

Payback 2016 Preview

For once I'm actually looking forward to a regular pay per view as Payback has had an awesome set of buildup over the last few weeks. Things really have been picking up in recent weeks and while the ratings haven't been great, it's been an awesome series of wrestling matches and storytelling. Let's get to it.

We'll start with a title match as Kalisto defends the US Title against Ryback on the pre-show for the second straight pay per view. I have no idea why anyone would think Kalisto keeps the title here as his title reign has died worse and worse every single week. Ryback actually needs something to do these days and it would be nice to see him get another title run. I was digging his Intercontinental Title reign last year before it was handed over to Kevin Owens so the US Title would be just fine.

In another title match we have Charlotte defending the Women's Title against Natalya in a match that is really more about Ric Flair being opposed by Natalya's uncle Bret Hart. I get the idea of the match but I'm still not a fan of the match being more about the older guys. I'm sure the wrestling will be very good and of a high quality but I'm expecting Flair to help cheat again because that's how this story is going to roll.

Of course right now we're waiting on Sasha to get her big shot so this is more an exercise in waiting than anything else. On top of that, it would have been better if we hadn't just seen this at Roadblock but you can't expect WWE to come up with another idea that fast. I mean, it's not like they have a full division of possible challengers here or anything like that.

We'll keep up the title match theme here with what should be the biggest layup of the entire show: Cesaro taking the Intercontinental Title from the Miz. If Miz has proven one thing over the years, it's that he can take loss after loss before coming back to win the Intercontinental Title for a nothing reign with the title being dropped off to an upcoming star.

In this case, that would be Cesaro. There's no reason to suggest that

Cesaro doesn't get the title here as he's rocketed up the card and finally has the kind of character that can go somewhere. The only thing missing now is an actual accomplishment and the Intercontinental would certainly fit the description.

Speaking of results that should be obvious, Baron Corbin should be going over Dolph Ziggler. Much like Miz, Ziggler is a made man who can lose every single big match he has and not lose a drop of popularity so putting Corbin over is exactly the right move. Corbin is someone who could get some traction on the main roster and a win over Ziggler would be a good second start to his WWE career.

In the last of the lower card matches, we've got Enzo Amore vs. the Vaudevillains in the tag team tournament final for the right to face New Day for the titles later on. While this should be a layup on paper, I'm not so sure on who wins here. On one hand you could give the Vaudevillains the title shot to put New Day over a fresh team while they wait to have the Bullet Club get the belts in the summer.

On the other hand you could go with Enzo and Cass....but do you give them the titles this fast? You really don't want to risk Enzo and Cass losing what they have to the better act in New Day but you also don't want the new guys losing to a team that just isn't as good as they are in Gotch and English. We'll go with Enzo and Cass but I really wouldn't be surprised to be wrong here.

Now we'll get to some of the more interesting stuff and we'll start with Dean Ambrose vs. Chris Jericho. After the win at Wrestlemania, it would seem that Jericho is getting ready for one last main event run, perhaps with one more World Title shot. If that's the case, a win over Ambrose would certainly do him a lot of favors. At the same time, Dean REALLY needs a big win after his near squash loss to Brock at Wrestlemania. Either way I can't imagine this is the last match we're going to see between the two and I think Dean goes over early on, but the idea of a draw is up there as well.

This brings us to probably the second biggest match on the card as Sami Zayn and Kevin Owens actually get to face each other on the WWE roster

for the first time ever (likely of many times in the future). For me, this one is an absolute layup: Sami should win and he should win going away. Owens is a bigger deal at this point and Sami needs a big main roster rub. I'm sure Owens will wind up winning the feud because Zayn doesn't win long term feuds (as he shouldn't) but he wins the first match to get things going hot. Owens will be fine long term and doesn't need the win as much here so we'll go with Sami starting fast.

That leaves us with the biggest match on the card and I'm not sure where to start here. Roman Reigns is defending the WWE World Title against AJ Styles but there's also the shadows of Luke Gallows and Karl Anderson who may or may not be in league with Styles. In this case, I don't think we're going to have the big Bullet Club moment yet but there's almost no way AJ loses. Instead, what I think is Reigns gets Anderson and Gallows on his side as the Roman Empire with AJ bringing in Finn Balor and then someone else for a big feud down the line.

WWE has done an excellent job setting up this match with AJ going over big name after big name and Reigns just kind of being there. It's a good way to have AJ look awesome while also giving Reigns a big win in his first title defense. The match should be a lot of fun as Reigns is great once the bell rings (assuming the match isn't 27 minutes long of course) and AJ is AJ. I'm really looking forward to this one and there are a lot of possibilities of what might happen at the end.

Payback looks like one heck of a show and it's going to be in front of a white hot Chicago crowd, which could be a big hit or a miss depending on how things go. This is a show that looks like it has a great batch of matches with almost nothing looking weak on the entire card. It should be a lot of fun, which is so strange to say outside of Wrestlemania season.

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Monday Night Raw – April 25, 2016: The Old New

Monday Night Raw

Date: April 25, 2016

Location: XL Center, Hartford, Connecticut

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

It's the go home show for Payback and things are getting interesting around here. The big story at the moment revolves around what's going to happen with the recently debuted Karl Anderson and Luke Gallows, who may have attacked Roman Reigns to help AJ Styles. AJ has denied it but there's a chance that this could be a Bullet Club reunion. Let's get to it.

We start with an In Memory Of graphic for Chyna. That's almost more than I was expecting.

The opening recap focuses on Reigns, AJ and Gallows/Anderson from last week.

Here's Shane McMahon to get things going. Shane talks about how he's here because of the fans and this Sunday is the first pay per view of a new era. I do love how they're just admitting that Smackdown means nothing and comes along on Raw's ride. Cue Stephanie to make her big return and suck up to the Hartford crowd as she was born in this town.

Apparently this is Shane's last night running the show because Vince hasn't been pleased. Therefore, we're going to find out once and for all who is running the show. Shane does a quick poll of the crowd to predictable responses but Stephanie says she isn't leaving. That's fine

with Shane, who is in charge tonight and therefore calls security down to remove Stephanie from the ring. She fights them all the way to the back as is her custom. Shane introduces our first match.

AJ Styles vs. Sheamus

Sheamus drives him into the corner to start (take a shot) but AJ comes back with his dropkick sequence. It's back to the heavy forearms to knock AJ around so Styles hits one of his own to put Sheamus on the floor. A moonsault off the apron misses though and Sheamus sends him into the steps to take us to a break.

Back with Sheamus holding the chinlock (take another shot), followed by two straight Irish Curses for no cover. Off to a bearhug and you can't fault Sheamus' psychology here. AJ escapes and avoids a charge to send Sheamus into the post (take another shot) and go up top. Sheamus tries a super White Noise but AJ escapes into a release super powerbomb of all things. Looked good too.

It's time for the running forearms and kicks in the corner until AJ is sent face first into the buckle. A nice powerslam gets two for Sheamus but he can't get the Cloverleaf. Instead AJ comes back with a good looking Pele to put both guys down. Sheamus is up first this time and throwing on the Cloverleaf until AJ gets a quick rope. The Brogue Kick hits the ropes though and it's the Phenomenal Forearm to put Sheamus away at 14:26.

Rating: B. This has been a great buildup for Styles who has taken down one big name after another before he gets ready for the World Title match. In other words, there has been no 50/50 booking or making either the champion or the challenger look like a goon. The commentary helped here too as they talked about how similar Sheamus and Reigns are. This was a really well done setup and the whole thing worked exactly as they were hoping for. Oh and it was a good match too, which doesn't surprise me.

Anderson and Gallows come out to look at AJ, which fuels the conspiracy theory for some reason.

Roman Reigns is watching in the back when the Usos come in to suggest that they'll have his back on Sunday. Reigns doesn't seem to hate the idea. The fans in the arena were chanting WE CAN'T HEAR YOU during this.

Here's New Day to talk about how awesome their tournament has been while promising to party like it's 1999. This brings out the Vaudevillains to say they want to party like it's 1899 when they beat up those mange ridden mongrels Enzo and Cass. Of course this brings out Enzo and Cass to a BIG reaction with Enzo saying he's hotter than a 104 degree fever and wants to run down a beach and jump into his own arms. Woods says they'll beat whoever wins because NEW DAY ROCKS. I miss simple little build segments like this without a match or a big blowoff or something. Just let people talk.

Gallows and Anderson leave AJ's locker room.

John Cena will be back on Memorial Day, May 30.

Usos vs. Karl Anderson/Luke Gallows

No team name yet but they do have matching white vests. Cole says Anderson and Gallows were in "a club" with Styles over in New Japan. Jimmy and Anderson get things going with the twin taking over to start. It's off to Jey for chops of his own, only to have Anderson come back with a hard leg lariat. Gallows comes in for a really big clothesline to turn Jey inside out before Anderson starts working on Jimmy's bad shoulder.

The bald guys take turns chinlocking Jey before it's back to Anderson with another armbar. Jey's uppercut is knocked away with an even bigger uppercut from Gallows and the bad arm is bent around the ropes. Jey goes up top but gets knocked down hard, sending the shoulder into the barricade as we take a break. Back with Jey kicking Anderson away and making the hot tag off to Jimmy for the array of strikes. Another big clothesline turns Jey inside out though and Anderson posts him for good measure. The Magic Killer (elevated suplex into a neckbreaker) knocks Jimmy silly at 13:52.

Rating: B-. Good debut here and really just a step above a squash. This

was total domination with Anderson and Gallows looking like the monsters they needed to be. I could easily see them getting the titles by the summer as New Day can move on to something bigger and it's not like anyone else needs the belts at the moment. Also the Usos will be fine as they're as made as a tag team can be.

The beating continues post match until Reigns comes out for the save.

Styles says he had nothing going on with Gallows and Anderson. The two of them come in to say they'll have his back on Sunday and can do whatever he wants.

We look back at the history between Sami Zayn and Kevin Owens with both guys talking about how they grew up together and were best friends for years. Then Sami won the NXT Title in December 2014, only to have Owens turn on him and take the title a few months later. Owens debuted in WWE a few months later and beat John Cena in his first match on the main roster. Sami injured his shoulder around the same time and was out for months before returning in January 2016 to eliminate Owens from the Royal Rumble. Owens thinks Sami is the one making this personal. This Sunday it's about payback.

Sami Zayn vs. Rusev

Rusev has Lana with him for the first time in what feels like months. Sami can't do much with the power to start and gets stomped down on the bottom rope as the fans want Lana. A headscissors takes Rusev down but the slingshot plancha is pulled out of the air with Sami being dropped onto the apron. Sami pops back up though and moonsaults off the barricade to drop Rusev again. Rusev kicks him hard in the head though and we take a break. Back with Sami fighting out of a front facelock and hitting a high cross body. Rusev throws him down but can't get the Accolade, allowing Sami to roll him up for the pin at 12:00.

Rating: C. Sami needed this win a lot more than Rusev, though the incredible downfall for the Bulgarian continues. It's so strange to think that he was feuding with Cena for the US Title just a year ago and now he's a midcard monster for someone like Sami. Still though, the right guy won and it really wasn't that shocking.

Lana throws a shoe at Sami post match. That goes nowhere so Owens runs out and drops Sami with a shot to the back.

Stardust interrupts Apollo Crews in the back but Apollo calls him Cody to make things serious. Apparently Dusty Rhodes came up with the name Apollo, which makes me wonder what Crews' name was before that. Stardust is odd as usual.

Apollo Crews vs. Stardust

Crews starts fast with his standing moonsault to avoid Stardust and a dropkick gets two. Stardust kicks him down and takes off his gloves for some reason before cranking on Crews' arm. That goes nowhere so Crews gets two off the standing moonsault. The lifting powerbomb gives Crews the pin at 3:08.

Rating: D+. They need to go somewhere with Crews or he's going to get boring with the constant smiling and squash wins over low level guys. It's hardly a lost cause or anything but he's getting close to the Rocky Maivia territory. Give him a story or a quick feud or something, as long as it doesn't mean listening to Crews talk that much.

Here's Dean Ambrose for a chat. Dean was supposed to host the Ambrose Asylum tonight but he's not in the mood for fun and games after he was attacked from behind last week. This Sunday he's facing one of the best of all time but he's ready to fight. Jericho may be the best in the world at what he does but Ambrose is pretty good at what he does too. When Ambrose sees a problem, he rolls up his sleeve and starts leaving bruises and chipping teeth because that's what he does.

Dean wants Jericho out here right now so here's Chris to call him an idiot. Jericho isn't wasting his time fighting Ambrose in a dump like Hartford. Instead, Dean should be down on his knees kissing Jericho's \$1,500 boots for letting him be in this ring. Jericho changes his mind and asks for an apology from Ambrose for stealing the Highlight Reel. Dean apologizes that Jericho paid that much money for such ugly shoes, for wearing a scarf everywhere and for that Bon Jovi haircut. He's not sorry for the brawl that starts but Jericho quickly gets the better of it and puts Dean in the Walls on the announcers' table.

Natalya vs. Emma

Charlotte is on commentary. Emma quickly takes it outside for a gutwrench suplex before we hit a seated full nelson. Not that it matters as Natalya gets up and grabs the Sharpshooter for the submission at 2:19.

Natalya stares Charlotte down first match so the champ hides behind Ric.

Chyna tribute video. It's nice that they're actually doing this. Most of this is a series of clips and then a series of tweets from various wrestling personalities commenting on her passing.

Baron Corbin vs. Damien Sandow

In a role reversal from Smackdown, no match as Zigler jumps Corbin from behind and chases him off.

Greetings From Puerto Rico.

Here are Miz and Maryse to talk about Miz's title defense against Cesaro on Sunday. Miz is used to being tormented by the anonymous internet trolls who now think Cesaro is going to win on Sunday. This title is more than important because it's legendary. Miz is tired of seeing all the handmade signs saying CESARO SECTION because the fans should be better than that. You can have your internet section because he has a Miz section that looks like Maryse.

This brings out Cesaro to interrupt but Miz goes into a Robert De Niro speech from Taxi Driver. Cesaro promises to roll the credits on Miz's title reign and tells Miz to make his day. Miz goes to leave but tries a cheap shot, earning himself Swiss Death but Maryse dives on top of her husband to prevent the Swing. Cesaro holds up the title. I could totally go for this "let's yell at each other and make the story more unique" to set up big matches. If only that had been done for decades instead of "here's a match three times before the BIG version of it that you have to pay for."

AJ comes up to Reigns in the back and says he's taking the title on Sunday. Reigns thinks Gallows and Anderson already have ringside seats.

This week's Kickoff match is Ryback vs. Kalisto for the US Title.

Alberto Del Rio vs. Roman Reigns

Non-title. Roman throws him around to start and gets in one of those running corner clotheslines. The running enziguri staggers Reigns though and Del Rio double stomps him from the apron as we take a break. Back with Del Rio holding the chinlock a bit longer than usual before hitting a DDT for two. The low superkick misses though and Reigns comes back with his series of clotheslines. That earns him the now standard booing but Del Rio bails to avoid the Superman Punch.

Instead it's the apron kick to send Del Rio into the post, only to have him kick the ropes to crotch Reigns as he comes back in. This is referred to as a kick to the hamstring due to reasons of convenience, allowing Del Rio to get in the superkick for two. Del Rio misses the top rope double stomp because Reigns is able to drop down instead of sit up, allowing Reigns to hit the Superman Punch. Cue Anderson and Gallows to stare Reigns down, allowing Del Rio to roll Roman up for two. The spear puts Del Rio away at 13:00.

Rating: C. At least they seem to be turning Reigns heel because there's just no way it's going to work as a face act at this point. No matter what Reigns does, that booing is part of the whole package now. They're certainly acknowledging it now though and that's the best thing to happen to Reigns in a long time.

Post match Anderson and Gallows come in for the beatdown. AJ runs out to stop them but gets Superman Punches. Gallows and Anderson come back in, allowing Reigns to hit the Phenomenal Forearm to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. This show started off looking great and then really ran out of steam in the second half. However, they did a lot of good things to help set up the pay per view and you can still see the momentum from Wrestlemania. The key thing for me is they're doing a better job of setting up feuds and big matches.

Whether it's the rather awesome World Title match or Sami vs. Owens (ok so that one wrote itself) or Cesaro going after Miz and the title, most

of the matches have gotten a much stronger focus than in previous months. Above all else though they all seem to have a mostly unique story and setup.

With Cesaro vs. Miz it's Cesaro never holding the title before and all the movie stuff. With the tag tournament match you have two unique teams with a bit of a history in NXT. With the Women's Title you have the families feuding (not a fan but at least it's something). The key though is everything has a story instead of "well they've fought a bunch of times and now they're fighting again" or "contractually obligated rematch". It makes things feel fresh for a change and that's something WWE has been lacking for years now.

Results

AJ Styles b. Sheamus – Phenomenal Forearm

Luke Gallows/Karl Anderson b. Usos – Magic Killer to Jimmy

Sami Zayn b. Rusev – Rollup

Apollo Crews b. Stardust – Lifting powerbomb

Natalya b. Emma – Sharpshooter

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Smackdown – April 21, 2016: Miz Is Awesome

Smackdown

Date: April 21, 2016

Location: O2 Arena, London, England

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, Jerry Lawler, Byron Saxton

It's the last show on the UK tour and we're in the same building we were in on Monday for Raw. These shows can range from nothing special to more interesting than usual but Smackdown tends to be just your run of the mill show. We're getting closer to Payback though and the card is looking stacked. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of AJ vs. Roman on Monday, including Luke Gallows and Karl Anderson beating Reigns down.

It's time for MizTV with Maryse handling the introduction before Miz brings out guest AJ Styles. Miz gets right to the point of asking about AJ being tight with Gallows and Anderson in New Japan, to the point that he knows them better than anyone else. Styles denies being behind the attack but he never told them NOT to attack Reigns. Miz continues being awesome at needling as AJ eventually gets annoyed at him for asking about Gallows and Anderson over and over again.

The fact of the matter is that AJ doesn't need them to beat Reigns but Miz thinks that being a better "rassler" isn't going to get it done because Roman Reigns is the guy. Miz says he can handle the truth from AJ but Maryse tells him to go Will Smith. This leads to a rather romantic moment which disgusts AJ so badly that he backfists Miz in the face.

AJ vs. Miz is set for later.

Ryback vs. Kalisto

Non-title for no apparent reason other than Kalisto loses here because the title is back to meaning nothing. Ryback runs him over in the corner and the GOLDBERG chants begin for reasons of general annoyance. Kalisto's kicks have little effect as Ryback gorilla presses him down and sends him shoulder first into the post as we take a break. Back with Ryback doing his delayed superplex for a delayed two count.

Ryback puts him in the Tree of Woe for kicks to the ribs, only to miss a charge and go shoulder first into the post. Kalisto's kicks to the chest and corkscrew cross body stagger Ryback and the hurricanrana driver gets two. Ryback hits a quick Meathook but the Shell Shock is countered into a DDT for two more. The Salida Del Sol is countered into the Shell Shock to give Ryback the pin at 9:42.

Rating: C-. It's clear that WWE wants to put the title on Ryback and I have no idea why they just don't do it at this point. Kalisto means nothing as champion at this point as he won the belt and then did nothing with it ever since (as is so often the case) so just give it to Ryback who could be a decent monster for someone to slay later on. First though, we get a rubber match because that's how the midcard titles roll around here.

Dolph Ziggler vs. Baron Corbin

Never mind as Corbin jumps Ziggler during the entrance and beats him down on the floor as has become his custom.

The Miz vs. AJ Styles

Non-title again. Miz gets clotheslined down to start and AJ goes old school with a Muta Lock (bridging Indian deathlock with a chinlock) but Miz gets his head out and rolls to the floor. Back in and AJ gets caught with some knees to the back, only to hit a quick dropkick (Lawler: "That was a miso soup dropkick wasn't it?"). A spinwheel kick drops Miz again so he hides behind Maryse, allowing him to get in a left hand to drop AJ.

Styles gets sent into the barricade and we take a break. Back with Miz stomping away in the corner and hitting that running clothesline. We hit the chinlock (because of course) but AJ jawbreaks his way to freedom. A

big boot drops Styles again (Miz can throw a nice boot) but it's a double cross body to put both of them down. AJ is up first though and gets in the running seated forearm for two. Miz starts going after the knee before a DDT gets two more.

The Skull Crushing Finale is countered into the fireman's carry backbreaker onto the knee (which Lawler pronounces correctly for once) for another near fall but AJ dives into an atomic drop. We hit the Figure Four for a bit until AJ turns it over with Ranallo doing a great job of putting over AJ as someone who will never quit.

The Calf Crusher goes on out of nowhere but Miz is too close to the ropes. Styles hit the Pele and that's enough for Miz who tries to walk, only to run into Gallows and Anderson. Miz makes the mistake of turning around and it's a slingshot forearm to set up the Phenomenal version for the pin on Miz at 17:55.

Rating: B. I know I'm in the minority but I've been a big Miz fan for a long time now. No he's not going to get back to the main event or anything but he's more than capable of having a strong performance against someone who can walk him through a match. They're doing a really good job of setting AJ up as someone who could shock the world at Payback. That's an impressive feat, especially if they go somewhere else with this Bullet Club story after the pay per view. Oh and well done on having both midcard champions lose clean in less than an hour and a half.

We look at the end of Raw with Jericho and Owens taking out Zayn and Ambrose.

Ambrose and Zayn are ready for Owens and Jericho in tonight's main event. Spotted dick is referenced but they can't decide on a cool team name.

In what might be a dark segment that won't air on the TV show, Miz and Maryse are still in the ring after the match. Miz says he knew Gallows and Anderson were with AJ but that just showed he was right. Tonight there was an injustice and he demands an investigation on this match right here and right now. Miz doesn't care how long it takes because he wants someone to come out here.

Cue Shane McMahon to say what's up London. That's not cool with Miz because he should be a priority to everyone on any show. He pokes Shane a bit and that's not cool with the red show boss. Miz pokes him a few more times so Shane punches him in the face and drops him with the back elbow to the jaw before clotheslining him out to the floor. Again, not likely to make the show but a cool thing for the crowd.

Post break, Gallows and Anderson say they're here to make an impact and aren't here with Styles. They'll debut on Monday against the Usos.

Paige/Natalya vs. Naomi/Tamina

Tamina and Natalya get things going but it's quickly off to Naomi for her stupid wiggling headscissors without any actual damage being done to Natalya. Seriously, the Divas era is done so stop that nonsense. Paige comes in to help with a double wishbone before it's already back to Natalya because Paige being in the ring in front of her home crowd would be a waste of time.

Naomi drops Natalya again and shouts that Natalya wants to wrestle. Well kind of yeah. We hit the chinlock from Tamina for a bit before Natalya easily gets over for the tag off to Paige. Naomi gets sent into the buckle and the Rampaige gets one with Tamina making the save. Natalya comes back in and it's a Sharpshooter to Tamina while Paige gets Naomi to tap to the PTO at 5:33.

Rating: D+. I like that double submission ending as you let Natalya look good while Paige gets to win in front of her home country. It's really tiring to see her lose all the time but with the way the division has been realigned, maybe she has to be moved down to the lower levels. I'm still a fan of hers but she's really not up to the top level at this point.

Fandango vs. R-Truth

Goldust is guest referee and this is fallout from Goldust teaming with Fandango instead of Truth last week. They trade knockdowns and trade hip swivels. More dancing ensues with Goldust joining in until Truth lays Fandango out with the Lie Detector for the pin at 1:53. I have no idea

where they're going with this but if they could get to the point already, it would be most appreciated.

Goldust and Truth dance post match with Goldust looking terrified at the thought of trying the splits.

Here are Enzo Amore and Colin Cassady for a chat about the tag team tournament final. Enzo gets through the opening spiel before the Vaudevillains cut him off. English thinks Enzo has mange so Enzo thinks the Vaudevillains are a couple of haters. Apparently the G stands for gentlemen so Enzo is going to be honest with him. That thing English said about him having rodent mange.....well Enzo really doesn't know what it means.

Gotch insults Enzo's rhyming (hater) and English says that it's going to take two real men to show what a real era should be like. After they win the tournament, Simon promises to use proper pronunciation and ask "how are you doing". Cass thinks that's SAWFT. This was a really good exchange and a much better introduction to the Vaudevillains than we've seen so far.

Greeting From Puerto Rico.

Dean Ambrose/Sami Zayn vs. Chris Jericho/Kevin Owens

Jericho and Zayn get things going with Sami doing that reverse leapfrog and armdragging Chris down into an armbar. Dean comes in and has to spin out of a Walls attempt but can't get Dirty Deeds as we head to a break. Back with Owens elbowing Ambrose in the head and slowly hammering away. Jericho can't keep Dean in the corner though and it's off to Sami for the high cross body and a near fall.

Sami loads up the corner climbing wristdrag but opts to dive onto Owens instead. Makes sense. That's fine with Owens as he pulls Sami outside and pounds away as Dean has been down WAY longer than he should have after a beating. It's back to Jericho for a chinlock followed by a Lionsault for a very calm near fall. The Blue Thunder Bomb doesn't even warrant a cover here but it's a double tag to Ambrose and Owens with the latter running into a boot in the corner.

Dean hits the suicide dive through the ropes but Owens gets in a superkick for two. The fans are having some issues getting into this one even though it's certainly not bad. A quick Dirty Deeds and the Helluva kick have the heels in trouble but Dean goes up instead of covering, allowing Jericho to crotch him on the ropes, giving Owens a quick pin at 12:53.

Rating: C. Totally standard Smackdown main event tag match and while that's fine, it's certainly nothing you need to see. I like the idea of putting two feuds into one match but they're out of combinations to do before the pay per view, which is a common problem WWE runs into. Ambrose getting pinned via cheating is a good idea as well.

Owens is very pleased with the win to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. The wrestling was stronger tonight but my goodness some of the booking decisions made my head hurt. As usual the midcard titles mean nothing because they're just midcard titles and a way to make people look good by beating midcard champions. It's so backwards compared to the way things used to go and went for years that it makes no sense but I'm sure WWE can explain it better to you than I could. They speak crazy like that you see.

Results

Ryback b. Kalisto – Shell Shock

AJ Styles b. The Miz – Phenomenal Forearm

Paige/Natalya b. Naomi/Tamina – PT0 to Naomi

R-Truth b. Fandango – Lie Detector

Kevin Owens/Chris Jericho b. Sami Zayn/Dean Ambrose – Owens pinned Ambrose after Jericho crotched him

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WWE Raids New Japan, Possibly Signs AJ Styles, Shinsuke Nakamura and Others

<http://www.f4wonline.com/wwe-news/njpw-stars-nakamura-aj-styles-luke-gallows-and-karl-anderson-headed-wwe-204971>

If this is true, it's the biggest talent raid since Hall and Nash. This could be huge.

Global Force Wrestling Makes First Roster Announcements

And some of them are pretty familiar.

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Justin Gabriel

Davey Boy Smith Jr.

Doc Gallows

Karl Anderson

Lance Hoyt

Chris Masters

Quinn Ojinnaka

Lei'D Tapa

Thea Trinidad

Sanada

We waited a year for some WWE/TNA rejects and a few guys from Japan? The shows might be fun, but this is going to need some major work to get anywhere.