

Monday Night Raw – November 27, 2017: The Monster Among The Mayor

Monday Night Raw

Date: November 27, 2017

Location: Thompson-Boling Arena, Knoxville, Tennessee

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Booker T.

We're finally out of Houston and on the road to the Royal Rumble. The big story coming out of last week is Roman Reigns winning the Intercontinental Title for the first time and issuing an open challenge after the show went off the air. Other than that we have the continuing issues with Kurt Angle, HHH and Stephanie McMahon as we flash back about seventeen years. Let's get to it.

The opening recap looks at Kane vs. Braun Strowman, including Kane injuring Strowman's throat last week.

Here's Reigns to open things up. Last week was a big week for him as he and the Shield beat up New Day. Then he had an opportunity and we see a clip of him winning the Intercontinental Title. After the show was over, Shield came back out and put Miz through a table. This is his yard and this is the title so if you want it, come get it. Cue the Miztourage to say they know someone who wants the title. This brings out Elias of all people to say he wants the title. Reigns thinks it sounds like Elias wants to walk with the big dog, but after tonight he might have a neck brace like Curtis Axel.

Seth Rollins vs. Cesaro

Dean Ambrose is on his honeymoon so Rollins is on his own. It's not like he has a buddy who happens to be Intercontinental Champion around or anything. Cesaro works on a wristlock to start but gets stomped down into the corner without much effort. Seth gets sent outside though and we take a break.

Back with Cesaro working on the ribs by dropping some knees for two. Seth's high crossbody is countered into a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker and we hit a waistlock. Rollins tries an abdominal stretch of his own but gets hiptossed down without much effort. The Blockbuster works a bit better and Cesaro falls outside for a suicide dive.

Back from a second break with Rollins getting two off a Falcon Arrow. A poke to the eye sets up a small package for two on Seth and it's off to the Sharpshooter. Rollins makes the rope though and gets two of his own off the low superkick. The wind-up knee is enough to end Cesaro at 18:23.

Rating: B. Nice long match here with Rollins getting a win to hopefully set up a title match next week. That being said, I have no idea how they're supposed to keep doing these one on one matches. There really should be a better way to set up a title match than having the singles wrestlers fight over and over again, but that might mean building up more teams.

Post match Seth says the Shield isn't going their separate ways because it's time to invoke the rematch for the Tag Team Titles.

We look at the end of last week's 205 Live with the Zo Train losing but beating down the good guys anyway.

Kurt Angle is with the four good cruiserweights and says it's time to determine who gets the shot. Tonight there's going to be a four way and next week there's going to be another one. The winners of those matches will face off for the next title shot.

Titus O'Neil vs. Samoa Joe

Titus charge at him in the corner but gets headbutted away without much effort. An early Koquina Clutch is broken up and it turns into a chop off. A kick to the shoulder gives Titus two but a right hand takes him down. The Clutch makes Titus tap at 2:30.

Apollo Crews tries to go after Joe and gets choked out too. I have no idea why this is what Samoa Joe is stuck doing.

We recap Paige and company invading last week.

Paige/Mandy Rose/Sonya DeVille vs. Bayley/Sasha Banks/Mickie James

Alexa Bliss is on commentary.....and there's no Mickie or Bayley. Paige and company come out and laugh off the idea of Sasha having no partners. We cut to the back where Mickie is holding her shin and Bayley is holding her neck. Paige laughs this off and says she's tired of hearing about her interfering last week. Last year, she was THE woman in WWE and helped erase the word Diva from WWE (we could have a tournament for everyone who takes credit for anything like this).

Now she and her friends, named Absolution (sounds like a bad perfume) are here to take things back. Rose and DeVille talk about how everyone has tried to be the next big thing but they remember how Paige started all of this. Paige offers Sasha a spot on the team but she forearms Paige off the apron. The beatdown is on in a hurry with everyone hitting a finisher. No match of course.

Bray Wyatt is here. Post break he's in the ring for a chat. Bray talks about never having a childhood. He never got to do all the usual things that children do. Your entire world exists inside the confines of a cardboard box. They tell you what to do and who to love. It's pathetic really, just like everyone here. Their suffering brings him joy and he can see them for who they truly are. Bray says we're all dead and starts cackling.

Bray Wyatt vs. Matt Hardy

Joined in progress with Bray running Matt over without much effort. The backsplash gets two but Matt drops him without too much effort. The middle rope elbow doesn't work so Matt settles for the Side Effect for two. Matt's moonsault misses and Bray spider walks up, followed by Sister Abigail to give Bray the pin at 3:30.

Rating: D+. Nothing to see here, though that's usually the case with Matt's matches anymore. They're not very interesting and the big story with him tends to be when is Jeff getting back. I'd love it if this losing streak started moving him towards the Broken Matt character, as I can't imagine WWE not getting their hands on it eventually.

Post match Matt sits in the corner and starts screaming while doing the DELETE motion. Cole: "Are we witnessing the beginning of a Matt Hardy....breakdown?"

We look at Strowman getting hurt last week.

Jason Jordan wants to face Strowman again this week but since Braun is hurt, he'll face Kane instead.

Rich Swann vs. Akira Tozawa vs. Ariya Daivari vs. Noam Dar

One fall to a finish and winner goes on to a one on one #1 contenders match in two weeks. It's a brawl to start with Tozawa fighting off a double teaming but Swann flips over him. They trade some rollups for two each until the villains take him outside. Swann hits a big flip dive onto all of them with his knee hitting Tozawa square in the face. He seems ok though as Swann heads back inside for Rolling Thunder, only to be caught by Daivari's spinebuster.

Tozawa comes back in and is double whipped into the corner. A double suplex drops Swann on the floor and we take a break. Back with Swann still on the floor as Tozawa hits the standing backplash on Daivari. The top rope version is broken up but Swann comes back in for the Tower of Doom. Dar breaks up the Phoenix splash but Tozawa takes him out with a dive.

Daivari's frog splash gets two on Swann, only to have Tozawa catch him with a Shining Wizard. The top rope backplash crushes Daivari with Dar sending Tozawa into the post. Dar's running kick to the head drops Tozawa so Swann pulls Tozawa outside. A regular kick to the head sets up the Phoenix splash to give Swann the pin and the spot in the #1 contenders match at 12:37.

Rating: C+. This was longer than it needed to be but the right guy won. Nothing here felt like anything you couldn't see on a regular episode of 205 Live, which is a big part of the problem. Hopefully this sets up Swann vs. Cedric Alexander for the title shot with Cedric eventually getting the win, as he's long overdue for a run as champion.

Here's Elias for his Intercontinental Title shot but first, a song about how sad the Miztourage is to not have their leader around. Dallas and Axel join in on harmonica and do give quite a performance. Elias offers them some praise but the fans cut him off with a WE WANT ROMAN chant. That's cut off by a NO WE DON'T chant and we're FINALLY ready to go.

Intercontinental Title: Roman Reigns vs. Elias

Elias is challenging. They trade shoulders to start with Elias getting the better of it and slapping on a reverse chinlock. Elias gets two off a clothesline and we hit a regular chinlock. Back up and the Miztourage offers a distraction so Elias can get in a hard knee for a near fall.

We come back from a break with Elias getting kicked in the face, only to have Reigns stop and take out the Miztourage instead of following up. The distraction lets Elias take Reigns down and drop a top rope elbow for a rather near fall. A sitout powerbomb gets the same but Reigns is right back with a Superman Punch for two of his own. Back up and the spear retains the title at 14:48.

Rating: B-. While the ending wasn't exactly in doubt here, it was still a good, hard hitting match. They're certainly protecting Elias at the moment and I'm not sure what to make of that. It would be nice if they had him actually win something but with the Intercontinental Title now basically the show's World Title, he's kind of stuck. But at least it was a good match.

Post match Samoa Joe sneaks in and chokes Reigns out. No Rollins for the save either, mainly because this was a Reigns singles match and not a Shield match. That determines who comes out for a save you see.

Asuka vs. Dana Brooke

Brooke says she'll be all over Asuka at the bell. A cross armbreaker makes Dana tap at five seconds.

Post match Absolution comes out and surrounds the ring, only to let Asuka leave in peace.

Jason Jordan vs. Kane

Before the match, Jordan talks about how he's an athlete and knew his knee was banged up last week. Kane actually gets powered into the corner a few times to start but the suplex is broken up. A hard toss sends Jordan outside where he comes up holding the knee again. That's enough for a countout at 1:42.

Post match Kane stays on the knee until Finn Balor comes out for the save. They stare each other down and we take a break.

Finn Balor vs. Kane

Kane wastes no time in whipping Balor into the corner and we're into an early chinlock. Balor dropkicks him outside and hits a dive as the announcers talk about what a big deal a win over Kane would be. Kane hits him in the ribs with a chair for the DQ at 2:44.

Kane beats on him with the chair and wraps it around Balor's throat until Braun Strowman comes out for the save. A chair to the back has no effect on Strowman and the beatdown is on. Strowman destroys him with the steps and a chair, including a powerslam onto the steps. Kane gets his throat crushed on the chair and staggers into the crowd (probably looking for registered voters) to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. The good, long matches worked but I have no idea what that ending was supposed to be. So Jordan is trying to be all gutsy and get over his knee injury, Balor is dealing with Kane (and getting destroyed by him over and over) and Kane vs. Strowman is over who the real monster is. Ignoring the fact that Kane hasn't been viewed as much of a monster in at least ten years and WHY IS THIS THE TOP STORY OF THE SHOW??? Like, is this supposed to set up Kane vs. Strowman, after Strowman has beaten Kane down multiple times now? That's their big draw?

Other than that, the show actually wasn't half bad with Asuka's win being a high point. Sometimes there's no need to have the match be anything other than a glorified joke and that's what we had there. Asuka is just better than Brooke and there was no need to watch it go for three minutes to prove such a thing. As mentioned, the wrestling was good but the booking of the last thirty minutes or so...not so much. Have Reigns vs. Elias and the Samoa Joe attack close the show and it's far, far better.

Still good though.

Results

Seth Rollins b. Cesaro – Wind-up knee

Samoa Joe b. Titus O'Neil – Koquina Clutch

Bray Wyatt b. Matt Hardy – Sister Abigail

Rich Swann b. Ariya Daivari, Akira Tozawa and Noam Dar – Phoenix splash to Dar

Roman Reigns b. Elias – Spear

Asuka b. Dana Brooke – Cross armbreaker

Kane b. Jason Jordan via countout

Finn Balor b. Kane via DQ when Kane used a chair

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Main Event – November 16, 2017: The Smart Choice

Main Event

Date: November 16, 2017

Location: Phillips Arena, Atlanta, Georgia

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Vic Joseph

It's the go home show for Survivor Series and I'm not sure if that's going to mean anything around here. The best hope I have here though is last week's episode containing a clip from Smackdown, which you never see around here. It would make sense again this week and would help set up Survivor Series. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Heath Slater vs. Curt Hawkins

Slater pauses to start and throws Curt the I'VE GOT KIDS shirt. That's fine with Curt, who sends him shoulder first into the post. Some stomping sets up a chinlock before a quick leg trip keeps Heath down. Back up and Slater avoids a charge into the corner, setting up Sweetness for two. Hawkins can't hit a superplex so Slater grabs a top rope sunset flip for the pin at 4:49.

Rating: D+. Just a match that you would expect these two to have, though the switched up finish worked as a nice change of pace. Slater is a perfect choice to open something up as you're going to get an entertaining little match and the fans are always going to cheer for him. Nothing to see of course but at least the reaction worked.

We look at Jason Jordan defeating Bray Wyatt on Raw but getting beaten up soon after.

From Raw.

Here's Angle to announce that Jordan is off the team due to injury. Before he can name it though, Jordan comes out and begs Angle to let him

do it. He'll be fine by Sunday and he's seen Angle fight injured so many times. Jordan says Angle picked him because he was the best option and it wasn't favoritism. He won't get another chance like this because he's worked his whole life to get here and wants to represent Raw. Stephanie comes out and tells Kurt to make the decision but HHH comes out as well. HHH gets right to the chase: Jordan is out and he's in instead. A Pedigree plants Jordan and that's that.

From Raw again.

Kane vs. Braun Strowman

Strowman jumps Kane and I don't think we had an opening bell. They head outside with Strowman driving him face first into the barricade but getting whipped into the steps. Kane pulls out a table as the referee isn't even trying to tell them to get in the ring. Smart move actually. Some chair shots to the back just annoy Strowman, who takes the chair away and lights Kane up with it instead.

With the table set up at ringside, Strowman loads up a superplex, only to have Kane punch his way out to avoid a bad case of death. Kane gets knocked inside but can't chokeslam him down. Instead it's a middle rope ax handle and the running powerslam through the ring (that made me jump). The bell never rang so no match but that was quite the finish.

Very quick clip of Paul Heyman's promo on Raw.

Tony Nese vs. Gran Metalik

Nese poses to start and runs Metalik over with a clothesline for an early two. Tony misses a charge though and gets caught with a dive as we take a break. Back with Nese getting caught on top, allowing Nese to get two off a gutbuster. A superkick cuts Nese off though and it's the Metalik Driver for the pin at 6:15. Not enough shown to rate but it was exactly what you would expect.

Pay per view rundown.

Clip of AJ Styles' promo from Tuesday.

And again, from Smackdown to close the show. New Day vs. Sami Zayn/Kevin Owens ended when Shield came down and then everything went nuts.

Sami and Owens bail to the floor, leaving New Day to get beaten down. The Usos come in but the Bar cuts them off. We see the Raw women's team invading the Smackdown women's locker room for the big brawl with Charlotte taking the big beating. Back in the arena, Samoa Joe and Finn Balor run in along with others, only to have Shane lead some reinforcements. Shinsuke Nakamura starts striking away but Kurt Angle shows up to bring out Braun Strowman for the real house cleaning.

Everyone brawls to the floor where Shield surrounds Shane McMahon. Shane has to watch as Smackdown is decimated on the floor, including Samoa Joe breaking the trombone over Big E.'s back. Angle gets in the ring and asks Shane how this feels before a TripleBomb plants the boss. Angle takes off his jacket and gives Shane an Angle Slam. Strowman watches as it's a second TripleBomb to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. The ending helps this one (again) and the HHH stuff helped a lot too. They were smart to go with the Smackdown stuff here again as that's far more interesting than most of the stuff on Raw. I'll be glad when the Raw vs. Smackdown stuff is done but at least it's been entertaining while it's lasted.

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Monday Night Raw – November 13, 2017: I Can Survive Stephanie

Monday Night Raw

Date: November 13, 2017

Location: Phillips Arena, Atlanta, Georgia

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Booker T.

It's the go home Raw for Survivor Series but there's a good chance we'll be seeing some Smackdown names tonight and some Raw names tomorrow. The big stories tonight though are the returns of Roman Reigns and Brock Lesnar, the former of the two from a bad illness. You can pretty much guess how tonight is going to go but that's not the worst thing in the world. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of the Raw vs. Smackdown feud. It's been good but I never need to see that Under Siege thing again.

Here's Stephanie McMahon to open things up and it's full on heel mode this week. She talks about having huge decisions to make that we can't fathom and needing help for those moments. This includes a General Manager like Kurt Angle, who comes out to address last week's incident. Angle says there was a raid last week but Stephanie wants to know how the Smackdown roster got into the building.

Kurt doesn't know and we're off to the races with Stephanie cutting off his balls. She recaps every single thing in that condescending voice of hers and rips on Angle for every decision on the road to Survivor Series. Stephanie asks why Angle put Jason Jordan in the spot because John Cena was available but went to Raw. Angle says he's going to start at Survivor Series and break Shane McMahon's ankle, though Stephanie doesn't think he can do that anymore. She's about to fire him when Shield comes out.

They get a nice reaction but Stephanie cuts the fans off to tell them to cheer or boo. Ambrose endorses Angle for his work at TLC and gets annoyed at the YOU STILL GOT IT chant. Stephanie rips on Shield for losing the Tag Team Titles (to another Raw team but that doesn't seem to bother her) and asks where Roman has been. Reigns asks where Stephanie has been for six or seven months (it's been like three weeks) after her husband put her through a table at Wrestlemania. Shield wants to fight New Day on Sunday and will take care of business if New Day accepts.

Survivor Series Qualifying Match: Dana Brooke vs. Mickie James vs. Bayley

The other team members are on the floor and Mickie gets sent outside to start. Back in and Dana stacks them up in the corner for a handspring elbow. Bayley gets knocked off the apron and we take a break. Back with Bayley suplexing both of them and sending Dana outside for a Stunner over the ropes. Mickie hits a good looking flapjack into a nipup before dropping Bayley with a neckbreaker. A double faceplant puts Dana on the floor....where she hits Asuka for some reason. That earns Dana a knockout kick to the head, leaving Bayley to hit the Bayley to Belly for the pin on Mickie at 7:31.

Rating: D+. Asuka looked the best out of all of the people involved with the match and there's nothing wrong with that. Bayley winning was the right call and makes the most sense, though I could have gone with her losing and having to figure out where she had to go from there. Still though, it makes sense.

Enzo Amore/Drew Gulak vs. Kalisto/Akira Tozawa

Before the match, Enzo goes on an inane rant about Kalisto having short pockets and I have no idea what he's talking about (as usual). Gulak and Tozawa start things off and some early heel double teaming fails. Kalisto springboards in with a dropkick and we take a break. Back with Gulak cranking on Tozawa's neck until Tozawa kicks him down. Diving tags bring in Enzo and Kalisto with the masked one hitting a springboard crossbody. A missile dropkick drops Gulak and there are the back to back dives. Kalisto dives onto Gulak but the Jordunzo ends Tozawa at 7:47.

Rating: C-. At least it had some good looking dives. This was every lame

Enzo match you've seen but thankfully there were some other people around to help take up the slack. Enzo vs. Kalisto hasn't been interesting since Enzo got the title back but that's what we're stuck with for reasons of "well, we can't just cancel 205 Live".

We look at the opening sequence.

Team Raw is in the back with Angle making Finn Balor/Samoa Joe vs. Anderson and Gallows to make sure they can work together. Jordan on the other hand gets to face Bray Wyatt to prove that he's not a handpicked choice in over his head. Braun Strowman wants Kane, which Angle grants.

It's time for MizTV with the Miztourage in the background. Miz talks about Baron Corbin being his presumed opponent at Survivor Series, assuming Corbin doesn't choke like he usually does. Corbin couldn't even make it onto last week's Smackdown but Miz always capitalizes on his chances.

Like tonight, when he faces the Shield along with his guests tonight: the Bar. The new champs come out and, after congratulating themselves on their win, say they're real champions unlike the Usos. They're going to jail break the Uso Penitentiary and show their superiority. Miz promises to take care of the Shield tonight because this is their moment.

We look back at Under Siege again.

New Day has accepted Shield's challenge.

Jason Jordan vs. Bray Wyatt

Jordan isn't scared and scores with an early dropkick before driving Bray into the corner. He actually scores with a belly to belly but Bray takes him outside and whips him into the barricade. Bray: "You don't know what you're messing with kiddo." Back from a break with Bray working on the knee but stopping for a backsplash. The Rock Bottom out of the corner has the fans all peppy but they're calmed down with Jordan getting in a right hand. Sister Abigail is countered into a rollup to give Jordan the pin at 7:16.

Rating: D+. Well that was flat. Jordan had nothing after the break and

then wins with a simple rollup. I've liked Jordan's push for the most part but this felt like a BIG stretch and too much at once. Bray is a former World Champion and Jordan casually pinned him like it was nothing. Jordan feels way out of place on that team and it would be nice to have him replaced, though I'm not sure if it would make sense.

Post match Bray beats the heck out of Jordan to a strong reaction. The bad knee is wrapped around the post and we get a THANK YOU WYATT chant. Jordan can't put any weight on the leg and needs help getting out.

Post break Jordan is getting his knee looked at with Angle thinking of taking him out of Sunday's match. Jordan begs to stay in but Angle doesn't say anything.

Here are Brock Lesnar and Paul Heyman to address AJ Styles. Heyman gets to the point: if the fans want to see Lesnar beat up Styles, it happens on Sunday. He's seen Lesnar thrown into the ring with stronger opponents than he's ever seen before, all of the people who could destroy most humans.

Now it's AJ Styles, who lives up to the concept of speed kills. Heyman stops to yell at the crowd before saying Styles is the most talented in-ring performer of this generation. Some people might think that's Finn Balor but Heyman will let people figure that out. Heyman goes over all the reasons that AJ could challenge Styles, but thinks a good old boy from Georgia isn't going to survive against a Georgia Bulldog eating carnivore. Lesnar is the #1 champion in WWE, then now and forever.

If you want to see a Rocky movie come to live, Heyman gives you AJ Styles. Heyman lists off all the big names that AJ has defeated but this ain't no freaking Rocky movie. AJ can't survive the onslaught of the conqueror and he can't survive the F5. Heyman looks forward to seeing AJ Styles in person on Sunday but this ends with Brock standing tall. Brock actually shakes some kids' hands on the way out for a weird visual. Paul was all kinds of fired up here and it was great stuff.

Shield vs. Miz/The Bar

Rollins and Cesaro hit the mat to start and it's an early standoff. A

dropkick puts Cesaro down and of course he immediately checks his teeth. Dean comes in for some hard chops in the corner but Sheamus cuts him off with some hard shots of his own. Everything breaks down with Shield clearing the ring, including some double dives to the Bar. Miz and company bail into the crowd and we take a break.

Back with Rollins being thrown outside but Dean is right there to clothesline Cesaro. Sheamus dives into a superkick though and it's a double knockdown. The hot tag brings in Reigns for his usual clotheslines as everything breaks down. Cesaro's big uppercut gets two but Reigns is right back with the Superman Punch.

The spear is blocked with another uppercut though and it's a blind tag to Miz. Reigns doesn't notice and gets rolled up with a handful of tights for two. Rollins comes back in with the springboard knee, followed by Dirty Deeds to Sheamus. Miz is left all alone and there's a spear, followed by the TripleBomb for the pin at 15:06.

Rating: C+. Normally I would get annoyed at the champions losing like this but what are you supposed to do when you're against the Shield? It's not like someone just pinned Miz clean as it was three people beating the heck out of him for the pin. Miz is getting closer and closer to the most days ever as champion (he's less than four months away) and if nothing else has taken away his momentum before, this won't either.

Clips of Kane vs. Strowman over the last few weeks.

Kane says he remembers putting Strowman in the garbage truck like a symphony of horrors. Tonight, he'll show Strowman that there are worse things in life than death. Like him for instance.

Here's Angle to announce that Jordan is off the team due to injury. Before he can name it though, Jordan comes out and begs Angle to let him do it. He'll be fine by Sunday and he's seen Angle fight injured so many times. Jordan says Angle picked him because he was the best option and it wasn't favoritism. He won't get another chance like this because he's worked his whole life to get here and wants to represent Raw. Stephanie comes out and tells Kurt to make the decision but HHH comes out as well. HHH gets right to the chase: Jordan is out and he's in instead. A

Pedigree plants Jordan and that's that.

Finn Balor/Samoa Joe vs. Anderson and Gallows

Joe shoves Balor into the ring to start and it's rapid fire shots to Anderson early on. Gallows tries to sneak in a cheap shot but Joe runs him over with a clothesline and we take a break. Back with Balor slugging away at Gallows but Anderson takes him down into a chinlock. Anderson gets two off a spinebuster and we take a second break in eight minutes. Back again with Gallows kicking Balor down but a Pele allows the hot tag to Joe. House is cleaned and the Rock Bottom out of the corner plants Anderson. Joe dives onto Gallows and the Coup de Grace ends Anderson at 12:48.

Rating: C-. It says a lot when the match is nearly thirteen minutes and they barely showed enough of it to rate. Balor and Joe as good but unwilling partners (no mention of the Dusty Classic win in the whole match of course) is fine and they should be good additions to Sunday's stacked match. Anderson and Gallows continue to fall apart as a team but that's to be expected, sadly enough.

We run down Sunday's card.

Alexa Bliss doesn't care if she faces Natalya or Charlotte on Sunday. She doesn't think much of Smackdown, which she usually DVR's and forgets to watch later. Maybe she'll just have to show up on the show. As usual, Bliss' delivery and facial expressions were outstanding here as she really does come off like the most stuck up woman you want to see get taken down a dozen or so notches. That's hard to do and she does it to perfection.

Kane vs. Braun Strowman

Strowman jumps Kane and I don't think we had an opening bell. They head outside with Strowman driving him face first into the barricade but getting whipped into the steps. Kane pulls out a table as the referee isn't even trying to tell them to get in the ring. Smart move actually. Some chair shots to the back just annoy Strowman, who takes the chair away and lights Kane up with it instead.

With the table set up at ringside, Strowman loads up a superplex, only to have Kane punch his way out to avoid a bad case of death. Kane gets knocked inside but can't chokeslam him down. Instead it's a middle rope ax handle and the running powerslam through the ring (that made me jump). The bell never rang so no match but that was quite the finish.

Overall Rating: C-. This is a really tricky one to grade as the bad stuff (anytime Stephanie was on screen, the reaction to Jordan, Wyatt getting pinned so easily and most of the wrestling in general) is a bit too much for the good to outweigh but the good is REALLY good. We now have HHH added to Survivor Series, New Day vs. Shield, Bayley on the team and a heck of a promo from Heyman. I'm a heck of a lot more excited for Sunday than I was coming in and that's one of the best things you can say about a show like this. Good result but not the best trip getting there.

Results

Bayley b. Mickie James and Dana Brooke – Bayley to Belly to James

Enzo Amore/Drew Gulak b. Kalisto/Akira Tozawa – Jordunzo to Tozawa

Jason Jordan b. Bray Wyatt – Rollup

Shield b. Miz/The Bar – TripleBomb to Miz

Finn Balor/Samoa Joe b. Anderson and Gallows – Coup de Grace to Anderson

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

Monday Night Raw

Date: September 18, 2017

Location: SAP Center, San Jose, California

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Booker T.

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

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

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

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

Post break Jordan is frustrated but Angle gives him a pep talk, basically

saying it's ok to not fight back every time someone brings him up. If Jordan wants to get back at Miz, go take his Intercontinental Title.

Alexa Bliss vs. Nia Jax

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

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

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

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

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

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

Here are Sheamus and Cesaro for a chat before a match. Sheamus talks

about the love of nostalgia and thinks it's kind of boring. You have the people wrapping themselves up in the blanket of the Hardys and pretending it's the good old days. They destroy nostalgia acts and you can ask the Hardys for proof of those things. Cesaro says nostalgia will fade soon enough, just like the nostalgia for this reunion between Seth Rollins and Dean Ambrose. They'll be there to take the Tag Team Titles when the team falls apart because they are the bar.

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

Asuka is coming.

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

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

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

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

Rating: B-. Good match but the usual problems abound. These matches just keep going because there's no one else for the teams to face and there's no reason for them to continue otherwise. Couple that with I'm supposed to be interested in seeing them fight again just six days after they fought here. Not that it matters as they'll likely be fighting again the next month because they don't have anyone else to slide into the spots. Give us something fresh, even if it's for a month or so.

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

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

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

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

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

Curt Hawkins vs. Apollo Crews

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

Lesnar and Strowman have a sitdown interview (in different places).

Heyman doesn't think much of Lesnar being the underdog because that was the case when he conquered the Streak. Strowman is confident because he's destroyed people before and will do so again. Heyman talks about Lesnar not being able to train for Strowman because there's no one like him.

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

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

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

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

It's a completely different way of presenting the feuds and one of them is working a lot better than the others because

it's been crafted to the participants' strengths and weaknesses.

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

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

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

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

Asuka is coming.

Bray Wyatt vs. Dustin Rhodes

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

Finn Balor pops up on screen and talks about growing up reading stories.

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

More Tweets on Heenan.

The announcers talk about Heenan's greatness and legacy.

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

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

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

Neville vs. Gran Metalik

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

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

hearing him brag about being champion for the next eight months.

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

Here's Elias to sing his song about how horrible his opponents are, just like everyone here in San Jose.

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

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

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

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

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

Overall Rating: C-. This show was kind of all over the place but they made do with what they could considering the lack of a live Lesnar or Cena in general. They did a good enough job at hyping up No Mercy, which

is the entire point of this show. However, the wrestling wasn't exactly strong and that makes for a dull show. The first hour and a half was really weak but it picked up the pace a lot down the stretch, which was what mattered most. Not a terrible show, but it was dull for some long stretches.

Results

Nia Jax b. Alexa Bliss – Samoan drop

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

Apollo Crews b. Curt Hawkins – Toss powerbomb

Bray Wyatt b. Dustin Rhodes – Sister Abigail

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

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Main Event – September 16, 2017: The Short Term Holding Pattern

Main Event

Date: September 14, 2017

Location: Honda Center, Anaheim, California

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Vic Joseph

It's been a busy week for WWE so let's make sure we have one more show in there, just to fill in some space of course. Hopefully the matches are a bit more interesting this week, though last week's show was one of the better ones they've done in a good while. Then again it's not like there's much continuity around here. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Rhyno vs. Dash Wilder

Feeling out process to start with Rhyno smacking him in the face a few times. Wilder charges into an elbow but is able to shove Rhyno off the top and down onto the floor in a heap. Back in and we hit a quickly broken chinlock, followed by Rhyno's running shoulder in the corner. The Gore misses but Rhyno settles for a spinebuster and the pin at 5:45.

Rating: D+. Just a match here with Rhyno still being over for reasons I can't quite pin down. Maybe it's just how simple his character is and you know exactly what you're going to get from his matches. It's also nice to have Wilder at least making an appearance here or there while Dawson recovers.

From Raw.

Roman Reigns vs. Jason Jordan

Reigns won't shake hands to start and John Cena is shown watching in the back. Feeling out process to start until Jordan charges into a right

hand. The corner clotheslines are countered with the belly to belly and Jordan has a breather. One heck of a running clothesline lets Reigns hit the corner clotheslines but the Superman Punch is countered into the Crossface.

Back from a break with a headbutt dropping Jordan again, followed by a suplex to do the same. We hit the chinlock for a bit before another suplex (granted a different variety) sends Reigns flying. That great dropkick puts Reigns down again and it's still another suplex for two more.

The running shoulder in the corner sets up some rolling northern lights suplexes for another near fall. We hit the Crossface but Reigns finally makes the rope (after nearly tapping on his face). Back up and Jordan's shoulder goes into the post, setting up the Superman Punch. The spear is enough to put Jordan away at 15:18.

Rating: B. Jordan is getting better and the more time he spends away from Kurt Angle, the better this push seems to be going. He just doesn't need the Angle connection and I'm glad that they're doing something like this instead of having them be paired on screen. Reigns looked good here too and is starting to look a bit more comfortable in recent weeks.

Reigns shakes his hand post match. Post break here's Cena to call out Reigns for almost losing. He'd like an explanation, but recommends that Reigns keep it at about one sentence in the form of a catchphrase. Roman says he was out here having a great match, which Cena can't do. Reigns has had more great matches in the last two years than Cena has had in his career. Reigns: "What do you think about that?" Cena: "You can't pin this one on me guys. Reigns is burying himself."

Cena talks about how Reigns has never been put in check before but Cena is going to show him what real failure is. The way things are going, No Mercy is going to be a cake walk. Cena goes to leave but Reigns calls him back in and says he finds it interesting that Cena wanted to fight him. The reason Cena is back is because Reigns is selling the tickets that Cena hasn't been able to sell in five years. It must be because he can't break into Hollywood. Reigns: "If you need help, I know a guy." Cena says

No Mercy is going to be like a drug test: Reigns isn't passing.

And again from Monday.

Here are Brock Lesnar and Paul Heyman for a chat. Heyman knows that we're coming up on a pay per view called No Mercy where Braun Strowman is going to have to do everything he can to take the title away from Brock. That's interesting though because Braun is reminding Heyman of what Lesnar did in 2002, when he beat people like the Rock, Hulk Hogan, Rob Van Dam and the Undertaker. So is Strowman going to be ready to cross the line from sports entertainment into Suplex City?

Heyman doesn't think so, but here's Braun to interrupt. The fight is on and Brock grabs a German suplex (I believe the first time he's ever done that to Strowman) but Braun no sells it, drawing a stunned look from Lesnar. That's a great spot, though ignore the fact that Cena did something similar in 2014. Strowman lays him out with a chokeslam and the running powerslam as Heyman is terrified.

Mustafa Ali/Lince Dorado/Gran Metalik vs. Noam Dar/Tony Nese/Ariya Daivari

Daivari and Dorado start things off and it's a hurricanrana and springboard moonsault press for two on Ariya. Dar comes in and it's time to start in on his arm, sending him outside for a break. Back with Daivari grabbing a chinlock on Metalik and shouting a lot. Dorado grabs the handspring Stunner and it's off to Ali and Dar. Ali grabs his rolling neckbreaker as everything breaks down. The villains are sent outside and of course that means a triple flip dive with Ali barely grazing Nese. Back in and the 054 ends Daivari at 8:49.

Rating: C-. This was every six man tag you see out of the cruiserweights and that's not the worst thing in the world. Dar has really fallen off the map since the Alicia Fox split and I can't say I'm surprised. He never was anything great in the ring (not that he's bad) but really, he's just kind of there at this point.

Video on Big Show vs. Braun Strowman in the cage.

From Raw, one more time.

John Cena vs. Braun Strowman

Graves says Cena is trying to take Strowman out like Reigns could never do. So Cena is out to put him on the shelf for several months now as Reigns already pinned Strowman and put him out for weeks. Cena gets thrown out to the floor to start and then whipped hard into the corner for good measure. Strowman hits a dropkick of all things and the announcers are stunned.

Cena's right hands have no effect but he gets the feet up in the corner. A fall away slam sends Cena flying and we take a break. Back with Strowman being sent outside but running Cena over again. They head back inside with Cena getting him up for the AA but falling forward from the weight.

The Shuffle is broken up just as easily with a spinebuster giving Strowman two. Cena manages an AA, only to have Braun roll out to the floor. A run around the ring is cut off with Strowman picking up the steps and bouncing them off Cena's head. That's not a DQ for no apparent reason so Strowman throws the steps inside for a powerslam, which is enough for the DQ at 13:58.

Rating: C. This was a squash with a screwy ending as Cena makes someone else look like a killer. You know, because he hasn't done it yet this month. Strowman looks like a monster and it was a heck of a performance. I'm actually believing he could win the title at No Mercy, only to lose it to Reigns before he beats Lesnar to retain at Wrestlemania.

Overall Rating: C-. Just a show here with nothing standing out. We're kind of in a short term hold pattern at the moment as we get closer to No Mercy, meaning a lot of this stuff doesn't mean a lot. Strowman vs. Cena being run on free TV with no build bothers me more each time I think about it but at least the ending was the right call. Not much of a show this week but that's Main Event for you.

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Monday Night Raw – September 11, 2017: Punt Formation

Monday Night Raw

Date: September 11, 2017

Location: Honda Center, Anaheim, California

Commentators: Booker T., Corey Graves, Michael Cole

As is the case so often anymore around WWE (and thank goodness for that), we have some big matches announced coming in. This time around that would be Braun Strowman vs. John Cena, which had better end in some kind of a screwy finish. I mean, WWE wouldn't possibly be stupid enough to do something else right? Let get to it.

As you might expect, we open with a moment of silence for the sixteenth anniversary of September 11. We also have a text crawl on the screen, talking about the importance of freedom.

Opening sequence.

Roman Reigns vs. Jason Jordan

Reigns won't shake hands to start and John Cena is shown watching in the back. Feeling out process to start until Jordan charges into a right hand. The corner clotheslines are countered with the belly to belly and Jordan has a breather. One heck of a running clothesline lets Reigns hit the corner clotheslines but the Superman Punch is countered into the Crossface.

Back from a break with a headbutt dropping Jordan again, followed by a suplex to do the same. We hit the chinlock for a bit before another suplex (granted a different variety) sends Reigns flying. That great dropkick puts Reigns down again and it's still another suplex for two more.

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Rating: B. Jordan is getting better and the more time he spends away from Kurt Angle, the better this push seems to be going. He just doesn't need the Angle connection and I'm glad that they're doing something like this instead of having them be paired on screen. Reigns looked good here too and is starting to look a bit more comfortable in recent weeks.

Reigns shakes his hand post match. Post break here's Cena to call out Reigns for almost losing. He'd like an explanation, but recommends that Reigns keep it at about one sentence in the form of a catchphrase. Roman says he was out here having a great match, which Cena can't do. Reigns has had more great matches in the last two years than Cena has had in his career. Reigns: "What do you think about that?" Cena: "You can't pin this one on me guys. Reigns is burying himself."

Cena talks about how Reigns has never been put in check before but Cena is going to show him what real failure is. The way things are going, No Mercy is going to be a cake walk. Cena goes to leave but Reigns calls him back in and says he finds it interesting that Cena wanted to fight him. The reason Cena is back is because Reigns is selling the tickets that

Cena hasn't been able to sell in five years. It must be because he can't break into Hollywood. Reigns: "If you need help, I know a guy." Cena says No Mercy is going to be like a drug test: Reigns isn't passing.

Sasha Banks vs. Emma

Alexa Bliss is on commentary as Emma gets an early two off a sunset flip. Sasha gets the same off a backslide but gets blasted with a hard clothesline. Cue Nia Jax to join commentary as we take a break. Back with Emma getting taken down by a headscissors but hiptossing Banks into the corner. The five person commentary booth (geez) laughs off the idea of Emma winning the title because of all the hashtags. Banks has had enough of this and grabs the Bank Statement for the tap at 7:21.

Rating: D. You know, if you actually have Emma win something, even via a fluke, some people might buy her as something more than the person in the match to take the fall. Then again, that might suggest that there are more than three people worth pushing in the entire division and that's just unacceptable for whatever reason.

Video on Strowman vs. Big Show from last week.

Here are Brock Lesnar and Paul Heyman for a chat. Heyman knows that we're coming up on a pay per view called No Mercy where Braun Strowman is going to have to do everything he can to take the title away from Brock. That's interesting though because Braun is reminding Heyman of what Lesnar did in 2002, when he beat people like the Rock, Hulk Hogan, Rob Van Dam and the Undertaker. So is Strowman going to be ready to cross the line from sports entertainment into Suplex City?

Heyman doesn't think so, but here's Braun to interrupt. The fight is on and Brock grabs a German suplex (I believe the first time he's ever done that to Strowman) but Braun no sells it, drawing a stunned look from Lesnar. That's a great spot, though ignore the fact that Cena did something similar in 2014. Strowman lays him out with a chokeslam and the running powerslam as Heyman is terrified.

The announcers talk about the recent hurricanes and how you can help. Nothing wrong with that.

Goldust vs. Bray Wyatt

Bray comes up on screen to say that Goldust hides behind his paint but now he needs to run. Goldust slugs away to start and sends Bray outside for a freaking flip dive off the apron (YOU'RE TOO OLD FOR THAT DUSTIN!). Back in and Bray runs him over, setting up Sister Abigail for the pin at 2:08.

Post match Bray wipes the paint off of Goldust's face, shouting that he's just a man. Finn Balor comes in for the save.

Sheamus and Cesaro are ready to face Dean Ambrose and Seth Rollins because as soon as adversity hits them, they're going to break up again. They are the bar, and that is still a stupid catchphrase.

Sheamus/Cesaro vs. Anderson and Gallows

Rollins and Ambrose are on commentary. Actually hang on as the champs start brawling with both teams. No match.

Post break Rollins and Ambrose say they want both of those teams tonight. Angle says find partners and the DELETE chants are already starting.

Asuka is coming soon.

Nia Jax doesn't seem pleased when Bliss comes up to say she doesn't like it either. She wants Jax to be best friends again so they can have a classic together. Jax says she'll think about it but that match is already made for next week. Bliss looks stunned.

Elias vs. Kalisto

Yes again. Elias sings about how Anaheim sucks and makes fun of the Mighty Ducks. Kalisto speeds things up to start but gets his shoulder wrenched, followed by a clothesline for two. We hit the armbar for a bit until Kalisto fights up for a tornado DDT. Kalisto misses a double knee shot off the top though and gets powerbombed in half. Drift Away is enough to give Elias the pin at 4:29.

Rating: D. NOW NEVER LET THEM FIGHT AGAIN! These two have fought probably

five times in the last month or so (including a match on Main Event) and none of them have been anything interesting. Elias is in a weird place as it feels like they want to push him but they won't actually do much with him. They're keep him warm though and that's better than leaving him off TV.

John Cena vs. Braun Strowman

Graves says Cena is trying to take Strowman out like Reigns could never do. So Cena is out to put him on the shelf for several months now as Reigns already pinned Strowman and put him out for weeks. Cena gets thrown out to the floor to start and then whipped hard into the corner for good measure. Strowman hits a dropkick of all things and the announcers are stunned.

Cena's right hands have no effect but he gets the feet up in the corner. A fall away slam sends Cena flying and we take a break. Back with Strowman being sent outside but running Cena over again. They head back inside with Cena getting him up for the AA but falling forward from the weight.

The Shuffle is broken up just as easily with a spinebuster giving Strowman two. Cena manages an AA, only to have Braun roll out to the floor. A run around the ring is cut off with Strowman picking up the steps and bouncing them off Cena's head. That's not a DQ for no apparent reason so Strowman throws the steps inside for a powerslam, which is enough for the DQ at 13:58.

Rating: C. This was a squash with a screwy ending as Cena makes someone else look like a killer. You know, because he hasn't done it yet this month. Strowman looks like a monster and it was a heck of a performance. I'm actually believing he could win the title at No Mercy, only to lose it to Reigns before he beats Lesnar to retain at Wrestlemania.

Rollins and Ambrose are looking for partners and run into Dean Malenko and Jamie Noble. Dean says they're not dressed for it but the Hardys are. We have an eight man tag.

It's time for MizTV and Miz and Maryse have a major announcement: Maryse

is pregnant! Miz is so happy and the fans actually seem to be happy for him. He rips on the fans of course and has a speech but here's Enzo Amore to interrupt. Miz goes on another heck of a rant, talking about how Enzo and Big Cass were supposed to be the big deal around here and even wrestled with John Cena on a pay per view.

Now Enzo is getting kicked off a tour bus and has to cheat to win. Miz was treated like Enzo to start and then reinvented himself to turn into a star who has been here for over ten years. Now Enzo thinks he can beat Neville? The cruiserweights are some of the most athletically gifted stars in the world and do things off the top rope that brings the WWE Universe to their feet. When Enzo goes to the top, he falls on his face. They work every day to get better while all Enzo cares about is hanging out with third rate rappers.

Enzo says Miz is just a copy of Chris Jericho and Ric Flair while he's an original. He's going to No Mercy to become Cruiserweight Champion and then he'll come back to Raw and beat the paper Intercontinental Champion. That's enough for Miz, who is willing to fight right now. He even dedicates the match to his unborn child but Enzo calls him S-A-W-F-T anyway. Enzo was picked apart here but his retort was good.

Miz vs. Enzo Amore

Non-title. Enzo runs out to the floor to start and says Miz's wrestling abilities are heading straight to DVD. Miz chases him outside and rams Enzo's head into the mat over and over again. Miz: "Hey Enzo. How you doin?" Back in and Miz brags a bit more, earning himself a crotching on the top. Miz hammers away again so Enzo asks if Miz is really the father. That's enough for Miz, who beats on Enzo until the Miztourage joins in for the DQ at 3:07.

Rating: D. So uh, was there a point to this? Enzo gets ripped in half, runs his mouth some more, and then gets the fire beaten out of him in the match and post match. Miz continues to look like a star and as usual I'd love to see him move up the ranks after he finally drops the title.

Enzo gets destroyed even more post match.

Post break, Neville laughs at Enzo, who can barely move.

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

It's a brawl to start (well duh) until the Hardys work on Cesaro's arm. That goes nowhere as it's off to Sheamus, who gets sent outside along with Cesaro. Back with Gallows kicking Ambrose out to the floor as the heat segment begins. A double clothesline from Cesaro and Sheamus gets two and it's off to a chinlock from Cesaro. Dean gets him down with a backslide, only to get caught with the assisted White Noise for two.

Matt comes in for the save and gets sent into the barricade for his efforts. Dean's swinging neckbreaker doesn't get him anywhere as he has to fight out of the Magic Killer. The rebound lariat drops Gallows but Sheamus cuts him off again. A backdrop is finally enough for the hot tag to Seth as things speed up. Everything breaks down and it's a double Twist of Fate to Anderson and Gallows. Sheamus and Cesaro walk away though, leaving Anderson to take the windup knee and Dirty Deeds for the pin at 13:02.

Rating: C-. In other words, Monday Night Football just kicked off (doubleheader on opening weekend) so there's no point in really trying to do anything interesting. Cesaro and Sheamus walking out is the right idea and it lets the champs look good. The problem continues to be that we've seen these teams for a long time now and none of them are very interesting. The matches are fine but the build to get there feels like nothing special whatsoever.

Overall Rating: C+. Good show here, completely worthless main event aside. As usual, this was a great example of why Raw only needs to be two hours as the show could have been outstanding with less time to fill but that's what you have to expect around here. It was more than watchable though and I'm interested in where No Mercy is going to go. Hopefully things pick up a bit next week with only one Monday Night Football game to deal with, though I wouldn't hold my breath.

Results

Roman Reigns b. Jason Jordan – Spear

Sasha Banks b. Emma – Bank Statement

Bray Wyatt b. Goldust – Sister Abigail

Elias b. Kalisto – Drift Away

John Cena b. Braun Strowman via DQ when Strowman used the steps

Enzo Amore b. Miz via DQ when the Miztourage interfered

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

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Main Event – September 7, 2017: I'll Walk With You

Main Event

Date: September 7, 2017

Location: CenturyLink Center, Omaha, Nebraska

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Nigel McGuinness

We're in a new era here because a change in the commentary team is enough to warrant calling it a new era. Corey Graves has moved up to Smackdown so this show falls to Joseph and McGuinness, who probably aren't going to change all that much. Hopefully the show is good, though as usual it depends on what you get from Monday. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

TJP/Brian Kendrick vs. Mustafa Ali/Lince Dorado

Dorado enziguris Kendrick to start and gets two off a dropkick. Ali comes in with a neckbreaker for the same but it's off to TJP for a headscissors into some dabbing. A double slam drops TJP and Kendrick charges into a double flapjack. TJP gets in a clothesline from the apron to drop Ali and the villains take over for the first time.

It's off to Brian for an armbar with a neck crank but TJP can't get the kneebar. Kendrick can get a superkick to his jaw though and the hot tag brings in Dorado. A moonsault press gets two on TJP and everything breaks down. Dorado dives onto Kendrick and it's the 054 from Ali to put TJP away at 6:32.

Rating: C+. These cruiserweight tag matches have been getting a lot better in recent weeks. They're flying all over the place and showing what they're capable of doing, which makes them great choices for opening matches like this one. TJP has grown on me considerably and Ali is getting better every single time. Good, fun match here.

From Raw.

John Cena vs. Jason Jordan

Before the match, we look at Cena answering an open challenge from Kurt Angle fifteen years ago in his debut match. The fans are actually behind Cena, which should tell you a lot about Jordan's future. Jason grabs an early takedown and grabs a waistlock. Cena can't do much with him to start until a hard clothesline drops Jason without much effort. A suplex gets two on Jordan, followed by a hard whip into the corner for the same

as we take a break.

Back with Jordan hitting his own suplexes and that's enough for Cena, who initiates the finishing sequence. Jordan's rollup is countered into the STF but he reverses into something like a Crossface. Cena powers out (because he's Cena) and reverses another suplex into a crossbody. That's enough for Cena though as he grabs the AA for the pin at 11:38.

Rating: B-. These performances make Jordan look like a star but the whole being Angle's son thing is really not doing him any favors. It's not an effective story and I think WWE is starting to get that. Hopefully they build Jordan up and then do something to get rid of the Angle connection because it's not doing much for him.

Post match Roman Reigns comes out for a chat. Back from a break with Roman asking why it took a veteran twenty minutes to beat a rookie. I don't think Reigns knows A, what a rookie is or B, how to tell time. Cena says Roman is starting to ask questions and that's the worst thing he could do. They're distracting him and he's out here with his zipper down. Reigns: "I busted it actually. Big dog."

Cena promises that Reigns will get his answers at No Mercy, either by a guy who has lost his steps or someone who has been stringing Roman along. Roman is going to learn that he's an entitled golden boy while people like Chad Gable, Jason Jordan and even the Miz have had to fight and claw their way to get where they are. Point being, Cena doesn't respect Reigns because Roman is the only one living a lie. Reigns wants to fight right now but Cena doesn't seem interested. That makes Roman think he's all talk, which is why Reigns doesn't respect him.

From Raw again.

Intercontinental Title: The Miz vs. Jeff Hardy

Miz is defending. Jeff gets three near falls in the first minute before a clothesline puts Miz on the floor. A dive is teased but Jeff pulls back as Miz moves, sending us to a break. Back with Jeff getting two off his sitout gordbuster but mostly missing the Whisper in the Wind. Dallas offers a distraction so Axel can break up the Swanton, leaving Matt to

take care of both of them. All three are ejected and it's Jeff grabbing a rollup for two.

Miz's DDT gets the same but he misses the running clothesline in the corner. Miz hits a running knee ala Daniel Bryan for two and we hit the YES Kicks. Jeff is right back with a dropkick but his dive off the apron is broken up. We hit the Figure Four for a bit with Jeff getting out without too much trouble.

The Twisting Stunner has Miz in trouble so he heads outside, only to get caught by Poetry in Motion against the barricade. Back in and the Swanton misses thanks to Maryse telling her husband it was coming. Another Twist of Fate is countered into the Skull Crushing Finale to retain the title at 13:02.

Rating: B. Better match than I was expecting and Miz retaining clean (the Maryse thing wasn't interference) is a good idea. The fact that they're pushing Miz's total days as champion is interesting too as he's only about six months away from setting the all time record for combined days with the title. That's easily something he could reach, along with most title reigns. They would be crazy not to push the heck out of that and it seems to have started.

Elias vs. Kalisto

The fans seem interested in walking with Elias. After a little ditty about how there's nothing cool about Omaha, we're ready to go. Kalisto starts fast with a bunch of kicks to the leg and we take an early break. Back with more kicks, followed by the hurricanrana driver. Not that it matters as Elias nails Drift Away at 5:55. Not enough shown to rate but it felt like they were very rushed.

Video on Big Show and Strowman breaking the ring back in April.

Big Show vs. Braun Strowman

Inside a cage with pinfall/submission/escape to win. Strowman splashes him up against the cage to start but runs into the KO punch as we go to a break. Back with both guys down again until Show slams him into the cage

over and over. Show tries to climb for some reason and gets crotched, only to shove Strowman off again.

That means a top rope elbow for two and a THIS IS AWESOME chant. Show goes for the door but gets pulled back, only to have Strowman get the door slammed on his head. A double shoulder puts both of them down but Show's chokeslam is countered into a DDT for two. The chokeslam is good for two and Show escapes the powerslam. Strowman misses a charge and goes into the cage wall but is still able to catch Big Show escaping. The big old superplex plants Show and it's the running powerslam for the pin at 16:58.

Rating: B. These two continue to surprise me as they haven't actually had a bad match. WWE has a bad tendency to turn these battles of the big men into really boring matches but this was another great power match with both guys looking good. It's also proof that having an obvious winner isn't the worst thing in the world. Strowman was obviously winning (Big Show isn't Kalisto after all) and it didn't make the match any less entertaining.

Post match Strowman says that's nothing compared to what he'll do to Lesnar. Now it's time to put Big Show out to pasture, so Strowman powerslams him through the cage (a section of which breaks and falls to the floor) to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. Pretty standard episode this week, though I really like that cage match. The Reigns vs. Cena stuff is still entertaining and I remain stunned by how well they're treating Elias. He's barely lost aside from Finn Balor and that's quite the record for someone who shouldn't be that big of a deal. Hopefully things go well for him and he can get back on Raw soon enough.

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If You Ever Wondered Why The Expanded Kickoff Show Was A Bad Idea

It can lead to things like this.



That would be Miz making his entrance for the Kickoff Show match with only a few hundred (if that) people in the arena. Miz is the current Intercontinental Champion and he's in an arena with fewer people than a flea market show. This match

was a rematch from Raw and served virtually no purpose other than getting people on the show. It started at roughly 5:20pm, because we just had to get in three Kickoff Show matches.

Now here's the thing. Apparently the arena's gates didn't open until after 5pm. Ok, that's understandable and can't be blamed on WWE. What CAN be blamed on them is having so much material that the first match had to start an hour and a half before the regular show officially began. The second and third Kickoff Show matches were before a reasonable crowd. This however looks awful and is something that is likely going to be a running joke for a good while.

Stop cramming in so much stuff, especially when it's hardly adding anything.

Monday Night Raw – July 24, 2017: Like Father, Like...Kind Of?

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 24, 2017

Location: Verizon Center, Washington D.C.

Commentators: Booker T., Michael Cole, Corey Graves

We've got less than a month to go before Summerslam and that means we need to start filling up the card. General Manager Kurt Angle has promised to settle the #1 contendership issue tonight but we also need to find out more about his new son Jason Jordan. There are three matches

announced in advance for tonight so let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the end of last week's show where Braun Strowman broke up the #1 contenders match between Roman Reigns and Samoa Joe.

Here's Kurt Angle to open things up. Angle talks about the weight being lifted off his shoulders since he's announced Jason Jordan as his son (Quick sidebar: why would having an illegitimate son from nearly thirty years ago cost him his family? Are Angle's wife and family so nuts that they can't accept him dating in college?).

As for the #1 contendership, Brock Lesnar will be defending against....someone we'll find out later as Braun Strowman interrupts to say he better be getting the title shot. Cue Samoa Joe to say he wants another shot at Lesnar because he knows he can finish him. Strowman and Reigns can finish each other but he better get his title shot. Roman comes out to say Joe and Strowman haven't done anything to earn a shot and lists off all of his accomplishments.

Angle changes his mind again and makes the four way for Summerslam. Joe isn't happy but the brawl breaks out anyway with Joe and Reigns hammering away on Strowman. That lasts all of thirty seconds before they start fighting each other. Strowman gets back up and beats on Reigns before dominating Angle's security. Joe gets the choke on Strowman until the locker room comes out for another failed save attempt. Reigns spears Strowman down but he pops right back up and sends Joe and Reigns outside.

Elias Samson vs. Finn Balor

No DQ due to Samson hitting Balor with a guitar last week. Balor breaks up the pre-match song and sends him outside early on. Back from a break with Balor still in control until a shot to the banged up shoulder puts him in trouble. Samson grabs a chair but it's Balor kicking him away and scoring with the basement dropkick. Samson's armbar is broken without much effort and Balor hammers away in the corner.

Finn grabs the chair but Samson takes it away and hits him in the back with it as we take our second break in less than ten minutes. Back again with Balor getting kicked out to the floor and a shoulder breaker giving

Samson two. Samson makes the mistake of loading a chair in the corner, meaning his head bounces off of it a few seconds later. Balor catches him in the ring skirt and hammers away ala fellow Irishman Fit Finlay.

A very fired up Finn stomps him down to the floor again and there's the running kick to the face. Some chair shots have Samson beaten down even more and it's the shotgun dropkick into the Coup de Grace....but here's Bray Wyatt. Sister Abigail plants Balor and Samson gets the pin at 17:56.

Rating: B-. Longer than it needed to be but this did a good job of setting up the likely Summerslam match. Balor gets to keep looking strong and Samson gets the biggest win of his career, completely by the rules as well. I'm not sure what they're planning with Samson but I haven't seen many newcomers protected like him in a good while.

Bray spider walks over to Finn and says Follow the Buzzards.

We look back at Angle's announcement last week.

Angle is excited to watch Jordan's first singles match. Emma of all people comes up to say she wants some TV time. Maybe she can just start dating Jason. Angle gives her Nia Jax tonight.

Enzo Amore's plan to deal with Big Cass tonight: not have a plan.

Enzo Amore vs. Big Cass

Before the match, Enzo says he has a tank full of heart and the people in this arena are the key. This is a race and he can't wait to run into Cass like a finish line. Shouldn't that be run OVER Cass like a finish line? Enzo kicks at the leg to start but a dropkick is swatted away. A sleeper is quickly broken up and Cass kicks him in the ribs. Enzo tries to fight back with some rights and lefts, earning himself some hard rams into the corner. One heck of a running bit boot ends Amore at 3:37.

Rating: D+. That's exactly what the match needed to be but they don't need to do it again. Amore isn't in Cass' league physically and there's no point in having him beaten down like this for a third time. Just put him on 205 Live already or have someone stand up to Cass (as in Big Show) already because we've covered this thoroughly.

Post match Cass stays on him until Big Show makes the save, only to get kicked in the head. Cass drops a bunch of Empire Elbows and leaves Show down in the corner.

Alexa Bliss can't wait to see Sasha Banks and Bayley ("Team Gag Reflex") explode. She knows one of them is going to go too far to win and avoid watching Summerslam on the WWE Network. No matter what happens, she'll be the real winner tonight.

Emma vs. Nia Jax

Emma goes after her like you go after a monster, only to get shoved down and splashed in the corner. A running flip backplash puts Emma away at 1:24. I'd bet money this was punishment for Emma's complaints last week.

Akira Tozawa is ready to fight Ariya Daivari when Titus O'Neil comes up to say the match is canceled due to the bad shoulder. Tozawa is livid and says he's going to the ring anyway, without Titus.

Post break Tozawa is in the ring and wants Daivari out here (Unfair as Daivari was told he wouldn't have a match. He might be off at a Bingo tournament.) but gets Neville instead. Neville takes credit for the bad shoulder and calls Tozawa pathetic. Tozawa hits him in the face with the good arm and kicks Neville down to set up the top rope backplash. Cue Daivari (Bingo must have closed up early) to beat up both guys.

Bayley and Sasha are ready but don't agree on who will win.

We recap the opening segment.

Jason Jordan is ready for his match with Curt Hawkins and wants to make his father proud. It's like a dream come true.

Dean Ambrose and Seth Rollins are about to talk strategy but Ambrose says he doesn't trust Seth, which doesn't sit well.

Bayley vs. Sasha Banks

The winner gets Bliss, who sits in on commentary, at Summerslam. Feeling out process to start with Bayley grabbing a rollup but getting smacked in

the face. Bayley gets in a kick and the charge in the corner, only to get knocked off the top as we take a break. Back with Bayley fighting out of a double arm crank and getting two off a facebuster. The Backstabber into the Bank Statement has Bayley in trouble until she flips over into a rollup for two.

They slap it out with Banks getting the better of it, only to miss the top rope knees. Bayley knees her in the head but gets caught with a Shining Wizard to put both of them down. A fired up Bayley gets more aggressive than she's been in a long time and slugs away, only to have a superplex broken up. Sasha hits a frog splash but Bayley reverses the cover into a rollup for the pin and the title shot at 13:14.

Rating: B-. Good match here as Bayley continues her short road to redemption. Having Bayley win the title on the big stage could be interesting but it's more likely that Banks turns on her to cost Bayley her chance. At least they're building up the card in a hurry though as this is the second match announced in about two hours.

Bliss comes to the ring for the staredown.

Video on a Special Olympian.

Curt Hawkins vs. Jason Jordan

Hawkins punches him in the face before the match and gets suplexes down for his efforts. Some crossface shots and a belly to back get two as Angle is watching on. There's the belly to belly and the shoulder in the corner, followed by a belly to back suplex into a neckbreaker to put Hawkins away at 1:44. Jordan looked fired up (as he always did) but a bit sloppy. Better than I was expecting though.

The Revival comes to the ring for an interview with Dawson telling Charly Caruso to get out because they've got this. They're the best tag team in the world right now because they chased New Day off to Smackdown, took out the Hardys and scared Enzo and Cass so much that they split up too. Cue Anderson and Gallows to say they're the good brothers and this is a good brothers town. They did everything that the Revival did before the Revival, including being bald.

Revival vs. Anderson and Gallows

Anderson gets taken into the Revival corner to start for some double teaming, only to have Anderson and Gallows double team the Revival to the floor like some good brothers would. We take a break and come back with Anderson having to punch Dawson in the face as he tries for a hot tag. Gallows comes in and starts cleaning house with a big boot and a splash for no cover on Scott. The Boot of Doom is loaded up but here are the Hardys to interrupt. Revival is thrown to the floor but the distraction just lets them come back in for a Shatter Machine and the pin on Anderson at 9:45.

Rating: D+. I'm not sure if this was a face turn for Anderson and Gallows but they could certainly use one, much like the division as a whole. The match was a bit of a mess but that's all you can expect when you have a short match with interference taking up a good chunk of the thing. Still though, it's promising.

The Hardys lay out Revival but they escape before a Swanton can hit.

Miz gives the Miztourage a pep talk. He's successful in Hollywood because he's an original instead of all those rebooted franchises. You know, like the Shield.

Next week: Jason Jordan on MizTV and Samoa Joe vs. Roman Reigns vs. Braun Strowman.

Dean Ambrose/Seth Rollins vs. Miz/Miztourage

Ambrose hammers on Axel to start and runs him over for some right hands and elbows to the head. Rollins comes in for a knee drop as we see Sheamus and Cesaro watching. That...could be interesting actually. Miz comes in and eats a Sling Blade, followed by the Miztourage being cleared out as we take a break. Back with Rollins in trouble as Miz cuts off a hot tag attempt.

Miz gets two off a neckbreaker and it's off to Axel for a dropkick (Axel: "HOW GOOD WAS THAT???"). Rollins fights off Dallas but it's still not enough as Miz grabs a DDT for two more. We hit the YES Kicks with Corey

singing Miz's praises because he can. The good old double clothesline puts both Rollins and Miz down, followed by a quick roll over to Ambrose for the hot tag.

House is quickly cleaned, including a rebound lariat on Dallas. The top rope elbow is good for two as everything breaks down. Axel escapes Dirty Deeds and it's the Skull Crushing Finale for two on Ambrose. Stereo suicide dives put the Miztourage down though and it's Dirty Deeds to put Miz away at 17:47.

Rating: B-. They got along well enough but I can't imagine they'll put the Shield back together for real anytime soon. The match wasn't great or anything though it's not like this was supposed to be a classic of any kind. I liked the match and they did a good enough job of keeping the crowd going. I'm not sure where this is going at the end but it's got enough of my attention.

Post match Seth puts out the fist for the Shield pose but Ambrose leaves him hanging to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. I liked this show more than I was expecting to and a lot of that has to do with scheduling stuff in advance. Instead of having to spend so many segments setting up matches, we could get straight to the promos before the matches and then the matches themselves. It's how wrestling has worked for the better part of ever and I have no idea why WWE felt the need to mess with it. At least Summerslam's build is looking strong and that's a very good sign.

Results

Elias Samson b. Finn Balor – Sister Abigail from Bray Wyatt

Big Cass b. Enzo Amore – Big boot

Nia Jax b. Emma – Running flip backsplash

Bayley b. Sasha Banks – Rollup

Jason Jordan b. Curt Hawkins – Belly to back neckbreaker

Revival b. Anderson and Gallows – Shatter Machine to Anderson

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Main Event – July 20, 2017: Finding Their Footing

Main Event

Date: July 20, 2017

Location: Bridgestone Arena, Nashville, Tennessee

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Corey Graves

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

Opening sequence.

R-Truth vs. Curt Hawkins

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

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

From Raw.

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

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

From Monday again.

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

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

Heath Slater/Rhyno vs. Anderson and Gallows

Rhyno and Anderson get things going with Karl being run over with a shoulder. Gallows comes in and eats a middle rope shoulder before it's off to Slater....who gets his head kicked off. Back from a break with Slater still in trouble (as always) via some stomping, followed by a chinlock. A leg lariat allows the hot tag to Rhyno as house is cleaned. Slater gets pulled off the apron though and Rhyno takes a kick to the back of the head. The Magic Killer puts Rhyno away at 9:49.

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

From Raw one more time.

Samoa Joe vs. Roman Reigns

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

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

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

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

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

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

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