

New Column: You Might Remember This One – Summerslam Edition

I did this for Wrestlemania and it's worth doing for this show.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-you-might-remember-this-one-summerslam-edition/>

Smackdown – July 26, 2016: The Big Problem

Smackdown

Date: July 26, 2016

Location: First Niagara Center, Buffalo, New York

Commentators: David Otunga, Mauro Ranallo, John Bradshaw Layfield

We're into the new era of Smackdown now and it should be interesting to see where they go now that they're all on their own. Given who they have on the roster, there's a chance we'll have to get some new titles or at the very least some new stars to challenge for the titles that already exist. Let's get to it.

Daniel Bryan and Shane McMahon are in the back and say this new era is all about us as they walk into the arena.

Just like Raw, there's a new intro accompanied by new music.

The roster is around the ring with the bosses inside. Shane talks about how we have the only WWE Champion here so it's time to find a new #1

contender. Dean Ambrose comes out to say he's ready for a new challenge and has Smackdown Live fever. Tonight there's going to be a Six Pack Challenge for the right to face Ambrose at Summerslam. Included in that match will be:

John Cena

Bray Wyatt

Dolph Ziggler

AJ Styles

Baron Corbin

That leaves one spot open so let's have a battle royal right now for that final position.

Battle Royal

Kane, Tyler Breeze, Fandango, Apollo Crews, Konnor, Viktor, Simon Gotch, Aiden English, Kalisto, Zack Ryder, Jey Uso, Jimmy Uso, Erick Rowan, Alberto Del Rio, Mojo Rawley

The camera has a slightly different camera angle, starting from over the cover and down a bit lower instead of the stationary shot. Kane throws out Gotch and clotheslines Ascension out to start clearing out the ring early on. Breezango gets together to eliminate Jey Uso and we take a break.

Back with Rowan and English having been eliminated, leaving us Breeze, Fandango, Kane, Del Rio, Crews, Kalisto and Ryder. I didn't bother listing Rawley as he was eliminated a few seconds after we came back. A double clothesline gets rid of Del Rio and Kane throws out Breezango to get us down to four. Everyone starts taking shots at Kane but Crews seems to injure his knee on a standing shooting star.

All four are down for a bit until thankfully Crews gets up fine. A clothesline sends Ryder to the apron and Kalisto hits Salida Del Sol on Crews. Ryder goes up for the Elbro but slips off, only to have Kane do

the dramatic sit up. Kane dumps Kalisto with ease and Ryder follows him out, leaving Kane and Crews. Apollo backflips out of a chokeslam and low bridges Kane out for the win at 12:45.

Rating: C. The ending really does this match a lot of good and teasing Kane winning made it even better. Above all else though they kept this moving very quickly and didn't overstay the welcome as so many battle royals do. Crews isn't likely going to win the Six Pack Challenge but it's a nice win to get him noticed.

Crews says he won't celebrate until he wins the main event.

Shelton Benjamin is coming back.

Dolph Ziggler is ready to break through the glass ceiling. You can't be a multiple time World Champion and still complain about the glass ceiling.

Natalya vs. Becky Lynch

Battleground rematch because those are still a thing in the new era. Becky takes her to the mat for a bit but gets run over by a shoulder. Natalya flips to her feet and slams Becky off the top as we take an early break. Back with Becky jawbreaking her way out of a chinlock and getting two off a guillotine legdrop. The Disarm-Her is broken up and Nattie By Nature gets two. The slow motion Sharpshooter that is only designed to be countered is countered into the Disarm-Her to make Natalya tap at 10:21.

Rating: C-. I don't know any other way to put this but Natalya is really dull. She wrestles the exact same match as a heel that she wrestled as a face and there's really no motivation for her other than something that happened a few weeks ago and now she's a villain basically in name only. It doesn't help that these two don't have the best chemistry, especially when they're the best in the Smackdown division.

Post match Becky says you can call her Becky Balboa (No.) but is interrupted by Alexa Bliss who says this is what the new era looks like. This is followed by the returning Naomi, Carmella (almost no reaction) and Eva Marie, who comes out with a voiceover like a movie trailer, listing off every possible positive attribute about herself. It's really

corny but I actually liked it, even though Eva didn't say anything.

Baron Corbin says he'll win.

It's time for MizTV with special guest....The Miz. He brags about how awesome he is (well duh) until Randy Orton interrupts. Orton thought Miz was talking about him with all those accolades and agrees that Miz is awesome. Miz brings up the upcoming Brock match and Orton is ready to take Lesnar to Suplex City because he'll be taking Brock to Viperville. Orton suggests a match against Miz tonight and he'll even make it non-title so Maryse accepts for her husband.

Randy Orton vs. The Miz

Non-title. They're quickly on the floor with Miz stomping Orton down, throwing him back inside, and then whipping him into the steps. Back in and the RKO knocks Miz silly for no cover. Instead Orton stares at the entrance and slowly gets up before slapping the ropes a bit. Miz has been down for about two minutes before getting up to take a second RKO for the pin at 4:53.

Rating: F. Oh screw you WWE. Smackdown has almost nothing and you have Miz lose to one move with almost half the match spent on him standing up after the RKO. You know who would have been perfect for this spot? Kane. He's established, he's tough, he loses NOTHING by taking the loss and it makes Orton look like he can beat a monster. This was stupid and one of the things that ticks me off more than any other nonsense WWE pulls.

Video on American Alpha. They're here next week. Well I mean they were here earlier but we don't have time for the hottest tag team act in a long time. I mean, aside from New Day of course.

A jobber is in the ring for a match when Heath Slater comes in and knocks him out. Slater isn't happy that he wasn't drafted to either show and wants to be in the main event. He starts a SIGN HEATH SLATER chant and the fans actually go along with it. Cue Shane McMahon to say Slater needs to send in his resume. Slater says his resume would say he was the brains behind the Nexus, the Corre (there's a name I never thought I'd hear again) and the Social Outcasts. As Slater rants, Rhyno of all people

sneaks up behind him for a Gore.

AJ thinks Smackdown is against him because he's too good. Why else wouldn't the Club have been drafted together and why else would he have to fight five guys at once?

Bray Wyatt says it all revolves around him and tonight he'll have the whole world in his hands.

John Cena vs. AJ Styles vs. Apollo Crews vs. Bray Wyatt vs. Baron Corbin vs. Dolph Ziggler

One fall to a finish, no tags and the winner gets a shot at Ambrose at Summerslam. We take an early break and come back with Bray and AJ double teaming Crews with the other three down on the floor. That lasts about as long as you would expect it to as Bray takes AJ's head off with a clothesline, only to be dropkicked down by Ziggler. AJ adds a springboard 450 with Cena diving back in for the save. Crews comes back in with rolling German suplexes on AJ, only to walk into an STO of all things from Corbin. Baron throws on a chinlock, which really shouldn't be seen in a six way match.

We go to another break and come back with stereo Towers of Doom (because that's how wrestling works) and Corbin getting two off Deep Six to Crews. Apollo's toss powerbomb gets two with Bray pulling the referee out. The Zig Zag should finish Bray but there's no referee. Cena finally remembers he's in this match and AA's Ziggler and AJ with the latter getting two.

Crews and Wyatt take AA's as well but Corbin takes a bit more to get up and elbows his way out. And scratch that as the second attempt works, only to have AJ springboard in with the forearm. Styles turns right into a superkick though and Ziggler gets the very surprising pin at 16:12.

Rating: C+. ZIGGLER??? Of all the people you have here you pick ZIGGLER??? I mean I know this lets you have Styles vs. Cena and....well that's about it actually. Yeah Smackdown needs new stars but the best they can do is having Dolph Ziggler's main event push brought out of mothballs? I don't hate it but I'm going to need to see a lot more of this before I accept Ziggler as a top challenger.

Shane, Bryan and Ambrose come out and say nothing to fill in the last four minutes of the show.

Overall Rating: C. This show's main issue is it followed last night's great Raw. It's certainly not a bad show and they did some good things (Crews getting a push, setting up the title match, the women showing up) but on the other hand you have Orton's completely needless destruction of Miz, Heath Slater and Rhyno instead of American Alpha (which at least gives you something to look forward to next week so it's not all bad. This show set left a lot to be desired but it's certainly not terrible. The problem is Smackdown didn't look great in the first place and now those suspicions are even more confirmed.

Results

Apollo Crews won a battle royal last eliminating Kane

Becky Lynch b. Natalya – Disarm-Her

Randy Orton b. The Miz – RKO

Dolph Ziggler b. AJ Styles, Apollo Crews, John Cena, Bray Wyatt and Baron Corbin – Superkick to Styles

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Smackdown – January 29, 2004: Viva La Smackdown

Smackdown

Date: January 29, 2004

Location: MCI Center, Washington D.C.

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

This is another request that I got so long ago that I can't remember why someone wanted to see it. I'd assume it's due to the big battle royal for the #1 contendership to the Smackdown World Title with the winner getting to face Brock Lesnar at No Way Out 2004. This was a fun time for Smackdown so let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Smackdown GM Paul Heyman is in the ring to start but he's quickly interrupted by Vince. The big boss wants to know why the Royal Rumble winner (Chris Benoit) isn't on Smackdown anymore after jumping to Raw. Vince blames Heyman for getting rid of Benoit so Heyman goes on a rant about how the old Vince would just march on past it like he did when Hall, Nash, Hogan or even BRET HART left the company.

That's why Heyman has an idea: tonight we'll have another Royal Rumble RIGHT HERE TONIGHT. We'll have a fifteen man version with the injured Matt Morgan being replaced by Hardcore Holly and Chris Benoit's spot being taken by Eddie Guerrero. The winner gets the shot at Lesnar at No Way Out...because they can't just have the shot at Wrestlemania for some reason. Vince says it's on.

Smackdown Tag Team Titles: Basham Brothers vs. Paul London/Billy Kidman

The Bashams (Doug and Danny, a pair of very similar looking brawlers) are defending and have the useless Shaniqua in their corner. Doug (I think, though it's like trying to remember which Uso is which) starts with Kidman, who takes him down with a headscissors. Danny low bridges London to the floor though as Cole is already forgetting which Basham is which.

A spinning belly to back gets two for London and it's time to work on the spine. We hit the double arm crank for a bit until London dropkicks his way to a hot tag. Kidman's enziguri gets two on Doug with Kidman getting off the cover to dropkick Danny. Shaniqua offers a distraction and we get some twin magic, setting up a super DDT to retain the titles.

Rating: D. The Bashams were yet another lame team in a big list of them around this time. There was no reason to have two Tag Team Titles and I think everyone knew it but there was no way WWE would ever admit that. London and Kendrick would get the titles in July with three other title changes in between.

Kurt Angle is incensed that he has to pull his own number and jets off when he sees it.

Chavo Guerrero is all bruised but promises his dad that he'll get revenge on Uncle Eddie.

Speaking of Eddie, he comes in to pick his number and seems very pleased. Cruiserweight Champion Rey Mysterio comes in with his friend boxer Jorge Paez and nothing happens.

John Cena hits on Dawn Marie (attending the ball hopper) and draws his number. Rhyno comes in and suggests he'll end Cena's career by going after his bad knee.

Cruiserweight Title: Rey Mysterio vs. Jamie Noble

Noble is challenging, gets no entrance and has his blind girlfriend Nidia in his corner. This is a rematch from the Rumble where Nidia accidentally tripped Noble and cost him the match. Jamie takes him down with a hammerlock but an ankle scissors gets him out of trouble. Something like a torture rack has Rey in trouble so he armdrags Noble down and into 619 position. It's way too early for that of course but Nidia accidentally trips Jamie again to little disaster.

Noble stays on the back and puts on a seated abdominal stretch. Back up and Noble sends him into the corner and bends Rey's back around the post. A superplex puts both guys down as Noble can't follow up. My what

convenient timing. Mysterio comes right back with a middle rope bulldog and the 619 but he tweaks his knee on the West Coast Pop. Jamie sends him outside right in front of Nidia, who gets in the way of Jamie's attempted dive. For reasons that aren't clear, Jamie throws her inside but apparently she can see just fine, allowing Rey to hit a springboard seated senton to retain.

Rating: B-. Really good TV match and an improvement over the pay per view match but there's this misconception that people cared about Nidia enough to make this story interesting. Noble got what he had coming here and it's a simple story but Nidia doing a face turn isn't going to get anyone anywhere.

The new correspondent tells us that Playboy is looking for two women for the next spread. Ignore the fact that Torrie Wilson and Sable had already been announced for the issue. This sets up a quick history of the WWE/Playboy relationship, which has basically been buried in the archives ever since.

Dawn has to pick Big Show's number and "chicks dig it big" jokes are made.

Brock Lesnar isn't worried about Goldberg saying he's next because Goldberg is clearly a Lesnar wannabe instead of the other way around. Tonight he's issuing an open challenge to anyone on the Smackdown roster for a non-title match. This might be the longest I've ever heard Brock talk and I've certainly heard worse.

Charlie Haas and Shelton Benjamin are about to pick their numbers when someone comes in to tell Heyman that Eddie has been attacked. Everyone runs to Eddie while the Chavos deny having anything to do with this. Rey comes in and goes after Jr. but gets pulled back.

Eddie is put in an ambulance.

Brock Lesnar vs. Orlando Jordan

Oh yeah Jordan is a person that exists. I always forget. He's still a rookie at this point so this shouldn't take long. Brock actually gets

knocked outside to start as the fans remind Lesnar that he tapped out recently. Jordan can't even get one off a sunset flip so Brock easily drives him into the corner for some shoulders to the ribs. We hit a modified rear naked choke for a bit before Jordan comes back with a dropkick and jumping elbow. A clothesline cuts that off though and the Brock Lock ends Jordan with ease.

Rating: D-. I'm so glad they let Jordan get in some offense on the champ like this before he was destroyed. It really enhanced his career and made me care about him. Jordan continues to rank very high on the list of worthless wrestlers as he just stayed around for years despite showing absolutely no reason to keep a spot on the roster.

Some wrestlers went to Walter Reed Hospital to see some wounded soldiers.

We see clips of Kane being tormented by the spirit of the Undertaker.

Vince says forget about Undertaker because he's buried. Uh, right. There is something to be said about Vince refusing to accept the idea that someone who comes back almost annually is coming back again.

Angle accuses Heyman of having Eddie injured. Apparently Eddie is already conscious again but Angle says that's not enough. Heyman says if Eddie is here when his number is up, he can be in the Rumble.

Royal Rumble

There are fifteen entries and we have 90 second intervals. Kurt Angle, who has dedicated this to the US Armed Forces, is in at #1 and Rhyno is in at #2. They slug it out to start and Rhyno hits a quick Gore in the first minute. Angle gets in a quick Angle Slam though and Charlie Haas is in at #3. Charlie mocks Angle for reasons of general stupidity, allowing Rhyno to jump him from behind. For some reason Angle doesn't help Rhyno get rid of Haas and goes after horned one.

Shelton Benjamin is in at #4 and the partners double team Rhyno but Angle makes another save with a German suplex. Nothing of note happens until it's Bradshaw in at #5 and it's time for the Clotheslines. We take a break and come back with Tajiri coming in at #7 but stopping to go after

the Cat (who came in at #6 and was eliminated during the break) and his manager Lamont.

Billy Gunn is in at #8 and nothing happens so it's Big Show in at #9 to start clearing out some room. Everyone gets ready for him but he shoves all seven of them off like they're villagers. Tajiri is easily put out and Bradshaw follows him via a low bridge. John Cena is in at #10 despite sporting a bad knee. Cena puts Show on the apron and we come back from a break with A-Train and Nunzio having entered at #11/#12 but Nunzio is already out.

Eddie Guerrero is in at #13 and apparently Rhyno was eliminated during the break. Guerrero actually backdrops A-Train out and it's Rikishi in at #14. Gunn is superkicked to the apron and Show gets the Stinkface. Shelton and Billy get the same thing and it's Hardcore Holly in at #15 to complete the field with Angle, Haas, Benjamin, Gunn, Show, Cena, Eddie, Rikishi and Holly.

Show chokes Cena to the apron and then the floor for an elimination that would stop the match dead in its tracks today. A big group of people almost have Show out and Cena pulls him down to the floor as we're down to seven. Since nothing else is going on, let's look at every elimination in the match so far! You know, because this couldn't be shown on a split screen for some reason.

Eddie gets rid of Haas and Shelton is sent out a few seconds later. A frog splash hits Rikishi before Angle gets rid of Holly (basically ending his "main event run" in the process). Eddie gets Gunn out and we're down to Guerrero, Angle and Gunn. Rikishi starts cleaning house until he misses a Banzai Drop. That's enough for Angle and Eddie to put him out and now we're down to the real showdown where either story would be awesome. Angle easily takes him to the mat and starts with the rolling Germans. Eddie stays on the apron and grabs an ankle lock on Kurt, only to be reversed into one from Angle (because of course).

Another elimination attempt doesn't work and it's the Three Amigos to put Kurt in trouble. The frog splash is broken up with some crotching and both guys are down near the corner. Kurt grabs a sleeper/chinlock but

Eddie sends him out to the apron for another slugout. They fight over a suplex with Eddie shaking his legs to save himself and suplexes Kurt to the floor for the title shot in a big surprise.

Rating: A-. This started slowly as battle royals tend to do but then it took off and turned into a great match when you knew it was going to be Angle vs. Guerrero at the end. This was the start of Eddie's rocket push and you could tell the fans were on board with the idea as Guerrero had earned this after a lot of years trying to get off the ground. It also needs to be emphasized that making this a Royal Rumble instead of a battle royal made it work so much better.

Overall Rating: B. This was one heck of a show with a good Cruiserweight Title match and the last third of the show being dedicated to one of the better battle royals you'll ever see. They're still in the era of having having big time shows because the Brand Split was still working at this point, meaning you would get stuff like this instead of EVERYTHING being about the pay per view. I had a good time with this show and it flew by, mainly on the strength of good wrestling, though having Eddie's injuries mean a bit more would have helped.

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Battleground 2016 Preview

This show has gone from one of the most B level shows ever to one of the least important shows in a very long time. It's still definitely just a filler show before we get to Summerslam but then the Draft has made the whole thing even more of a mess. You could tell things were all over the place when basically two matches were hyped up during the TV shows leading up to the pay per view. Let's get to it.

We'll open with the quick pre-show match between the Usos and Breezango. The Usos are the definition of "just there" and it's getting harder and harder to care about them. Breezango may not be the most exciting team in the world but it's still cool to see them getting even the most moderate push. There's no reason to have the Usos, who haven't done a thing in a long time, win here so we'll go with Breezango getting their biggest win ever.

Let's get this one out of the way: Rusev squashes Zack Ryder and no sells his comeback because that's what happens to Ryder. The mini push means nothing and they made that very clear as soon as they had Sheamus beat him clean in two minutes. Ryder loses to Rusev like he always does as we continue to wait for a serious challenger to the title.

We'll continue the midcard title theme with Miz beating Darren Young. I love the Backlund segments but I just can't imagine them actually giving him the title. He won the battle royal almost by mistake and hasn't won anything of note on his own. Why would I buy him as a midcard champion already? Miz holding the title longer is fine as the big win over him is going to mean even more when he's been built up that long.

In another match that's just kind of there, we'll go with Becky Lynch over Natalya. I barely remember why they're fighting at this point and I can't imagine WWE really cares either way. This might as well be for the Smackdown Women's Title as the division is basically these two and everyone else, which really does show why there's no need to either bring up all the new women or to put the women on both shows. Becky wins here because it's not like Natalya needs much to restore her to her eternal

spot on the card.

While we're here we'll knock out the other women's match as Sasha Banks and a mystery partner team up to face Charlotte and Dana Brooke. This is basically Sasha needing help after all the weeks of Charlotte and Dana beating her up so it's time for her to get some backup. There are some new women on the Raw roster but there's almost no way it's not going to be Bayley. If there's ever been a bigger layup for a mystery partner on a pay per view five days after the latest WWE Draft to debut in a women's tag, I can't think of it off the top of my head.

That being said, Bayley isn't going to be a factor here because this whole thing exists for Sasha to make Charlotte tap in the middle of the ring and set up their big showdown at Summerslam. It's still a great way to debut Bayley as she'll get her own big moment instead of being yet another name being brought up on Draft night. She'll be one of the first challengers to Sasha's new title and the debut should be fun.

In the first of two matches that don't mean much now that everything has changed, New Day faces the Wyatt Family in a six man tag with no titles on the line. The Wyatts have been split up by the Draft while New Day gets to keep going on their longest (modern) reign ever as Tag Team Champions. The whole Xavier Woods is terrified thing has gone nowhere so and I'd be interested in seeing where they were going to go had it not been for the split. Hopefully this wraps it up and we see New Day vs. the Club for the titles at Summerslam. But yeah, New Day wins here with ease.

The other match is basically the same story as John Cena teams up with Enzo Amore/Big Cass to face the soon to be split Club. In theory this is designed to set up AJ vs. Cena for Summerslam in their big rematch so we'll say the Club pins Enzo here. Above all else I love the idea that they're not going to just have the rematch here and then burn through the feud even faster. There are other ways to keep the feud going and I'll never understand why they have to just keep doing the same match over and over again. At least this is working for not though.

Sami Zayn and Kevin Owens are having their FINAL match against each other despite them being on the same roster for reasons that I still don't

understand. My hope is that they eventually team up and fight New Day (or the Club) for the titles as teammates who are forced to work together and happen to have great chemistry despite not being able to stand each other. I'll take Sami winning here in a fluke but it's probably my least confident pick of the show.

That leaves us with the main event and egads where do I even start. So it's the big Shield triple threat that people have wanted to see for years and not only are they throwing it on this show instead of Summerslam but it's less than a week after the Draft so everything is thrown apart and it's not clear how things go after this. Oh and Reigns has been suspended for freaking Adderall of all things so he hasn't been around to help build things up. It's almost like this is a mess and should have been postponed for a bigger show.

I'll take Rollins to win the title after the rather pointless double title matches from earlier in the week. Ambrose has been taking the ratings and Reigns would just be destroyed (like more than usual) if he wins the title back already so there's just Rollins left. Now the key for him would be to stay FAR away from HHH and Stephanie as they destroyed his first title reign, but given who runs Raw I can't imagine she won't have her fingers all over the new reign. I'll go with Rollins to get the title back though and Ambrose to drop right back to where he was before.

Overall Battleground is.....well it certainly exists. This is one of those shows that doesn't need to be there and is pretty clearly just a way to promote Summerslam in a few weeks. I'm not really looking forward to the show but that might be more due to the fact that we're in for four hours tonight, three tomorrow and two each on Tuesday and Wednesday. Tonight is going to be all about matches exceeding expectations though and while that's possible, I don't have the greatest hope in the world.

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New Column: Draft Fallout

Everyone is doing one of these and it's not like there's anything bigger going on right now.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-draft-fallout/>

Smackdown – July 19, 2016: Draft Notice

Smackdown

Date: July 19, 2016

Location: DCU Center, Worcester, Massachusetts

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, Jerry Lawler

Now this is a big one. Tonight we're not only going live but also splitting the shows into two rosters again for the first time in a few years. There's only been one other draft like this in company history and it wasn't the greatest show in the world. The interesting things here tonight are the potential returns of former stars as well as the guaranteed NXT callups. Oh and a rematch from last night's World Title match as a bonus. Let's get to it.

We open with the Commissioners and the GM's on the stage and a quick

explanation of the rules:

1. Raw gets three picks to every Smackdown two.
2. Tag Teams are selected as a unit unless a GM wants either.
3. Raw has the first pick.
4. Six NXT picks will be made.

Stephanie cuts Foley off and picks Seth Rollins number one. So much for the title meaning a lot.

Daniel Bryan picks Dean Ambrose to put the Shield boys on different shows.

I won't bother saying the specifics so I'll just say which show.

Raw: Charlotte

Smackdown: AJ Styles

Raw: Finn Balor

Before we get to another pick, it's time for a match.

John Cena vs. Luke Gallows

The rest of the Club, Enzo and Cass are at ringside. We go to a quick commercial but this time they're showing the match during the commercial on a split screen. Gallows powers him down and is apparently too heavy to take the AA. Cena gets in a dropkick and we come back from the break. A spinning side slam gets two for Luke but he walks into the ProtoBomb and the Shuffle. Gallows breaks up the AA with a superkick (GET THAT MAN A T-SHIRT!) but the other four get in the ring and the match...is allowed to continue with Anderson and Styles being sent to the floor. An AA gives Cena the pin at 5:27.

Rating: C-. This didn't have time to go anywhere and I'm hoping the airing the match during the break doesn't become a regular thing. If there's one concept WWE never got, it's the idea of giving the fans a

breather. You can't present every single moment as must see and expect the fans to stick with you through the insane amount of content WWE pumps out.

Time for more picks.

Raw: Roman Reigns

Smackdown: John Cena

Raw: Brock Lesnar

Smackdown: Randy Orton

Raw: New Day

Darren Young/Zack Ryder vs. Rusev/The Miz

Challengers vs. champions. Backlund atomic drops Miz to start and Ryder adds a slingshot elbow for two. Miz pulls Zack off the ropes for a crash before it's off to Rusev for some shots to the back. Miz gives up the hot tag to Young for his still generic offense. A quick Gut Check gets two but Rusev suplexes Darren, only to throw Ryder into a Rough Ryder on his partner. Zack dropkicks Rusev off the apron and the crossface chickenwing makes Miz tap at 4:05.

Rating: C-. No time here and I have a feeling that's going to be the case for almost all matches tonight. That's how things should go though as the wrestling isn't the point here. Young making Miz tap sets up the title match just fine, though I don't see much of a reason to get hyped for Ryder vs. Rusev. Maybe it was the losing to Sheamus in two minutes flat.

Xavier Woods vs. Bray Wyatt

Everyone is at ringside. Bray stands in the corner with his back to Bray before bending backwards. He even kneels in the middle of the ring to offer a free shot but Woods is afraid. Woods seems to be hypnotized so Bray beats him down and chokes a bit. The release Rock Bottom plants Woods again but he makes a quick comeback, only to walk into Sister Abigail for the pin at 4:47.

Rating: D+. This was all about the story instead of the match and that's the right idea. Bray squashing Woods is the right idea too and it's cool to see someone freaking out at the sight and thought of Bray. That almost has to play into the finish on Sunday but it also makes the titles more interesting. If Woods is teasing a split, they'll have to drop the belts soon and that's not happening Sunday.

Kevin Owens vs. Kane

And never mind as Sami Zayn runs out to attack Owens. Kevin sends Sami in for a chokeslam from Kane but he chokeslams both of them for fun. No match.

Back to the picks!

Raw: Sami Zayn

Smackdown: Bray Wyatt (not the Wyatt Family)

Raw: Sasha Banks

Smackdown: Becky Lynch

Raw: Chris Jericho

Sasha Banks vs. Charlotte/Dana Brooke

Dana starts for the team but Sasha knocks Charlotte outside and hits the double knees off the apron. Back in and Dana misses a charge to set up the Bank Statement, only to have Charlotte break it up and hit Natural Selection for the pin at 2:21.

More picks:

Raw: Rusev w/Lana

Smackdown: The Miz w/Maryse

Raw: Kevin Owens

Smackdown: Baron Corbin

Raw: Enzo Amore/Big Cass

Chris Jericho vs. Cesaro

Cesaro uppercuts him to the floor and hits a running version up against the barricade. Back in and we hit the pinfall reversal sequence until Jericho slams him off the top. The Lionsault is countered into a Russian legsweep off the middle rope and it's time for a Swing. The spinning springboard uppercut is countered into the Codebreaker for the pin on Cesaro at 4:53.

Rating: C+. In case you didn't get enough of these two during the build to Money in the Bank. I'm really not wild on the idea of Jericho winning here as they don't seem interested in actually doing anything with him despite giving him a bunch of wins. Cesaro continues to be that guy who keeps losing and WWE keeps expecting him to be over, which to be fair he kind of is.

Back from a break with Becky Lynch attacking Natalya before a match. Ok then.

Draft time.

Raw: The Club

Smackdown: American Alpha

Raw: Big Show

Smackdown: Dolph Ziggler

Raw: Nia Jax

Rollins says he'll win tonight.

Time for the final five televised picks before 30 more will be made on the WWE Network.

Raw: Neville

Smackdown: Natalya

Raw: Cesaro

Smackdown: Alberto Del Rio

Raw: Sheamus

WWE World Title: Dean Ambrose vs. Seth Rollins

Ambrose is defending and Rollins jumps him during the big match intros. We take a break before the bell rings with Dean being posted. Back with Ambrose saying ring the bell, allowing Rollins to hammer away in a hurry. A backbreaker sets up the chinlock before Rollins sends him outside for a chop off. Dean gets whipped into the barricade but he backdrops Rollins into the timekeeper's area. Back in and Seth hits a low superkick for two as we take a break.

We come back again with what sounds like a CM Punk chant accompanying Rollins hitting a running forearm in the corner. Dean fights back with elbows to the face and a swinging neckbreaker for two. A quick Buckle Bomb sets up a missed frog splash but Rollins grabs a quick superplex. He loads up the Falcon's Arrow but Dean reverses into Dirty Deeds at 12:21.

Rating: C+. The match was fine but it's pure filler with Battleground and the triple threat looming. Rollins getting pinned clean is interesting as now Dean looks a lot more like an equal instead of someone who keeps getting beaten in the big matches over and over. It's a good main event, though it feels kind of worthless after last night. Like, what did any of that accomplish?

Shane and Bryan come out to celebrate and a PPV rundown ends the show.

Overall Rating: B-. These are the hardest shows to review as there's nothing to compare it to. They kept it moving fast enough and the wrestling was just there for the most part but they kept the draft picking moving and that's a very good thing. This felt like something professionally run and that's never really been the case in previous drafts. Good show here but this would have been better off after Battleground.

Results

John Cena b. Luke Gallows – Attitude Adjustment

Darren Young/Zack Ryder b. Rusev/The Miz – Crossface chickenwing to Miz

Bray Wyatt b. Xavier Woods – Sister Abigail

Charlotte/Dana Brooke b. Sasha Banks – Natural Selection

Chris Jericho b. Cesaro – Codebreaker

Dean Ambrose b. Seth Rollins – Dirty Deeds

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Monday Night Raw – July 18, 2016: The Lame Duck Go Home Game Changing Show (Updated)

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 18, 2016

Location: Dunkin' Donuts Center, Providence, Rhode Island

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, John Bradshaw Layfield

This is a unique show as it's kind of a big night but also kind of a lame

duck show while also being the go home show for a pay per view. The Draft is tomorrow night but there's also a World Title match as champion Dean Ambrose defends against Seth Rollins. The show is also going to open with the announcement of the new General Managers for both shows. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here are Shane and Stephanie to open things up. They have their standard bickering that makes award show presenters seem like Bogart and Bergman before arguing over testicles vs. lady balls. Stephanie's big announcement: there's going to be a new Cruiserweight division on Raw. Shane mentions his General Manager and the YES chants begin. That's cut off just as quickly though as Stephanie Raw's General Manager: Mick Foley. I wouldn't have bet on that one but I'd be shocked if he's still around by TLC.

After Stephanie awkwardly dances to his music. Foley compares the feeling here to the Attitude Era because IT'S THE GREATEST THING EVER and feels like the MONDAY NIGHT WARS ALL OVER AGAIN BABY! Stephanie calling him made the little embers turned into a fire. He's ready to bring Raw to new heights and all that jazz.

Shane brings out his own General Manager with the worst kept secret in wrestling this year: Daniel Bryan. Daniel won't shake Stephanie's hand before he talks about how much he missed the people. Naturally Stephanie cuts him off to suggest he pander to the fans. See she doesn't get it because they've never cheered for her. Stephanie: "They did once!"

Bryan talks about how he heard Shane's ideas for a show where wrestlers are put first and he wanted to come back. When he beat HHH at Wrestlemania XXX (Stephanie: "Technicality.") and won the WWE World Title, he and the fans did that together. Stephanie gets in her B+ jokes and Shane says Stephanie can only stay relevant by marrying a WWE superstar. One last YES chant takes us out.

Chris Jericho/Kevin Owens vs. Sami Zayn/Cesaro

Cesaro gutwrenches Jericho to start before it's off to Sami so things can

speed up a bit. An Owens distraction lets Jericho get in a shot though and we take a break. Back with Jericho still in control over Sami and sending him out to the floor. Sami gets in a few shots of his own though and the hot tag brings in Cesaro.

That means it's time for the uppercut train and the springboard spinning uppercut for two on Jericho. Owens and Sami come in off the double tags but Jericho breaks up the Helluva Kick. Cesaro's high cross body gets two on Chris and the Swing makes it even worse. Everything breaks down and Sami tornado DDTs Owens before small packaging Jericho for the pin at 12:02.

Rating: C. In case you didn't get enough of these guys during the Money in the Bank build. I love Sami getting a pin here though it should be interesting to see what happens with all four of these guys tomorrow night. Jericho and Cesaro not having matches on Sunday doesn't say much for either of them but that's their norm all around.

Golden Truth, Titus O'Neil and Jack Swagger try to get on Daniel Bryan's good side until Stephanie interrupts. They insult each other (with jabs about Daniel and Brie planting peaches) for a bit until Daniel says she ruined Raw.

Alberto Del Rio vs. Darren Young

Miz is on commentary. Del Rio sends him into the corner to start and works on the arm as Miz gets in his second plug for Bob Backlund's book. Young comes back with a backdrop and atomic drop as we flash back to the 70s. A Miz distraction earns himself a forearm to the face, allowing Darren to roll up Del Rio (with a Backlund style bridge) for the pin at 2:33.

It's time for a twelve man tag but Cena comes out first and says it's an interesting time in WWE with Battleground being the icing on the cake. The Club is going to try to beat up Cena on Sunday but he has the Certified G's. Enzo says the term "don't take this the wrong way" has a 0% success rate so don't take this the wrong way but the Club is like a bunch of herbs.

Without ugliness in the world there can be no beauty so thanks for your sacrifice Gallows. AJ has a haircut like a soccer mom and Anderson is as generic as Times New Roman. Cena thinks Enzo is just a catchphrase machine but Cass says that's what he does. That's what makes them the best trio in the world like Nirvana, Destiny's Child or the Wu Tang Clan.

Enzo: "How you doin?" Cena: "I don't know how I'm doing!" He thinks they need to get serious but the Club cuts off the S-A-W-F-T line. AJ accuses them of meeting a few weeks ago over a bowl of candy at catering and thinks they can beat up everyone on the team tonight. Cue New Day to talk about going to the Wyatts' compound but AJ makes fun of Woods for being scared.

That goes nowhere so New Day explains How You Doin to Cena. Naturally this turns into a Pokemon Go reference with Woods listing off the ones he's captured but Cena cuts him off, only to be cut off with a NEW DAY ROCKS chant. This brings out the Wyatts as it turns out we actually have a match to get to.

John Cena/Enzo Amore/Big Cass/New Day vs. The Club/Wyatt Family

This is joined in progress after a break with Gallows coming in to shoulder Cena down. That brings in Big E. for a power showdown, only to have a little gyrating first. Now we get Strowman coming in to run Big E. over but Enzo tags himself in. Woods plays some trombone and Enzo bounces off Strowman so it's time for Cass to try his luck. A shove to Cena triggers a huge brawl until it's back to Strowman and Cass with the big boot staggering Braun. Kofi tries to dive in but gets slammed down by Braun as we take a break.

While we're on commercial, it deserves to be pointed out how good of a job they've done with Cass. Him staring down Strowman felt more like a big deal than anytime Lesnar did it and I actually bought Cass as a threat to hurt him. That's very impressive and a great sign for him to come.

Back with Bray charging into Kofi's pendulum kick and a diving tag to bring in Cena. The finishing sequence is initiated but Bray brings the spider walk out of mothballs to shut him down. Rowan grabs a chinlock and

the heels start taking turns on Cena. Gallows misses a splash and we take another break.

We come back again with Bray missing his backsplash to Cena, allowing the hot tag to Cass. Everything breaks down again and New Day cleans house on the Wyatts. Woods hits a big flip dive to take them all out but Gallows breaks up Bada Book Shakalacka. New Day and the Wyatts fight up the ramp, leaving Enzo to clothesline Cena by mistake. The Styles Clash ends Amore at 18:58.

Rating: B+. This is even more impressive when you consider how many people had to be incorporated here. The ending really pushes the idea that Cena/Enzo/Cass don't know each other well enough to fight off a well oiled machine like the Club which is a really logical point to make. New Day vs. Wyatts could be a lot of fun and this was a nice preview. Really good stuff here with the pre-match promo being just as great.

Earlier today, Seth Rollins was in the empty arena (well save for the cameramen) to talk about how they came through so many stands to fight. He was the brilliant mind and kept Ambrose around to take the beatings and Reigns around to dish them out. After Sunday, Reigns will never be the same again. Ambrose on the other hand is a coward who is running out of places to hide. This Sunday, Rollins will prove he was always the man.

We recap the opening segment.

Shane comes up to Foley in the back and suggests that Stephanie just hired him because he'll connect with the fans while being manipulated. Foley appreciates the caring but thinks Stephanie has fire and drive. This would be another beloved face trying to put Stephanie over.

Baron Corbin vs. Sin Cara

This is Cara's first match after the Lucha Dragons officially split. Corbin sends him into the corner to start but gets kicked away. A springboard elbow to the jaw staggers him but End of Days gives Baron the pin at 1:15.

Kalisto comes out for the post match save but gets beaten down as well.

Charlotte/Dana Brooke vs. Becky Lynch/Sasha Banks

Dana gets taken into the corner to start and it's time for Becky's early armbar. The spinning legdrop gets two on Dana but here's Natalya to attack Lynch for the DQ at 2:22.

Sasha gets beaten down post match.

Rusev/Sheamus vs. Dolph Ziggler/Zack Ryder

Sheamus headlocks Ryder down to start and cuts off his comeback by hitting him in the face a few times. Rusev sends him into the barricade and it's back to Sheamus for the slow beating. Sheamus won't tag for some reason though and we hit the chinlock. Ryder dropkicks him down and makes the hot tag off to Ziggler as everything breaks down. Rusev kicks Ziggler in the back and it's the Accolade for the submission at 3:45.

Rating: D+. Just a quick way to show off the idea that Rusev is awesome because we didn't know that yet. Ryder needed a win here after that mess last week against Sheamus. Ryder is going to get destroyed on Sunday and I'm not sure where things go after that. Sheamus on the other hand continues to float, just like Ziggler. And no WWE, that's not a hint about a bonus match for Sunday.

Video on Randy Orton.

Video on Cena hosting the ESPYs.

Daniel suggests a peace treaty with Mick Foley because they're so much alike. Foley has no issue with Bryan but the battle is on.

Raw World Title: Dean Ambrose vs. Seth Rollins

Rollins is challenging and all the bosses are at ringside. Dean headlocks him to start and Seth bails out to the floor. The champ sends him into the barricade and we take a break. Back with Seth in control and putting on a chinlock. A hard right hand gives Seth some near falls before both try cross bodies at the same time. Dean fights up first and hammers on Seth a bit, including a forearm to put him on the floor.

There's a big suicide dive but Rollins powerbombs him into the barricade. Back in and a frog splash gets two as we take another break. Back with Seth still in control and hitting his springboard knee to the head. Another frog splash misses though and Dean has an opening. It sounds like the fans are cheering for Rollins here.

Dirty Deeds gets two with Rollins putting his foot on the ropes. Seth rolls outside but comes right back in and counters the top rope clothesline into the Pedigree for two. With nothing else working, Seth loads up a superplex but Dean ties up the legs and it's a double pin at 24:18.

Rating: B+. More really good stuff from these two but the ending comes off as a cheap way to have Sunday's title match be for the vacant title. You knew they weren't sticking with Ambrose on top for long because he's not the "star" kind of guy and that's the excuse they're sticking with. I mean, Rollins may be a ratings disaster but he's a STAR ratings disaster. Really good match here though and a big feeling title match.

Stephanie (of course) declares Rollins the new champion and Shane doesn't say anything to close the show. You know you'll see more of this on Sunday.

Overall Rating: A-. Like I said at the beginning, this was a very odd show without anything actually mattering until the ending but even that was odd. I'm sure there's going to be an update tomorrow night but this comes off as a way to either set up a new World Title or to just give the belt back to Reigns like nothing ever happened. There are two great wrestling matches on here though and they were more than enough to make this show awesome, questionable ending aside.

So apparently after the show went off the air, a bonus clip aired on the Network where Ambrose was declared champion because it was a screwy finish. You know, because THREE HOURS AND EIGHT MINUTES isn't enough content.

Results

Sami Zayn/Cesaro b. Kevin Owens/Chris Jericho – Small package to Jericho

Darren Young b. Alberto Del Rio – Rollup

Wyatt Family/The Club b. Enzo Amore/Big Cass/John Cena/New Day – Styles Clash to Amore

Baron Corbin b. Sin Cara – End of Days

Sasha Banks/Becky Lynch b. Charlotte/Dana Brooke via DQ when Natalya interfered

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New Column: The Pen Is Mightier Than The Beast

They do know they can make it up right?

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-the-pen-is-mightier-than-the-beast/>

Monday Night Raw – July 11, 2016: This Close To Interesting

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 11, 2016

Location: Joe Louis Arena, Detroit, Michigan

Commentators: John Bradshaw Layfield, Michael Cole, Byron Saxton

Things are back to normal this week, or at least as back to normal as they're going to be with just one more Raw after this before the Draft takes place. The only major event announced for tonight is Zack Ryder challenging Rusev for the United States Title after beating Sheamus twice last week. Let's get to it.

First of all, on a personal note, Happy Anniversary Becca. Thanks for an amazing year and I love you.

Opening sequence.

Battle Royal

Goldust, Darren Young, Apollo Crews, Viktor, Konnor, Bubba Ray Dudley, D-Von Dudley, Dolph Ziggler, Bo Dallas, Simon Gotch, Aiden English, R-Truth, Baron Corbin, Jimmy Uso, Jey Uso, Jack Swagger, Alberto Del Rio, Curtis Axel

Winner gets an Intercontinental Title shot at Battleground so Miz and Maryse are on commentary. English is put out early and he lands near Bob Backlund, who is managing Young. R-Truth puts out Viktor and Bubba (Not D-Von, Cole.) gets rid of Axel. There goes Truth and Konnor follows him out. One Uso tries to eliminate the other but they settle with a double superkick to get rid of D-Von as we go to a break.

Back with Gotch and Jey having been eliminated during the break. Del Rio gets rid of Goldust and Crews eliminates Dallas as the ring is emptying out. Jimmy and Swagger are thrown out so we're down to Crews, Bubba,

Young, Del Rio, Corbin and Ziggler. Crews low bridges Bubba out and Del Rio is the only one left standing. Ziggler drops him with a Fameasser and goes for a cover out of instinct. That's not enough to eliminate him though as Alberto comes back with a tilt-a-whirl gutbuster.

Alberto misses a charge and goes through the ropes, allowing Ziggler to superkick him to the floor which isn't an elimination. Corbin sends Dolph to the apron but can't get him out. Del Rio comes back in and gets backdropped out by Crews to put us down to four. Corbin gets rid of Ziggler but Crews gets rid of himself and Corbin, leaving Young to win the thing at 13:20.

Rating: D. You know what, why not? That's certainly a unique way to win the match and it's a nice way to have Young go somewhere after all those vignettes. I would have gone with Crews here but this could have been a lot worse. I mean, at least it's not another battle of Cleveland with Ziggler vs. Miz. It was a pretty standard battle royal though, which is only going to be so entertaining.

Backlund picks Young up to celebrate.

Shane and Stephanie McMahon are talking about why Vince McMahon is going to be here tonight. Maybe it's to give one of them a promotion. Seth Rollins comes in and thinks Vince is here to see about him as the face of the WWE. Rollins has footage for tonight and Shane thinks it should be on the Ambrose Asylum. Stephanie says no because she hates Dean (Have we ever gotten a reason other than he's apparently an embarrassment to the company?) so Seth will get to debut the Rollins Report. Great. EVEN MORE talking.

Quick look at Brock Lesnar winning his return to the UFC on Saturday before he faces Randy Orton at Summerslam. Orton will be on the Highlight Reel at Battleground.

Zack Ryder comes up to challenge Rusev again but Sheamus jumps him from behind. Apparently there's no title match tonight because Ryder will be facing Sheamus next. Three WOO's for false advertising!

Sheamus vs. Zack Ryder

Ryder goes right after him to start and knocks Sheamus to the floor for a dropkick off the apron. Back in and a running boot to the face gets two for Zack as the announcers ignore the match to play fantasy draft. Not that it matters as the Brogue Kick ends Ryder at 2:22. I knew this was coming because this is how WWE works but thanks for YET ANOTHER waste of potential for the sake of a nothing match on Smackdown.

Rusev comes out and beats up Ryder as well while shouting that he accepts Ryder's challenge. Wait, so Ryder is getting the title shot after Sheamus just beat him clean? SERIOUSLY? This is the kind of stuff you suggest in sarcasm because it's the dumbest thing you could possibly do, not what you actually do on Raw.

Breezango vs. Lucha Dragons

This is due to the Dragons messing up Breeze's vest on the pre-show. Fandango and Cara start things off and it's time for more Draft talk. Cara headscissors him down but gets caught in the wrong corner to put him in trouble. Fandango is sent into the corner as well and the hot tag brings in Kalisto, who almost immediately botches a springboard. A few kicks to Breeze go better and the hurricanrana driver makes it worse. The numbers get the better of him though and Breeze gets in a superkick for the pin on Kalisto at 4:20.

Rating: D+. I can't help it but I like Breezango. They're just a goofy little midcard heel team but it's not like there's anything better for either of them to do. If nothing else it means we're getting something out of that Golden Truth story, which went on forever and deserves to actually go somewhere. Also it's not like the Dragons mean anything at this point anyway so them losing doesn't exactly matter.

Here's Seth Rollins for the Rollins Report. Tonight he has something special for us: footage from a special sitdown interview with Roman Reigns. Please tell me this isn't going to be one of those things where he asks questions and Reigns' answers are to completely different questions and edited to sound embarrassing.

We see the footage and it's....one of those things where he asks questions and Reigns' answers are to completely different questions and edited to

sound embarrassing. Basically Reigns "admits" he did it and says he should be out of the triple threat because he's no role model. Oh and he hates Dean being champion.

Back in the arena, Rollins says Ambrose should be out of the triple threat because he deserves his rematch for the title, one on one. Cue Ambrose but Rollins yells at him for being a coward and stealing the title from him at Money in the Bank. Dean says he loves to come out here and have a good time but he's the top man in this industry. He's more than just a joke and a utility player because he's the only one still standing and the king of this company. Dean goes on about Rollins wanting another shot and offers a title shot anywhere any place. Rollins is ready right now but nah, not tonight. He'll see Dean next week.

We get a quick preview of New Day fighting the Wyatt Family at their compound. This DEFINITELY looks like the Final Deletion.

Ambrose vs. Rollins for the title is confirmed for next week.

Kevin Owens vs. ???

Sami Zayn is on commentary but Kevin won't come out until he's gone. Stephanie comes in to say get rid of Sami because she's all about solutions. Sami starts to leave but gets in a fight with Owens on the ramp. No match.

Vince arrives and says he's here to name the Commissioner of Smackdown.

Kevin Owens vs. Cesaro

Time for more Draft talk! I know it's a big deal but could you please talk about the actual match for more than two seconds first? Cesaro gutwrenches him over for two to start before they trade headlocks. A hurricanrana puts Owens down but he makes the ropes to break up the Swing. Owens takes over with a whip into the barricade as the announcers talk about where John Cena will be drafted. Cesaro's suplex doesn't break their focus but Owens knocks him into the barricade as we take a break.

Back with Cesaro fighting out of a chinlock and avoiding the Cannonball in the corner. The Pop Up Powerbomb is blocked and the springboard

spinning uppercut gets two for Cesaro. Another running uppercut on the floor (with Cesaro wearing JBL's hat) but Cesaro gets crotched on top to slow him down. Owens busts out a torture rack neckbreaker for the clean pin at 12:24.

Rating: C+. I like the finisher but I could go without Cesaro losing all over again. I mean to be fair he had that awesome run against Miz and came up short, which is his standard operating procedure. It's still working, but at some point you're just wasting a lot of potential and acting like Cesaro isn't being hurt by all the losses.

Post match Owens grabs a headset to brag about how awesome he is until Sami Zayn jumps him from behind. Cesaro swings Owens in a meaningless gesture. Maybe he should, I don't know, be upset about the loss?

The Club thinks John Cena is abandoning Enzo and Big Cass by hosting the ESPYs and not being here tonight. Maybe after the win they could hop on a plane and crash the awards so they can beat up John Cena.

Heath Slater vs. Titus O'Neil

We actually get a Slater Gator reference for a name I never thought (or hoped to) I'd hear again. Titus throws him around to start but runs into a raised boot in the corner. That means it's time for a quick Bo-Train, followed by Slater getting two off a DDT. Titus starts powering back and catches a diving Heath in three straight backbreakers. The Clash of the Titus puts Heath away at 3:12.

Rating: D. Well that happened and I'm not sure what else there is to say about it. This is another short match that doesn't seem to mean much but maybe that's going to be the norm going forward. Titus winning is fine but I'm not sure where he's going after losing to Rusev so decisively.

Sasha has been waiting to shut Dana Brooke up all weekend now and wants the title after that. Tonight, she gets real.

We look back at the Wyatt Family challenging the New Day to come to their compound last week.

Now we go to the compound, where a bunch of cars turn their lights on and

try to crush New Day as they get out of their truck. The editing makes this look like it's being played in fast motion so it's almost impossible to keep track of. The Wyatts arrive in a car and the brawl is on with New Day being beaten down with a variety of weapons. Woods hides behind a tree until Bray swings an ax at him and rams him into the tree trunk.

Kofi is shoved into some mud until Big E. suplexes Rowan. Strowman (who looks even more frightening with his shirt off) and Big E. hit each other a few times until Bray comes back and drops the unconscious Woods by the car. Kofi and Big E. are beaten down again as the editing gets even faster. Woods gets back up with a trashcan lid for a save but Bray beats everyone down and asks where the power of positivity is now.

New Day is sent into a car which is quickly beaten down but they escaped somewhere in there. Bray is left alone but smiles at New Day, who are freaked out by his laughter. Rowan and Strowman come back but a bunch of people in sheep masks appear, all holding lanterns. That's enough for New Day as they bail, leaving Bray to say follow the buzzards.

Yes it's clearly a takeoff from the Final Deletion and I'm sure I'll hear about how much better TNA's version was, though this was the serious version and exactly the kind of thing that made the Wyatts creepy in the first place. This really is something that has to be seen though as words really don't do it justice. It worked though.

Enzo Amore/Big Cass vs. The Club

Enzo and Cass say they want Cena's spot but they're willing to earn it. The Club on the other hand think they can take it by beating Cena up 3-1. AJ tells them to walk away but Enzo says the only place they're walking is into that ring right now. This is joined in progress after a break with Enzo trying to hold Anderson with a headlock. It's quickly off to Gallows who headbutts Enzo back into the corner as the beatdown begins.

Karl comes back in for a headlock but Cass comes in and slams Enzo onto Anderson for two. To be fair Enzo might as well just be a projectile as I don't think he's entirely human. Gallows kicks Enzo in the face and sends him shoulder first into the post as we take a break. Back with Anderson and Gallows taking turns on Enzo. Anderson finally lets Enzo get away for

the hot tag to Cass (Enzo's signature) and a fall away slam sets up the Bada Boom Shakalacka. AJ low bridges Gallows to the floor though and it's a DQ at 10:48.

Rating: C. This was just a long beating on Enzo and to be fair that's almost all he's good for in a situation like this one. I like how much they're protecting Cass though as I don't think he's been pinned yet and the Club actually lost here. The match was fine, albeit pretty basic for the most part. It's acceptable though as you don't want to burn the fans out on this match like they did with the Club vs. the Usos.

Post match the beating is almost on but here's Cena, who was in Los Angeles earlier today, for the save. Well at least he's not live via satellite. That earns him a big CENA chant which you really don't hear that often.

Dana Brooke vs. Sasha Banks

Sasha shoves her outside to start and things instantly slow down. Back in and Dana talks a lot of trash before kneeing Sasha in the ribs. Banks is sent outside so Charlotte can brag us to a break. Back with Sasha in a chinlock (Charlotte: "Very good Dana.") before stomping away in the corner. The announcers continue to talk about ANYTHING other than this match as Dana grabs another chinlock to keep things slow. Sasha fights out again and hits the double knees in the corner. Dana crotches her on top but Sasha pops right back up and grabs the Bank Statement for the win at 12:00.

Rating: C-. This was fine and another win for Sasha as that Natalya feud looks more and more pointless every single week. Dana is getting better in the ring as she's not botching everything she tries but she still is on the main roster far sooner than she probably should have been.

Post match Charlotte says that's not good enough so Sasha has to beat Dana again on Smackdown.

Here are Shane, Stephanie and Vince for the Smackdown Commissioner announcement. Vince thinks they've been doing a fair job but wonders how they could be his kids. Where's the violence and anger? How could they

not have stabbed each other in the back yet? What's up with Stephanie being all passive aggressive and Shane having no ruthless aggression?

The kids are given a chance to convince their dad that they should be in charge of Smackdown and Stephanie goes first. Stephanie goes on a rant about what Shane said on the Mick Foley podcast about how he left when he wasn't congratulated enough. That's nothing compared to what he says behind Vince's back because he's all crazy and needing to be praised.

Shane says he came back in this arena five months ago and he's eternally thankful. He's ready to change everything about Smackdown and shatter the glass ceilings that Vince and Stephanie have set up. We get a quick fan poll with Shane easily winning which Stephanie attributes to crowd manipulation.

Vince doesn't care what the people think but one of them has to run Smackdown. That will be.....Shane, while Stephanie runs Raw. Ah that's better. For a second there I thought they might actually do something interesting. Vince wants them to compete for who gets the keys to the kingdom but they'll both be naming General Managers. Great. MORE power struggles and double bosses for each show.

Vince leaves and Stephanie tells Shane she's going to make him wish he was never born. Shane thinks Stephanie is hiding something and it's fear. It's game on, but Stephanie says she's married to the only game in this business. She slaps him in the face so he kisses her on the cheek, only to have Stephanie slip off the steps as she leaves to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. I actually liked this show more than I was expecting to as it absolutely flew by. Even though it was just a big preview for the Draft next week (as it should have been), they kept it entertaining enough and set some stuff up going forward, which is all it was supposed to do. Unfortunately the ending really hurt things as it's going to be all about the McMahons even longer, which is really the last thing they needed to go with but that's how WWE works. Anyway, not a good show or anything but it was good enough for a show in a vacuum like everything else is around here at the moment.

Results

Darren Young won a battle royal after Baron Corbin and Apollo Crews eliminated each other

Sheamus b. Zack Ryder – Brogue Kick

Breezango b. Lucha Dragons – Superkick to Kalisto

Kevin Owens b. Cesaro – Torture rack neckbreaker

Enzo Amore/Big Cass b. The Club via DQ when AJ Styles interfered

Sasha Banks b. Dana Brooke – Bank Statement

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Monday Night Raw – June 27, 2016: Holes In Limbo

Monday Night Raw

Date: June 27, 2016

Location: Amalie Arena, Tampa, Florida

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

We're getting closer to Battleground but things have changed a bit because of Roman Reigns' suspension. It should be interesting to see if that's actually referenced during the show as they could just as easily say Rollins attacked him off air or that he was injured during last week's match. Let's get to it.

Here's Seth Rollins to open things up. He talks about the upcoming triple threat but stops to talk about the Roman Reigns scandal. What he did to get himself suspended soiled the Shield's name and then he even put out a statement about it. We see the Tweet from Reigns saying he violated the Wellness Policy and apologizing for it, which Rollins doesn't buy. What about an apology to the fans?

As for the last part where Reigns says he owns it, all that matters is Rollins owns him. Reigns doesn't deserve a second chance or forgiveness or to be in the main event of Battleground. Based on the suspension, we might as well just make it a singles match because that's what Rollins deserves.

Cue Ambrose to say everyone makes mistakes, like being Seth's friend or Rollins wearing skinny jeans. As far as Dean is concerned the triple threat is still on. This brings out AJ Style to say it should still be a triple threat with himself taking Reigns' place. Dean doesn't make the decisions around here but thinks it's still a triple threat.

They all bicker with each other when John Cena comes out as well. He's held that title fifteen times and had his first match in WWE fourteen years ago today. Cena won the last time he beat Ambrose so let's make it a fatal fiveway. Now it's Stephanie McMahon to say she doesn't like Ambrose standing in the ring as champion. She does however like the idea of Cena and Styles in the Battleground title match. Therefore tonight it's Cena vs. Rollins and Ambrose vs. Styles. If Cena and AJ win, they can be added to the title match at Battleground.

Paige/Sasha Banks vs. Charlotte/Dana Brooks

This is Sasha's first match on Raw or Smackdown since April because WWE has no idea how to book more than one story in this division at a time. Sasha sends Dana into the corner to start but Brooke reverses and does

the pat on Sasha's head. That just earns her an ejection out to the floor and we take a break.

Back with Charlotte putting Paige in a chinlock, apparently due to kicking her in the face during the break. A running flip neckbreaker allows Charlotte to taunt Sasha a bit and draw the hot hotheaded Banks in. Paige dives for the tag but settles for a superkick to the champ's face, allowing her to bring in Sasha. Everything breaks down and double knees in the corner sets up the Bank Statement to make Dana tap at 8:46.

Rating: C-. The ending made sense and it's a good sign that Paige's win over Charlotte wasn't just a one off plot device. Sasha going through Charlotte's lackey to get to the big title showdown makes sense though I could see them waiting until Summerslam to go there. Unfortunately this makes the whole Natalya series seem like a waste of time as there was no real reason to wait on Sasha getting this run. Oh and please don't have them put Ric Flair in Sasha's corner for some stupid reason.

Titus O'Neil vs. Rusev

Non-title and we actually get a match here despite Titus attacking before the bell again. Titus misses a charge in the corner and gets stomped down, setting up a chinlock that goes nowhere. A dropkick puts Titus down and a few knees to the ribs keeps him in trouble, only to have the threat of a big boot sends Rusev outside. We get a double clothesline before Titus throws Rusev over the timekeeper's area for the countout win at 4:09.

Rating: D. Why in the world are we getting another of these matches? Titus vs. Rusev was one of the lamest title matches I've seen in a long time and now we're getting another despite Rusev already beating him? WWE really needs to comprehend the idea of a one off match. Not everything needs to be part of a big story, despite what WWE seems to think.

Stephanie runs into Kane, who is still trying to get a chance at running Smackdown. Miz and Maryse come in to complain about the lack of a red carpet and the limo driver not opening the door for them. Kane mentions his own acting career before bringing up Miz not defending the title in a long time. That's accurate actually so Stephanie makes a title match

against a mystery opponent. It's like a cliffhanger you see.

As usual, every single word Stephanie says feels like it comes off a teleprompter. I don't know if it's that she sucks as an actress or what, but she's sounded like that for over fifteen years now and it almost never changes. She can rant and rave very well but anytime she tries to sound natural or spontaneous, she sounds like an eight year old in a school play.

Seth Rollins vs. John Cena

If Cena wins he's in the title match at Battleground. They start fast with Seth actually getting the better of it off some right hands. A dropkick and Blockbuster get two each on Cena but he initiates his finishing sequence to come back. Of course it's WAY too early for that so the Shuffle is broken up with a kick to the face.

Back from a break with Cena hitting the shoulders into the Protobomb again but catching the kick that would break up the Shuffle. A third Protobomb sets up the Shuffle but the AA is countered into the low superkick for two. Cena comes right back with a tornado DDT for two of his own, only to have Seth kick him in the face.

The great looking frog splash misses though and Cena heads up top but Seth runs the ropes for a superplex and rolls into a Falcon's Arrow for two. A quick AA gets two more with Seth getting his foot on the ropes. Another AA doesn't work so Cena grabs the STF but cue the Club for a distraction, setting up the Pedigree for the pin at 16:00.

Rating: B. It's nice to have these two feel fresh after all those matches they had back in the fall. Cena losing this close to clean is kind of surprising but Rollins needs wins like these to really look like a top player again after the injury. I mean I know he won the title but does that really mean much anymore? Good match here though, despite the somewhat obvious ending.

Enzo Amore/Big Cass vs. Carlos Kershing/Mitch Walding

Enzo says they're riding a wave and the wave is these people. Therefore

he wants the fans to do the wave as soon as the bell rings. The Bada Boom Shakalacka ends we'll say Kershing at 25 seconds.

Post match Cass loads up the spelling but the Social Outcasts interrupt. Dallas says the Outcasts are H-A-R-D so Cass asks which is the hardest. A big boot drops Slater and the other two aren't so willing to get in the ring.

Bob Backlund/Darren Young segment with Backlund saying it's time for the Darren Young Era. This sounds like the last one.

Some Special Olympians got to train at the WWE Performance Center. Nothing wrong with that.

The Special Olympians are here and get a presentation to the crowd.

Becky Lynch vs. Summer Rae

Natalya is on commentary and there's no match as Becky goes right after her, earning a pretty loud BECKY chant as a result.

It's time for the Highlight Reel with guests Sami Zayn and Kevin Owens. After Jericho blames both of them for that maniac Dean Ambrose being WWE World Champion, he brings them out and brings up their careers being put on hold because of this feud. Sami wants to end everything at Battleground because they might wind up on different shows without anything being settled.

Owens won't say anything so Sami accuses him of being a coward. Sami wants to hear Owens admit that he's jealous of Sami for getting to WWE first in NXT. Owens says he's told Sami the truth many times: what he did was to advance his own career. Everything they did was to get to WWE and Sami should have done is congratulate Owens for using him as a stepping stone. The fact that he doesn't shows that Owens is a better friend than Sami ever was, but the match is on for Battleground.

Jericho loves the idea but says Owens is just trying to follow Jericho's path. Chris doesn't think much of Sami either and would love to shut up his stupid idiot face right now, but he'll leave Owens to do that at Battleground. We get the Gift of Jericho pose but both Sami and Owens

kick him in the face at the same time. The fans seem really intrigued at the idea of these two working together.

We recap the opening segment.

Intercontinental Title: The Miz vs. ???

Miz is defending against...Kane. I had it being Cesaro but why do that when you can do someone not quite that interesting who hasn't had a match since Wrestlemania? Kane throws him around to start but can't get a chokeslam. Instead it's a big boot to the champ's face, followed by a side slam for two. Maryse gets on the apron to break up another chokeslam attempt, only to get knocked to the floor for some screeching. Miz is nice enough to check on her and her injured ankle, drawing our second countout for the midcard champions of the night at 3:27.

Rating: D. I'm glad Kane didn't win here but tell me we're not going to see a rematch between these two at Battleground. I really don't need to see Kane getting a second title shot but since they did this match here we absolutely need to see them do it again because HOW ELSE CAN WE POSSIBLY DO A STORY???

Post break Maryse shows Miz that she was faking. Miz is impressed.

Apollo Crews/Cesaro vs. Alberto Del Rio/Sheamus

See, Del Rio and Cesaro had a match on Smackdown (not shown of course) so they're in a heated rivalry now. Sheamus wants nothing to do with Crews to start so Apollo grabs a quick suplex on Del Rio and brings in Cesaro. Some kicks stagger Cesaro and a DDT gets two for Alberto.

Sheamus comes in for the Irish Curse before slapping on a chinlock to keep things slow (not a bad thing here). Cesaro throws him down and the double tag brings in Crews to clothesline Del Rio a few times before Alberto intentionally enziguris Sheamus and walks out. A dropkick sends the steps into Sheamus, setting up the toss powerbomb to give Crews the pin at 5:00.

Rating: D+. Well ok then. I'm not sure where they're going with this but it's a good sign that Crews is just in the midcard without too many

questions. I really don't need to see them waiting around while he has a nothing feud to introduce him to the roster. The short thing against the Social Outcasts was bad enough but he seems to actually have a place now. Not exactly a character or that much of a story but he's got something.

Dean Ambrose is disappointed that he didn't get a parade for winning the title but he'll settle for a match with Styles tonight. Stephanie comes in and talks about how she wants to get the title off Dean as fast as she can because he's a disgrace to the company. Oh and no one would want his autograph because he's not worth it.

Ok, this is just stupid now. Stephanie just keeps going from one side of the spectrum to the other and you can pretty much guess which one she'll be on a given week. It's either the fun loving one who dances with kids and wants to make WWE great or the one who is basically Vince with better legs. At some point you need an actual motivation for your character and "I want WWE to be respected" isn't enough.

We get that because she tells you every single week but just saying it and giving no reason for why someone isn't worthy of your praise isn't enough. Pick a side or at least tell us why you're doing something. Just having Stephanie go all over the place because she's Stephanie and the rules don't apply to her. This has been going on for years but she's a self made woman and empowering or whatever their line is.

The Wyatts are here....and it's New Day in costumes, with Kofi as Rowan, Woods as Harper and Big E. as Bray, complete with cowboy hat, gray beard with a string to hold it on, overalls and a lantern made up of light up unicorn horns. We even get a New Day themed Wyatt style montage. Kofi throws the mask off and wants to know how Rowan can breathe in that thing. They get in the ring and Big E. plays up to being born in Tampa. Big E.: "Tampa General Hospital anyone?"

They make fun of the outfits until the real Wyatts interrupt. Bray says it's a new day and tells the fans to vilify him. How can the power of positivity help someone who just lost his job and can't put food on his table? Kofi calls the power of positivity a way of life and Big E. agrees but Bray focuses on Woods. Xavier looks a bit shook and Bray says Woods

can confide in him. They're just playing one of Woods' games but there are no winners or loses. There's just malice and destruction and New Day will fall. Remember when Bray was going to be a face and he was looking awesome? Is there a reason that was canceled?

Post break New Day thinks it's a great idea to keep messing with the Wyatts. Kofi: "It was the best idea we've had since we went and saw Finding Dory the other day." Woods looks shaken and walks off.

Dean Ambrose vs. AJ Styles

Non-title and Rollins is on commentary. Feeling out process to start with Ambrose getting taken down in a headlock. Back up and Dirty Deeds doesn't work so we take an early break. We come back with AJ hitting a good looking dropkick and slapping on a chinlock. A hot shot breaks up AJ's momentum and a fisherman's suplex of all things gets two for the champ.

AJ gets the same off a faceplant but takes too much time getting to the top, allowing Dean to grab a butterfly superplex. Styles is back up though and grabs a torture rack into a spinning powerbomb, only to miss the Phenomenal Forearm. Dean wrenches his knee though and that means the Calf Crusher. You don't have the champ tap though so he grabs the rope instead.

Dean sends him outside and OF COURSE he can still do the suicide dive on the bad leg. Back in and AJ rolls through the top rope elbow, followed by the Pele. Dean is JUST FINE and hits the rebound lariat to put both guys down. This brings out the Club so AJ can get two off a brainbuster. Cena comes down to fight Gallows and Anderson but the distraction sets up Dirty Deeds to put AJ away at 15:45.

Rating: C-. Completely ignoring the leg injury aside, is there a reason why Seth didn't come in and attack Dean to keep it a triple threat like he wanted? He's supposed to be all smart and he was fine with letting Dean be in the Calf Crusher while he just sat there. I know it's not how you do a match like this, but it goes against Seth's intelligence to have Dean in that much danger and not do anything about it. This match had too many holes it in for me to work, despite it being entertaining at times.

Post match the Club beats up Cena as Rollins hits two Pedigrees on Ambrose. Is there ANY reason he's still using that move? He's not associated with HHH anymore and it really doesn't fit his style but that's what he was using before and nothing is allowed to change for a main eventer so I guess that's what we're getting for good. Cena gets a Magic Killer on the stage and Dean takes another Pedigree to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. This wasn't quite the same as last week as the wrestling was just there for the most part. The bigger problem though is how weak Battleground is looking aside from the main event. It looks like a lot of rematches and then some nothing matches like Kane vs. Miz and Titus vs. Rusev. On top of that there's also the impending Draft, which really makes so much of this stuff seem like filler. The show certainly wasn't horrible but it was really just there, and that's rarely a good sign. Oh and next week is the Fourth of July, meaning the biggest throw away show of the year. Have fun with that one.

Results

Sasha Banks/Paige b. Charlotte/Dana Brooke – Bank Statement to Brooke

Titus O'Neil b. Rusev via countout

Seth Rollins b. John Cena – Pedigree

Enzo Amore/Big Cass b. Carlos Kershing/Mitch Walding – Bada Boom
Shakalacka to Kershing

Kane b. The Miz via countout

Apollo Crews/Cesaro b. Sheamus/Alberto Del Rio – Toss powerbomb to
Sheamus

Dean Ambrose b. AJ Styles – Dirty Deeds

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