods keeps looking worried. As Big E. promises to spread positivity from the window to the wall, Woods cuts them off and says Bray just knows about fear. This is a bad idea and it's no longer fun and games. If they can't see that, New Day can't survive.

John Cena/Enzo Amore/Big Cass vs. The Club is set for Battleground.

Team USA vs. Multi-National Alliance

USA – Apollo Crews, Big Show, Kane, Dudley Boyz, Mark Henry, Jack Swagger, Zack Ryder

Multi-National Alliance – Chris Jericho, Kevin Owens, Sami Zayn, Cesaro, Sheamus, Alberto Del Rio, Lucha Dragons

Elimination rules and the foreigners (including Kalisto, who hails from the far off land of Chicago) come to the ring to their national anthems. Owens beats up Ryder to start before it's quickly off to D-Von vs. Cara. This is going to be really hard to keep track of early on. A quick 3D gets rid of Cara at 1:05 and the Brogue Kick does the same to Bubba at 1:12.

Back from a break with Cesaro swinging D-Von into the Sharpshooter for the submission at 5:45. Swagger comes in for the Patriot Lock but has to

fight out of the Sharpshooter attempt. Jericho comes in and the Vader Bomb hits raised boots, setting up the Codebreaker for the elimination at 7:53. Kane comes in but everything breaks down for a huge brawl as we take another break.

Back with Del Rio getting two on Crews off a Backstabber before getting dropkicked out of the air. The hot tag brings in Henry for some slow motion house cleaning, only to have Kalisto dive into the World's Strongest Slam for the elimination at 13:20. Owens comes in and GIVES HENRY A POP UP POWERBOMB for the elimination at 13:35.

That was insane and I was thinking there was no way he could do it but he just did anyway. Ryder is in next but Owens sends him into Sami, triggering the obvious brawl. Kane tags himself in but Owens hits Sami with a chair for the DQ at 14:55. As in Owens is disqualified, though it should really be Kane. Speaking of Kane, he hits Owens with the chair for another DQ at 15:24, despite Owens already being eliminated. Kane chokeslams Sami so Crews adds the standing moonsault for the elimination at 15:49. Sheamus Brogue Kicks Crews for the elimination at 15:53 and we're rapidly running out of people.

So it's down to Ryder/Big Show vs. Jericho/Sheamus/Del Rio/Cesaro with Jericho beating on Ryder. Cesaro tags himself in and it's time for the uppercut train on Cesaro's own teammates. He loads up the Neutralizer on Ryder but gets rolled up to eliminate Cesaro at 18:41. The announcers treat that way too lightly and it's Sheamus beating on Ryder, only to get caught with a neckbreaker. The hot tag brings in Big Show to start cleaning house with the KO Punch eliminating Jericho at 20:14. Del Rio's low superkick is blocked and a chokeslam gets rid of Alberto at 21:31.

We're down to Sheamus vs. Ryder/Big Show with Show pulling Sheamus back in over the top by the hair. The chokeslam doesn't work though and Sheamus is smart enough to go for the leg. Ryder comes in for his forearms in the corner, only to get caught in the powerslam for two. Show grabs Sheamus by the throat and shoves him into the Rough Ryder for the final pin at 22:18.

Rating: C-. Oh what else were you expecting here? You knew that a bazooka

blast to the chest wasn't going to defeat the Americans here and that's exactly how this should have gone. Ryder getting the win is a fun little moment and no one is going to remember this by the time it's the fifth of July so everything is fine. The match was nothing to see but it's not like any rational person was expecting anything else.

Old Glory is lowered and fireworks take us out.

Overall Rating: D+. Again I ask: what else were you expecting? It was mostly a skippable show with some decent wrestling and a grand total of nothing of note, save for a six man being announced twenty days before a pay per view. This is a good example of a throw away show that no one was going to watch in the first place but at least there was enough stuff on here to keep me entertained for three hours. We'll be back to serious next week and that's fine on a holiday like this.

Results

Rusev b. Titus O'Neil – Accolade

Enzo Amore/Big Cass b. Social Outcasts – Bada Boom Shakalacka to Dallas

Dean Ambrose b. The Miz – Dirty Deeds

Seth Rollins b. Dolph Ziggler – Pedigree

Golden Truth b. Vaudevillains – Solid Gold to English

Becky Lynch b. Summer Rae – Disarm-Her

Team USA b. Multi-National Alliance – Rough Ryder to Sheamus

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Smackdown – June 2, 2016: Hope For The Future

Smackdown

Date: June 2, 2016

Location: BMO Harris Bank Center, Rockford, Illinois

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Mauro Ranallo, Byron Saxton

Things are rapidly changing around here as we have the new Brand Split in less than two months. More importantly for now however is the freshly heel AJ Styles who has set his sights on the returning John Cena, likely setting up a huge showdown at Money in the Bank. This show will likely focus on the build towards the ladder match so let's get to it.

The opening recap focuses on AJ Styles and the Band reuniting on Monday and Styles turning full heel.

Opening sequence.

Here's the New Day to open the show. Woods mentions Smackdown going live on July 19 and then it's time to talk about the Club. Yeah they're big and tough but they'll never be your WWE World Tag Team Champions. This brings out Gallows and Anderson with New Day asking what kind of club they are exactly. Do they meet in a tree house? Do you have to pay dues?

New Day wants a fight but the Club says no. Woods: "They don't want none." Cue AJ to say the WWE belongs to the Club but Kofi doesn't seem to get that. Kofi lists off all their accomplishments and laughs that AJ took ten years to get here. AJ talks about what he did to Cena but gets a NEW DAY ROCKS chant.

Becky Lynch vs. Charlotte

Non-title. Becky sends her into the ropes to start before Charlotte reverses in the corner and grabs a neckbreaker. Dana offers a distraction and Charlotte kicks Becky in the face to put her on the floor as we take an early break. Back with Becky hitting a running forearm in the corner and getting two off the exploder suplex.

Becky misses a knee though and hurts her leg (Did the Flair family find a lucky charm a long time ago or something? It's uncanny how many in match knee injuries their opponents have.) but it doesn't seem to bother her that much. Instead Becky grabs a triangle choke but gets lifted into a Batista Bomb for two. Charlotte misses the moonsault but lands on her feet anyway, only to have the Figure Eight countered into the Disarm-Her, drawing in Dana for the DQ at 8:45.

Rating: C+. It's nice to have Becky not lose a match for a change though at some point she needs to actually win something of note. I'm assuming they're gearing up for a four way or something like it at Money in the Bank though I can't imagine they'll take the title off Charlotte this soon. Good match here though.

Post match Natalya comes out but Charlotte and Dana get away before they can be put in submissions.

Dean Ambrose and Sami Zayn are having a friendly argument in the back when Kevin Owens and Alberto Del Rio come up with Owens saying Sami is trying to manipulate Ambrose. Owens: "He's Canadian remember? You can't trust him." More trash is talked and Dean wants to fight now instead of waiting for their scheduled tag match later.

Golden Truth vs. Dudley Boyz

Breezango is in the VIP area. The Goldust music hits and the Golden Truth graphics come on but the Dudley Boyz video is still playing. Truth's remix now has the lyrics on screen with a bouncing Goldust head telling you what to say. Also it's apparently "Goldentruth".

Truth drives Bubba into the corner to start and a double suplex puts the big man down. The Dudleyz take over and D-Von's spinning elbow to the jaw gets two. Everything breaks down and Goldust catches D-Von with a

spinebuster, only to have Tyler get on the apron for a distraction. Goldust goes to deal with him but gets rolled up by D-Von for the pin at 4:04.

Rating: D. I hate to admit it but I'm digging this story more and more every week. It's a naturally developing story and it's actually entertaining me every time they go out and do something else. I'm not sure where this ends but it's been FAR more entertaining than it had any right to be the whole way through.

Post match Breezango laughs at Golden Truth. Fandango: "Just like a game of shooty hoops, three strikes and you're out!"

Recap of Baron Corbin vs. Dolph Ziggler.

Corbin is standing outside because he won't grace the fans with his presence after they cheered what happened on Monday. The next time he comes into a WWE arena, it's to end Dolph Ziggler. Or on Raw next week.

Dean Ambrose/Sami Zayn vs. Alberto Del Rio/Kevin Owens

Owens goes after Sami to start before it's quickly off to Del Rio, who is rolled up for two. Dean comes in for a shot to the ribs and it's right back to Sami but he walks into a Backstabber for another two. Owens is happy to come in and pick Sami's bones but quickly hands it back to Del Rio for a kick to the ribs. The fast tags continue as Dean is brought back in to dive on Del Rio as we take a break.

Back with Alberto stomping on Dean's chest in the corner before the heels take Ambrose outside for a beating. Unfortunately it's in front of the announcers' table so Sami flip dives onto both of them. Sami gets pulled off the apron though and the beatdown continues on Dean, only to have him escape the armbreaker. The Dirty Deeds attempt is broken up though and the running enziguri hits Owens instead. Sami gets the tag and scores with the Helluva Kick to put Del Rio away at 9:24.

Rating: B. Nice fast paced tag match here with both teams working well together and doing some things you don't normally get in the tag team formula. I'm not wild on having these tags where the good guys always

team with the bad guys leading up to the ladder match but at least it was an entertaining match this week.

Post match Owens grabs a headset and says he's tired of his partners screwing things up. He goes under the ring and finds a ladder so he can climb up and pull down the briefcase, only to have Cesaro run down and hit the spinning uppercut while still wearing his suit. Cesaro climbs the ladder and pulls down the briefcase instead.

Jack Swagger vs. Rusev

Non-title and Rusev attacks before Jack can get in the ring. Swagger says ring the bell and has the Patriot Lock on about two seconds in. Rusev bails to the floor and eats a hard clothesline but Jack's shoulder is banged up from the attack. Back in and Swagger makes a quick comeback but misses the running Vader Bomb. Instead he clotheslines Rusev again with the shoulder mostly fine. Rusev escapes another Patriot Lock attempt and sends Swagger outside for a whip into the steps. The Accolade is countered into the Patriot Lock but Rusev gets the rope and puts on the Accolade so Jack can pass out at 4:43.

Rating: C. I know it's been a long time since this happened but it's still not something I'm going to get into. They've had the same match over and over and it's really kind of hard to care about when there's no way Swagger is going to do anything noteworthy. Swagger really needs a change and jobbing to Rusev again isn't a good sign.

Rusev won't let go until Titus O'Neil runs out for the save.

Bob Backlund asks Darren Young for a training update. Young says his running has been great so far but Backlund only wants him running in case he misses the bus. Apparently Backlund has stolen Young's car keys and Young can walk to the next town in eight hours. Backlund: "And if you get there any faster, I'll know you ran!" I freaking love these things.

We look at Rollins and Reigns not fighting on Raw.

AJ Styles vs. Kofi Kingston

Kofi flips him away to start but AJ snaps off some armdrags and poses a

bit. The announcers speculate that the Club's breakup was staged to set Cena up, which is a better explanation than I would give it. Kofi takes him into the corner for a basement dropkick and that means it's time for a musical interlude. All six guys get in and it's a standoff until we take a break.

Back with Kofi elbowing Styles in the jaw and putting on an armbar. Styles is sent to the floor and it's a standoff between New Day and the Club, allowing AJ to post Kofi to take over. Woods starts running his mouth and apparently motivates Kofi to get in a jawbreaker, only to have Styles hit that strike rush of his to drop Kingston again. Kofi grabs a monkey flip of all things to put Styles down.

The Boom Drop makes a rare appearance and something like a knee drop to a standing AJ gets two. Styles is sent to the apron and Woods starts playing some trombone, causing AJ to miss the Phenomenal Forearm. The SOS gives Kofi two but the Club and New Day get into it at ringside. Kofi dives over the top to take out Gallows, only to have AJ score with the Pele coming back in. The Styles Clash gives AJ the pin at 13:35.

Rating: B+. For all his goofiness, I think it's often forgotten just how good Kofi can be in the ring. No he's not likely to ever become a World Champion but he's definitely someone who can wrestle a good to very good match against almost anyone. I miss watching Kofi in singles stuff and I'd love to see him as more of the solo act on the team.

Overall Rating: B-. This was a stronger show than usual as it feels like Smackdown is starting to mean something again heading into the Brand Split. There was enough good wrestling here and Club vs. New Day got a strong focus to start what could be an entertaining feud going forward. I liked this show for a change and that's not something I can often say these days.

Results

Becky Lynch b. Charlotte via DQ when Dana Brooke interfered

Dudley Boyz b. Golden Truth – Rollup to Goldust

Sami Zayn/Dean Ambrose b. Kevin Owens/Alberto Del Rio – Helluva Kick to Del Rio

Rusev b. Jack Swagger – Accolade

AJ Styles b. Kofi Kingston – Styles Clash

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Wrestlemania Count-Up – Wrestlemania XXIX: All Those Rematches

Wrestlemania XXIX

Date: April 7, 2013

Location: MetLife Stadium, East Rutherford, New Jersey

Attendance: 80,676

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, John Bradshaw Layfield

It's hard to believe this show was almost a year ago. The main event is of course Rock vs. Cena II in the sequel that not a lot of people wanted to see. Other than that we have CM Punk challenging the Streak and HHH vs. Brock Lesnar in another sequel that not a lot of people wanted to

see. I wasn't too hot on this show live but Wrestlemania is always worth checking out. Let's get to it.

Pre-Show: Intercontinental Title: The Miz vs. Wade Barrett

Barrett is defending. Miz backflips out of an early belly to back suplex attempt and gets two off a fast rollup. He tries to jump over Barrett in the corner though and gets kicked in the ribs to give the champion control. Barrett: "How awesome is he now?" Miz is laid on the top rope and a running knee to his ribs gets two. Barrett loads up his boot to the face with Miz in the ropes but Miz gets his own foot up instead.

The Reality Check gets two for Miz but both guys escape finishers. Winds of Change gets a close two for Wade but Miz ducks the Bull Hammer and hooks the Figure Four. Barrett is quickly into the ropes though and pops up with Wasteland for two. Miz picks the leg and takes Barrett to the mat for the Figure Four and the title out of nowhere.

Rating: C. This was perfectly fine as they wanted to fire the fans up before the show got started. It's amazing how far these two have fallen in the last year as Miz is floundering even more and Barrett is a one note character. This result wouldn't mean anything as Barrett got the title match the very next night.

New Jersey Governor Chris Christie talks about Hurricane Sandy hitting New Jersey back in October and destroying a lot of the Jersey Shore. But the people of New Jersey fought back and rose up along with New York because they're unbreakable and unstoppable.

The opening video talks about moments that change the world forever and how they make time stand still.

I still like the female part of that I'm Coming Home song.

Sheamus/Randy Orton/Big Show vs. Shield

The three guys had been having issues with Shield for months now. At this point, Shield still hasn't lost a six man tag and Big Show isn't trustworthy but he's a necessary ally. Basically everyone thought Orton was going to be the one to turn on his partners here though. Thankfully

Shield doesn't come from the top of the stadium this time. Reigns starts with Sheamus and they slug it out in the corner. The cameras are all over the place as they keep switching angles.

A running ax handle puts Reigns down and a clothesline is good for one. Orton comes in and drops a knee before hitting the Garvin Stomp. Rollins comes in but walks into a dropkick followed by ten right hands in the corner. The fans are WAY into this so far. Back to Sheamus who gets his knee dropkicked out, allowing Ambrose to come in for some fast stomping. The fans are even more into Ambrose but he walks into a powerslam for two. Sheamus goes to tag Orton but Big Show tags himself in instead.

Show rips the vest off Ambrose for the chop in the corner but Dean tries a chop of his own. That just makes Big Show mad so he hits ten straight chops. Dean dropkicks Big Show in the knee just like Sheamus got earlier and it's back to Rollins who tries to keep Big Show down. Shield starts their fast tags as Cole says they're like a swarm of hornets. Rollins hits some running knees to the head for two before it's back to Reigns for a chinlock. Show suplexes his way to freedom but Rollins knocks Orton to the floor.

The giant backdrops Rollins from his knees and the hot tag brings in Sheamus. The Irishman rips the vest off of Rollins for the ten forearms. Ambrose gets a tag and is immediately caught in the ten forearms as well. There's the rolling fireman's carry to Ambrose and another one to Rollins who lands on Dean. Reigns pulls Sheamus outside though and the double teaming begins.

Orton is whipped into Rollins to put both guys down but Shield throws Rollins back inside. The Triple Bomb to Sheamus is broken up by a Big Show spear in a nice visual and everyone is down. Show reaches out for a tag but Orton takes it himself, ticking Big Show off. Randy loads up the RKO on Ambrose but has to catch a springboarding Rollins in an RKO. Reigns comes in with the spear though and puts Dean on top for the pin as Big Show watches from the apron.

Rating: C+. It's amazing that Shield is actually still together a year later and have become even more dominant. I thought they would win the

match coming into this and I'm glad the first loss wasn't here at Wrestlemania. The match wasn't bad but it didn't have the time or the near falls that make most Shield matches awesome. Still though, good opener and Big Show was somewhat justified in his actions.

Big Show yells at Orton post match and knocks out both of his partners.

Music video on Rock vs. Cena II with the theme of legacy vs. redemption.

Snooki is here.

Mark Henry vs. Ryback

This is a simple idea: how big of a guy can Ryback Shell Shock? Henry also choked Ryback during a bench press challenge a few weeks earlier. Ryback was on fire a few months before this but has fallen through the floor in the time since. They stare each other down to start before Ryback wins an early slugout. Some clotheslines put Henry against the ropes but he runs Ryback over to a big pop. A powerslam gets two for Henry and we get a Sexual Chocolate chant.

Ryback can't suplex him but Mark lifts Ryback up and places him on the apron for a ram into the buckle. Back in and Henry pounds on the spine before we hit the bearhug. Ryback is thrown outside but he dives back inside at two. The bearhug goes on again but Ryback fights out and drives Mark into the corner. There's the Meat Hook and Ryback easily picks Mark up for the Shell Shock, drawing Ryback's first pop of the match. Henry grabs the ropes though and falls onto Ryback for the pin.

Rating: D. Nothing but a slow power match here though the Shell Shock attempt looked good. The booking still doesn't make sense to me as Henry would challenge Cena to a title match tomorrow night before Ryback closed the show by turning heel and getting the title shot on PPV. Why not have Ryback win here, have Henry answer the open challenge, and THEN have Ryback go after Cena, saying Henry almost beat Cena (he did) so imagine what Ryback could do. The whole thing was backwards. Anyway the match wasn't great and they only kind of did the Shell Shock, which was the whole point of the thing.

Post match Henry goes back in to stomp on Ryback some more but the Big Guy fights back and Shell Shocks Henry. Again, why not have that be the ending?

The announcers play with the new WWE action figures. JBL beats up the Rey Mysterio toy in some nice continuity.

Video on the WWE partnering with the Special Olympics.

Some Special Olympians are here with Stephanie McMahon and Chris Christie.

Tag Team Titles: HELL NO vs. Dolph Ziggler/Big E. Langston

This is Langston's in ring debut and his team is challenging. AJ is with them as well and Dolph is Mr. Money in the Bank. Bryan's beard is only a foot or so long here. We get a nice bit of continuity to start with Ziggler kissing AJ on the apron after the bell, allowing Bryan to kick him in the head for a close two. The YES Kicks have Ziggler in trouble but he dives to the corner after ducking the big one. Both power guys come in now and it's Kane taking over with right hands to the face, only to be caught in a series of backbreakers.

Langston runs Kane over and it's back to Ziggler who gets two off a dropkick. Dolph doesn't stay in long as he tags Big E. back in, only to have him get caught by a running DDT. Now it's already back to Ziggler who walks into a side slam. Kane misses the top rope clothesline but Ziggler almost entirely botches the Fameasser, meaning it's only good for two. A hard clothesline drops Ziggler but Big E. breaks it up at the last second. Langston nails the Big Ending but Bryan takes him to the floor. AJ throws in the briefcase but misses the big show, allowing Kane to hit the chokeslam, setting up Bryan's Swan Dive to retain the titles.

Rating: D+. This was more short than anything else. They seemed to be teasing leaving Ziggler fresh so he could cash in later which people were expecting like the birth of a child at this point. HELL NO was a good team and a good stepping stone for Bryan to the main event scene in the coming months.

Make-A-Wish video starring John Cena.

Fandango vs. Chris Jericho

This is the dancing feud so Fandango has a full dance troupe with his original brunette dance partner, soon to be replaced by Summer Rae. It's also Fandango's in ring debut under this name. Fandango dances to start but is quickly taken down to the mat by Jericho. A hard slap sends the dancer to the floor before Jericho brings him back inside and hammers away in the corner. The fans are entirely behind the Canadian here.

Fandango jumps over him in the corner but walks into the Codebreaker to send him out to the floor. A hard baseball slide drops Fandango again and a BIG dive off the top knocks him to the floor. Back in and Jericho slaps him in the face but Fandango enziguris Jericho down to break up the springboard dropkick. Fandango stomps away before putting on a chinlock as Jericho's forehead is cut open.

Jericho fights up and runs Fandango over with some shoulders before hitting a top rope dropkick. A Thesz Press of all things drops Fandango and there's an enziguri to make up for earlier. Fandango sends him shoulder first into the post to take over again and the guillotine legdrop gets two.

Back up and Jericho counters a dropkick into a Walls attempt but Fandango kicks away. He goes up again but Jericho shakes the ropes to bring him down. A superplex is countered by a series of headbutts, only to have Jericho avoid another legdrop attempt. The Lionsault connects but Jericho tweaks his knee, allowing Fandango to small package him for the pin out of nowhere.

Rating: C. The match wasn't bad for the most part and I'm not sure I can argue against it being the biggest upset in Wrestlemania history.

Fandango may have wrestled as Johnny Curtis before but this was his debut as the character, making it a big deal to have him win here. Jericho has always been great at making people look good and that's exactly what he did here.

We look back at the pre-show match with Miz winning the Intercontinental

Title.

Another video on Rock vs. Cena, this time focusing on Rock and his fans. By this I mean fans saying Rock's catchphrases.

We get a video of classic Wrestlemania moments set to the song playing in the Rocky Balboa vs. Apollo Creed fight in the first Rocky movie. This leads into a Sean Combs medley.

We recap Del Rio vs. Swagger. It's a basic story: Del Rio is from Mexico and Swagger's new manager Zeb Colter is very anti-foreigner. He's as close to a white supremacist as you'll get in modern WWE and rants about how evil foreigners are crippling America. The government won't do anything about it so Jack Swagger will instead. He won the Elimination Chamber to earn the title shot here and has injured Ricardo's ankle coming into the match.

Del Rio had turned face late last year and was on a roll as champion. He was suddenly a patriot who loved America but was also proud of being from Mexico. The character worked very well and his matches got about a hundred times better. Even I was digging Del Rio around this time while I'm not generally a good fan.

World Heavyweight Championship: Alberto Del Rio vs. Jack Swagger

After all that, Swagger doesn't even get an entrance. AT WRESTLEMANIA. Colter goes into a rant about how horrible this country is because of how many other languages people speak now, including Chinese and Yiddish. However, Swagger will fix everything tonight by winning the World Heavyweight Championship. Del Rio wears an old school robe and after the big match intros we're ready to go.

Del Rio quickly sends him to the floor and sends Swagger into the announcers' table but gets tripped by Colter. Back inside and Jack sends him shoulder first into the post to take over. A quick rollup gets two for the champion but Jack drops him with a kick to the head. The Vader Bomb gets two but Del Rio counters Jack instead of having his knee wrapped around the post. Back in and Jack runs into a boot to the face before taking a few clotheslines to put the champion back in control.

Alberto stomps on Colter's hand for good measure before the low superkick gets two. The armbreaker is countered into a kind of powerslam for a very close two as Jack is in control again. Jack takes out the knee and puts on the Patriot Lock but Alberto quickly kicks away. He misses the enziguri in the corner though and Jack stays up. Del Rio comes right back with a series of forearms in the corner and the Backstabber is good for two.

The champion hits a German suplex but takes his time following up. His cross armbreaker is countered into the gutwrench powerbomb to give Swagger a two count and there's the Patriot Lock again. Alberto is almost to the ropes but Jack pulls him back into the middle. Instead Del Rio pulls him down into the armbreaker but Jack counters that into the Patriot Lock.

This time Alberto makes the ropes before countering another gutwrench suplex into a kick to the head. He limps into the corner enziguri for two as Colter puts Swagger's leg on the ropes. Zeb goes even more evil by kicking Ricardo's leg out to draw Del Rio outside, allowing Jack to send him into the barricade. Back in and Alberto grabs the armbreaker out of nowhere to retain the title. It's as sudden as it sounds.

Rating: C+. This was getting good in the middle but they ran to the finish almost immediately. There's a chemistry there and I'd love to see them do stuff on the mat and trade submissions for fifteen minutes. Instead it didn't even get eleven and they cut off the technical stuff to go for the manager. That being said, it's still a good match but it could have been great.

WWE supports the National Guard.

We recap Undertaker vs. CM Punk. As usual, Punk is trying to break the Streak but this time there's an added caveat. Undertaker's long term manager Paul Bearer recently passed away and Punk interrupted Undertaker's tribute to him to promise to break the Streak. He even stole Bearer's Urn and tossed it around like a football before dropping it on the concrete.

CM Punk vs. Undertaker

Living Colour plays Punk to the ring and Heyman is still at his side here. As always, Undertaker's entrance is just freaking cool. Punk slaps him in the face to start and fires off forearms in the corner. Undertaker misses another big right hand and gets slapped in the face, so this time he just kicks Punk in the face. Punk is thrown out to the floor and into the timekeeper's area where Undertaker nails him in the head again. The Dead Man loads up the announce table rams Punk into the post before being thrown back inside.

There's a right hand to the head as the dueling chants begin. Taker drops the leg on the apron before driving his shoulder into Punk's to set up Old School. Punk pulls him down off the top rope with an armdrag though and starts ramming elbows into Undertaker's head. In something I can't remember seeing from anyone else, Punk hits Old School to Undertaker. You can see how much he's loving this and the facials are making it so much better.

Punk nails a Russian legsweep and cranks on Undertaker's right arm. That goes nowhere as Undertaker puts him into the corner and hammers away but hits his own knee on a charge. A baseball slide puts Undertaker on the floor and Punk drops a top rope ax handle (with the finger poke of course). Back in and Punk gets two off a neckbreaker but Undertaker comes back with right hands. A high kick gets two for Punk as Heyman shouts about CM getting more and more momentum.

We hit the chinlock on the taller guy but Taker quickly fights up, only to charge into a boot to the face. Punk tries another Old School but crotches himself on the top rope. A big right hand puts Punk on the floor but Heyman gets on the apron to block the Taker Dive. The distraction lets Punk hit another neckbreaker for two. Punk nails the running knee in the corner followed by the Macho Elbow for another near fall. Taker escapes a GTS attempt and plants Punk with a chokeslam for two of his own.

A big series of right hands has Punk covering up in the corner and it's the snake eyes and big boot combo but Punk leg lariats Undertaker down to block the boot. The dueling chants pick up again before Punk sends Taker back to the floor. An uppercut slows Punk down but he's able to escape a

Last Ride through the table. He kicks Undertaker in the head to set up the Macho Elbow onto the table, which doesn't break. That always looks sick.

Both guys are down and Punk looks to have injured his leg. Punk is able to get back inside and we tease a countout until Undertaker dives back in at nine. Back in and Undertaker tries Hell's Gate but can't quite get it on. Punk flips over for two and hooks the Anaconda Vice. Undertaker's shoulders stay down for two but he sits up and stares Punk in the eyes for a great counter.

The chokeslam is countered into the GTS but Taker bounces into the ropes and hits the Tombstone for a very close two. They slug it out but Punk's shots have no effect. Taker loads up the chokeslam but Punk shoves the referee down. Heyman distracts Undertaker but Punk injures his knee by kicking Undertaker in the ribs. The Last Ride is countered by an urn shot for another close two. The GTS is countered into a Tombstone which is countered into a GTS which is countered into a Tombstone to make Undertaker 21-0.

Rating: B. I liked the match but it's still not as good as it's made out to be. The urn to the head into the Undertaker cover was done better at Wrestlemania X7 and I never bought Punk's covers as serious threats. It's still a good match and I was into it more than the match at Wrestlemania 27, but it's still not Punk getting inches away from breaking the Streak like it's been made out to be.

Undertaker picks up the Urn for a nice tribute to Bearer.

Ad for the Mick Foley DVD.

Video on Cena, focusing on redemption.

Michelle Beadle is here.

We recap HHH vs. Brock Lesnar. They started feuding the night after Extreme Rules 2012 when Lesnar broke HHH's arm, setting up a match at Summerslam. Brock beat HHH by breaking his arm again and HHH thought about walking away. However, Lesnar attacked Vince and put him in the

hospital. This fired up HHH enough to want a rematch here at Wrestlemania on the grandest stage of them all. Brock also broke Shawn Michaels' arm and you know that's too far for HHH.

It's No DQ and if HHH loses he has to retire. This is of course completely different from the no holds barred match at Summerslam. From what I remember, a grand total of no one wanted to see a rematch but it's HHH at Wrestlemania so you knew it had to happen. The stipulations dropped the interest even further.

HHH vs. Brock Lesnar

Shawn and Heyman are in the respective corners. As always, Brock looks nothing short of terrifying. HHH has powder all over himself as he comes out through a skull entrance. They slug it out to start and of course HHH gets the better of it. Remember when Brock just destroyed Cena and Big Show with right hands? Forget that, because they're not HHH. A knee to the ribs finally puts Lesnar in control but they fall out to the floor. Lesnar is sent into the barricade and then into the announce table as HHH is dominating in the first minute.

Brock comes back with a chair but misses a swing and hits the steps. They head into the crowd with HHH clotheslining him back to ringside. Back in and HHH blocks the chair shot with a running knee before throwing Brock back to the floor. Brock goes head first into the steps but comes right back with an overhead belly to belly. There is a MASSIVE bruise on Brock's left pectoral. Shawn is looking concerned as Brock suplexes HHH through the announce table and roars.

Another overhead belly to belly on to the remnants of the table have HHH reeling. Back in and Brock stomps away in the corner before charging into a boot. Not that it matters as he comes right back with a third belly to belly for two. HHH tries to elbow out of a German but gets thrown down again with ease. Another German gets two but HHH fires off right hands, only to be whipped over the corner and out to the floor.

Brock glares at Shawn long enough for HHH to come back with a big running clothesline. Another clothesline puts Brock in the timekeeper's area and there's a big chair shot to his back. Back in and Brock snaps off another

German for two before knocking Shawn off the apron with a big right hand. Trips comes back again with a spinebuster because he's capable of going move for move with Brock Lesnar. A Pedigree is countered into an F5 attempt but Brock lets go to avoid a superkick from Shawn. It's Michaels taking the F5 instead, only to have Lesnar take the Pedigree for two.

The sledgehammer is brought in but Brock ducks the shot and takes a massive F5 for two. They head outside again with HHH being whipped hard into the steps. The steps bounce off HHH's head before Brock throws them into the ring for some fun. Another shot with the steps is good for two as the fans aren't really responding to a lot of these near falls. Even Heyman says that's enough but HHH slaps Brock in the face.

A slugout (won by HHH of course) is countered into the Kimura but HHH drives him into the corner for the break. The same hold is countered the same way before Brock puts him on the middle rope to slap the hold on again. HHH lifts Brock into the air and puts him down with another spinebuster to break. Brock misses a charge into the post and HHH hits a hard low blow to put both guys down. HHH crushes the arm against the post with a chair as

Shawn is laid against the barricade with his head up watching. Another chair shot to the arm crushes it against the steps and HHH puts on a Kimura of his own. Heyman tries to interfere but walks into a superkick. Brock finally powers up and slams HHH down onto the steps for another break. HHH grabs the hold again and gets slammed down onto the steps one more time. There's a third Kimura to Brock but he plants lifts HHH into the air, only to be countered into a DDT on the steps. A sledgehammer to the face sets up the Pedigree on the steps for the pin.

Rating: B. As mentioned earlier, the match was good but the interest just wasn't there. The times when HHH was able to go punch for punch with Lesnar were just ridiculous but we live in HHH's WWE anymore. At least he didn't make Lesnar submit to an MMA hold and Lesnar got to break some stuff. The match is certainly entertaining and I can live with HHH winning at Wrestlemania, but they had to keep it going one more match as a result which was pure overkill.

Hall of Fame time. This year's class includes Mick Foley, Trish Stratus, Bob Backlund, Booker T, Donald Trump and of course Bruno Sammartino.

Wrestlemania XXX is in New Orleans.

The new attendance record: 80,676.

WWE Championship: John Cena vs. The Rock

Twice in a lifetime. Rock is of course the crowd favorite and defending. After the big match intros we're ready to go. Cena grabs a headlock to start as they have a lot of time to work with here. A hard shoulder puts Rock down before they do the exact same sequence with the roles reversed. Rock grabs a second headlock before throwing him down with a hiptoss. Cena bails for a bit before taking over with right hands and a hard whip into the corner.

The fans are entirely behind Rock here as he comes back with more right hands and a hard whip of his own. More mirroring of the other. Some shots to the chest have Cena in trouble but he comes back with a clothesline followed by a chinlock. Back up and a belly to belly gets two on Rock before we're back in the hold again. Rock counters into a sleeper as the crowd is oddly quiet.

That goes nowhere so Rock grabs a Samoan drop to put both guys down again. Cena gets two off a fisherman's suplex but misses the tackle. The STF doesn't work either and Rock grabs his bad looking Sharpshooter. That goes nowhere as Cena powers out and initiates his finishing sequence, only to miss the Shuffle. A Rock Bottom is countered into a bad looking crossface (not the STF Cole you dolt) but Rock rolls out.

Now the Shuffle connects but the AA is countered into a spinebuster. The Elbow takes too long though and now the STF (JBL: "THERE is the STF Michael!") goes on, only to have Rock power out of it. The Rock Bottom gets two and so does the AA, with the latter allegedly ripping Rock's abdomen apart and giving him a hernia which means he's probably never wrestling again because insurance companies don't want to deal with that risk.

Cena misses the top rope Fameasser and now the Elbow connects for two. John rolls outside so Rock can recover a bit. Back in and Rock wins a slugout but tries a cross body which is of course easily caught. Cena looks bored catching him like that. The AA is countered into another Rock Bottom followed by more laying around. Rock tries the Elbow again complete with You Can't See Me but he runs into the AA for two more. They slug it out yet again and Cena hits a Rock Bottom of his own for two.

John loads up the People's Elbow just like last year but hangs onto the ropes when Rock gets up. The AA is countered into yet another Rock Bottom for yet another two. They counter finishers again until Rock nails a DDT to break the finisher streak at like 8. Back up and another Rock Bottom is countered into another AA to give Cena the title back.

Rating: B-. Now just to clarify, they did get in some finishers right? This was bordering on parody with all of those kickouts as they went from headlocks and shoulders to Rock Bottom/AA a go-go for the last ten minutes. It was entertaining for the most part but much like any other match, when you pound finishers into the ground like they, they stop meaning anything.

They say something we can't hear and shake hands after the match. Cena leaves Rock alone in the ring and waits for him on the stage. They pose together to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. The show is definitely entertaining and I shortchanged some stuff when I watched it live. My main criticism still holds up though: nothing felt big here. Even a year later, what is important here? Cena won the title, only to have Bryan charge up the ladder and become the real star after Cena feuded with Ryback for a few months. Lesnar and HHH had their real blowoff a month later. Punk vs. Undertaker was good but the real moment for Punk was at MITB.

Overall the show works well enough and is entertaining for a one off viewing, but it doesn't feel like a big deal. The two main events are both rematches from the previous year and that isn't the best idea for Wrestlemania. It didn't help that the last three matches all had really obvious endings so it was more about just killing time rather than any

intrigue. Still though, all three of those matches are at least good and there's nothing really horrible so it's definitely a solid show.

Ratings Comparison

The Miz vs. Wade Barrett

Original: D+

Redo: C

Shield vs. Randy Orton/Sheamus/Big Show

Original: B-

Redo: C+

Ryback vs. Mark Henry

Original: D

Redo: D

Dolph Ziggler/Big E. Langston vs. HELL NO

Original: C

Redo: D+

Fandango vs. Chris Jericho

Original: D

Redo: C

Jack Swagger vs. Alberto Del Rio

Original: C+

Redo: C+

Undertaker vs. CM Punk

Original: B

Redo: B

HHH vs. Brock Lesnar

Original: B+

Redo: B

John Cena vs. The Rock

Original: C+

Redo: B-

Overall Rating

Original: B-

Redo: B

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2013/04/07/wrestlemania-xxix-and-so-it-ends/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of the History of the Intercontinental Title at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B01D4D3EGQ>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

Wrestlemania Count-Up – Wrestlemania XXVII: Miz's Chris Jericho Moment

Wrestlemania XXVII

Date: April 3, 2011

Location: Georgia Dome, Atlanta, Georgia

Attendance: 71,617

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, Josh Matthews

This is the Rock's show as he's back to be guest host. Really that's all you need to know here because it's all that matters. We've also got Cena vs. Miz for the Raw Title, which is basically a backdrop for the obvious Rock and Cena interaction. For the blue guys we've got Del Rio challenging Edge for the title and Undertaker's opponent is Shawn's heterosexual life partner HHH. Oh and there's no MITB this year thank goodness. Let's get to it.

Keri Hilson sings America the Beautiful. I'm not sure who she is but I like her voice far better than Fantasia's from last year.

The opening video sounds like the opening to a late night talk show, but it leads to ROCKY, which makes it all better. He does the long walk down the long ramp to get to the ring and the place goes nuts for him. Rock starts off with the FINALLY line after walking around the ring for a bit. He asks if we can feel, taste and smell the electricity. We get a pretty lame "I say Wrestle, you say Mania" bit with the crowd and Rock has goosebumps.

As for the wrestlers here tonight, there's one in particular sitting in the back trying to decide which Fruity Pebbles shirt to wear to the ring tonight. We get the required Fruity Pebbles chant as Rock keeps stalling. Before continuing, Rock has to have some of the People's Water (his words

not mine). Now when he says Yabba, the people say Dabba. If it's not clear by now, he has no idea what to say here for the most part.

Rock lists off all of his own nicknames to say he's hosting while rhyming a bit ("Always defiant and standing taller than Andre the Giant") before saying that IF YA SMELL belongs to the people. Everyone says it with him and that's finally that. This was six minutes long and had about enough material to fill in a third of that.

We get the usual Wrestlemania through history video to show how important it's been over the last 27 years.

Cole, a heel here, says this is the fabric of Americana. That's a bit of a stretch I'd think.

Smackdown World Title: Alberto Del Rio vs. Edge

Del Rio is challenging and comes out in a Rolls Royce. The video screen is made to look like a driveway for Del Rio to be driving from in a cool sight. Also at ringside is Del Rio's bodyguard Brodus Clay. Does anyone even remember that association? Christian is of course here to second Edge. Alberto sends him into the corner to start but Edge comes back with some hard slaps. A backdrop puts Alberto down and a second one puts him on the floor.

Back in and Del Rio grabs an armbar to take over, only to be armdragged down. Alberto goes right back to the arm as Brodus talks trash. Back to the armbar but Del Rio misses a charge and falls out to the floor. Edge dives off the top to take Del Rio down again and we head back inside. The champion heads to the top but Alberto pulls him down with a top rope armdrag for two. Edge comes back with a big boot to get himself a breather but he can't follow up.

A running forearm puts Del Rio down again and a flapjack gets two. Alberto grabs a Codebreaker to the arm but the cross armbreaker is countered into an Edge-0-Matic for two. Del Rio rolls through a rollup and grabs the armbreaker but Edge gets his feet on the ropes to quickly escape. Edge snaps Alberto's neck on the top rope but as he goes up top, Del Rio hits the enziguri in the corner for two.

Brodus and Christian get in a fight on the floor but Del Rio kicks Christian down. There's the Edgecution to set up the spear but it hits post instead. The armbreaker goes on but Edge keeps his hands together...for a minute before Alberto gets the hold on full. Edge gets on top of Alberto to break it up and there's the Edgecator (modified Sharpshooter) but Del Rio rolls away. Not that it matters as Edge pops up and hits the spear to retain.

Rating: C+. For a world title match at Wrestlemania, this was a disappointment. For Edge's last match because his neck was REALLY messed up, this was pretty decent stuff. Edge would retire a few days later and vacate the title, which says to me that he should have put Del Rio over here. At the end of the day it makes Alberto look weak to lose to a guy that banged up but it did give Edge a good moment to go out on. Nothing great though.

Post match Edge beats up Del Rio's car and Alberto...lets him. Christian provides a pipe and the real beating of the car begins. This had to happen sooner or later. Cole brings up a good point: "Someone should arrest them." True actually, but then again Orton didn't get arrested for trying to blow up John Cena, so this is minor by comparison.

Tough Enough is coming. That show was awesome.

Cole taunts Lawler a bit before their match later.

Cody Rhodes vs. Rey Mysterio

Cody used to be Dashing but then Rey hit him with the 619 and the knee brace hit Cody in the face, scarring him and requiring facial surgery. Cody basically became Dr. Doom but in reality his face was fine. However he wanted Rey's mask for retribution. This was an AWESOME character but of course WWE would wind up wasting the entire thing and make Cody a jobber because they got bored with him after a few months. Still though, this part was awesome.

Oh yeah the match. Rey comes out as Captain America this year which is an awesome looking costume for him. Rey is almost immediately sent to the apron but comes in off the top with a dropkick to take over. A forearm to

Rey's face takes over and Cody goes after the knee brace which caused the initial injury. Rey kicks his way out of the corner but Cody headbutts him in the face to take over again because of the hard mask.

The Disaster Kick to the head puts Rey down again and it's off to a chinlock. Cody charges into a boot in the corner but comes right back with the Alabama Slam for two. Back to the knee brace for a second before Cody hits a running knee to the back of Rey's head to keep him down. Mysterio is sent to the apron again and goes up top, only to be sent down in a delayed superplex. Cody stomps away and talks about how Rey hurt his face.

Rey escapes Cross Rhodes and sends Cody out to the floor for a baseball slide to the face. A headscissors sends Cody into the apron and we head back inside to speed things up. Rey hooks a quick quick rollup for two and fires off a kick to the face. Cody charges into a kick to the ribs but comes back with a release German suplex for two. A springboard headscissors puts Cody down but the 619 is caught in mid kick. Cody slingshots Rey's throat into the middle rope for two more and now the knee brace is removed.

Rey comes right back with a moonsault press for two of his own and Cody loses his mask. The 619 hits and a hard kick to Cody's head gets two more. Now Mysterio puts Cody's mask on and hits a few headbutts with it before hitting a top rope headbutt to the chest for two. Cody rolls to the floor and sneaks in a shot to the face with the knee brace, followed up by Cross Rhodes for the upset pin.

Rating: B-. Good match here and pretty easily Cody's biggest win ever to this point. Cody needed this win a lot more than Mysterio and it made him even more awesome than he already was before this match. Mysterio had nothing to gain here and it was a pleasant sight to see the hotter star go over like that.

We go to the back for our comedy segment of the night. Teddy is in the back with Snoop Dog for a talent search. First up we have William Regal dropping some rhymes on us. Snoop says it's not gangster enough for him. Here are Khali and Beth Phoenix to sing Summer Loving from Grease. It

would have been better as Natalya but still not bad. Finally we have Ryder singing Friday (now THERE'S a dated joke), only to be blasted with a chair by Piper. Snoop is...pleased? Masters does his pec dance to We Will Rock You with Yoshi Tatsu providing vocals. Horny raps and we have a winner. The Bellas come in to dance too.

Corre vs. Big Show/Kane/Kofi Kingston/Santino Marella

Corre is the sequel to Nexus and is made up of Barrett/Slater/Gabriel/Jackson. Barrett is IC Champion and Slater/Gabriel are tag champions. Santino and Slater start things off but after a quick hiptoss from Marella here's Big Show. Matthews: "He's certainly not unorthodox." Yeah actually he is, given how big he is. Everything breaks down and Kofi kicks Barrett's head off. In all the calamity, Santino Cobras Slater into the WMD for the pin in just over 90 seconds. This would be the replacement for MITB for the Mania payday.

Rock kind of hits on Eve Torres in the back. But enough of that as Rock says he can make magic with anyone that comes around the corner. I called this one before it happened live: Mae Young pops up and says she wants the People's Strudel. Rock suggests the Moses variety instead and makes various other old people jokes. Mae smack's Rock's pants and leaves so Rock can say he wishes that was ANYONE else.

He turns around and locks eyes with Steve Austin. They look at each other and say it's good to see each other with Rock asking if Austin remembers. Austin says he does and they shake hands. This wasn't a funny moment but one of those where you could actually feel the intensity. Also to brag a bit, I called both of those appearances before they happened live.

We recap Randy Orton vs. CM Punk. Back in 2008, Orton cost Punk the title for no apparent reason by keeping him out of the Championship Scramble at Unforgiven. Two and a half years later, Punk jumped Orton and said he was doing this as revenge for Orton costing him that shot. Punk had since taken over the Nexus and sent them after Orton, who took them out one by one in a few weeks (Note that Cena spent six months fighting them and took out one guy while Orton took out about five in as many weeks). Tonight is the showdown.

Randy Orton vs. CM Punk

The cylinder from last year is now a cube which still has the videos playing on them. Orton immediately takes it to the floor and pounds away, but Punk jumps over the steps and kicks them into Orton's knees. Back in and Orton stays on the knees for a quick two count. Punk of course mocks the knee injury before stomping at the legs even more. Randy grabs a quick backbreaker but Punk comes back with a kind of Stunner to the leg for two.

Punk hits the running knee in the corner but Orton falls down before he can hit the bulldog. The straightedge one stays on the knee and puts Orton in the Tree of Woe. In a cool bit, Orton tries to pull himself up but Punk drops a top rope knee to take Randy right back down. The GTS is countered but Punk breaks up the RKO with a high kick for two. Punk loads up the Macho Elbow but Orton crotches him down instead. A superplex puts Punk down but the cover is very delayed and only gets two.

Punk wraps the knee around the post a few times and Orton is in big trouble. Off to a modified Indian deathlock for a bit but Orton fights back and slugs Punk down to take over. Punk comes back with a basic kick to the knee and there's the Anaconda Vice. Orton rolls over and the fans never once seemed nervous about a tap out. CM heads out to the apron and is rammed into the post, followed by the Elevated DDT. Orton loads up the Punt but the knee gives out. Punk heads to the outside and loads up the springboard clothesline but dives right into the RKO for the pin by Randy.

Rating: B. Good solid match here which should have been the end of the feud, but since this is WWE, there was a gimmick rematch the next month because that's how WWE books feuds. You know, because WRESTLEMANIA isn't good enough to end a story at. Anyway, very good match here between two guys with solid chemistry together.

The Rock and Gene Okerlund are in the back and they meet John Cena's #1 fan: Pee Wee Herman. He's not my kind of comedy but Rock recruits him to Team Bring It. Gene calls Herman a tool.

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Hall of Fame time. The class of 2011: Abdullah the Butcher, Sunny, Road Warriors, Drew Carey, Bob Armstrong, Jim Duggan (with bowtie on the 2x4) and.....that Shawn Michaels guy.

Here's a Wrestlemania Recall from...Monday night? It's Lawler and Swagger, Cole's trainer for his match tonight, brawling.

We don't bother recapping Cole vs. Lawler, but basically Cole has been heel since November and even cost Jerry the WWE Title a few months ago. After months and months, tonight is Lawler's revenge. Swagger has been training Cole and Austin is guest referee. Booker and JR come out to do commentary with Josh.

Cole comes out in a Syracuse hoodie and headgear to match. He makes fun of JR for being fat and Lawler for having a big ego. This is going to be Lawler's first Wrestlemania match.

Jerry Lawler vs. Michael Cole

Austin rides out on his ATV and sends Cole into his plastic cube. Cole warms up in his cube as Lawler and Austin wait in the ring. Austin rings the bell and Lawler goes right for Michael. He has to punch Swagger out first and sends him into the barricade for good measure. Cole begs for mercy and reaches his hand through the hole in the cube for a handshake, only to be pulled face first into the wall. Lawler climbs in and pounds away before bringing Cole out into the open.

Swagger interferes again and Cole gets a breather before actually hitting a baseball slide. Jack puts on the ankle lock as Cole is in control here. Back in and Michael works on the ankle some more as he's actually maintaining control. Cole loads up a Vader Bomb but can only do it off the bottom rope for two. It's remarkable that a former world champion is in this much trouble after a few shots by an announcer isn't it?

Cole starts going after the ankle again as we're somehow EIGHT MINUTES into this. The crowd chants boring and they're absolutely right. Cole takes down a strap and puts on the An-Cole (yes that's what it's called) Lock but Lawler easily breaks it. After nine minutes plus, Jerry FINALLY comes back and starts pounding away. Swagger throws in a towel but Austin

wipes his head with it and throws it back. Jack gets in the ring and is Stunned for his efforts.

Now Cole gets in Austin's face but walks into a right hand from Jerry as the real beating begins. There's a dropkick for good measure to put Cole down and it's time for the middle rope punch, complete with a point to the sign and the peeling down of the strap. Jerry covers him but pulls it up at two. Lawler puts on the ankle lock and Cole immediately tabs. Austin asks if he gives up veeeeeeeeery slowly. Cole: "YES YES I GIVE UP I GIVE UP!" Austin: "ARE YOU SURE!" The bell finally rings and we're done.

Rating: D-. Oh this was terrible. This ran THIRTEEN AND A HALF MINUTES with Lawler getting beaten up for nearly ten of that. This should have been five minutes long with Lawler not even breaking a sweat. I can live with the lack of a piledriver for company rules, but the fist should have ended it rather than the ankle lock. At least it couldn't get worse though.

Swagger carries Cole out and it's time to drink. Booker comes in for no apparent reason and Lawler (a notorious non-drinker) has a chance to drop his beers. We get a Spinarooni and Booker gets a Stunner for stealing the spotlight.

And then it happens.

We get an e-mail from the Anonymous Raw GM, saying that since Austin got physical, the decision is reversed and Cole wins by DQ. If there has EVER been a dumber idea in wrestling history, I have no idea what it is. Lawler would get the win TWO MONTHS LATER and the GM would eventually be revealed to be Hornswoggle of all people. This is just so stupid. Austin gives Josh, the messenger, the Stunner for good measure. Also to keep the people from booing this out of the building anymore than they already are.

We get a video on Wrestlemania week.

We recap HHH Undertaker. In short, Shawn couldn't do it the last two years, so now it's HHH's turn to try. Both guys talked about how big this

was and how awesome they were and it's no holds barred for no real apparent reason.

HHH vs. Undertaker

HHH comes out with a phalanx of soldiers, in battle gear and to a LONG version of For Whom the Bell Tolls by Metallica. Does it make up for the Thor entrance? No, but it's pretty awesome. Taker comes out to Ain't No Grave Can Hold My Body Down (or whatever its name is) by Johnny Cash. HHH pounds him into the corner to start but gets launched over the top rope for his efforts. The Game fires off more right hands but gets sent into the steps to break the momentum again.

HHH comes back by spearing him into the Cole Mine (JR and King are doing commentary now) but Taker sits up with ease. Back in and Taker hits the jumping clothesline but Old School is countered. A clothesline puts Taker onto the floor and HHH whips him into the barricade for good measure. HHH loads up the announce table but the Pedigree attempt is countered by a backdrop to the floor.

Taker goes back inside and busts out the Taker Dive for good measure. Thankfully this time he had HHH there to catch him. The steps are placed in front of the other table and Taker charges at HHH, only to be caught in the spinebuster through the table to put both guys down again. Back in and HHH walks into a chokeslam for a close two. HHH drives Taker into the corner and starts pounding away, only to get caught in the Last Ride ala Wrestlemania 17. He escapes this time though, only to have his Pedigree attempt countered. Snake Eyes connects but the big boot is countered into another spinebuster.

HHH brings in a chair but gets kicked in the face to give Taker the chair. The Game absorbs a shot to the back and grabs a quick Pedigree for two. Triple H pounds away in the corner again and now the Last Ride connects for two. The Tombstone also hits for two and Taker is getting frustrated. As he picks up HHH, the Game comes back with a DDT onto the chair for no cover. Both guys slowly fight to their feet and there's another Pedigree and a VERY slow count for two.

A third Pedigree hits and the crowd is barely popping anymore on these

kickouts as we're reaching the point of ridiculousness. HHH blasts him in the back with the chair eight times but he's too gassed to follow up. A ninth cracks Undertaker in the head and the Dead Man is in trouble. There are about 45 seconds of nothing in between these shots by the way. Taker can't sit up so HHH yells at him to stay down. A chokeslam attempt is easily shrugged off but Taker gets to his feet in the corner.

HHH tombstones Undertaker but even with the tongue out it only gets two. Again, if your name isn't Kane, THAT DOESN'T WORK. HHH goes to the floor and gets the sledgehammer but walks into the Hell's Gate. He drops the hammer but the hold is locked on tight. HHH starts to pass out but gets the hammer again. Then he drops it again and HHH taps out to make Undertaker 19-0.

Rating: B. I'm pretty sure that's what I gave it live and it barely holds up to that level now. At the end of the day, this was treated like a match where Taker was beaten down so much that he couldn't possibly come back. The problem with the match is exactly that: it only felt like a match designed to be as one sided as possible for him to make the comeback. Think of it like the Aristocrats joke: take it as far as you can go and then get to the surprise ending. As mentioned, the fans didn't even react to the near falls by the end. It also didn't feel natural at all, much like the two Shawn matches. Good, but definitely not great.

Taker is carted out, which was the inspiration for the rematch, as HHH made it sound like he won the match.

Wrestlemania next year is in Miami.

John Morrison/Snooki/Trish Stratus vs. Laycool/Dolph Ziggler

Barely any story here as it's just there to give us Snooki, which is supposed to mean something. Vickie is with Laycool here because she's already screwing Dolph at this point. Trish is STUNNING as a brunette here too. Laycool attacks to start and the guys get involved as well. Michelle shoves Layla to start so Trish comes in and beats Michelle up. The Matrish is broken up with a stomp but Trish escapes the Faithbreaker (Styles Clash) with a facebuster.

Michelle and Stratus slug it out on the top before falling to the floor at the same time. Layla tries to interfere and gets decked as well, only to have Trish dive off the apron and take both of them out. The Chick Kick gets two on Michelle as the guys come in sans tags. Starship Pain to the floor takes Ziggy out and there's the tag to Snooki for a handspring elbow to Michelle. That and a splash are good for the pin.

Rating: D+. Trish and Laycool looked hot, Snooki did her two moves decently enough, the guys did almost nothing at all and Vickie was kept to a minimum in the less than three and a half minutes this ran. For a match that short with Trish looking that good, how much can you really complain here? Laycool would be split in a month with Michelle leaving the company.

The new attendance record is 71,617. Woot.

Do you need a recap of Cena vs. Miz? Miz is champion and it's Cena at Wrestlemania.

Anyway we do get a video of Miz's rise from MTV to Wrestlemania main event, cut in with great Wrestlemania moments. I'll give them this: Miz's rise from total joke to what he became is nothing short of remarkable. How Cena got the shot isn't even mentioned here. I think he won the Chamber match.

Raw World Title: John Cena vs. The Miz

Miz, complete with the SWEET coat, comes out through a set of balloons spelling out the word AWESOME. Oh and Alex Riley is here too. Cena has a full on gospel choir to sing him to the ring. That's rather awesome. We get a prayer set to a Cena career video. If nothing else, this lets us see a gospel choir singing "Your time is up, my time is now." It gets booed out of the building, but it does exist.

Feeling out process to start with Miz being taken down by a headlock. Miz grabs a headlock of his own but gets thrown down yet again. A test of strength is teased but Cena grabs another headlock instead. Not much to see yet. Miz fights into the corner and stomps away before hitting the corner clothesline for two. Matt Hardy's Side Effect gets two more as

we're firmly in first gear here. Another corner clothesline misses and Cena comes back with a regular clothesline for two.

A big boot to the head gets two for Miz as the crowd continues to be dead silent for this. Cena misses a...cross body I think and falls to the apron. A Million Dollar Kneelift gets two for the champion but the Skull Crushing Finale is reversed and Cena fires off the shoulder blocks. The finishing sequence continues but Miz escapes the AA into a low DDT for two. Miz escapes the STF and hits the Reality Check for two more. The champion removes a buckle pad and as the referee puts it back on, Cena gets an unseen small package for two.

Another AA attempt is blocked with Miz grabbing the top rope. Instead it's the STF but Miz quickly gets to the rope. Riley gets on the apron and the distraction is enough to send Cena into the buckle (apparently the referee is a bad repairman) and the Skull Crushing Finale gets two. Another Finale is reversed and the referee is bumped. The AA (ZERO pop) hits but there's no one to count. Riley comes in with a briefcase shot to the head which gets another two on Cena.

Alex tries to come in again but Miz's case shot takes him out by mistake. A BIG release AA hits again but Miz kicks out at two. They head outside and Cena clotheslines Miz over the barricade into the timekeeper's area. Miz tries to get up and Cena spears him down, sending Miz's head HARD into the concrete. I've heard Miz say that gave him a concussion and as a result he doesn't remember a thing about this match. It looked TERRIBLE too, and it actually ends the match, as in the MAIN EVENT OF WRESTLEMANIA, in a double countout.

Rating: D-. The second half of this match got WAY better than the first, but the problem is it's a fifteen minute match and the first seven or so are ridiculously boring. On top of that, did I mention it was a DOUBLE COUNTOUT IN THE MAIN EVENT OF WRESTLEMANIA??? The only good thing here was Miz kicking out of the AA in the middle of the ring. That's how you make a guy look good. The rest of the match however is how you make someone look HORRIBLE, much like the match. Terrible stuff here as Miz wasn't ready for this, which is what almost everyone thought would happen.

Oh wait here's Rock, who apparently has match making powers as host (why he didn't change the Lawler/Cole match earlier is anyone's guess). After ignoring another e-mail, he restarts this under No DQ rules. The bell rings, Cena can't hit the AA, Rock hits the Rock Bottom on Cena, Miz retains.

Post match Rock beats up Miz to a very limited reaction and it's the People's Elbow to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. Back in 2011 when I first watched this, I said out loud "What did I just watch?" That's the same thing I'm wondering now, because this was terrible. Taker vs. HHH and Orton vs. Punk are both solid matches, but other than that this might as well have been Over the Limit instead of Wrestlemania. Basically this was there to set up the next edition of the show, which is pretty much a big screw you to the fans. Nothing to see here other than MAYBE HHH vs. Undertaker, but other than that there's nothing of quality going on. One interesting note though: this is the only Mania ever with no title changes.

Ratings Comparison

Edge vs. Alberto Del Rio

Original: C+

Redo: C+

Cody Rhodes vs. Rey Mysterio

Original: B

Redo: B-

Corre vs. Kane/Santino Marella/Kofi Kingston/Big Show

Original: N/A

Redo: N/A

CM Punk vs. Randy Orton

Original: B-

Redo: B

Michael Cole vs. Jerry Lawler

Original: C

Redo: D-

Undertaker vs. HHH

Original: B

Redo: B

Snooki/Trish Stratus/John Morrison vs. Dolph Ziggler/Laycool

Original: N/A

Redo: D+

Miz vs. John Cena

Original: C-

Redo: D-

Overall Rating

Original: C-

Redo: D

Oh man was I too nice to this show back in the day.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/04/03/wrestlemania-27-not-sure-on-this-one/>

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book of the History of the Intercontinental Title at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

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Roadblock 2016: Are We There Yet?

Roadblock 2016

Date: March 12, 2016

Location: Ricoh Coliseum, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Commentators: John Bradshaw Layfield, Michael Cole, Byron Saxton

This is a special live show between Fastlane and Wrestlemania with a big main event in Dean Ambrose challenging HHH for the WWE World Title. It's not often that the Wrestlemania main event could be changed this soon before the date of the show but stranger things have happened. Let's get to it.

The opening video focuses on the World Title match and pitches the idea that Dean is blocking the road to Wrestlemania. Well they never have been too subtle so why start now?

Tag Team Titles: New Day vs. King Barrett/Sheamus

New Day is defending. Before the match, Woods says that when you look at them, you see hips that don't lie, which of course means it's time for a little dancing. They actually have a box of Booty0's cereal and Big E.

drops to his knees to speak like a child for some insults about the League. Unfortunately they couldn't come up with any insults for Rusev so Big E. promises to eat his cereal to grow big and strong. That box actually looks real so well done for whoever made that.

Kofi headscissors Sheamus down to start and it's already time for some posing. If New Day hasn't turned face yet, they might not even need to at this point. Sheamus pulls Kofi out of the corner and brings Barrett in for his assortment of punches. Big E. comes in for his backbreaker and some dancing before the Unicorn Stampede takes off.

Winds of Change puts Kofi down and Sheamus adds the Irish Curse as the heels (well the stronger heels) take over. A top rope shoulder gets two for Sheamus and the fans tell Barrett that he can't wrestle. Seriously? I know Barrett isn't as sharp as he used to be but he's getting the Khali chant now?

Kofi comes back with a dropkick and the hot tag brings in Big E. for a string of suplexes. Everything breaks down and Kofi cleans house, only to have Trouble in Paradise countered into the Cloverleaf. Barrett pulls Big E. off the apron but Kofi counters into a rollup for two. The SOS doesn't get a count despite only existing to get near falls. Kofi goes up top but kind of crashes into Sheamus as he tries to dive over, giving us a bad looking botch. Barrett kicks Big E. in the head but Woods offers a distraction, allowing Kofi to get in a cheap shot so the Big Ending can put Barrett away at 8:38. Big E. seems to be favoring his arm.

Rating: C. Hopefully that's it for this feud as I'm not really sure why they're fighting other than New Day started talking about the League one day. New Day is going to be a great act as faces but I'm not sure what kind of a shelf life they'll have before they'll told how to be funny and outgoing and the act dies as a result. At least they're on fire now and it's fun to watch.

Paul Heyman talks about making Toronto the capital of Suplex City and promises that Bray will be conquered by the Beast.

We recap Y2AJ splitting and Jericho burning one of their shirts on Smackdown.

Here's Jericho for his match but he has to insult the fans for cheering for AJ instead of him. Canadian fans are always behind the times eh? Jericho calls himself the greatest icon in the history of this country, drawing a WE WANT BRET chant. After telling the fans that they'll never get Bret again, Jericho talks about being embarrassed to be Canadian. Moving away from Canada was the smartest thing he ever did because Canadian fans chant for the flavor of the month. That includes when they cheered for Jack Swagger when he beat Jericho for the World Title years ago. Jericho insults WE THE PEOPLE and it's time for a match.

Chris Jericho vs. Jack Swagger

Jericho slaps him in the face to start and bails to the floor in a smart move. The chase doesn't go well for Chris as Swagger catches him back inside and hammers away in the corner. The announcers run down Jericho's career, talking about Baba and Tenryu in Japan because saying he's a ten time Intercontinental Champion and main evented Wrestlemania would be going over most fans heads.

Jericho comes back by sending Swagger into the barricade for two and we hit the chinlock. Jack fights up and we get a CM PUNK chant for no logical reason. Some clotheslines have Jericho in trouble and the Vader Bomb gets two. Jericho can't get the Walls so it's the enziguri instead. The Codebreaker is broken up with a powerslam but the gutwrench powerbomb is countered into the Walls for the tap out at 7:55.

Rating: C+. Better match than I was expecting here as Swagger continues to be fine when he isn't talking or trying to be anything bigger than a power guy who can do some submission stuff. This was fine for a way to keep Jericho's awesome heel run going, but the fans still chanting for him after that heel promo isn't the best sign.

JBL shouts YOU STILL GOT IT as Jericho goes up the ramp, making him even more annoying than usual.

We recap the NXT Tag Team Title match with Cole saying the Revival are the new Tag Team Champions. As in the Revival who won the belts nearly five months ago. The Revival thinks Enzo and Cass aren't serious enough and took out Colin Cassady's knee so the challengers are coming for

revenge and the titles.

NXT Tag Team Titles: Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady vs. Revival

Revival (Scott Dawson/Dash Wilder) are defending and the challengers have Carmella with them. Enzo and Dash get things going with Amore nailing a dropkick before it's off to Cass for the big side slam. Wilder dives into a right hand to the ribs, followed by Cass picking up Enzo and throwing him at Dawson to keep control. They do the same thing again with Enzo flying over the top to take both of them out, drawing a loud NXT chant.

Back in and Dawson gets a blind tag to send Enzo shoulder first into the post, giving the champs a target. Dawson cranks on an armbars as JBL tries to say the Revival are a throwback to the late 90s tag teams. Add tag team history to the list of things JBL doesn't know much about. Enzo gets sent into the buckle again and stomped in the Tree of Woe, only to do a situp to send Dawson into the post.

Cass comes in to clean house with a big boot and the East River Crossing to Wilder but the Rocket Launcher is broken up. Carmella slaps Dawson but the distraction lets the champs hit the Shatter Machine (picture a 3D into a Codebreaker) on the floor. Back in and Enzo hits a top rope DDT on Wilder and grabs a rollup for a close near fall on Dawson. The champs get back up though and a Shatter Machine out of the corner gets the pin on Amore at 10:15.

Rating: B+. Please send them up to the main roster already as it's pretty clear that we're not getting the title change anytime soon. Enzo and Cass are an awesome act but if they're not getting the titles then there's no point in keeping them down in NXT. It's clear that they're ready for the main roster so let them go and do the fun feud with New Day before they're turned into the tag team Santino.

Earlier today, Natalya dedicated her match tonight to Bret Hart and thinks it could get her a step closer to the Divas Title. Charlotte came in and laughed at her but refused to put the title on the line. Natalya said Bret must have been right about the Flairs being cowards and Charlotte made it a title match, which I guess she can just do because contracts work in a weird way in WWE.

Divas Title: Charlotte vs. Natalya

Charlotte is defending. Natalya works on an arm to start but gets caught in a bodyscissors. They trade some holds on the arm with Natalya getting in a leg lock, followed by a surfboard. Back up and Charlotte pulls her to the floor for a crash and takes over with the stomps in the corner. Cole, who already used the term "Divas Wrestler" in this match, compares Charlotte to Mildred Burke. Did Matt Striker take over the commentary division this week?

The discus forearm is broken up and Charlotte starts in on the knee. There's a chop block to make Natalya scream a lot but she's still able to kick the champ out to the floor. Now the discus forearm connects and but Charlotte counters the Sharpshooter into the Figure Four. Natalya gets Charlotte under the ropes for a weird counter and Natural Selection gets two.

Charlotte goes up for something but gets countered into a Batista Bomb for a very close near fall. You could tell the fans bought into that one. The Figure Four is countered into the Sharpshooter but Ric helps pull Charlotte to the ropes. Natalya swings at Ric and gets rolled up with Charlotte's feet on the ropes to retain at 13:35.

Rating: B. What is up with this show being so awesome? Natalya is one of those women that you can put in there with anyone and get a passable match but this felt like she was actually getting close to the title instead of just being there to put Charlotte over. I liked this one a lot more than I was expecting and that's always a good thing.

We recap Brock Lesnar vs. Bray Wyatt, which is mainly over the Wyatt Family eliminating Brock from the Royal Rumble. Lesnar is out for revenge tonight.

Brock Lesnar vs. Bray Wyatt

Bray talks about all the people Brock has conquered but tonight there's a deal with the devil, which has changed this match into a handicap match.

Brock Lesnar vs. Bray Wyatt/Luke Harper

Heyman says that Brock is FIGHTING out of the conqueror's corner for a cool sounding intro. Bray bails to the apron to start so Harper takes the first suplex, sending him out to the floor. Brock stares at Wyatt, allowing Harper to get back inside for a suicide dive. Two boots to the face stagger Brock and the discus clothesline gets a nearer fall than you would expect.

We hit a crossface but Brock gets to his feet and slips between Harper's legs for a German suplex. Is there anything this guy can't do? A superkick doesn't do much so Brock throws him down with two more German suplexes. Harper gets tossed around even more as the fans keep count for Brock. The F5 puts Harper away at 4:01. Brock and Bray never made contact.

Rating: C. This was fine and they did a good job of protecting Bray here. Harper got in some strong looking offense too so everyone comes out looking fine. I'm not sure where they're going with Bray vs. Brock but maybe they'll head there in a few months instead of doing it at Payback or whatever they're calling the show after Wrestlemania.

Sami Zayn vs. Stardust

Another bonus match. An early CODY chant gets on Stardust's nerves as the announcers talk about the Missing Link for no logical reason. Sami grabs an armbar and some armdrags for a nice start. There go the OLE chants, which Cole calls an ode to Sami's former persona, just in case you didn't think Cole knew everything about wrestling ever. Stardust sends him back first into the apron to take over, setting up a cartwheel.

Some knees to the back followed by a waistlock have Sami in trouble and Stardust tries a reverse Boston crab (Colt Cabana's Billy Goat's Curse). A Matt Hardy Side Effect gets two on Sami and a top rope superplex is good for the same as this has been one sided for a long time. Sami pops back up with clotheslines and right hands in the corner before low bridging Stardust out to the floor. There's the big flip dive over the ropes and the Blue Thunder Bomb gets two. Stardust comes right back with a Disaster Kick for the same but gets suplexed into the corner, setting up the Helluva Kick for the pin at 12:43.

Rating: C-. I wasn't feeling this one as much as some of the other matches tonight but it was still fun enough. The problem here was they were clearly setting up the comeback all match and then the back work didn't go anywhere as Sami just popped up and did his big stuff. At least the right guy won though and a lot of Sami's strength comes from when he's beaten down and has to fight against all odds. Good enough stuff here though and that's all it needed to be.

We recap HHH vs. Dean Ambrose which is all about Dean rebelling against the Authority and doing a much better job of it than Roman Reigns ever could.

WWE World Title: Dean Ambrose vs. HHH

Dean is challenging. Feeling out process to start as the announcers give out even more stats and figures (HHH hasn't had a singles match since Wrestlemania XXXI or a title defense since 2009). Dean headlocks him down and some armdrags keep HHH in trouble. Back up and Ambrose lays across the top rope ala Shawn Michaels and HHH isn't happy. The CM Punk chants start again and Dean grabs HHH's nose as he armdrags the champ down a second time.

Thankfully the chants turn into the standard LET'S GO AMBROSE/HHH as Dean gets kneed in the ribs. They head outside with Dean getting in a clothesline before wrapping the leg around the post. HHH actually tries a Pedigree on the floor but gets his legs swept out, only to kick Dean into the steps to change momentum. HHH starts in on the back and puts on a Crossface, followed by a Rings of Saturn of all things.

JBL talks about the Toronto fans seeing their hero Whipper Billy Watson win back in 1956. A spinebuster gets two but Dean pops back up and gets the same off a bulldog. Dirty Deeds is broken up but the facebuster sets up a rebound lariat for two on the champ. I still don't like the idea of someone taking a hard shot to the face and hitting an offensive move a second later. That never works for me.

HHH's leg starts giving out on him again, allowing Dean to counter a Pedigree attempt into a Figure Four. Cole: "He's going to tap HHH for the title!" Dean switches over to a Sharpshooter but HHH makes the ropes for

the save. Dirty Deeds connects but Dean's foot is under the ropes for a good false finish.

A hard whip sends HHH over the ropes and out to the floor, setting up the suicide dive. Dean hits the top rope elbow and even throws in a Suck It. HHH gets knocked onto the announcers' table but avoids the elbow off the barricade for a huge crash. It's only good for a nine count so HHH hits a quick Pedigree to retain at 24:33.

Rating: A-. Awesome match here and I'm sure that three count is going to be Dean's consolation prize. There wasn't much of a chance that they were going to change the title here but giving us the false hope was a nice feeling. HHH winning the match (mostly) clean is fine enough but I could go for Dean actually winning something big every now and then.

Overall Rating: A-. I had a great time with this show even though it doesn't change much of anything. Sometimes all you need is a good night of wrestling and that's what we had here. The worst thing all night was Stardust vs. Sami in a match that certainly wasn't bad. This show worked out really well and hopefully will give WWE some of the positive momentum they've been lacking so much lately.

Results

New Day b. King Barrett/Sheamus – Big Ending to Barrett

Chris Jericho b. Jack Swagger – Walls of Jericho

Revival b. Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady – Shatter Machine to Amore

Charlotte b. Natalya – Rollup with feet on the ropes

Brock Lesnar b. Luke Harper/Bray Wyatt – F5 to Harper

Sami Zayn b. Stardust – Helluva Kick

HHH b. Dean Ambrose – Pedigree

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Royal Rumble Count-Up – 2009: And Then There Was Orton. And HHH

Royal Rumble 2009

Date: January 25, 2009

Location: Joe Louis Arena, Detroit, Michigan

Attendance: 16,685

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, Jim Ross, Todd Grisham, Matt Striker, Tazz

This isn't so much the Royal Rumble as much as it is HHH and Randy Orton are in a match and 28 other guys happen to be in the ring too. Other than that we have Edge challenging the NEW WWE Champion Jeff Hardy and Cena defending against JBL, who has Shawn Michaels and his crisis of conscience working for him at the moment. This wasn't the best year for WWE so let's get to it.

No intro video this year. That's interesting.

ECW Title: Jack Swagger vs. Matt Hardy

Swagger won the title about two weeks ago and this is Hardy's rematch. We

actually get big match intros for this, which is a rare sight for an ECW Title match. Matt takes him into the corner to start before punching Jack in the face. Striker calls that a pugilistic endeavor to sound smart. Another punch sends Swagger to the floor and we head back inside for a clothesline from Matt.

Jack heads to the floor to hide after Matt swings again. Back in and Swagger takes Hardy to the mat and cranks on the arm a bit. Hardy comes back with a dropkick in the corner and a bulldog for two, only to go up and get shoved down to the floor. Back in and Swagger starts in on the arm but Hardy quickly escapes a key lock. A punch to Hardy's arm blocks a clothesline and a big boot gets two for the champion.

Back to the key lock as Jack stays on the arm. He lifts Hardy off the mat by the arm a few times as the fans cheer for the challenger. Matt fights back but he's basically fighting with one arm here. A bulldog puts Jack down for two and a middle rope elbow to Swagger's back gets the same.

Hardy walks into a belly to belly suplex from Jack for two though and both guys are down. A DDT on the arm gets two for the champion but Matt blocks a belly to back superplex. Matt hits a decent looking moonsault for two and the fans are getting into these kickouts. The Twist is countered and Jack sends Matt shoulder and possibly head first into the post. The Swagger Bomb retains the title.

Rating: B-. Better match than I was expecting here with both guys looking good out there. Matt was getting close to being something decent as a singles guy and this was his way off ECW and onto Smackdown. Swagger would go on to win a world title and shock the world in the process before falling through the floor soon after. Solid opener here.

Orton arrives and gets glared at.

Women's Title: Beth Phoenix vs. Melina

Melina is challenging and Beth has Santino with her here. Beth shoves her around to start before easily breaking out of a headlock. A LOUD Santino chant starts up as Beth throws Melina around. Melina comes back with a shot to the head but gets shoved down immediately again. The challenger

hooks an armbar of all things but Beth easily stands up while Melina stands on her shoulder.

Melina gets on Beth's shoulders again but Beth shoves her down in a crash. A running Umaga attack in the corner puts Melina down again and Beth is in full control. In a freaky looking move, Beth grabs Melina's leg in a kind of ankle lock position and bends the leg forward to make Melina kick herself in the back of the head. FREAKING OW MAN! Melina escapes a gorilla press and fires off some forearms before getting two off a sunset flip. Two knees into Beth's back have her staggered and a hair drag gets two. Out of nowhere, Melina grabs a spinning rollup for the pin and the title. As sudden as it sounds.

Rating: D+. Not terrible here and the girls looked good so I can't complain much. That leg lock thing of Beth's was SICK and it's one of those moves that just looks painful all around. At the end of the day though, does it matter who has either of the female belts? They're completely interchangeable and this one was retired the next year.

We recap JBL vs. Cena, which is basically the Shawn Michaels Story. Basically the story went that Shawn was crushed by the financial crash and JBL offered to hire him to help win the title. Shawn helped JBL win a #1 contenders match and the question is will he screw over Cena tonight and compromise his morals? There was a VERY real argument to be made for Shawn vs. JBL at Mania for the title, so this wasn't a layup. The problem with this story is still there though: Shawn is a world class wrestler with the top company in the world...and he's broke? He may have lost his savings but he's not unemployed.

JBL tells Shawn if he wins the title tonight, Shawn is free with a huge payday and he can be in the Rumble tonight, which at the moment he isn't. Bradshaw leaves and Taker shows up, saying that sometimes it's a nightmare getting to Heaven.

Raw World Title: John Cena vs. John Bradshaw Layfield

Cena is defending in case you skipped the previous parts. We get the big match intros here and even a weapons check for old times' sake. Cena takes him to the mat with a headlock to start but JBL counters into one

of his own. A shoulder block puts JBL down and out to the floor as we take a breather. JBL whispers something to Shawn before heading back inside for some clubbing forearm to the back.

Cena slams him down for two though and we're still in the early stages. JBL heads to the floor again but this time Cena goes after him. He runs into Shawn though and stops cold, allowing JBL to get in a shot to take over. Shawn didn't move at all. Back in with JBL in control and a standing clothesline gets two. Presumably that one was only from Hoboken.

Off to a chinlock from the challenger as we keep things at JBL's slow pace. A side slam gets two on Cena and he rolls out to the apron. Layfield knocks him to the floor and then sends him into the stairs for two back inside. Cena fights out of a superplex attempt and hits the top rope Fameasser for two of his own. The champ initiates his finishing sequence with all of his usual stuff including the Shuffle. Shawn hasn't been a factor in the first nine minutes or so of the match.

JBL escapes the AA but gets caught in the STF instead. Shawn starts grabbing the ropes but doesn't do anything. Cena lets go of the hold anyway, allowing JBL to kick Cena to the floor. JBL's Clothesline gets two so he glares at Shawn for some reason. A quick AA attempt misses and JBL kicks the referee down by mistake. The Johns double clothesline each other and it's time for the big moment.

Shawn gets in the ring and is staring at both guys. Both guys get up and Shawn superkicks John. As in the challenger/him employer. He also kicks the champion/the guy he was hired to take out before leaving. Shawn puts JBL's arm across Cena, causing the fans to chant for the champ. Another referee comes out and gets a two count for Layfield and both guys get up. Cena hits a quick AA on JBL to retain.

Rating: C-. The match itself was pretty dull but the drama worked well enough to make up for it. At the end of the day, JBL simply wasn't good enough at this point to hang in a world title match. Cena had to tone it WAY down to let JBL keep up with him and it showed badly. Still though, Shawn more than makes up for it and would go on to have a masterpiece with Taker at Mania so all is well and good.

We recap Edge vs. Hardy. Hardy shocked the world (including me) at Armageddon by winning the title, but a few weeks later he started having a string of "accidents" including having pyro go off in his face and nearly getting killed by a crazy driver. Everyone blamed Edge but he denied responsibility. The question is who is behind all this stuff. Hardy hasn't had a match that I know of in the meantime. I went to a house show during this period and Hardy didn't wrestle.

Smackdown World Title: Edge vs. Jeff Hardy

Vickie makes it No DQ for no apparent reason and Chavo is in Edge's corner because he's familia. Jeff spears Edge into the corner to start and pounds away as fast as he can. The fans almost immediately start chanting WE WANT CHRISTIAN. Now remember that line as I'll get back to it later on. Christian had left TNA and word hadn't broken yet on if he had signed with WWE yet (I don't think). Anyway, Jeff tries to bring in a chair but Edge kicks it out of his hands before it gets inside.

Hardy pounds away but Edge gets in a shot to take over for the first time. Edge sends him to the floor but can't hit a baseball slide, allowing Hardy to hit a clothesline off the apron. Back in and Jeff tries a springboard but gets kicked down to the floor for the third time. Edge rams him into various hard objects including tables and the barricade and then another table.

We head back inside again with Edge in full control including a spear in the corner. Jeff grabs a quick two off a sunset flip but gets clotheslined right back down. Off to a body vice by Edge to slow things down a bit. Jeff fights up and hits a mule kick before going up top, only to jump into a dropkick from Edge for two. Now Edge goes to get two chairs but Jeff spears him down off the apron before it can be brought in.

Edge gets back to the apron but gets pulled down into a Twist of Fate onto said apron, sending both guys down onto the floor. Since it's Jeff vs. Edge, here's a ladder. Jeff spreads Edge out on the table but Chavo climbs up to slow Jeff down. Edge moves, so Jeff hits a HUGE splash to put Chavo through the table instead. Back in and Jeff gets two off a high

cross body. Edge gets up first and pulls a buckle off, only to get caught in the Whisper in the Wind for two.

Out of nowhere Edge counters the Twist into a DDT for a very close two. We're pretty clearly in the final stages of this match which means it's getting awesome. Edge counters the slingshot dropkick into a kind of hot shot into the exposed buckle for ANOTHER two. The spear is countered into a Twist of Fate so Jeff goes up. After kicking Vickie away, the Swanton hits but Vickie pulls the referee out. Cue Matt to send Vickie into the ring and pick up a chair. To the shock of a lot of people, Matt cracks Jeff with the chair to give Edge of all people the world title.

Rating: B. This too awhile to get going but once they hit their stride they started acting like Edge and Jeff Hardy in a big match. The No DQ stuff wasn't needed here but it made things work a bit better. At the end of the day, these two work best when they can turn off the rules and go nuts, which is what they did here.

Now remember earlier that I mentioned Christian. He was originally supposed to be in Matt's spot, setting up a reunion with Edge. However, WWE felt the fans figured this out so we got Matt in his place. This also happened in 2012 with Sheamus winning the Rumble instead of Jericho. Based on this theory, Shawn should have kept the title at Wrestlemania 14 because almost everyone knew that Austin was winning.

That makes no sense and I don't get what they think this is accomplishing. It didn't work out well for Russo and it won't work out for the WWE. Matt vs. Jeff didn't work at the end of the day, mainly because I don't think people wanted to see them fight. I'll give them this: they did come up with a logical reason for Matt to turn so it's not a terrible idea. It just wasn't the best option they had.

Orton says he'll win. Jericho pops in to thank Orton for punting Vince on Monday but Randy will probably get fired for it.

Rumble by the numbers which is roughly the same as the previous year.

Royal Rumble

Mysterio is #1 and Morrison is #2. Rey kicks him in the face a few times to start but gets put on the apron for trying his sitout bulldog. A springboard cross body puts Morrison down and there's a big headscissors to take Morrison down. John gets sent to the apron but hangs on by the top rope, even when Mysterio dropkicks him in the ribs. Carlito is #3 and is the second tag champion in here along with Morrison. Those titles would be unified at Mania.

Rey tries a standing moonsault but gets caught in a modified swinging neckbreaker instead. Carlito hits a gorgeous double jump moonsault to take Morrison down and stomping ensues. MVP, currently on a winning streak after losing forever, is #4. There's Ballin on Morrison and a facebuster to Carlito. Rey get sent to the apron but he saves himself almost immediately.

Great Khali with the awesome dance music is #5. Everybody gets a chop and Khali poses a bit. Mysterio tries to springboard onto him and Carlito tries a Backstabber, both to no avail. Kozlov is #6 and immediately headbutts Khali out by himself. MVP misses a running kick in the corner and he's gone too (BIG heat on Vlad for that). Carlito is gone after jumping into a spinebuster and Mysterio looks to be up next, but heeeeeeeeeere's HHH at #7.

Since no one else can get a good match out of Kozlov, you know HHH is going to try his hand at him. They stare each other down and Kozlov hits the headbutt to take him down. The facebuster stuns Kozlov and HHH throws him out wise ease. It's HHH, Morrison and Mysterio in there at the moment with Rey chilling in the corner. The knee to the face puts Morrison down and Orton is #8.

The battle of Evolution continues and the backbreaker puts HHH down. Both finishers are countered with Morrison breaking up the Pedigree. Rey hits a seated senton on Orton and the 619 on Morrison before JTG is in at #9. Orton tries to put Mysterio out as people start pairing off. Ted DiBiase, as in one of Orton's lackeys, is #10. Mysterio and DiBiase immediately fight to the apron with Rey doing some gymnastics to stay alive.

Jericho is #11 and goes right for Orton. He can't get him out so there's

a Lionsault to HHH instead. Jericho is knocked to the apron and Mike Knox is #12. Orton and DiBiase focus on JTG as Knox beats on Rey. HHH saves the masked dude for no apparent reason and Miz is #13. He goes right after JTG and hits something like the Skull Crushing Finale before going after the Game.

Morrison and Mysterio team up on Orton but John and Miz both take RKOs. There's one for JTG but HHH hits a Pedigree to stop Randy dead. HHH dumps Miz and Morrison to prove how awesome he is and Finlay is #14. Jericho backdrops Mysterio to the floor but he lands on Morrison and hops onto Miz to get back to the ring. Finlay beats on everyone in the ring until Cody Rhodes, the other of Orton's goons, is #15.

We currently have Mysterio, HHH, Orton, JTG, DiBiase, Jericho, Knox, Finlay and Rhodes. Legacy (the collective name of the trio) starts picking off people one at a time, starting with Finlay. They don't actually put anyone out but they get to beat on everyone at least. Rey dives at Orton but gets caught in an RKO in a nice counter. The Undertaker is #16 and here come the punches. His only victim at this point is JTG to clear the ring out a bit.

Goldust of all people is in at #17 and immediately goes for DiBiase. Rhodes pulls his real life brother (Goldust) off so Goldie sends him to the apron a few times. That's as far as he can get though as an RKO puts Goldust down and Rhodes gets to dump him out. Punk is #18 and happens to be the IC Champion at this point. There's a GTS for HHH as RKO works on Y2J. Mysterio gets sent to the apron by Knox and Finlay works on Taker.

Mark Henry is #19 and throws a lot of people around but can't get anybody out. Shelton Benjamin is #20 to fill the ring up even more. Jericho and Punk go up top for no apparent reason other than for Shelton to charge the corner and hit a kind of double DDT to bring them both back down. Billy Regal is #21 and goes right for Punk, who beat him for the IC Title a week or so again.

Mysterio dumps Henry off camera to thankfully get someone out of the ring. HHH is upside down in the corner but he winds up sitting on the apron. Here's Kofi at #22 to speed things up as well as he can with so

many people around him. Taker dumps Benjamin and Kane is #23. After beating up a few people he stares his brother down before they start working together to chokeslam some people.

Punk pulls Regal out and brags about it without getting thrown out. R-Truth is #24 and nothing happens. Rob Van Dam makes a one night only return at #25 after not having been seen in the WWE in about a year and a half. That at least wakes the crowd up but there are too many people in there for his style of stuff to work. He loads up the Five Star but Truth is too close so he has to bail out in mid air.

The Brian Kendrick is #26 back when he was actually a big deal. To show how big he is, he manages to dump Kofi and get thrown out by HHH in about fifteen seconds. Dolph Ziggler gets lucky #27 but only lasts about six seconds longer than Kendrick with Kane getting the point. Your future World Heavyweight Champion ladies and gentlemen. Santino is #28 and breaks Warlord's record of two seconds in the Rumble by being clotheslined out by Kane before he can even stand up straight.

Jim Duggan makes his token Rumble appearance at #29 and he punches everything in sight, including knocking the Dead Man down. Big Show is #30, giving us a final group of Mysterio, HHH, Orton, DiBiase, Jericho, Knox, Finlay, Rhodes, Undertaker, Punk, Kane, R-Truth, RVD, Duggan and Big Show, or half the field in the entire match. Nearly everyone goes after him at once but it's Duggan that gets tossed instead.

Jericho tries to put a sleeper on Show but it gets about as far as you would expect. Taker throws Punk to the apron as Show dumps Truth. Punk fires off some kicks and hangs on three times so Show finally knocks him out cold and out to the floor. Show knocks out Knox and Mysterio as Horny gets in for no apparent reason. Finlay tries to save him and gets dumped for his efforts at good parenting.

Jericho hits a Codebreaker on Kane and Orton hits the Elevated DDT on HHH. Taker and Show have their required staredown and RVD hits the Five Star on Orton. Jericho comes up behind Van Dam to dump him while Rob holds his ribs. That's his last WWE appearance to date. Chris turns around and sees Taker who tosses him with glee. Legacy teams up to put

Kane out and we're down to Taker, Big Show, HHH and Legacy.

The trio surrounds Undertaker as HHH gets chokeslammed. Taker does the same to most of Legacy so the giants punch each other a lot until Show gets knocked to the apron and hangs on with his feet flying off the apron. THAT was cool. Not that it matters anyway as he gets RKO'ed out a few moments later but it still looked good. Show pulls Taker to the floor a minute later because that's how he rolls.

So as people expected at the time, it's HHH vs. Legacy for the Rumble. Taker and Show fight into the crowd for no apparent reason. HHH goes after Rhodes first but the numbers catch up with him. He gets beaten down and Orton says pick him up. The RKO is countered though and HHH sends Orton to the apron. There goes DiBiase and Rhodes follows, but Orton sneaks up on HHH and throws him out to win the Rumble.

Rating: D. This was one of the weaker Rumbles there's ever been. For one thing, it was clear that Orton was going to win no matter what happened. Second and probably more important, they got caught in the classic Rumble trap of having WAY too many people in there at once. They didn't even try the three act structure here and it showed badly. That's something Pat Patterson was absolutely amazing at and he was gone by this point.

Overall Rating: C-. It's clear that the company was in a transitional period here and that makes this a hard one to get through. There's enough good stuff here to check it out, but it's nothing worth going out of your way to see. The only really solid match is Edge vs. Hardy and even that is nothing really worth seeing. This is a rare instance where the Rumble didn't dictate how the show went as the rest of it is a far easier sit than the Rumble itself.

Ratings Comparison

Jack Swagger vs. Matt Hardy

Original: B

Redo: B-

Melina vs. Beth Phoenix

Original: C-

Redo: D+

John Cena vs. John Bradshaw Layfield

Original: C

Redo: C-

Edge vs. Jeff Hardy

Original: B-

Redo: B

Royal Rumble

Original: D

Redo: D

Overall Rating

Original: B+

Redo: C-

So let me get this straight: every match is literally within a single grade of the original but the original is nearly two grades higher? Dang I was REALLY feeling generous that day. A show with an hour long match that gets a D doesn't sound like a B+ overall to me.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/28/royal-rumble-count-up-2009-the-voices-tell-me-no-one-but-orton-has-a-chance/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of the History of Wrestlemania at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

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Monday Night Raw – December 14, 2015: They Really Just Did That!

Monday Night Raw

Date: December 14, 2015

Location: Wells Fargo Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, John Bradshaw Layfield

Now this could be a very interesting show. Last night Roman Reigns finally showed the fire he's been needing for years and destroyed the League of Nations as well as HHH. This starts the road to the Royal Rumble but there is almost no way to predict how a Philadelphia crowd is going to react. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last night's main event and Reigns' post match attacks.

Here's a ticked off Stephanie McMahon to open things. She talks about how badly businesswomen are perceived. Take away her money and her education and she's just like you. Last night she had to explain to her daughters why their daddy was beaten up and spitting blood in the hospital last night. It's obvious the fans want her to be cold hearted and vindictive so that's what they're going to get.

This brings out Roman, who says it's his daughter's birthday and he can't wait to see her when he gets home. Stephanie asks how Reigns can say that when her husband is so hurt. Reigns says he's got stuff to do so fire him or move on. The boss yells about how Reigns failed again last night as he always does because he's a disgrace and a failure. Roman disagrees because it's really Stephanie and HHH that are the disgraces. Make that the entire McMahon Family, so Stephanie slaps him about ten times. She won't fire him because her husband asked him not to. Vince might though, because he's on the way tonight.

Dean Ambrose vs. Dolph Ziggler

Non-title and I believe the fourth straight show where Ziggler has been in the match after the opening segment. Dean wristlocks him down to start and gets two off a slam. We hit a Regal Stretch of all things on Ziggler before Dean sends him to the floor for a suicide dive. This has been one sided so far. Back in and we hit a pinfall reversal sequence until Dirty Deeds doesn't work to send us to a stalemate as we take a break.

Back with Ziggler taking over by dropkicking Ambrose out of the air, followed by the Fameasser for two. Dean grabs a belly to back suplex into a faceplant for two of his own and now the fans think this is awesome. Oh come on you far too quickly impressed people. It's not that great. Dean misses a charge into the corner and eats the superkick, only to hit the rebound lariat before going down. This brings in Kevin Owens to throw Ziggler outside for the DQ at 12:21.

Rating: C+. Way too happy fans aside, this was a smart way to go for the first match on a show in Philadelphia. There's a group of wrestlers that they're going to cheer no matter what and these two are near the top. The match was good enough despite being little more than a bunch of spots going back and forth.

Owens powerbombs Dean twice and holds up the title. Ziggler tries to come in but gets kicked in the knee, followed by a powerbomb onto Dean as Owens stands over both of them.

We look at Stephanie slapping Reigns again. They're making it very difficult for me to keep calm tonight.

Owens says he doesn't have to justify himself to anyone because that was just the beginning. He isn't going to stop until he drives Dean into an institution and takes back HIS Intercontinental Title.

The ECW guys are getting ready for their extreme rules match against the Wyatts. If this city has taught Bubba one thing it's that you have to keep getting back up.

Stephanie is waiting on Vince.

R-Truth vs. Bo Dallas

0...k? Truth shoulders him down and takes a victory lap early on. As the match is going on, we cut to the back where Vince arrives. It has been WAY too long since something has happened during a match on this show. We cut back to the ring where Dallas and Truth look terrified. Truth snapmares him down and here's Vince while the match is still going on. Everything stops and Vince gets in the ring to tell both guys to get out of his ring, drawing one of the pops of the night. The match ended at 3:27 but no rating of course.

Vince talks about Reigns sweating in the back because he might get fired. That's enough for now though as he goes and sits at ringside, saying Roman is going to sweat a bit more. After a break, Vince calls Reigns down to the ring to take his medicine. Reigns comes out (down the ramp for a change) and Vince demands an apology for what Roman did to HHH last night. Roman smirks a bit so Vince threatens to beat him up right now. There goes the jacket but here's Sheamus to interrupt before it goes any further.

Sheamus wants to be the one that beats an apology out of Reigns but the fans cut him off with the YOU LOOK STUPID chant. On behalf of Vince's Irish coat of arms, Sheamus wants to challenge Reigns for tonight. Sheamus knows he can beat Reigns at any time, so let's make it a title match. Vince asks the fans if they're interested but there's no chance that's happening. Reigns wants to know why not and thinks it's because the old man's grapefruits have shriveled to prunes. That's too far for Vince so it's on for tonight. However, if Reigns doesn't become champion, he's fired. Vince kicks Reigns low and leaves.

Alberto Del Rio/Rusev vs. Ryback/Jack Swagger

Lana is actually at ringside during a League match for a change. Ryback starts fast with the delayed vertical suplex for two on Rusev. It's off to Del Rio for some kicks in the corner and Ryback stands perfectly still as Alberto runs across the ring for the enziguri. Some stomping sets up a chinlock from Alberto as the fans are really not interested here. It's hard to bore a Philadelphia crowd but they've managed to pull it off.

The fans try a WE THE PEOPLE chant and Ryback responds with a suplex to Rusev, setting up the hot tag to Swagger. Jack makes the comeback with his usual and gets Rusev in the Patriot Lock, only to get caught in a Backstabber. Ryback gets thrown out and back to back superkicks give Rusev the pin on Swagger at 6:35.

Rating: D+. Just a quick match here (thank goodness) and the League continues to be a lame group that is effective yet boring. At least Swagger took the fall here instead of Ryback, who can't take too many more falls before he loses any credibility he might have built up over the summer. Well any more of it that is as most of it is already gone.

The Rosebush talks about the Charlotte/Becky Lynch situation and Tommy Dreamer being offended by Rose saying he spray tanned. Apparently Dreamer's skin is as thin as his hair.

Tyler Breeze vs. Neville

I'm off to watch one of their great NXT showdowns instead of this likely nothing match. Before we start, here's Miz to direct the match and call for the bell. Neville works on a headlock to start as Miz tells him to crank on the head. We hit a chinlock instead until Breeze comes back with some stomps as we keep cutting to Miz. Tyler puts on his own front facelock as Miz tries to lead some Neville chants. Neville fights up again and nails a great looking (and sounding) superkick, setting up the Red Arrow for the pin at 4:55.

Rating: C-. This wasn't bad but is clearly part of a longer story. Miz and Neville are an intriguing pair as they both need something to do so why not try something new? Speaking of something new, how about WE STOP

JOBGING BREEZE??? Did they really just need a new midcard jobber and that's the only reason they called him up? That's the best they can do for someone that worked that hard in NXT? What a shame indeed.

Neville is getting annoyed at Miz after a break but Miz suggests that Neville could be a superhero in the next Star Wars movie. However, he needs Neville to teach him his accent so he can be the next James Bond. Neville still isn't interested and walks off.

The Wyatts promise to bury the ECW guys.

Wyatt Family vs. Tommy Dreamer/Rhyno/Dudley Boyz

Extreme rules. The Wyatts surround the ECW guys to start as JBL acts like ECW was the greatest thing of all time. Bubba and Dreamer lead the house cleaning and it's time for some weapons. Back in and the Dudleys give Rowan What's Up but Harper comes in for a save with the superkick. Dreamer hits him with a few hard objects and loads up a superplex, only to have Strowman pull him to the floor. Bubba completes the superplex but Rowan makes it a Tower of Doom sending Harper down onto the chair as we take a break.

Back with the Wyatts in control until Rhyno cleans house. Dreamer gets to do the baseball slide into the dropkick in the Tree of Woe on Harper and Bray is knocked into the crowd. Strowman gets thrown over the announcers' table and Bubba follows Bray into the crowd. Harper is on the stage with Dreamer but his powerbomb is countered into a Death Valley Driver through a pair of conveniently placed tables. Strowman helps Bray against Bubba until Dreamer makes the save with a kendo stick. That's fine with Strowman who powerslams Dreamer through part of the barricade.

Bubba beats Bray up near the announcers' table and throws the cover on him. Back in the ring (finally) and the Dudleys beat up Harper until Luke fights them off with relative ease and loads up a table. Bubba runs back in for 3D but Bray makes the save and gives D-Von Sister Abigail on the floor. Rowan returns with a spinwheel kick to Bubba but Rhyno suplexes him down. The Gore hits knee though and Sister Abigail plants Rhyno. Rowan loads up a table and a top rope splash sends Rhyno through the wood for the pin at 15:33.

Rating: B. This was WAY more fun than it had any right to be and thank goodness the right team won. They had me believing that the ECW guys were going to win here and riots would have been justified. Instead this was much more of a treat for the live crowd and a pretty fun match for the most part, especially seeing Tommy Dreamer in pain. Good stuff and a really fun surprise.

We recap the Reigns story for the night.

Here's New Day for their latest celebration. Big E. and Kofi are limping after last night and Woods says they're not in a mood to party for once. We see some stills of the bigger crashes and the fans cut Kofi off with a NEW DAY ROCKS chant. Kofi is so messed up that he couldn't even do the full skip clap on the way to the ring. They invite the Usos to the ring and Woods gets right to the point by saying the Usos have earned New Day's respect.

A truce is offered but the twins aren't buying it. Instead Big E. asks the Lucha Dragons to come out here as well. Kofi praises Sin and says the Dragons are his son's favorite tag team. Kalisto calls that a really nice speech but asks about Woods throwing his trombone at him for a save. Xavier can't change the past but last night these three teams took the tag division to a new level and it was for the fans.

Again the handshake is offered and this time they're actually accepted. The four of them leave and Woods insists that they were being sincere, but tonight it's ALL ABOUT THE NEW DAY! It's time to dance so the Usos and Dragons come out to beat them up. That's really heelish of them (though it won't be considered as such) after they lost last night in a No DQ match and New Day really didn't do anything bad tonight.

Brie Bella/Alicia Fox vs. Becky Lynch/Charlotte

Team BAD is in the front row and Ric Flair is with his daughter. Brie avoids a Charlotte charge in the corner to start and sends the champ head first into the buckle. We hit a very early chinlock followed by the YES Kicks for two. Charlotte gets over for the tag to Becky and everything breaks down. With the referee distracted, Ric trips Alicia and Becky grabs the Disarm-Her for the submission at 4:26.

Rating: D. I have no idea who I'm supposed to cheer and who I'm supposed to boo. So Becky knew that Charlotte cheated to retain last night but is still friends with her after Charlotte blew her off last night. Then Charlotte's dad cheats instead of Charlotte to pin Alicia, who was doing the Daniel Bryan kicks for a guaranteed face reaction despite being a heel (I think?) at the moment. This division MAKES NO SENSE. Oh and did Team BAD do anything to warrant being at ringside?

The Prime Time Players still merchandise for Christmas.

We look back at last night's main event.

Vince talks to the League of Nations, again minus Barrett.

WWE World Title: Sheamus vs. Roman Reigns

Sheamus is defending, Roman is fired if he doesn't win the title and Vince is at ringside. Reigns takes him right to the corner for the clotheslines and the fans are behind him for a change. A quick Regal Roll sends Reigns outside and Sheamus slams him onto the table as we take a break. Back with Reigns fighting out of a chinlock and suplexing Sheamus for a breather.

Sheamus sends him to the apron but Reigns snaps the throat across the top and hits the apron boot. A Samoan drop is broken up so Roman just takes him to the middle rope for a bigger drop. The Irish Curse gets two so Reigns lifts Sheamus up for two off a powerbomb. Sheamus slams him down in turn and puts on the Cloverleaf (Not the Texas Cloverleaf but rather the old Edgecator. That's a bad name.), sending Roman over to the ropes.

The fans are still cheering for Roman and a Superman punch knocks Sheamus silly. Vince pulls the referee out at two though and Sheamus grabs White Noise for two. Dang they're getting close on these kickouts. Vince grabs the referee and tells him something. Sheamus pushes Reigns to the floor and here comes the League with Rusev kicking (a bloody) Reigns in the head.

Back in and Sheamus ducks the Brogue and hits another Superman punch to the champ and one to knock Vince silly....only to eat a Brogue Kick for a

VERY near fall. This is AWESOME drama and the best stuff they've had since Rollins vs. Ziggler at last year's Survivor Series. Sheamus loads up another Brogue and walks into a spear to give Reigns the title at 16:55!

Rating: B. The wrestling is totally inconsequential here as they NAILED the drama and the story here. This was exactly what needed to happen for a long time now and Reigns is totally over with the fans, at least at the moment. I'm actually in shock here and the moment was exactly what it needed to be. Well done WWE, which I wouldn't have believed I'd be saying a week ago.

The announcers put this over as a huge moment as Roman celebrates, including kicking Vince out to the floor. I do love the fact that the solution for Reigns was to make the show as bad as they possibly could so the fans would cheer him by default. It sounds bad but dang if it didn't work. The show actually ends with Reigns as champion and no shenanigans.

Overall Rating: B+. This show had the most important thing a show can have and that is uncertainty. I didn't know what was going to happen in the main event (or the extreme rules match for that matter) and that's where they have you. The idea behind wrestling (most of the time at least) is that you shouldn't be able to know what's coming but you want to see what's coming. That's how I felt for the main event. I really didn't know what was happening and I wanted to find out.

The energy was way up for this show and it made for the best week in months. It's no classic or anything, but it addressed one of the biggest issues they've had a long time: going through the motions with almost nothing interesting happening. There's a long way to go until we get to the Rumble but this was a big step in the right direction.

Results

Dolph Ziggler b. Dean Ambrose via DQ when Kevin Owens interfered

R-Truth vs. Bo Dallas went to a no contest when Vince McMahon stopped the match

Alberto Del Rio/Rusev b. Jack Swagger/Ryback – Superkick to Swagger

Neville b. Tyler Breeze – Red Arrow

Wyatt Family b. Dudley Boyz/Rhyno/Tommy Dreamer – Top rope splash through a table to Rhyno

Becky Lynch/Charlotte b. Alicia Fox/Brie Bella – Disarm-Her to Fox

Roman Reigns b. Sheamus – Spear

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Tables Ladders and Chairs 2015: Thank You Roman

Tables Ladders and Chairs 2015

Date: December 13, 2015

Location: TD Garden, Boston, Massachusetts

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Jerry Lawler

We'll close out the pay per view calendar with some good violence on one of the shows full of the shows full of gimmick matches. The main event in the namesake match is Sheamus defending his World Title against Roman

Reigns in what should be a brutal fight between two power guys. Let's get to it.

Pre-Show: Sasha Banks. vs. Becky Lynch

This would be another unannounced match because the Divas Revolution isn't important enough to mention in advance. Sasha gets the huge hometown pop and we get a little 12 Days of Christmas from Team BAD, which they thankfully cover with the final verse. None of the lines are funny enough to mention but you have to expect that with something WWE thinks is amusing. This would be your nightly attempt to make Team BAD into the second New Day. You know, because when you look at Tamina, she just screams charisma.

They start fast with some nice rollup attempts until Lynch headscissors her down. Sasha doesn't get high enough on a leapfrog and crashes down on her face but it's not enough to get the Disarm-Her. The announcers talk about Paul Heyman praising Becky as she takes Sasha down with an armbar. Banks finally drives her into the corner and avoids a charge, setting up the double knees (I don't remember the last time she got to use that) to the back.

We take a break and come back with Sasha nailing the Backstabber into the Bank Statement but Becky gets to her feet and eventually rolls out before the hold can go on full. They trade more rollups for two each until a Regal Cutter takes Lynch down for two more. A pumphandle suplex gets the same on Sasha and there's the Disarm-Her. Cue Tamina for a distraction so Naomi can kick Becky in the chest, setting up the Bank Statement for the submission at 11:41.

Rating: B-. This felt like an NXT match on the big stage which is how things are supposed to go. They were finally allowed to try some of their submission stuff instead of having the same Divas matches they always have, even with the Naomi and Tamina interference. I can't wait for the day when Sasha is finally allowed to go on her own because this UNITY nonsense is really holding her down. Other than "we don't have anything else for them to do", why is she still stuck with Tamina and Naomi? Good match here though and hopefully a sign of things to come tonight.

The opening video is Reigns standing there while clips of his path through the tournament and Sheamus' cash in play behind him. The video game themed promo? Nowhere to be seen. The simple yet effective Christmas present themed video that ended the pre-show? Not on here either because why be creative when you can be generic?

Tag Team Titles: Usos vs. Lucha Dragons vs. New Day

Ladder match with New Day defending. I'm not sure why they're going with their hottest match to open the show but at least the first fifteen minutes should rock. Before the match, Kofi asks Woods why there's no special hair tonight but Xavier wasn't about to waste a good hair day on Boston. With tonight's win, they will secure their spot as the faces of the division because who else can do it? The Lucha Dragons are too small and the Usos sound like a disease. Woods sits in on commentary and we're finally ready to go.

Kofi and Jimmy start fast with one ladder being slid inside and another being....dropped back down to the floor. Back in and it's a double springboard with Kofi and Kalisto landing on the ladder. A double save is made so the Dragons moonsault from the middle rope to take the champs down. The Usos are all alone so they load up a ladder but knock the Dragons off the apron instead of going up.

They throw the ladder onto the guys on the floor and dive on top of them as JBL loses his mind at how stupid that was. Kofi gets thrown to the floor but Big E. runs the ladder over as the champs take over again. We get the Unicorn Stampede to Jimmy with a ladder in between, meaning it's time for some tromboning. Jey's save is countered with a belly to belly onto the ladder. The Dragons are back up but Big E. stops their ladder (upside down here) and drives them back into the corner. Kalisto gets smart and dives over the ladder to take Big E. down.

Cara rides the ladder down onto Kofi and takes out the Usos with a running Swanton over the top onto a ladder. The Dragons climb the ladder with Big E. underneath but he bench presses the ladder in an awesome display of strength. Kalisto dives onto the Usos again but they throw him down before dropkicking the ladder into Big E. in the corner. We get the

mini ladder as Kofi breaks up a Superfly splash from Jimmy. Woods: "That's what being a veteran ladder match haver can do for you!" Back up and Kofi gets caught in the Tree of Woe for a running Umaga Attack from Jimmy, leaving the twins all alone.

We get a big staredown between all the challengers with the Dragons taking over, including a monkey flip into the 450 to send Kalisto onto the ladder onto Jey. Woods: "WHY???" Kofi comes back in (with Woods saying it's due to the rest building up his stamina like in WWE2K16) and wedges a ladder into the runs of a standing ladder.

That earns him a hurricanrana to send Kofi face first into the side of the ladder. Woods: "Our paintbrushes are fists and feet and you're about to see Kofi do some fantastic art!" Back in and all four challengers climb up with Jey and Kalisto slugging it out on top. In the totally insane spot of the match, Kalisto gives Jey a Salida Del Sol over the top of the ladder and through the bridged ladder, sending Woods (and the crowd) into shock.

Somehow Kalisto isn't dead and climbs up for a slugout with Jimmy but Big E. makes the save and stops Jimmy's charge with a forearm (Woods: "LOOK AT THAT TRICEP MEAT!") but a baseball slide into the ladder puts Big E. down again. Kalisto is all alone but Woods declares the match No DQ (in case there was any confusion beforehand) and hits Kalisto in the back with the trombone, allowing Kofi to retain the titles at 17:46.

Rating: A. Well that's your match of the night by about a mile. That Salida Del Sol was absolutely nuts and one of the best spots they've done in years. I'm glad New Day retained because they've earned the right to keep the titles a bit longer, and maybe even a program with Enzo and Big Cass. Imagine the promos on that one.

We recap Rusev vs. Ryback, which is built around Rusev being all romantic with Lana and Ryback wanting to fight.

Ryback vs. Rusev

Rusev forearms him down to start and they quickly head outside with Ryback getting the better of it before taking Rusev back inside for a top

rope ax handle. Some right hands in the corner set up a powerbomb from Rusev and it's time to slowly stomp on the back. We hit the chinlock as Cole talks about Lana saving herself for marriage to Rusev. They fight over a suplex until Ryback takes over after about the tenth try, followed by a middle rope dropkick for two.

The Shell Shock is broken up so Ryback gets two off a high cross body instead. Points to him for trying some new stuff at least. Lana offers a distraction to break up the Meat Hook though and Rusev superkicks him down. Back in and the Accolade is broken up, only to have Rusev kick him in the head to get the hold on for the knockout at 7:56.

Rating: C-. I'm so tired of seeing either of these guys built up only to lose to another upper midcarder because they have no idea how to build up anyone else. The match was a decent enough power brawl but I have no idea how many more times they can go with the Lana injury idea before it gets even less interesting than it is now.

Reigns and Ambrose are ready for tonight and can't wait to see Sheamus and Owens beaten down so they can walk out as double champions.

Quick recap of Alberto Del Rio vs. Jack Swagger which is mainly over Zeb Colter, who split with Del Rio on Monday.

US Title: Jack Swagger vs. Alberto Del Rio

Del Rio is defending and this is a chairs match. Both guys grab chairs to start and we get the early duel. That goes nowhere so they head outside to fight among the dozen or two chairs set up. Del Rio is sent into one face first time after time until he hits Jack in the throat to take over.

A Backstabber gets two for the champ but Jack throws a chair at him. The Vader Bomb is blocked and the tilt-a-whirl backbreaker gets two for Del Rio. They head outside again with Alberto burying him under a pile of chairs and then throwing even more on top. Back in and the armbreaker is broken up with Swagger sending him shoulder first into the post for two more.

Swagger wraps a chair around the leg and puts on the Patriot Lock

(meaning the chair doesn't change anything) until Del Rio falls out to the floor. The powerslam sets up the Vader Bomb for another near fall. Jack throws in about ten chairs but Del Rio counters into the armbreaker over the ropes. A bunch of chair shots to the back sets up the top rope double stomp onto the chairs to retain the title at 11:19.

Rating: C. The match wasn't bad but again this was such a mess with such an uninteresting story that there's almost no way the match can be good. The finisher is still stupid, the chairs match gimmick is even worse (maybe) and the fans never bought the idea that Del Rio was going to lose. At least Colter wasn't involved though.

We recap the ECW guys vs. the Wyatt Family. The Dudley Boyz were the Wyatts' latest targets due to whatever bizarre reasons the Wyatts had this time (as usual they aren't really clear). This meant the Dudleys had to bring in Tommy Dreamer and Rhyno to even things out, setting up an elimination tables match.

The ECW guys says they've seen it all over the years and now they're here fighting one more time because hardcore is forever and age is just a number.

Dudley Boyz/Tommy Dreamer/Rhyno vs. Wyatt Family

The ECW guys go right at them to start and thankfully there are no tags. It's already weapons time and the fight is quickly on the floor. We get a really bad looking sequence where Bubba puts a trashcan in front of his face so Strowman can punch it back at him. That was horrible. Strowman starts cleaning house until all four fight back. Rowan comes in and puts D-Von on a table but gets shoved off the top as the table breaks anyway. That's not an elimination because it wasn't an offensive move, which goes along with the rules these matches have had over the years.

3D puts Rowan through the table for an elimination but Bubba is clutching his knee. Bray and Harper come back in to take over as Bubba's knee is good enough to go after Strowman on the floor. Rhyno suplexes Bray and Harper but Bray stops the Gore with a cross body. A big boot puts Rhyno through the table and we're tied up again. Harper takes D-Von to the top but Bubba is back in to turn it into a Doomsday Device. Bubba goes after

Strowman on the floor and D-Von gets another table, only to have Bray slam him through it for an elimination.

It's down to Bray/Braun/Luke vs. Bubba/Dreamer. That means it's time for kendo sticks and a cheese grater between Braun's legs. Bubba and Dreamer bury him under a table for no apparent reason, leaving Harper to put Dreamer through a table with a suicide dive. Sister Abigail is broken up with some stick shots to the head and now it's time for fire. Bubba covers a table with the fluid but Braun comes back in to chokeslam him through for the win at 12:30.

Rating: C+. This was fun enough and I can live with Rowan getting eliminated because no one cares about him in the first place. At least the Wyatts get a win and the jobbers did the job like they were supposed to. Hopefully this is almost it for Dreamer as he has little to offer outside of hardcore matches. Rhyno can do some good enough stuff on his own and might be worth keeping around, but they need to phase the ECW guys out again.

The pre-show panel recaps the show and throws us to the first Royal Rumble ad.

Intercontinental Title: Kevin Owens vs. Dean Ambrose

Owens is defending after Ambrose beat him in a non-title match last month and then won a triple threat match on Smackdown. That's about it for the recap because there's barely a story here. Before the match, Owens laughs at Boston fans for bragging about the success of their sports teams because none of them actually did anything in the first place. Dean might have thrown popcorn and soda in his face on Monday, but no matter what happens tonight, this is going to be the Kevin Owens Show.

Owens kicks him in the back to start so Dean punches him in the face. A belly to belly gets two for Owens and we hit the early chinlock. Dean fights up with a suplex but can't hit Dirty Deeds. Instead it's a clothesline to put Owens on the floor for a suicide dive. Owens pops right back up for a fall away slam and the backsplash on the floor, leaving Dean to dive back in at nine. Another backsplash hits knees but the top rope elbow is countered into a nice German suplex.

The Cannonball misses though and now the top rope elbow gets two. Dean's superplex is countered into a middle rope Regal Roll and the kickout stuns Owens. The Pop Up Powerbomb is broken up and Dean grabs Dirty Deeds, only to have Owens touch the bottom rope for the break. Dean is stunned and walks into the Pop Up Powerbomb, only to counter into a hurricanrana for the pin and the title at 9:10. Lawler: "He's going to be on cooking shows! He's going to be on soap operas!"

Rating: B-. I wish they had let Owens keep going as champion but at least they FINALLY let Dean have something. This was treated as a big deal and could lead somewhere, assuming you believe the Intercontinental Title could actually mean something instead of being a title that is traded around every few months with no one getting anywhere as a result.

Dean celebrates quite a bit.

We recap Charlotte vs. Paige with Charlotte turning mostly heel and Paige not really turning anything new. Charlotte is embracing her inner Flair and Paige isn't cool with that, setting up this title match.

Divas Title: Charlotte vs. Paige

Charlotte is defending and has her dad with her again. Paige knees her in the face to start and Charlotte hides behind her dad on the floor. Ric gets yelled at for a bit, allowing Charlotte to trip Paige as she comes back in and drop some more knees. We hit a front facelock on Paige as the fans aren't thrilled with this so far. Paige's sleeper attempt doesn't go anywhere and it's time for Charlotte to go after the knee. We see Team BAD, dressed as Team PCB for no logical reason, watching the match in the back.

Ric pulls off a turnbuckle pad but Charlotte doesn't seem pleased. Paige uses the distraction to hit a running knee to the ribs and slap on her own Figure Four until Charlotte quickly rolls over. Back up and Charlotte hits a spinning top rope cross body, only to get caught in a fisherman's suplex for two.

Something like a Rampaige from her knees gets two for the champ but the spear hits a knee to the face. Now the Rampaige connects on Charlotte but

Ric pulls Paige's leg under the ropes. Even JBL admits that this one happened. Charlotte uses the distraction to get the rest of the buckle pad off though and Paige goes face first to retain Charlotte's title at 10:44.

Rating: C. As usual the psychology was way off here because they have no idea if Paige is a face or a heel. Charlotte is definitely doing better at the moment but Ric really needs to get out of here because the stories are becoming more about him than Charlotte, who actually needs the exposure. The match wasn't bad but they needed some better focus.

After an ad for Kay Jewelers, Becky isn't happy with what Charlotte did. Charlotte offers to make it like old times again but does the pinky swear with her dad instead and laughs at Becky.

Long recap of Sheamus vs. Roman Reigns, which is mostly about Sheamus cashing in his Money in the Bank last month and forming the League of Nations soon afterwards.

WWE World Title: Sheamus vs. Roman Reigns

TLC match with Sheamus defending. Sheamus charges into a right hand to start and Reigns pounds away on the mat. The fans are chanting for Cena early on, despite this being a pretty solid show so far. It's almost like they're never happy no matter what they're given. They head outside with the champ being whipped over the barricade and into the timekeeper's area.

The ladder is bridged between the announcers' table and apron but Sheamus hits him in the back with a chair to get a breather. The fans think Sheamus looks stupid but at least it's better than the Tater Tot chants. Instead of going for the title, they fight up the aisle with Sheamus going through a bunch of tables and chairs for a crash. Reigns takes too long though and Sheamus backdrops him through a table. Sheamus gets back inside for the first climb but has to come back down to throw a ladder at Reigns.

The apron kick is countered by another shot to the face and a big White Noise puts Reigns through a table. They finally get back in with Reigns

taking another ladder to the back but of course he's still able to powerbomb Sheamus onto the ladder. Reigns knocks him back to the floor and hits something like a Superman punch off the steps with a chair to the head. Back in again and the regular Superman punch is countered into the Irish Curse as the fans just do not care. Like it's disturbing how little they care here.

The fans chant for NXT as Reigns powers out of the ten forearms to the chest for a Samoan drop through the bridged ladder (clearly made of wood). That gets the fans back but they boo Reigns out of the building as he climbs again. JBL asks if Reigns is finally going to do it, basically admitting that the five minute title reign means nothing. A quick Superman punch drops Sheamus again but he pulls Reigns down again. Now it's Sheamus going up but Roman nails another Superman punch off the ladder (cool spot) to knock Reigns through a table.

Reigns goes up and here are Rusev and Del Rio for the save. You knew that was coming sooner or later. Rusev takes him to the floor for the Accolade but Reigns fights out again and Superman punches both guys, only to eat a Brogue Kick from Sheamus. We get the slow climb and Reigns is back again, only to have Sheamus pull the title down and kill the crowd even deader than they already were at 24:00.

Rating: B. The match was fun but we all knew what was coming at the end and there was no way around it. I'm not even going to bother going on a rant about how stupid this is because there's nothing left to say about it. This story and feud is horrible and it just keeps going because we need the PERFECT moment to put the title on Reigns permanently. What WWE doesn't seem to realize (or acknowledge because I can't believe they're this dumb) is that the moment has already passed multiple times and the Reigns chance is gone.

The League (minus Barrett, who must be busy tonight), poses until Reigns spears them all down and beats them up with a chair. Reigns isn't done yet (like, he won't even listen to Stephanie shouting STOP!) and powerbombs HHH onto (not through) the announcers' table. That sums up Reigns' career so perfectly. An elbow puts HHH through the table as the announcers freak out that someone could touch the boss. Fans: "THANK YOU

ROMAN!" HHH is helped out but Reigns runs back to ringside and spears HHH down to finally end the show.

This worked for many reasons, but there's one at the top of the list: emotion. Instead of going by what the script says which may or may not make sense, there was a logical progression of Reigns being pushed to his limit too many times and FINALLY snapping like a 6'4 gladiator would do if he kept dealing with stuff like this. Stuff like that is always going to work and it did here. Of course there are still a dozen problems with the show and this doesn't solve most of them but it was a cool moment.

Overall Rating: B-. This was a very back and forth show with the opener obviously being the high point but the rest was like a boat that was trying to get through a bad storm. It had some good moments and there was definitely more good than bad but the main event was just death due to the horrible build. The violence and carnage carried things as it almost does but they still need a lot of changes. This worked for one night though which is a lot more than you can say most of the time.

Results

New Day b. Lucha Dragons and Usos – Kingston pulled down the titles

Rusev b. Ryback – Accolade

Alberto Del Rio b. Jack Swagger – Top rope double stomp onto a pile of chairs

Wyatt Family b. Dudley Boyz/Tommy Dreamer/Rhyno last eliminating Bubba Ray

Dean Ambrose b. Kevin Owens – Hurricanrana

Charlotte b. Paige – Pin after Paige was sent into the exposed turnbuckle

Sheamus b. Roman Reigns – Sheamus pulled down the title

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Tables Ladders and Chairs 2015 Preview

Now this is an interesting one as the TV shows are disasters right now but TLC is one of the few shows a year that is almost always worth watching due to the levels of violence and carnage. It's very much a show built around the in ring action instead of the stories building up to it and that's exactly what WWE needs right now. Let's get to it.

Since there's no pre-show match announced yet (though I can't imagine we don't get Breeze vs. Ziggler AGAIN), we'll jump into this at random and save the main event for the end.

The Wyatts have to go over the ECW guys. Like they have to. As in there's no way can't. This should be the biggest layup in the history of big layups and I hope I'm not getting overconfident with it. One would have thought that Fournune going over EV 2.0 back in 2010 would have been a layup too but Tommy Dreamer pinned AJ Styles because of reasons. Thankfully it's elimination rules so a fluke is less likely, meaning I'll go with the Wyatts.

Alberto retains over Swagger in his first defense of the title since he won it back in October. There's always a chance that the Colter breakup is either a swerve or to set up a reunion with Swagger, but I still can't imagine that they're going to put the title on a loser like Jack. The

fans wanted to boo Del Rio but he's right back to being the same dull guy he's always been. Either make him a big face like he was doing in 2013 (which I still really like) or let him be a jerk who gets to talk about something other than being Mexican. I'll take Del Rio to retain but watch out for a swerve here.

Rusev over Ryback because they need to push Rusev as a threat for some reason. This Lana reunion isn't getting them anywhere, which was what I was worried would happen after all those months of people saying "just put them back together" because this isn't the same dynamic they had in the first place. It's almost impossible to put a monster back together after he loses (which would apply to both guys here) and they're not getting anywhere by having Rusev be the same guy he is while getting to make out with Lana. Rusev wins and no one cares.

Charlotte retains over Paige and I guess I'm supposed to boo the champ here. This story has gone from Paige being a jerk over Charlotte's brother to Paige being just kind of there while Charlotte rants about how awesome her family is. We're just killing time until we FINALLY get to Sasha Banks on top of the division, or Nikki returning and being all fearless and such. But yeah Charlotte keeps the title here.

Owens keeps the title over Ambrose because we need to have another instance of two guys splitting a series, likely setting up a third match at the last Raw of the year. Why? I have no idea, but WWE loves itself some meaningless trilogies. Thankfully the first match was good so maybe the rematch can be too, but it's a pretty big drop to go from the main event of one show to a midcard title match on another. It's almost like WWE doesn't care much for Ambrose and is going to put him out there to put someone else over every single time and then wonder why his reactions get quieter and quieter.

Then we have what should be the match of the night with New Day defending against the Lucha Dragons and the Usos. Despite a lame buildup with the Usos kind of being forgotten the whole way through, this should be a blast as we have three teams who can fly with the best of them flying with the best of them. Just let these guys go nuts and do a bunch of crazy high spots on a ladder for fifteen minutes and the crowd can go

nuts as a result. New Day retains because who are the other teams going to fight since there are almost no other heel teams on the roster with anything.

Finally we have one of the lamest main events in the history of modern wrestling as Sheamus defends against Roman Reigns in the TLC match. Now this has the potential to be AMAZING with two big power guys just beating each other up for twenty five minutes. If there's one thing Sheamus is good at, it's having a big power brawl with another guy capable of having a big power brawl. I don't believe for a second that they actually change the title here as the League will likely interfere at the last minute but at least we'll have a good match until we get to the lame ending.

Overall TLC could be subtitled "just try and have fun". The booking is horrible at the moment and a lot of changes need to be made, but it's pretty clear that we're not going to get that anytime soon. However, it does seem like we could get something fun this time with the violence and carnage that comes with this show every year. I know it won't fix everything or even a lot of the problems, but a night of fun brawling and insanity can take our minds off a lot of WWE's current issues. It's almost impossible for things to get much worse now so let's just hope for the best and have some fun.

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Monday Night Raw – December 7, 2015: One on the Brake And Two on the Gas

Monday Night Raw

Date: December 7, 2015

Location: North Charleston Coliseum, Charleston, South, Carolina

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

It's the go home show for TLC and the big story continues to be Roman Reigns and company vs. the League of Nations. There's still a lot of the card to be set for Sunday but as usual, you can see most of it from here. The show isn't looking bad and if they put enough violent gimmicks on the card, everything should be fine. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Sheamus vs. Reigns and last week's main event. Thankfully Reigns beating them on his own on Smackdown is omitted.

Here's the League, now with their own music. Sheamus says he can't look stupid if he's the World Champion. As for this Sunday, how can he be afraid of defending the title against Reigns if he already beat him in 5:15? The WWE has entered the International Era and Sheamus lists off the four countries represented in the League. You'll notice there are no Americans, because in 2015, America just isn't good enough anymore. Sheamus says they're the best of the best.....and we've got the Wyatts?

The fans immediately chant YES for the Wyatts. Bray says they haven't been introduced because the League of Nations just lives in Bray's world. They're here for the chaos but here are the Dudley Boyz and Tommy Dreamer to interrupt. That was close. They almost had something interesting there before we get ANOTHER ECW reunion. Bray says they're not getting the message that they're outnumbered. Actually they're multiplying because here's Rhyno to even things up. Dang I was hoping for Dudley clones. Before they can get to the ring, here are Reigns, Ambrose and the Usos to make it sixteen people at once.

Dudley Boyz/Tommy Dreamer/Rhyno vs. Roman Reigns/Dean Ambrose/Usos vs. League of Nations vs. Wyatt Family

Elimination tag with one man from each team in the ring at once. Harper is quickly sent to the floor as Del Rio takes down Ambrose. It's off to Jimmy beating on Rusev as D-Von is down in the corner and Harper tags in Bray. There are basically two matches going on at once. D-Von tags in Rhyno for some clotheslines and a suplex to Jimmy.

Strowman comes in to clean house and it's off to Dreamer, wearing some Dusty Rhodes polka dot pants. Braun is knocked to the floor, allowing Rusev to take Dreamer down. The Usos load up a double superplex on Rusev but Strowman makes it a Tower of Doom with Dreamer being taken out in the process. Rowan tags himself in and takes a quick DDT from Dreamer for the elimination as we take a break. Thank goodness they got rid of the more interesting team so quickly.

Back with Del Rio beating up Jey and Dreamer until Tommy grabs a neckbreaker on the now legal Sheamus. Bubba comes in with a Rock Bottom for two on Sheamus but all twelve come in for a huge brawl. We get down to Rhyno vs. Reigns for a showdown but Rusev and Sheamus break it up. Rusev walks into a 3D and the Dudley Boyz set for What's Up, only to have Sheamus Brogue Kick Bubba for the second elimination.

Things settle down to Sheamus vs. Ambrose but Rusev tags himself in before anything can happen. Dean goes off on Rusev with strikes (Saxton: "Ambrose is a different piece of toast), followed by the standing elbow drop for two. Back from another break with Sheamus firing off the ten forearms to Jey's chest until Reigns makes the save.

It's off to Rusev for a bearhug before Barrett misses a charge in the corner, allowing for the hot tag to Reigns. The fans are WAY behind Roman here (it's an old NWA town so faces are popular and heels are hated) as he powerbombs Del Rio and Superman Punches Barrett and Alberto. Everything breaks down with a big series of dives and Del Rio gets Reigns in the armbreaker. Jimmy comes in with a Superfly splash for the save and it's a spear to Sheamus for the pin at 21:36.

Rating: B-. Fun brawl here but the League of Nations is now 0-2 as a four

man team and the already weak looking World Champion got pinned when you have three others who could take the fall. Rusev doesn't even have a match on Sunday and he can't take a pin here? Another good idea (like having the Wyatts out there) with questionable booking (like having them go out first) bringing it back down a bit when it didn't need to.

Post break, Sheamus says that's the closest he's coming to losing the title. He's going to smash Reigns up and he'll give us a preview tonight.

Stardust is raving about Hollywood when Titus O'Neil comes in to say Stardust needs to get some. Well Eden is probably here tonight.....but Titus means some Stardust time, such as reading a good book and having a bottle of wine. Stardust goes on another rant and Titus leaves.

Dolph Ziggler vs. Kevin Owens

Non-Title and Tyler Breeze/Summer are here. Kevin trips him down to start and grabs a front facelock as Ambrose is in the back watching (while eating popcorn and drinking a soda). We hit the chinlock on Dolph until Ziggler counters into a rolling three quarter nelson for two. Ziggler dropkicks him down but gets clobbered in the face with an old Vader style forearm to the face.

They head outside with Ziggler's headbutt not having much effect. The fall away slam into the barricade give Kevin three straight near falls and it's time for some big right hands to the head. A kick to Dolph's face gets two as Dolph keeps pulling himself up. Owens sends him shoulder first into the post for a nine count on the floor. The backsplash gets two more and Dolph falls back to the floor as we take a break.

Back with Owens slapping on a chinlock until Ziggler fights up and avoids a charge to send Owens shoulder first into the post for a change. Kevin is just fine and sends Ziggler out to the floor to try another countout. Dolph starts getting up again though so Owens goes outside, only to take the running DDT on the floor. Back in and Owens throws him with a release German suplex but misses the Cannonball. The Fameasser gets two and they trade superkicks with Ziggler falling on top for another near fall. Owens is right up though and it's a Pop Up Powerbomb for the pin on Ziggler
19:07.

Rating: B-. Another good match here but it felt more long than anything else. Ziggler continues to be entertaining enough but you're not going to get anything more than the same stuff every single time he's out there. I'm really not sure why Breeze needed to be out here as he was just watching instead of actually doing anything. At least we get the TRILOGY match on Sunday because that's all anyone wants to see right?

Post match Ambrose comes out and throws his popcorn and soda in Owens' face.

The Wyatts are ready to crush the ECW guys. Strowman wants to become Dreamer's nightmare later tonight.

Miz comes in to tell Neville that his offer of mentoring was serious on Smackdown. Donny Deutsch (star of a new show on USA) comes in to offer Neville a spot on his show. He gives Neville his card and tells Miz to get back to him in a few years. Miz gives Neville his card but Neville throws it away.

Alicia Fox/Brie Bella vs. Sasha Banks/Naomi

Fox and Banks start things off with Alicia grabbing a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker. It's off to Naomi who takes one as well to send Team Bad out to the floor. Tamina trips Alicia to take over and it's a dropkick from Naomi for two. We hit the chinlock from Naomi, followed by another one from Sasha. Back up and Alicia rolls over for the hot tag to Brie. It's time for the YES Kicks before everything breaks down. Another Tamina distraction sets up the Rear View for the pin on Brie at 5:28.

Rating: D. I'm so sick of these matches. We've seen them do the same stuff every single week for months now and nothing has changed except for the numbers. Naomi is still doing the same "HAVING FUN" offense, Banks is still as good as anyone in the division and Brie still has no idea if she's a face or a heel. You would think they would learn at some point but it hasn't happened in months now.

Post match New Day comes out to give Team Bad their own unicorn horns and everyone dances. Ok then.

The New Day is still in the ring after a break to talk about giving back. They've given a donation to the League of Nations and some baby names to Kim Kardashian and Kanye West for their new son. Then they have to give two different teams a Tag Team Title shot on Sunday in a ladder match. Why do they need ladders? They're not house painters and they're not saving cats from trees. We get a quick New Day Theater with Big E. playing a tree and Kofi playing a kitten. Woods says that New Day is a group of grown men and saves Kofi from the tree, end scene.

Lucha Dragons vs. New Day

Non-title, Woods is on the floor again and the Usos are on commentary. Cara and Kofi get things going with Kofi throwing him out to the floor for a suplex from Big E. Woods lays on the floor next to Cara and plays some trombone as we take a break. Back with Big E. missing a splash into the corner before it's off to Kalisto for some rapid fire kicks and the corkscrew cross body to Kofi.

The comeback is short lived though as Kofi takes him into the corner again, only to have Kalisto come back with a sloppy headscissors. The (not) hot tag brings in Cara to really take over off a standing moonsault to Big E. Kofi is legal though and kicks Cara down, only to have the Usos get in a fight with Woods (Jey: "BEAT HIM LIKE HE STOLE SOMETHING!"). The distraction lets Cara roll Kofi up for the pin at 6:36.

Rating: C. That would be the second time in an hour and a half that a champion has been pinned to set up a title match on Sunday. I beg of you WWE, please find something new. There are other ways to set up something like this and it's getting annoying to see this happen every single time.

The Usos leave with the horns and the trombone. So now they actually did steal something. SOMEONE BEAT THOSE TWO MEN LIKE THEY DESERVE!

After a recap of the opening match, Reigns says he's fine with having a lesson from Sheamus, even though he has no idea what Sheamus could teach him.

We look back at Charlotte faking an injury to beat Becky Lynch last week.

It's time for MizTV with guests Charlotte and Ric Flair. Charlotte takes over the introduction for her father and says Miz has ten minutes of Rolex time. Ric says he's so proud and promises to be in his daughter's corner at TLC this Sunday. That brings Miz to Charlotte's new attitude, which sends her off on a mini rant about Miz being sexist. Miz shakes it off and asks about the match on Sunday, bringing up Paige costing Charlotte her friendship with Becky Lynch. He stays at it by asking about Paige saying Charlotte is only here because of her father.

Ric gets up at that but Charlotte yells about Paige, promising to destroy her on Sunday. This brings out the third guest and Paige really doesn't look too upset. Ric says this is just a ploy so Charlotte goes outside. Paige slaps him in the face and does the strut. Ric: "Get her!" Charlotte charges but Paige runs to end the segment. So...am I supposed to cheer for either of these two or is this another SHADES OF GRAY story that is in no way a method to keep the writers from having to figure out who they want to turn face?

We look at Reigns pinning Sheamus again.

Ryback vs. Rusev

Rematch from last week. Rusev chills on the floor to start and gets back in at nine. Ryback shoves him right back to the floor as Rusev is holding his back from earlier. Tired of waiting, Ryback busts out a corkscrew plancha (seriously). Ryback: "WE'RE HAVING FUN!" A quick backdrop sends Ryback over the top again and Rusev snaps the arm over the top as we take a break.

Back with Rusev still on the arm by bending it around the ropes and sending it into the post. Ryback's comeback includes some shoulders followed by a flying shoulder to really mix it up. A middle rope dropkick (better than Brie Bella's) gets two for Ryback and it's time for a chase around the ring. Ryback runs Lana over by mistake (Lana may have intentionally gotten in his way) and hurts her ankle again, freaking Rusev out. He throws Ryback in the Accolade on the floor and it's a double countout at 10:37.

Rating: C. Ryback was trying with some fresh offense out there (always

appreciated) but he's fallen back through the floor in importance again. That's what happens when you build someone up on a short term basis, have him lose his two big matches and then do nothing with him for weeks. Oddly enough it's the inactivity that hurts worse than the loss to Kalisto in the tournament.

Stardust vs. Jack Swagger

Titus is on commentary and this is joined in progress after a break with Swagger putting on the Patriot Lock. Stardust makes the rope as Del Rio and Colter come out, allowing Stardust to throw the arm into the post. Some choking on the ropes has Swagger in trouble but he comes back with clotheslines and a powerslam. The Patriot Lock makes Stardust tap at 2:40.

Post match Del Rio nails Swagger. Titus yells at Del Rio to watch out for Stardust so Alberto hits Stardust with a chair. Swagger grabs his own chair and knocks Alberto's out of his hands before sending Del Rio running off. Jack asks Zeb what he's thinking but Colter drives off.

This week's Rosebush is about Miz wanting to mentor Neville. Apparently Miz wants Neville to be recast in Dumbo. Speaking of animals, we saw the return of Rhyno this week. This followed Tommy Dreamer's, now with a golden tan. He thought he had baby oil but it was really Becky Lynch's hair dye. This is still such a waste of anything Rose could do.

In the back, Del Rio yells at Colter for causing him to trip and drop the chair. Alberto says he doesn't need Colter and threatens to use the chair on him. Colter claims that Del Rio wouldn't be champion without him and drives off. So they're split now, thank goodness.

Tommy Dreamer vs. Braun Strowman

Braun throws him around to start and drives in some shoulders to the ribs. We hit the nerve hold for a bit before the standing choke puts Dreamer away at 2:46. Total squash at a slow pace.

Here's Reigns for the big showdown with Sheamus. Reigns asks where Sheamus is before talking about climbing the ladder with his Shield

teammates over the years. He's on top of the ladder and calls Sheamus out for a beating again. Cue Sheamus to say that Sunday is going to be a sequel when he beats Reigns down just like he did at Survivor Series. Reigns is ready right now but of course Sheamus doesn't want to do it tonight.

Roman wants to know where Sheamus' potatoes are because all he sees are tater tots. That brings Sheamus charging but he stops in front of the three tables laid against the apron. Sheamus promises to build a castle from all the broken toys on Sunday. Reigns challenges to fight him again tonight but Sheamus knows all Roman wants to do is use the weapons. That's fine with Reigns ("Hold on a second tater tot") who throws out all the goodies, one at a time to drag this out far longer than it needs to be.

Sheamus still won't get in so Reigns keeps talking and it's FINALLY on after nearly ten minutes of talking. Reigns gets the better of it at first and loads up the announcers' table, only to have Sheamus take over and send him into a ladder (which Sheamus has to grab before it falls into the crowd). They fight into the crowd and then up to the entrance where all the tables and ladders are set up.

Sheamus blocks a powerbomb and hits him with a chair to take it back to ringside. Roman is thrown over the announcers' table but comes back with a spear through one of the many tables to end the show. WAY too long here for what they did but points for not having everyone else come out and letting this be about the two of them for a change.

Overall Rating: C-. This was one of the fastest shows I can remember in a long time. The first two hours felt like they took half an hour and the last third wasn't bad. Unfortunately the majority of the show was ok at best with the action being the biggest problem by far. The wrestling was just ok and a lot of the booking made my head hurt. They did a good job of setting up the pay per view but it was far from an entertaining show outside of that. Not the worst or anything, but a totally forgettable show.

Results

Roman Reigns/Dean Ambrose/Usos b. Wyatt Family, Dudley Boyz/Rhyno/Tommy Dreamer and League of Nations last eliminating the League of Nations

Kevin Owens b. Dolph Ziggler – Pop Up Powerbomb

Naomi/Sasha Banks b. Brie Bella/Alicia Fox – Rear View to Bella

Lucha Dragons b. New Day – Rollup to Kingston

Ryback vs. Rusev went to a double countout

Jack Swagger b. Stardust – Patriot Lock

Braun Strowman b. Tommy Dreamer – Standing choke

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