

# New Column: The Kevin Owens and Triple H and Seth Rollins and Roman Reigns Show

A column about the last five minutes of Raw.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-the-kevin-owens-and-triple-h-and-seth-rollins-and-roman-reigns-show/>

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## Monday Night Raw – August 29, 2016: It's His Show And We're Just Watching It

### Monday Night Raw

Date: August 29, 2016

Location: Toyota Center, Houston, Texas

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

It's a big night this week as we're guaranteed a new Raw World Champion in a fatal fourway with Kevin Owens, Big Cass, Roman Reigns and Seth Rollins facing off for the title. It's hard to say what we're going to get at Clash of the Champions in about a month so hopefully we can start setting some stuff up tonight. Let's get to it.

In Memory of Mr. Fuji.

We recap Balor's shoulder injury and the setup for tonight's title match.

All four World Title participants for the title are in the ring with Corey Graves moderating. Rollins cuts him off and says they're all here

because of him so he'll cede his time to someone else. Owens talks about how he's a prize fighter and tonight he's fighting for a prize. That leaves Reigns, who Owens just allows to be booed.

Cass is tall...and that's about it. Cass: "Did Jericho write that for you?" Cass says he's the biggest dog in this fight, causing Owens to point to Reigns. Seth is glad that this is an elimination match so he can beat up all of them in one night. A brawl breaks out with Reigns and Cass having a staredown before the ring is cleared. I'm glad they kept this short since no one said anything important and it was just hype for the main event.

### Neville vs. Chris Jericho

Before the match, Jericho says Owens will win tonight but promises everyone the Gift of Jericho. This is their first match since Neville broke his ankle back in the spring. A catapult puts Jericho on the floor early but he hides behind the ref to get in a cheap shot and send us to a break. Back with Jericho putting on a chinlock but diving into a kick to the ribs.

Neville moonsaults out to the floor and avoids a charge into the corner, setting up a small package for two. A superkick drops Jericho and I'm very surprised at how hot the crowd is despite such a big main event. The Red Arrow misses and the Liontamer make Neville tap at 10:50.

**Rating:** C+. I continue to be very glad that Neville can do more things than just the Red Arrow as those one spot guys can get lost in the shuffle quickly. Neville being a main eventer was a long shot at best but he's fine in the midcard where he could pull off an upset and most people wouldn't be that shocked.

Earlier today Bayley met the New Day and dancing ensues until Dana Brooke comes up, setting up a six person tag along with Gallows and Anderson. The key here: it didn't feel scripted. Instead it seems like the producer said "Bayley runs into the New Day and you've got two minutes. Go." That works so much better than scripting out the jokes and gives you entertaining things like this.

### Nia Jax vs. Haion

Jax runs her over and finishes with an AA into a powerslam at 1:15.

Anderson and Gallows now run a retirement home and suggest that New Day will be joining Team 3D. Nurse Dana Brooke comes in and puts on a rubber glove.

Video on Seth Rollins.

### Sami Zayn vs. Jinder Mahal

Sami has a bad ankle coming in and he tweaks it early on, allowing Mahal to smack him in the back of the head for two. A chinlock doesn't go very far and Sami comes back with the Helluva Kick for the pin at 3:06.

**Rating:** C. I'm still waiting for an explanation of why they brought Mahal back. He's fine enough for a warm body but of all people, Jinder Mahal? Anyway I'm assuming this is the start of something for Sami as the announcers kept talking about how he wanted the title. If Owens wins it tonight, there's no logical reason to not do Sami vs. Owens at Clash of the Champions.

Earlier tonight Sasha Banks was on the pre-show, saying that Charlotte was trying to injure her and end her career. Sasha will be back for revenge and the title.

### New Day/Bayley vs. Dana Brooke/Anderson and Gallows

Charlotte is on commentary and doesn't think much of Bayley putting on a unicorn horn and eating Booty0's. The women start with Bayley getting some quick two counts before working on the arm. It's quickly off to Big E. for a belly to belly (gimmick infringer) on Anderson as the champs take over. That lasts all of a few seconds before the villains beat him down in the corner. The hot (or at least moderately warm) tag brings in Kofi for the Unicorn Stampede, including a running dropkick from Bayley. Some dancing sends us to a break.

Back with the camera on the commentators as the match is going on behind them. I smell Kevin Dunn's fingers all over this. We actually look at the

match to see Kofi in trouble and getting elbowed in the face. Kofi gets in a double stomp and makes the tag to Big E. for the house cleaning. Everything breaks down and Kofi does an insane dive over the top, nearly breaking his arm in the process. Back in and Dana gets two off a rollup, only to have the Bayley to Belly wrap it up at 12:28.

**Rating:** C+. The crowd was digging the heck out of this and I can't blame them a bit. This was the perfect match for Bayley as New Day is over by definition and she fits in perfectly with them. Bayley gets another win to help set up her title match at Clash of the Champions and Anderson and Gallows save face. Good stuff all around and a fun match.

Cesaro says no one likes Sheamus so he'll spin him around and around and around.

Video on Big Cass.

### Cesaro vs. Sheamus

Match #2 in a best of seven series with Sheamus up 1-0. Before the match, Sheamus says he'll prove that he's just the better man. Cesaro takes him down to the mat to start and gets two off a double stomp. Sheamus' arm is banged up and the announcers want the match stopped to check it. Thankfully it's a dropkick to send Sheamus outside and we take a break.

Back with the Irish Curse getting two but Cesaro comes right back by hitting the springboard corkscrew uppercut. The high cross body connects (check your Bingo card) and Cesaro sends it outside. That goes well for Sheamus who backdrops him back first into the post, setting up the Cloverleaf for the submission at 11:15.

**Rating:** C+. Points for putting a story into the series with Cesaro's back injury though I'm still having issues getting interested in even more of these matches. WWE has a real problem of just having the same match over and over and then wondering why it stops being interesting in the process. Make it best of three or just do a 2/3 falls match or something but having it go twice that long doesn't seem like the best move.

Tribute video to Mr. Fuji and it's as good as you would expect from WWE.

Video on Kevin Owens.

### Braun Strowman vs. Americo

Standard masked luchador. It's the squash you would expect with Strowman throwing him around and tossing him into the air for a faceplant and the pin at 58 seconds.

Strowman unmaskes him post match.

Here's Stephanie McMahon to address Shane McMahon getting F5'd at Summerslam, but first she has to say we're about to crown the "first" Universal Champion. Paul Heyman cuts her off but Stephanie is right there to cut his balls off by demanding an apology. Heyman talks about how Lesnar provides value to Raw and is here to pay Lesnar's \$500 fine. He pulls out a pile of \$1 bills but Stephanie throws them onto the floor. Stephanie wants to know what value Heyman offers to Raw and warns him of a coming storm.

Heyman goes into a rant about the board of directors and how Stephanie can control everyone but Lesnar. For some reason this turns into a discussion on female empowerment with Stephanie saying Heyman is staring at the women's revolution. Heyman apologizes to her and she accepts before dropping the mic and leaving. With Stephanie gone, Heyman chuckles and smirks.

Video on Balor's injury and surgery.

Video on Roman Reigns.

### Titus O'Neil vs. Darren Young

The aggressive Young knocks Titus to the floor where he asks for a timeout. Back in and a hard whip sends Darren over the corner where he lands on a camera to break it into pieces. Some neck cranks don't go anywhere so Young crucifixes him for the pin at 4:04.

**Rating:** D-. Can ANYONE explain why this feud is still going or why I'm supposed to care about them fighting over and over again? Neither guy is interesting and it seems like a character that exists for the sake of the

Presidential elections and nothing more. Total filler here and it's getting more and more annoying every match.

Backlund and Young celebrate so Titus beats them both up.

Mick Foley apologizes for not being out there for Stephanie but she didn't need him. He suggests that everyone is barred from ringside tonight and again Stephanie says it's the first Universal Title match. Rollins comes in and Stephanie wishes him luck.

### Raw World Title: Big Cass vs. Kevin Owens vs. Roman Reigns vs. Seth Rollins

The title is vacant coming in and this is under elimination rules. Mick and Stephanie are at ringside as they should be. Cass says he's shocking the world tonight. The bell rings after a break (THANK YOU!) and Owens immediately heads outside. The Cass vs. Reigns showdown is delayed again as the villains go after the big men and it's time to pair off.

Seth and Kevin are knocked outside and we get the big showdown with Cass blocking the Superman Punch. A running big boot knocks Reigns outside with Cass falling out as well. Rollins dives onto Cass but Owens drops him onto the barricade, only to have Reigns dive onto Owens and Cass as we take a break. Back with Owens in control and getting two off the backslash to Cass.

Reigns fights back with his string of clotheslines until Cass kicks his head off. They've done a really good job of making Cass look like he belongs here in the first ten minutes. A big boot puts Owens on the floor and the Empire Elbow hits Rollins. The East River Crossing is broken up by a Superman Punch and the low superkick gets two. Owens adds the Frog Splash to get rid of Cass at 13:46. I'm sure Saxton saying he thinks Cass can pull it off a minute earlier didn't give that away for anyone. Also, I believe that's the first time Cass has been pinned on the main roster.

Back from a second break with Reigns powerbombing Owens and Rollins for a Tower of Doom. Rollins' falcon arrow gets two on Roman but the Superman Punch knocks Rollins out of the air for two more. Cole describes this as incredible action for the second time in about a minute.

Owens comes back in with a superkick to Rollins, setting up back to back Cannonballs for another big reaction. The crowd has somehow stayed hot all night and that's a really good sign. The Superman Punch gets two on Owens and you can hear the crowd's sigh of relief on the kickout. Owens' Pop Up Powerbomb is countered with another Superman Punch and Reigns hits a quick sitout powerbomb for two on Seth.

A spear drops Rollins on the floor but here's HHH of all people to Pedigree Reigns on the floor. HHH throws Rollins back inside for the pin on Reigns at 23:48 (POP!), meaning Rollins needs HHH's help yet again. HHH throws Owens inside, Pedigrees Rollins and gives a shocked Owens the title at 25:05.

**Rating:** B+. This is a hard one to grade as they nailed the near falls and the drama to near perfection but I really don't care for HHH being back AGAIN and presumably setting up HHH vs. Rollins and/or Reigns. That's the standard problem with HHH: even if someone new is getting a big title win, it's still about HHH for a long time. However, let's get to the good part: KEVIN OWENS IS WORLD CHAMPION! Yeah that hasn't quite sunk in yet but it's actually happened and that is most certainly a good thing.

HHH leaves and Owens celebrates to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B. Make no mistake about it: the main event is the ONLY thing on this show that mattered in the slightest. The only other thing of note was the really awkward Stephanie vs. Heyman promo and I'm still not sure what happened there. They did a really good job with the title match though (HHH involvement aside) and that's all that matters on this show. A lot of this stuff is going to depend on the fallout but I'm very happy with Owens winning as he's definitely the most logical option. Good show with a red hot crowd throughout helping it along.

## Results

Chris Jericho b. Neville – Liontamer

Nia Jax b. Haion – Fireman's carry into a powerslam

Sami Zayn b. Jinder Mahal – Helluva Kick

New Day/Bayley b. Dana Brooke/Anderson and Gallows – Bayley to Belly to Brooke

Sheamus b. Cesaro – Cloverleaf

Braun Strowman b. Americano – Faceplant

Darren Young b. Titus O'Neil – Crucifix

Kevin Owens b. Seth Rollins, Roman Reigns and Big Cass – Pedigree to Rollins

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## **Monday Night Raw – August 22, 2016: Turn It Up**

### **Monday Night Raw**

Date: August 22, 2016

Location: Barclays Center, New York City, New York

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

It's the night after Summerslam and there's a lot to talk about, but



first and foremost we have no Universal Champion. Finn Balor won the inaugural title last night but was forced to vacate it due to a shoulder injury suffered during the match. Odds are tonight we'll find out what happens with the title so let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last night's Universal Title match. Nothing else is mentioned.

Opening sequence.

The announcers tell us about Finn's injury and the title being vacated. He'll be out at least SIX months.

The bosses bring out Finn with his arm in a sling. Balor says this title represents a lifetime of sacrifice, including one last night. He has to vacate the title tonight but when he comes back, this title is the first thing he's coming for. Balor gets a hero's sendoff but Seth Rollins cuts him off with a huge grin on his face. Rollins calls himself the real winner last night but here's Sami Zayn to cut him off.

Nothing is said as Chris Jericho comes out as well. He's followed by Owens, Enzo and Cass (before this segment started I said I'd take a flier and put the belt on Cass) and Reigns. Foley says there's going to be a series of matches to determine the champion next week. You can imagine how well that's going over.

### Seth Rollins vs. Sami Zayn

Before the bell, Sami looks over at Owens and gets jumped from behind to send us to a break. The match is joined in progress with Sami snapping off a headscissors to put Rollins outside, only to have him start stomping at Zayn in the corner. Back up and Sami springboards off the bottom rope and twists his ankle. Sami says he can keep going and low bridges to the floor, setting up a slingshot flip dive over the top. Seth comes back with the top rope knee to the head and we take a break.

Back with Sami hitting his big clothesline and a sunset bomb out of the corner. The Pedigree doesn't work as Sami hits the exploder suplex. The Helluva Kick doesn't work though and Seth stomps on the foot before

grabbing a leg lock for...actually not a submission. Sami gets to the ropes but can't grab a suplex, setting up the Pedigree to give Rollins the pin at 11:53.

**Rating:** C+. I'm fairly sure that was a fake ankle injury and it's a testament to what Sami can do with his selling that I'm really not positive. Rollins advancing is fine but it would be nice if Sami could have a story that isn't Kevin Owens related. The selling worked really well and I love Rollins trying a leg lock instead of just instantly using his regular move. It shows thinking during the match, which is something Rollins should always be doing.

### Kevin Owens vs. Neville

So there are going to be some named added. Neville sends him outside to start and hits a 450 off the apron. Another big running flip dive takes Owens down but here's Chris Jericho for a distraction so Kevin can (not) hit a clothesline to turn Neville inside out. Back with Neville avoiding a frog splash and hitting a middle rope phoenix splash, followed by the deadlift German suplex for two. The Red Arrow misses but Neville enziguris him right back into position. Jericho distracts the referee though and Owens hits the torture rack neckbreaker for the pin at 8:31.

**Rating:** C+. Oh how I love secondary finishers. It gets so tiring waiting on the one move that can finish a match so switching it up like this is a really nice change of pace. Owens winning here was obvious and there's nothing wrong with that. The match was fine for the time they had and Neville flying around is always fun.

The title match next week will be a fatal fourway. Is this surprising in the slightest?

Here's New Day to celebrate holding the Tag Team Titles for 365 days. They thank the fans for the year and it's time for a unicorn pinata. As I continue to try to understand the concept of a pinata, here are Anderson and Gallows to call this stupid. They point out that New Day lost last night so there needs to be a rematch. Anderson asks Kofi about taking the Magic Killer last night. Kofi: "BIG E! DEFEND ME!" Big E.: "Uh, I got nothing." It's Anderson vs. Big E. tonight and that means trombone time.

## Karl Anderson vs. Big E.

Joined in progress again with Big E. putting on the abdominal stretch and some rhythmic spanking. Anderson sends him into the corner and starts kicking at the leg, including a running kick to the back of the knee. Big E. powers him up again and throws Anderson over the top. The spear through the ropes is broken up by a knee as the rest of New Day beats on Gallows. Back in and the Big Ending puts Anderson away at 3:34.

**Rating:** D+. Well that happened. I'm not sure how the champion winning is better than having the challengers get some wins to build momentum but the New Day merchandise is all that matters. New Day holding the titles for a year is amazing but I'm not sure how much longer they can go before it stops being entertaining. Then again I was saying that six months ago.

The Dudley Boyz are saying goodbye tonight so we see a clip of their debut in 1999.

Here's Titus O'Neil for a chat. Ok ok we'll stop booing your belt. Titus talks about how New Day beat the Prime Time Players for the belts and rips on Darren Young for holding him out of the main event. People have been blaming Bob Backlund but Titus wants to blame Darren for not being in the main event. No one comes out so the fans ask for Slater again. Cue Bob Backlund at a run to put Titus in a cross face pectoral grab before Titus slams him. Darren runs out (Was he watching the Little League World Series?) and takes the Clash of the Titus while Backlund looks dead.

Video on Lesnar vs. Orton.

Earlier today, Shane said Brock crossed a line. Stephanie says she agrees. End of segment.

We look at Balor vacating the title.

## Rusev vs. Big Cass

Non-title, Rusev has bruised ribs and the winner advances to next week. Before the match, Enzo tries to figure out which part of New York City Bulgaria is in. An early clothesline puts Rusev on the floor and we take a break. Back with Cass fighting out of a chinlock before Rusev takes out

the leg. Rusev misses the splash though, allowing Cass to hit one of his own in the corner. That sends Rusev outside for a superkick to Enzo, sending Cass into a rage of right hands to the ribs. The bad ribs go into the steps and they trade kicks to the face with Cass getting the better. Rusev falls to the floor and walks out for the countout at 8:23.

**Rating:** C. Not much to the match here but I'm really pleased with the way they did the booking here. Rusev doesn't get pinned and they still send Cass on to next week's title match. Everything works out just fine here and we get a nice hope spot for the title. Oh and they didn't have Reigns interfere for the obvious ending. Well done again.

Owens and Jericho argue over who can be the next Universal Champion. They do however manage to get Tom's name wrong over and over.

Here are Charlotte and Dana Brooke to gloat about Charlotte getting the Women's Title back. Dana does a one woman YOU DESERVE IT chant and Charlotte has to agree. Charlotte says you can forget about Sasha Banks because she did it all by herself last night. Sasha is out with a back injury and now the queen has reclaimed her throne. That's it but here's Mick Foley to interrupt.

The boss (Foley, not Sasha), praises Charlotte last night but we have to stop for a WE WANT BAYLEY chant. Mick says Sasha will be back and will get a rematch for the title. That's fine with Charlotte but there's no one left for her to face tonight. Foley says not so fast because there are parts of this match that are heartbreaking. There are great moments too though, like signing free agents.....like BAYLEY!

We get the big introduction and the HUGGER SECTION signs are out in full force. Bayley can't believe this is happening but she's cut off by a YOU DESERVE IT chant. She thanks Mick for the moment and has an idea: how about we seal the deal with a hug, right here in Brooklyn, New York? You know Mick isn't going to turn that down.

Charlotte laughs this off and plugs Mick's reality show before saying there's a reason Bayley stayed in NXT during the Divas Revolution. Bayley says she won't try to upstage Charlotte but she will challenge her for the Women's Title. That's not cool with Charlotte, who says Bayley has to

earn it. Unfortunately Charlotte isn't ready so Dana can face Bayley instead. Mick agrees and the match is on.

### Bayley vs. Dana Brooke

Bayley starts fast by sending Dana into the buckle for a near fall but Dana knocks her outside and into the barricade. Back in and Dana works on the leg before just slugging away. Bayley comes back with her variety of elbows and the Bayley to Belly for the pin at 4:32.

**Rating:** C. The match was unimportant here compared to the pop for her debut which worked as well as they could have imagined. Bayley has long since deserved this spot and while it's a shame that an injury might have caused her to get to the main roster, she's a welcome fit here and much better suited to Raw than Smackdown.

Roman Reigns isn't worried about Kevin Owens.

The cruiserweights arrive September 19.

Sheamus is ready for his next match with Cesaro next week and insults New York sports teams.

### Bruan Strowman vs. Johnny Knockout

Knockout says he's doing this because, and I quote, he likes big sweaty men. Strowman throws him around to start and the reverse chokeslam cut off the LET'S GO JOBBER chants with the pin at 1:19.

Strowman beats him up again and makes the referee count another pin. Ever the professional, the referee waits until Knockout's shoulder is down.

Here are the Dudley Boyz for their retirement speech. Bubba says they returned a year ago in this ring and it's been a heck of a year. They've had some wins and some losses but now things are changing. D-Von says it's been a great career with twenty years going up and down the roads with this man here. They had some great matches with teams like Edge and Christian and the Hardys and D-Von would take every one of those shots and falls again tonight.

Bubba has the fans give themselves a round of applause and it's time to go but here are the Shining Stars to interrupt. They have a going away present for Bubba and D-Von: two tickets (economy class) to Puerto Rico! That alone earns them a beating and we get one last 3D and WAZZUP.....before Bubba tells him to get the table. Cue Anderson and Gallows to beat down the Dudleys. D-Von goes through the table via a Magic Killer. I'm actually surprised as I would have bet on that Ray turn.

### Roman Reigns vs. Chris Jericho

Final qualifying match. Jericho gets into a chase to start but stops to poke Reigns in the eye as we take a break. Back with Jericho putting the ASK HIM chinlock. Reigns fights back and sends him into the buckle but the Superman Punch is blocked. It's too early for the Walls so Jericho settles for two off the enziguri instead.

Jericho takes too much time on the top though and gets punched out of the air, setting up the apron boot. Now the Superman Punch connects for two and Jericho's Codebreaker is easily countered into a sitout powerbomb. Kevin Owens runs out for a distraction to break up the spear but it just earns Jericho another Superman Punch.

The spear is countered into the Walls but Reigns makes the rope. Owens adds a superkick to set up the Codebreaker for two with Saxton telegraphing the near fall by saying Jericho was the fourth man. Can we PLEASE stop doing that? Back up and they trade slaps until Owens has to be punched off the apron. Now the spear connects to send Reigns to the title match at 15:03.

**Rating:** C+. Again this was fine but you would think Rusev might make an appearance here. Reigns getting in was the only option as you can't have Cass as the only face in the title match. That being said, Jericho is always a great choice to make anyone look good and that's what he did here. Fine enough main event here but nothing memorable.

**Overall Rating:** C. This show was all over the place. I had fun with Bayley debuting and their reaction to the title situation was fine, but there's basically no reaction to Brock last night and Rusev not interfering in the main event doesn't make sense. The wrestling wasn't

anything special either, leaving this show square in the middle. Hopefully we get something on Lesnar soon though, because people aren't going to be pleased with just leaving the main event of Summerslam hanging while we wait for Lesnar to grace us with his presence again.

### Results

Seth Rollins b. Sami Zayn – Pedigree

Kevin Owens b. Neville – Torture rack neckbreaker

Big E. b. Karl Anderson – Big Ending

Big Cass b. Rusev via countout

Bayley b. Dana Brooke – Bayley to Belly

Braun Strowman b. Johnny Knockout – Reverse chokeslam

Roman Reigns b. Chris Jericho – Spear

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# Monday Night Raw – August 8, 2016: Point Being?

## Monday Night Raw

Date: August 8, 2016

Location: Honda Center, Anaheim, California

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

Things are starting to pick back up as we have thirteen days before Summerslam. The big story coming out of last week saw Randy Orton and Brock Lesnar trade assaults though there's no word on Lesnar being back this week. Other than that we have a rematch between Sheamus and Cesaro for reasons that aren't entirely clear. Let's get to it.

We open with a Last Week on Raw which covers Balor vs. Rollins, Reigns vs. Rusev, Lesnar getting RKO'ed and showing up on Smackdown to take out Orton. I like this idea but they need to speed it up a little.

Opening sequence.

Here are Enzo and Cass to open things up with Enzo saying Sasha Banks was smitten with him last week. There was as much chemistry as a science fair and he was hitting it to the track but Chris Gold Glove Jon Bon Jericho came out and pulled it back over the wall. Enzo and Cass are some Anaheim Angels on a Stairway to Heaven so welcome to the jungle you Axl Rose wannabe. Jericho comes out and calls them a couple of goofballs before Kevin Owens comes out.

Apparently Jimmin Marvinluter had a chat with them and now Owens has his back. They're closer than brothers, which Owens takes a few seconds to confirm. Cass thinks it's like Bert and Ernie where they're in the same bathtub scrubbing each others' backs. Owens calls Enzo a dead weight that Cass brought over to Raw with him so he doesn't like Cass anymore. Owens and Cass are about to fight but Jericho wasn't talking to the big mutton head Cass, even though he was looking right at him. Jericho: "I was talking to the hip hop hobbit." A brawl is teased but nothing happens as we go to a break.



## Enzo Amore vs. Chris Jericho

We actually wait to come back from commercial for the opening bell. Enzo starts fast with a dropkick and headscissors but gets run over by a shoulder. Owens, at ringside with Cass, runs his mouth as only he can. Jericho is sent to the floor with a baseball slide and a big staredown takes us to a break. Back with Jericho in control with chops in the corner, only to get caught with a middle rope DDT. Enzo tries another hurricanrana but gets caught in the Walls. The rope is grabbed but Jericho hits a quick Codebreaker. Cass and Owens get in a fight on the floor, ending with Cass coming in to boot Jericho for the DQ at 11:17.

**Rating:** C-. As far as a match whose only reason to exist was to set up a tag match at Summerslam goes, this was perfectly fine. The more Enzo gets in the ring on his own the better it's going to be for him. The good thing about Jericho at this point is you could imagine him jobbing to anyone so Enzo wasn't out of the running here. That's a rare treat you don't get often enough.

Post match Cass issues the challenge for a tag match at Summerslam. The Canadians quickly accept.

Mick Foley is on the phone with Stephanie when Sasha Banks comes in. She wants to face Charlotte and Dana Brooke in a handicap match tonight. Instead Mick makes it Dana vs. Sasha tonight and if Sasha wins, it's one on one with Charlotte at Summerslam. Mick: "Good luck." Sasha: "You don't need luck when you're the Boss."

## Braun Strowman vs. Jorel Nelson

Nelson is speechless about why he agreed to do this. Strowman kicks him off the apron and turns him inside out with a clothesline. The reverse chokeslam ends this at 1:00.

Mick Foley meets with Puff Daddy and receives front row tickets to his concert in Columbus, Ohio. New Day comes in and Puff eats some Booty0's. Big E. is out due to his injury from last week and Kofi makes rap jokes.

## Titus O'Neil vs. Darren Young

This would be the first match we saw last week. Darren hits him in the face to start so Titus hammers away. He loads up a quick powerslam but gets rolled up with Darren grabbing the trunks this time for the pin at 2:00. Keeping this short is the best thing that could happen tonight.

Here's Seth Rollins to open the second hour. The last few weeks have been a learning experience for everyone, including learning about his Summerslam opponent Finn Balor. He's followed Finn's career for years now and thought he was just a knockoff. "The Jared Leto to his Heath Ledger if you will."

We see a clip from last week with Balor talking to Seth, which makes Rollins talk about how Finn Balor isn't even his real name. Apparently it's a famous warrior and a demon king, which would be like Seth calling himself Rambo Apocalypse. Seth wants to know the real Finn Balor who came in here and insulted Seth in his ring. Balor has had two matches in WWE and now he thinks he's some big star.

The reason Seth is so arrogant is because he knows his place in WWE. He's not ignorant and doesn't need to surround himself with myths and legends because he knows who he is. One day parents will tell their kids stories about Rollins conquering people like Brock Lesnar, John Cena and Roman Reigns. His legend will be expanded at Summerslam when he adds Balor's name to that list. As has been the case lately, Rollins was on point here.

We look back at Orton hitting the RKO on Lesnar last week and Lesnar retaliating.

### Sheamus vs. Cesaro

This is the other rematch from last week where Cesaro won. Apparently that wasn't enough to impress the bosses, which matters more than winning around here. Cesaro starts with a dropkick and scores with a suicide dive. Back in and Cesaro hits the running uppercut in the corner, only to get caught with the big ax handle as we take a break. We come back to Sheamus hitting a top rope shoulder for two and grabbing a chinlock.

White Noise is countered into a failed Swing attempt but the Brogue Kick

misses as well. The Irish Curse and White Noise get two each and Sheamus is stunned. Sheamus goes up top but gets dropkicked down, setting up the uppercut train on the floor. The referee gets in the way of a right hand and doesn't see Sheamus rolling Cesaro up. Back up and Cesaro grabs a rollup of his own for the pin at 11:00.

**Rating:** C. This wasn't as good as last week's match but at least there's no reason to do a third match. That being said there was no reason to do a second match and we got one anyway. Above all else though the line from the announcers about how the bosses want to see physical dominance instead of people winning matches made me cringe. If it's not about winning, what's the point of being here?

We look at Lesnar attacking Orton on Smackdown. That's the third time in ninety minutes.

Long video on Randy Orton vs. Brock Lesnar, including sitdown interviews with each talking about their time together in Ohio Valley Wrestling. The talent level down there was unheard of with Orton, Lesnar, Cena, Shelton Benjamin and Batista all in the same place. They debuted in 2002 and both took their own paths to greatness though Lesnar reached his peak far faster.

Then Lesnar left because he didn't like people to pursue his fortunes elsewhere. Lesnar: "I became a megastar and he became just a star." Heyman says Orton is the best surfer on the beach, riding all those big waves. But then Lesnar is the shark. We see Lesnar laying Orton out on Smackdown for the fourth time tonight but Orton says it only takes one RKO. Good stuff here, even though they really don't have history together.

Lesnar is here next week.

### Dudley Boyz vs. Sin Cara/Neville

This is due to the Bubba and D-Von doing their usual "you're new and therefore you suck" speech to Neville earlier in the day. Sin Cara is dressed like Black Panther tonight. Bubba pounds Neville into the corner to start and the old guys take turns in the corner. D-Von is in a regular

t-shirt this week for a new look. Bubba goes after Neville and gets sent outside for a flip dive from Cara. Back in and D-Von takes over with a big elbow drop for two but misses a charge into the corner. It's off to Neville who ducks a D-Von clothesline to send it into Bubba, setting up the Red Arrow to pin D-Von at 5:18.

**Rating:** C-. Fine enough here and Neville/Cara are a passable selection for the new high flying team. I mean, it does make you wonder why they didn't just keep the Dragons together in the first place when Kalisto is just a warm body on Smackdown but I don't think they thought that through.

Bubba gives D-Von an angry glare post match. I blame the shirt change.

Here are Rusev and Lana in their wedding clothes with a wedding party set up. They're here to talk about their very special occasion and we get to experience their wedding day. We see a package of wedding photos and I flash back to last year when Lana was taken off TV for revealing the engagement. Yeah it's almost like that MADE NO DIFFERENCE WHATSOEVER. The fans call this boring which Rusev interprets as them wanting MORE MORE MORE. They're about to exchange their wedding vows again when Roman Reigns comes out to interrupt.

The fans boo because they have no idea how wrestling works or what they want out of their time here. Reigns was in the back watching and wondered why Rusev didn't have a best man. Maybe Roman can fill in that role and offers to give the newlyweds a toast. Rusev says no, so Reigns issues a challenge for Summerslam. Roman pours a drink and makes wedding night jokes, causing Rusev to go after him. A right hand knocks Rusev into Lana, sending her right into the wedding cake. Lana: "I HATE YOU!!!"

This is exactly the kind of thing that Reigns needs to do: simple stories that should get him cheered because he's doing something people want him to see. This was a really basic idea but it's going to set up the title match and gives people a reason to cheer Reigns and boo Rusev. Old school stories still work just fine and I have no idea why people hate them so much.

Sasha Banks vs. Dana Brooke

Non-title and if Sasha wins Dana is banned from ringside at Summerslam. Sasha takes her down to start but gets taken to the mat. Charlotte slaps Dana in the face by mistake and gets dropped by the champ. Back up and Dana misses a charge in the corner, setting up the double knees in the corner to give Sasha the pin at 2:17.

We get a sitdown talk from Finn Balor who talks about the origin of his name, including a famous warrior named Finn. Then there was the king of the demons: Balor. These aren't just stories but rather a source of power. When a warrior knows his power isn't enough, he can tap into these things and become greater than himself. Seth has never seen a demon like this but he'll meet the king at Summerslam.

Anderson and Gallows are dressed like doctors to discuss a condition called ringpostitis, which has been sweeping through the roster as of late. We see clips of Big E. getting crotched on the post last week and Anderson has a jar with ping pong balls inside. They recently performed surgery and the results were nuts. It makes you want to ball your eyes out and Gallows got a little testy. Tonight they collect another sample from Kofi Kingston. I love little vignettes like this, if nothing else just to spice things up a bit.

#### Kofi Kingston vs. Luke Gallows

Kofi starts fast and sends Gallows outside for a flip dive. Gallows takes over on the floor and muscles Kofi back in for a fireman's carry flapjack and the pin at 1:33. They're certainly not taking their time tonight.

Woods has to save Kofi from a post crotching.

Earlier today, Goldust met with Scooby-Doo and R-Truth thinks he's been replaced by man's best friend. A fight almost breaks out but Goldust suggests they go watch the new WWE Scooby-Doo movie together and eat some Scooby Snacks. The first movie was entertaining so I'm fine with this.

Here's Mick Foley for his big meeting with Daniel Bryan. They praise each other a bit before talking about Orton vs. Lesnar last week. Foley also isn't happy with Bryan degrading the Universal Title and wondering when the Milky Way Title was coming up. Mick says this isn't a joke and here's

Rusev, in ring gear, to interrupt.

Rusev sucks up to Mick, which Bryan thinks is a way out of his match with Roman Reigns. This brings out Cesaro to say he's earned a championship match in his last two performances. Bryan: "Cesaro, I think you've been completely underutilized on Raw." Foley: "Stay out of this Daniel." Mick makes the title match right here, right now.

#### US Title: Cesaro vs. Rusev

Cesaro is challenging and the bell rings at 11:01pm. Rusev goes after the arm to start and Cesaro is in early trouble. A whip into the corner puts Cesaro down again but he comes back with the running uppercuts. Rusev knocks him down again but the Accolade is countered into an electric chair drop. A slugout goes to Cesaro and the springboard uppercut drops the champ.

The Swing sets up the Sharpshooter and here's Sheamus to break it up. The distraction lets Rusev hit the superkick for two. I bought that as the finish. Sheamus gets up AGAIN and the distraction leads to a ref bump, meaning there's no count on the Neutralizer. Rusev pokes Cesaro in the eye to set up a Brogue Kick, followed by another kick to the head to retain the title at 9:50.

**Rating:** D. For the booking, not the wrestling. I actually groaned out loud at that ending because this is just dumb on so many levels. Let's take a quick look at why this was so dumb many levels.

1. It started after 11pm with zero announcement or build. Set this up instead of just doing it in such a hurry.
2. It only exists to set up Cesaro vs. Sheamus again, despite Cesaro beating Sheamus twice in a row, clean both times.
3. We now have Cesaro losing to set up a match against a two time loser.
4. Did I mention Cesaro loses again?
5. This felt like they ran out of ideas and threw in a taped house show match.

6. What was the point of Sheamus vs. Cesaro earlier tonight? Cesaro had already beaten him last week and all it did was set up a way to get us to this ending. Set up the match, perhaps by making last week's match a #1 contenders match instead of having it be a way to impress the bosses, and then have Sheamus interfere to set up the rematch. Don't have a rematch for no logical reason (the bosses wanting to see it again doesn't count) and then use it as a way to pay off another match later. That's stupid booking, but then again so is half the stuff WWE does at times.

Just a mess all around here and really stupid booking to get us to the next really stupid idea.

We're not done with the stupid as Rusev holds up the title and stares straight ahead for a good three seconds so Reigns can run down the aisle and spear him to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C-. This show was much more boring than bad and that's not necessarily an improvement. The biggest problem here is that this wasn't an interesting show. Nothing really happened here, save for Reigns going after Lana and Rusev plus an ending that made my head hurt. They kept things quick all night and as a result none of the matches felt important. This felt like they were just burning off a show instead of building up to Summerslam, almost like they don't have enough stuff to fill in a three hour (plus) card. It just wasn't all that interesting though the Reigns, Rollins and Balor stuff was all good.

### Results

Chris Jericho b. Enzo Amore via DQ when Big Cass interfered

Braun Strowman b. Jorel Nelson – Reverse chokeslam

Darren Young b. Titus O'Neil – Rollup with a handful of trunks

Sin Cara/Neville b. Dudley Boyz – Red Arrow to D-Von

Sasha Banks b. Dana Brooke – Double knees to the chest

Luke Gallows b. Kofi Kingston – Fireman's carry flapjack

Rusev b. Cesaro – Kick to the head

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# Monday Night Raw – July 25, 2016: The Newer New Era

## Monday Night Raw

Date: July 25, 2016

Location: CONSOL Energy Arena, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Corey Graves, Byron Saxton, Michael Cole

After three months of a new era, we're actually in a New Era as we've reached the first show with an exclusive Raw roster, which means a lot of things that aren't entirely clear. We don't officially have a World Champion as Dean Ambrose retained the title last night to keep it on Smackdown. Hopefully tonight we actually get some answers to the questions left over from the Draft so let's get to it.

Quick look at the main event.

Opening sequence, complete with a new logo and theme song.

The announcers are no longer at ringside and are up by the entrance



instead. There's also a new set.

Mick Foley and Stephanie McMahon are in the ring to introduce the entire Raw roster. Stephanie blames Reigns for costing them the title and says there has never been an episode of Monday Night Raw without a World Champion (Uh.....what? Just.....what?) so tonight they're going to rectify that problem. Tonight there will be two fourways with the winners squaring off tonight for the right to go to Summerslam to face Seth Rollins for the....wait for it...WWE Universal Heavyweight Championship (Killjoy is going to love that one). Foley introduces the eight people in the fourways:

Sami Zayn

Sheamus

Cesaro

Rusev

Roman Reigns

Kevin Owens

Chris Jericho

Finn Balor

We're not done yet though as Charlotte is going to be defending the Women's Title against Sasha Banks. The first fourway is right now.

Cesaro vs. Rusev vs. Kevin Owens vs. Finn Balor

Owens gets a big pop but the crowd doesn't seem to know Balor's pose yet. They'll get the hang of it soon enough. Balor and Owens are left inside with Finn scoring off a dropkick but Cesaro takes over with some uppercuts as we hit a break less than ninety seconds after the bell. Back with Owens and Rusev staring each other down until Balor comes back in to get caught in a German suplex.

Cesaro gets double teamed as well but Rusev misses a top rope splash. The

heels start fighting until Cesaro cross bodies both of them. The uppercut train starts up but Rusev breaks up the Swing. Everyone goes to the floor and it's Balor hitting a big flip dive for his first major pop of the night. Back in and 1916 (lifting reverse DDT) gets two on Cesaro and we take another break. We come back again with Rusev at the base of a Tower of Doom to plant everyone at the same time.

Owens gets two on Balor with the torture rack neckbreaker. The Bullfrog Splash crushes Cesaro and the Pop Up Powerbomb plants Balor. The Neutralizer is broken up though and Rusev grabs the Accolade on Owens. Cesaro comes back in and Swings Rusev, only to have Owens break up the Sharpshooter. Balor comes right back in with dropkicks though and the Coup de Grace puts Rusev away at 20:31.

**Rating:** B. I can't even get mad at them for having the US Champion get pinned again when Cesaro was right there. This was really the only way to go with this match as you don't have Balor debut and then lose in his first match. I don't need him to go to the title match at Summerslam but he needs to have a dirty finish tonight. Good match here though and a good way to showcase Balor, which was the entire point.

#### Nia Jax vs. Brit Baker

Nia throws her around to start and ties her in the Tree of Woe. The legdrop only gets two as Nia pulls her up. A headbutt and another legdrop put Baker away at 1:20. Total squash.

Golden Truth are playing Pokemon Go and annoy Sasha Banks. Sasha says she'll win tonight.

#### Sheamus vs. Chris Jericho vs. Sami Zayn vs. Roman Reigns

Sheamus and Jericho double team Reigns to start and Sami joins in on the beating. Reigns is sent to the floor so it's Sami getting beaten down by both guys until Sami backdrops Jericho onto Sheamus. That means it's time for Reigns to come back in and slam Sami down for two as the announcers talk about Stephanie. Sheamus comes back in for the ten forearms on Sami until Jericho knocks the Irishman to the floor. Reigns hits the big dive to take all of them out and we go to a break.

Back with Reigns getting double teamed but fighting back, only to get caught in a Blue Thunder Bomb for a very hot near fall. The Razor's Edge sitout powerbomb gets two on Sami but the Brogue Kick cuts off the Superman Punch. Sami adds a Helluva Kick, only to have Jericho steal the near fall. A Brogue Kick saves Jericho from the Walls but Sami dives over to break up the cover. Back to back Superman Punches drop the heels and the Codebreaker is countered into....something botched. Jericho takes another Superman Punch and the spear advances Reigns at 17:06.

**Rating:** C+. Not in the same ballpark as the first match with Sami and Sheamus basically disappearing in the last few minutes. Reigns winning was predictable and I'd be shocked if they went with Balor vs. Rollins for the title. They're running a risk of having Reigns get back into the title picture so soon but I don't think there was ever any real doubt.

Here's New Day to celebrate 337 days as Tag Team Champions. After Woods says he's glad Bray was drafted to Smackdown and a quick Booty0's ad, we get a montage of the title reign. Tonight, New Day is going to let a member of the crowd be an honorary member of New Day, but the question is who.

They pick a somewhat rotund man in a New Day shirt and Big E. asks sonny boy what his name is. Man: "Sonny Boy." Kofi: "No your government name." Man: "Sonny Boy." New Day doesn't quite buy this and ask if that's the name that comes on his bills or how he signs the check at restaurants. The dancing is on but the Club comes out to interrupt and beat the champs down. Big E. takes a Magic Killer and the other two lose their shirts. The Club talk trash to Sonny Boy and throw a shirt at him.

### Curtis Axel vs. Neville

Axel is listed as Mr. Irrelevant because he was picked last. Neville snaps off a neckbreaker to start and flips over him a few times. A standing shooting star to the back keeps Axel in trouble and the lifting German suplex puts him in the corner. The Red Arrow puts Curtis away at 3:45.

**Rating:** D+. Neville is still Neville, meaning he still does almost every spot he has in each match which explains why they get weaker and weaker

reactions every single time (see also Cesaro). Axel continues to be treated like a goof, especially when he should just be Joe Hennig and be Mr. Perfect II but that's too easy for WWE for reasons I don't understand.

Darren Young wants the Intercontinental Title but Bob Backlund's pep talk is cut off by the Pokemon Go hunt. Backlund yells a lot.

Video on Finn Balor.

Charlotte thinks Sasha will crack under the pressure tonight.

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

Charlotte is defending. They lock up and go down to the mat with a rollup freaking the champ out. Dana offers a quick distraction and earns an early reprimand. Banks grabs a quick Bank Statement but only gets a modified version of the hold, allowing Charlotte to escape. That's nice of her. Instead Sasha sends her outside for the double knees from the apron and a near fall.

Charlotte kicks Sasha into the corner and then drives her into the barricade, setting up some trash talking with the belt in hand. Dana picks up the dropped belt and Sasha feigns an attack, earning Dana an ejection. Why this isn't a DQ isn't clear but it takes us to a break. Back with Sasha fighting out of a double arm crank and hitting more running knees. Charlotte grabs a quick neckbreaker but has to bail out of the moonsault. That's fine as she lands on her feet (because she can), only to have a flip dive blocked by raised boots. Sasha sends her to the floor for a dive with a SCARY landing as Banks came down on her face.

She's fine enough to cover Charlotte for two but the champ sends her outside for a huge moonsault to a standing Sasha. I mean, she barely made contact but dang it looked cool. Back in and Natural Selection gets two so we hit the Figure Four. The hold is rolled over but Charlotte goes under the ropes and bends the hold over the apron. Back in and Sasha flips out of another Figure four to grab the Bank Statement but Charlotte's foot is under the ropes. Another Bank Statement gives Sasha the title in a big surprise at 16:53.

**Rating:** B+. Botches aside, this was a good match and felt like a big deal. Sasha winning feels like a crowning achievement, despite a limited build and WASTING THREE MONTHS ON THAT CHARLOTTE VS. NATALYA FEUD SO WE CAN CHANGE THE TITLE ON RAW. In theory this sets up either a rematch in Brooklyn or maybe a full time Bayley call up for a shot at Summerslam.

Sasha gives a quick speech about how she's earned this and this is a new era.

#### Braun Strowman vs. James Ellsworth

Before the match, James thinks it would be a big win for his career and anyone with two hands can fight. A quick beating sets up a reverse chokeslam to give Strowman the pin at 1:10.

Video on Roman Reigns.

Golden Truth is STILL hunting for Pokemon and find.....the Pittsburgh Penguins logo?

Here are Enzo and Cass for a chat about various raw foods. They're cut off by the Shining Stars of all people and it's time for a match.

#### Shining Stars vs. Enzo Amore/Big Cass

Primo puts Enzo down for all of thirty seconds before the hot tag brings in Cass to clean house. Cass actually gets low bridged to the floor but here are Golden Truth on the Pokemon hunt. The distraction lets Cass kick Epico in the face for the pin at 1:51. These guys were teaming with JOHN CENA last night and now they're here?

Roman and Finn wish each other luck.

#### Finn Balor vs. Roman Reigns

Winner goes to Summerslam to face Rollins for the title. Reigns launches him into the corner to start but Balor snaps his throat across the top. Some kicks to the head don't have much effect on Reigns as he runs Balor over again. The apron boot misses though and Balor's slingshot double stomp has Roman in trouble.

We take a break and come back with Roman powerslamming him for two and grabbing a chinlock. A sitout powerbomb gets two but Balor comes back with a string of kicks for a near fall of his own. The Superman Punch only gets two on Balor and everyone is stunned. Balor gets two off his own off a sunset flip to counter the Razor's Edge bomb. Back to back powerbombs get two more on Finn but Balor grabs a Sling Blade to block the spear. The Coup de Grace gets the big upset pin at 13:57.

**Rating:** B. I liked it better when AJ Styles did this the night after Wrestlemania but it's still a good ending and the right call for a change. There was really no need to do Reigns vs. Rollins again and this is a great way to make Balor seem like a big deal. He doesn't necessarily need to win the title at Summerslam but it's a really smart idea to have him get a big rub like this on his first night on the main roster.

Post match Reigns says he hopes Balor wins the title because he wants another shot at Finn.

**Overall Rating:** B. This was up and down all night but the main event and the title change were enough to swing it upwards. That title change really needed to happen as the rest of the show didn't exactly have a lot going on. The re-debuts were good and the matches made some people fresh players but that doesn't mean the show was all that entertaining. I really liked the lack of authority figures as they just don't need to be there that often. Overall it's a good show but absolutely nothing that blew me away.

### Results

Finn Balor b. Rusev, Cesaro and Kevin Owens – Coup de Grace to Rusev

Nia Jax b. Brit Baker – Legdrop

Roman Reigns b. Sami Zayn, Sheamus and Chris Jericho – Spear to Jericho

Neville b. Curtis Axel – Red Arrow

Sasha Banks b. Charlotte – Bank Statement

Braun Strowman b. James Ellsworth – Reverse chokeslam

Enzo Amore/Big Cass b. Shining Stars – Big boot to Epico

Finn Balor b. Roman Reigns – Coup de Grace

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# **Battleground 2016: It's Battleground!**

## **Battleground 2016**

Date: July 24, 2016

Location: Verizon Center, Washington D.C.

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

This is an interesting show as the Draft has made what was just a pit stop before Summerslam into a nearly meaningless show which happens to have something that could have been a co-main event of Wrestlemania. Other than that we have some nothing midcard matches, six man tags where two of the teams will be split starting tomorrow and a mystery partner. You might call this a mixed bag. Let's get to it.

Pre-Show: Usos vs. Breezango

Just a thrown together match. Jimmy hits a backbreaker on Fandango to

start before it's quickly off to Breeze. Some double teaming lets Breeze snap Jey's throat across the top rope and we hit the chinlock. A few kicks to the face/head drop Breezango and it's off to Jimmy via the hot tag.

Everything breaks down and it's a series of kicks to put Breeze on the floor. Tyler comes back in to save Fandango from an electric chair, only to have Jey cross body both of them. The Superfly Splash gets two on Tyler before another superkick puts Fandango outside. A running superkick looks to set up the Superfly Splash again but Breeze gets his knees up, allowing him to grab a small package for the pin at 5:28.

**Rating:** C+. This was a very fast paced match and above all else the right team won. The Usos don't need to win matches like this one while Breezango needs to get some wins under their belts to actually become an important team. I still like Breezango and they're a great example of making something out of nothing. Why can that almost never happen otherwise?

The opening video shows everyone holding their flags before going to a package on the Shield imploding to set up this match.

#### Charlotte/Dana Brooke vs. Sasha Banks/???

So Sasha has been going for Charlotte's title but keeps having to deal with Dana, hence bringing in a mystery partner. The mystery partner is....Bayley, in one of the worst kept secrets in a long time. Like, since Tuesday. The place goes insane for Bayley so that's certainly the solid debut.

Charlotte and Dana jump them from behind before the bell and Bayley is sent into the barricade. We get the official start with Charlotte hammering away in the corner until Bayley gets in the jumping middle rope elbow. It's off to Sasha who botches a hurricanrana before Charlotte sends her into the middle buckle.

Dana's chinlock doesn't go anywhere so it's off to Bayley who is taken down just as quickly. Bayley and Dana collide as JBL talks about this being a one off appearance for Bayley on the main roster. I really,



really can't imagine that's true. Sasha comes in off the tag and everything breaks down with Charlotte hitting Natural Selection for two on Banks. Dana saves the Bank Statement but Bayley takes her to the floor, setting up the second Bank Statement to make Charlotte tap at 7:24.

**Rating:** C+. This was much more about the crowd reaction than anything else and that worked like a charm. What won't work like a charm is having Bayley just go back to NXT at this point. Is there any real reason to not have her on the main roster full time at this point? She can do the build to Takeover and still do this stuff just fine but for some reason they want to just have this be a one off. Maybe it's to keep Sasha hot, but then again maybe they should have thought of that THREE MONTHS AGO WHEN SHE WAS THE HOTTEST THING IN THE DIVISION AND WE DIDN'T DO THE WAY TOO LONG NATALYA FEUD.

Sasha and Bayley hug post match.

We recap the Wyatt Family vs. New Day. The Wyatts returned with Bray's face turn completely forgotten and went after New Day and their power of positivity message. Bray got in Xavier Woods' head and started to psych him out but with the Wyatts being split by the Draft, most of that has been dropped.

### Wyatt Family vs. New Day

Before the match, New Day says they're just not scared. Woods and Strowman start but it's off to Bray to really scare Xavier. Actually make that Kofi, who dropkicks Wyatt while Woods is frozen in the corner. Rowan comes in with a slam and grabs a head vice before Bray drops his running backplash. A clothesline turns Kofi inside out and Woods has to drop down to the floor in fear. Kofi gets away from Braun and makes the hot tag to Big E. as everything breaks down.

Braun gets kicked to the floor and taken down by a Kofi dive (less than a year ago Dean Ambrose's dive bounced off of him). Woods saves Kofi from Sister Abigail but it's time for the big psychic staredown. It takes Kofi coming in off the top to wake Woods up and he goes off on Bray with a running forearm and right hands in the corner. A top rope splash crushes

Bray and a superkick (SHOT!) puts Erick on the floor. Big E. spears Rowan off the apron but Bray's spider walk freaks Woods out and sets up Sister Abigail for the pin at 8:50.

**Rating:** B. Well that happened. I have no idea what the point is in having these guys win unless they're either splitting up the New Day (stupid) or having....actually that's it for their options. I mean, there's always the chance that this loss means nothing and they'll just have New Day go on like it's nothing, which is probably the direction they're going with for the sake of stupidity.

#### US Title: Rusev vs. Zack Ryder

Rusev is defending after Ryder won a few matches (ignore the clean loss to Sheamus in two minutes of course) and challenged for the title. Lana, now in a tiara, introduces the champ. Ryder is in red, white and blue to really hammer this home. Rusev throws him into the corner to start but Ryder comes back with a middle rope dropkick....which completely misses.

A low superkick drops Ryder and it's time for heavy right hands. Ryder elbows out of a waistlock and fires off some forearms in the corner. A neckbreaker stuns the champ as we're firmly in the false hope portion of the match. Rusev knocks him to the floor but Ryder hits a dropkick off the barricade. Back in and the Rough Ryder sets up the Elbro but Rusev gets the knees up. The jumping superkick and the Accolade put Ryder away at 7:03.

**Rating:** D+. Zack Ryder loses to Rusev because that's what Zack Ryder does. Ryder is getting better at losing to Rusev as he finally broke five minutes against him. I really don't think anyone believed this was going to happen and there was no reason to assume anything else. Ryder isn't going to beat someone like Rusev and it's foolish to think he would.

Post match the beating continues until Mojo Rawley debuts to make the save, thereby setting up nothing at all since he's on Smackdown while Rusev is on Raw.

Seth Rollins comes in to see Mick Foley and Stephanie McMahon (GET SETH AWAY FROM HER! NOW!) and the bosses tell him to bring the title back to

Raw. Rollins isn't worried because he's just that awesome and promises that there will be a bunch of Rollins babies in about nine months.

We recap Sami Zayn vs. Kevin Owens who are fighting because they're Sami Zayn and Kevin Owens. They've hated each other for years now and they still are, though this was supposed to be the final fight until the Draft put them on the same show, negating the purposes of the idea.

### Sami Zayn vs. Kevin Owens

Zayn's attempted Helluva Kick sends Owens to the floor and they immediately start the brawl. Back in and Owens sends him into the corner for two off the Cannonball. Owens even stomps on Sami's hand as we hit the OLE chants. We hit the chinlock with Owens mocking the SAMI chants because he's just that awesome. Back up and the Michinoku Driver gets two on Owens but he's able to break up the flip dive before Sami can dive.

Instead Sami tries the slingshot moonsault but slips up and lands shoulder first on the apron. The shoulder is fine enough for Owens to work it over so you know he's ok. The Blue Thunder Bomb gets two back inside so I'm going to assume Sami is fine. Owens can't get a superplex so he settles for a superkick and Crossface. Sami finally crawls over to the rope and grabs the exploder into the corner. He gets caught on top though and has to escape a Death Valley Driver on the apron, meaning it's the closest thing we'll see to the BRAINBUSTAAAAHHHH in WWE.

Owens beats the count by a few seconds and they slug it out to dueling chants. The diving DDT is broken up and Owens hits a Cannonball with Sami still draped over the bottom rope. I love it when they tweak moves like that. The Bullfrog splash gets two on Sami but he counters the Pop Up Powerbomb into the tornado DDT. Yet another Helluva Kick is countered with another superkick as they keep countering each others' big moves due to being so familiar with one another.

Sami escapes another powerbomb attempt and hits back to back half and half suplexes for two and a standing ovation. The Pop Up Powerbomb connects but Sami gets his foot on the ropes. Owens starts slapping him as Sami says bring it, setting up another exploder into the corner. The Helluva Kick sends Owens falling into Sami's arms, setting up a second

Helluva Kick for the clean pin at 18:26.

**Rating:** A. Can we just give these two the match of the night honors whenever they're on the card? There's such a chemistry here and I'd love to see them as partners who can't stand each other. Owens is almost being turned face by sheer force of the crowd but it's almost impossible to go against someone as loveable as Sami. Either way, great match with a great story and outstanding action to go with it.

Cole says Sami has exorcized his demons by beating Owens. Those must be quick rise demons as he pinned Owens about a month ago on Raw in a singles match.

Pre-show recap.

### Natalya vs. Becky Lynch

Fallout from Natalya vs. Charlotte when Natalya turned on Becky. Natalya tries to bail to start but she's just suckering Becky in and scoring with a dropkick. It's already time to go after the knee with a side leg lock but she has to get out of a quick Disarm-Her. A stomp onto the leg sets up another leglock and Natalya gets in a quick nipup. An enziguri with the good leg gives Becky a breather before the Bexploder gets two. Becky gets two more off a missile dropkick but it bangs up the leg, setting up the Sharpshooter for the submission at 9:00.

**Rating:** C-. I wasn't feeling this one, especially after the classic beforehand. Natalya winning is fine and they did a good story with the leg and such but it's still just a match with a pretty lame story. I have no idea what they're going to do with the women on Smackdown but PLEASE don't bring in a second title at this point, especially with how much the talent falls off after these two.

Shane McMahon and Daniel Bryan give Dean Ambrose a pep talk.

### Intercontinental Title: Darren Young vs. The Miz

Young is challenging after winning a battle royal. He also has Bob Backlund in his corner in an attempt to make Young great again. Ignore the lack of preceding greatness. Young wrestles him down to the mat

before getting two off a neckbreaker. Miz shoves him off the top to take over and then grabs a headlock.

Miz's corner clothesline is cut off with another clothesline. The Crossface Chickenwing sends Miz bailing to the floor but Backlund won't let him leave. Maryse slaps Backlund and they both go down, only to have Backlund rip his shirt off. Miz goes after Backlund so Young grabs a cobra clutch on the floor as the bell rings (I think for a DQ?) at 8:40.

**Rating:** D. Well that happened and we can add another entry to the list of things that seem to be setting up a rematch but there's no logical way to have the rematch happen under the current rules because HAHA DRAFT. Young shouldn't have won the title here and it wouldn't have made sense for him to, though the Backlund thing has some more mileage in it, especially if it gives Young a personality.

Young chokes Miz out and looks at his hands ala Backlund in 1994.

We recap Cena/Amore/Cass vs. the Club. Cena was tired of getting beaten down by the trio so Enzo and Big Cass came out to help him, setting this up. Again though, the Club was split up so this doesn't exactly have the same meaning.

#### The Club vs. John Cena/Enzo Amore/Big Cass

Enzo says his team is 4G and they're very well connected. He keeps going on a rant with life advice (always lie on your resume and never make eye contact with someone while eating a banana) and also suggests a good dentist and therapist. Cena is dying in the corner listening to this and Cass tells the crowd to give it up for Enzo after that performance. Cass insults AJ's haircut and suggests that he make a lunch like a soccer mom ("Make sure to cut the crust off."). Then he can take the kids to Raw and remember the time they took a beating in Washington D.C.

Enzo and AJ start things off and we hit the SOCCER MOM chants. That earns Enzo a dropkick to the face so it's off to Cass to face Anderson. We get the standard Cass throws Enzo at people spot as Cena isn't sure what to think. Cass tosses Styles out as well before slamming Enzo onto Anderson, leaving Cena wondering why he can't get a tag. Things settle down to

Gallows working on Enzo with his heavy offense. Anderson comes in with a bicycle kick to the head (Karl: "HI YAH!") to set up a chinlock.

The beating continues until Gallows misses a splash, setting up the hot tag to Cena. A very quick AA attempt on Styles is countered into a Pele as everything breaks down. Gallows hits a chokebomb on Cass before Cena and Luke play pass the Enzo, only to have AJ hit the forearm on Gallows by mistake. The AA gets two on AJ with Karl making the save, setting up a spinebuster onto the table.

Cena dives back in at nine and the Styles Clash gets another near fall with Cass making the save. The Club takes out Cass so Enzo volunteers to fight them himself. Karl is sent into the post but Gallows kicks Enzo in the face, only to have Cena come back in and take Luke out. Styles comes back in but gets caught in a super AA for the pin at 14:23.

**Rating:** B. So that's your setup for Cena vs. AJ II which probably should be for the Smackdown World Title if such a thing exists. Cena pinning AJ in a tag match is fine and sets things moving forward a bit more but the bigger thing here is Enzo and Cass looking like they're on a much higher level than they were just a few weeks ago. These guys are looking like something important, which you never expect to see for people who debuted just three and a half months ago.

It's time for the Highlight Reel with the returning Randy Orton. Randy really seems happy to be back and is definitely here as a face. He talks about being gone for nine months to get back to this point and he's stuck here with this loser. Jericho says Orton being in this ring with him puts Orton on a different level. That makes Orton think he should drop Jericho with an RKO out of nowhere so Jericho sums up the last few months for him, including the tacks going into his back a little while ago.

Jericho offers the Gift of Jericho and Orton walks up to him, shaking Jericho up a bit. Orton says it was just to see the hair because it looks like Ellen DeGeneres'. We see a clip of Lesnar talking about hurting people but Orton is ready to go to Suplex City. See, it takes twenty suplexes to get there but it only takes one RKO to go to Viperville, NO ENHANCEMENT NEEDED. Even the crowd gasps at that one. Jericho suggests

that Orton is in trouble and teases Orton about the RKO, which eventually hits, albeit not out of nowhere. This took WAY longer than it should have but that enhancement line was great.

We recap the Shield triple threat which is well over a few years in the making. The short version consists of Rollins returning from knee surgery and taking the title from Reigns, only to have Ambrose take it away that same night. This set up the triple threat but Reigns has been suspended for a month due to a Wellness violation.

### WWE World Title: Roman Reigns vs. Seth Rollins vs. Dean Ambrose

Ambrose is defending but before we can get going, here are all four authority figures (because there are four authority figures in WWE). We get the big match intros and the three way staredown before Rollins is knocked to the floor. Ambrose rolls Reigns up for two and eats a big clothesline for his efforts.

Rollins gets caught in a Samoan Drop but Ambrose takes them both down as they're only just out of first gear. Roman is sent outside and we get Rollins vs. Ambrose for the third time this week. They head to the floor as well with Ambrose going into the steps and Roman going into the barricade. This is the rather dull part of the match where they haven't cranked it up yet and there's clearly at least another ten minutes in the match so we're kind of stuck waiting.

All three wind up in the timekeeper's area for a bit before Ambrose missile dropkicks Reigns for two. The standing elbow drop gets two but Rollins comes back in to break up the cover. Roman gets in a Superman Punch to Rollins but Ambrose runs him over to put all three down. Now it's Reigns getting double teamed with both guys scoring off running dives to the floor. We see the locker rooms watching (I'm sure that's completely authentic) as Reigns is powerbombed through the announcers' table.

Back in and the Buckle Bomb is countered with a hurricanrana into the corner to put both guys down. Rollins is still able to run up the corner for the superplex into the falcon's arrow for the first near fall. Reigns comes back in to break up a superplex on Rollins, setting up a sitout

powerbomb for two on Seth. The champ ducks the Superman Punch but can't hit Dirty Deeds, allowing the Punch to knock Dean outside. Rollins gets a very close fall off a Pedigree to Reigns, only to have the spear cut him in half. Ambrose scores with a quick Dirty Deeds to pin Reigns at 18:05.

**Rating:** B+. This started slowly but got a lot better as things went on. I'm really hoping that's not it for the Reigns punishment as just losing in a pay per view main event isn't exactly the worst thing in the world. Ambrose winning makes sense as Smackdown needs something to fight over and I'm sure Raw will still get their shots in the future. This would have been better served on a bigger stage but it really did need to happen.

JBL goes NUTS with a big rant about how great Smackdown is, completely forgetting how much he can't stand Ambrose. The Smackdown locker room comes out because this allegedly means something.

**Overall Rating:** B+. As is so often the case anymore, strong wrestling by the younger guys brings these shows up a few notches. The main event was solid and you had a classic in the middle of the show plus a very fun moment in the opener. The midcard stuff really holds this back though as there's a stretch in there of Natalya vs. Lynch which should have been on the pre-show to help keep this from ending at 11:15.

I'm fine with extra wrestling but there was really no need for the bonus tag when you could move something to the pre-show instead to free up some time. Still though, good stuff as WWE's PPVs continue to be better than they have any right to be. Check out Zayn vs. Owens though, in case you somehow haven't seen them fight before.

### Results

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

Wyatt Family b. New Day – Sister Abigail to Woods

Rusev b. Zack Ryder – Accolade

Sami Zayn b. Kevin Owens – Helluva Kick



Natalya b. Becky Lynch – Sharpshooter

The Miz b. Darren Young via DQ when Bob Backlund interfered

John Cena/Enzo Amore/Big Cass b. The Club – Super AA to Styles

Dean Ambrose b. Roman Reigns and Seth Rollins – Dirty Deeds to Reigns

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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 backslash 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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# Smackdown – July 14, 2016: Going Out Smackdown Style

## **Smackdown**

Date: July 14, 2016

Location: Van Andel Arena, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, Byron Saxton, Jerry Lawler

This is the end of an era as we're at the final taped episode of Smackdown before it moves over to the live world of Tuesday nights on USA. We're also closing in on Battleground but we can't actually do much about the main event since Roman Reigns is still suspended. That sounds like fodder for a tag match. Let's get to it.

Earlier today, Kevin Owens found a birthday card for his son from Sami



Zayn. All Sami gave his son was \$20 Canadian. That money goes in Kevin's pocket and tonight Dean Ambrose is going into the hospital.

Charlotte and Dana Brooke get out of a limo and promise to have Dana take care of Sasha Banks tonight.

Miz is ready to make Darren Young great Again on MizTV.

Dean Ambrose might be leaving Smackdown due to the Draft but tonight he's going out by destroying Kevin Owens one last time.

### Sasha Banks vs. Dana Brooke

Sasha has already beaten Dana once but she has to do it again to get a title shot at Charlotte, who is in Dana's corner. Banks starts fast with a rollup for two before being sent outside where a Charlotte distraction lets Dana take over. The Samoan Driver (still needs a name) is broken up and Sasha's high cross body gets two. Dana tries a rollup but gets caught in the Bank Statement for the tap at 3:48.

**Rating:** D+. This was mainly rollups and uninspired brawling though Sasha's high cross body looked good. I'm not quite sure what's gained by having Sasha beat her twice in a week but at least we're not heading for a rubber match or anything ridiculous like that. I'd assume we get Sasha vs. Charlotte at Summerslam as Sasha in Brooklyn is going to work so well.

We see Shane McMahon being named Smackdown Commissioner. He's already picked his General Manager.

### Dolph Ziggler vs. Rusev

Non-title. Ziggler takes it to the mat to start but Rusev runs him over and we take a break. Back with Ziggler fighting back with right hands but getting dropped with ease all over again. A powerbomb gets two on Ziggler and it's time to stand around a bit. Ziggler grabs a sleeper for a few moments before realizing that his running DDT and the Fameasser might do some more damage. Rusev gets in his superkick but here's Zack Ryder for a distraction, allowing Ziggler to roll Rusev up for the pin at 8:57.

**Rating:** C. This would be your weekly meaningless midcard champion loss unless there's a big surprise with Ziggler being added to the title match, though I can't picture that happening. Above all else though, it makes me wonder what the point was in having Sheamus beat Ryder clean on Monday. Who does that benefit and how does it make me want to see Ryder get a title shot at Battleground? Either don't do the match or have Ryder win again, especially if there's nothing for Sheamus to do.

We see the New Day at the Wyatt Compound from Monday.

#### Enzo Amore/Big Cass vs. AJ Styles/Karl Anderson

Enzo and AJ get things going but it's quickly off to Cass to clean house. AJ gets backdropped and a running clothesline puts Karl on the floor. The big toss sends Enzo over the top and onto the Club as we take a break. Back with Anderson getting a shot to Enzo's throat and it's time for the beatdown to begin.

AJ starts going after AJ's knee with a springboard stomp as the leg is over the ropes. Amore breaks up a springboard but Karl dives over to break up the hot tag attempt to Cass. A shot to the face drops AJ but it's Gallows breaking up the tag on the floor. That earns him a big boot to the face from Cass, only to have AJ grab a Calf Crusher for the submission on Enzo at 10:53.

**Rating:** C+. Just a glorified preview for the six man at the pay per view and there's nothing wrong with that. I'm really glad that they went with Styles instead of Gallows here as it can get really tiring seeing the same match over and over again, especially with Gallows and Anderson who were run into the ground against the Usos. Finally, it's a really good sign that Cass has Enzo around to take the losses. Cass has potential and a bunch of tag team losses would hinder that.

According to spoilers, there was supposed to be a Zack Ryder vs. Alberto Del Rio match at this point but there's no mention of such a match.

#### Kalisto vs. Tyler Breeze

Kalisto starts fast of course but a Fandango distraction lets Breeze drop

him throat first across the top rope. We hit the chinlock on Kalisto for a bit before he makes his quick comeback with the kicks to the chest and the corkscrew cross body. Tyler gets two off a kick but the Salida Del Sol is good enough to put Tyler away at 3:15.

**Rating:** D+. I'm not entirely sure where this is going and I'm glad Kalisto got a pin, even though I'm a Breeze fan and would love to see him go somewhere. At least the tag team has given him something to do, even if it's a low level act. A feud with the Lucha Dragons, who are just as worthless, is at least a step up over Golden Truth.

It's time for MizTV with guests Bob Backlund and Darren Young. Miz shows us some Backlund clips from the Network. The fans give him an ovation so Miz is ready with a Darren Young video package. That would be a test pattern though because Darren hasn't had any highlights. Darren is fine with that because his highlight will be winning the Intercontinental Title. Backlund says Miz can never be a great champion because he isn't a role model. Miz rips on Backlund for sounding like Forrest Gump but Darren won't stand for someone disrespecting his life coach. A brawl is teased but doesn't go anywhere.

Sasha Banks is getting a concussion test (an hour and a half after her match) when Charlotte and Dana come in. Charlotte says not yet on the title shot so Sasha should find a partner if she can.

#### Kevin Owens vs. Dean Ambrose

Non-title with Seth Rollins on commentary. And pretty much never mind as Rollins interferes for the DQ at 33 seconds.

Sami Zayn runs out and I smell a tag match.

#### Kevin Owens/Seth Rollins vs. Dean Ambrose/Sami Zayn

The match has been announced during the break by someone not mentioned. But then again we need a GM/Commissioner/whatever else they're going to change the name to a few months after the Draft. Owens attacks Ambrose at the bell and takes him outside for a beating. Back in and Rollins cranks on the neck before it's off to Owens to miss the backsplash. Sami gets in

a tag and we have a double dive to take the villains out.

Back from a break with Sami in trouble in the corner but he pretty easily gets away for the tag off to Ambrose. The standing elbow drop gets two on Owens and everything breaks down. Seth misses his springboard knee and gets taken down with a neckbreaker for two. Sami chases Owens to the floor with the threat of a Helluva Kick but Kevin catches Dean's suicide dive. Back in and Sami counters the Pedigree into a good looking tornado DDT. The Helluva Kick misses though and now the Pedigree is enough for the pin on Zayn at 13:18.

**Rating:** B-. Well that's a perfect way to go out for Smackdown if there ever was one. The match doesn't really change anything but it was a fun little match with the best possible combination for the pin. Sami losing doesn't change anything and it keeps the World Champion from taking a pin.

Ambrose saves Sami from an apron powerbomb and brawls with Rollins to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. I would tell Smackdown to never change but that seems a bit stupid at this point. If nothing else, Smackdown went out like it always does: with nothing too bad and enough good wrestling to warrant glancing at it while it's background noise the rest of the time. Not too bad for the final taped show, but hopefully it gets some better treatment live.

## Results

Sasha Banks b. Dana Brooke – Bank Statement

Dolph Ziggler b. Rusev – Rollup

AJ Styles/Karl Anderson b. Enzo Amore/Karl Anderson – Calf Crusher to Amore

Kalisto b. Tyler Breeze – Salida Del Sol

Dean Ambrose b. Kevin Owens via DQ when Seth Rollins interfered

Kevin Owens/Seth Rollins b. Dean Ambrose/Sami Zayn – Pedigree to Zayn

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# 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 kneeling 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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# Smackdown – July 7, 2016: Pre-Draft Momentum

## Smackdown

Date: July 7, 2016

Location: Huntington Center, Toledo, Ohio

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, Jerry Lawler, Byron Saxton

This is a fresh start for a change as Monday was a completely worthless show thanks to the Fourth of July. We're getting closer to Battleground but more importantly we're less than two weeks away from the Draft which resets everything anyway. In other words there's no way of knowing how good this will be so let's get to it.

The Club is conferencing.

Chris Jericho is trying to find his blue scarf.

Sami Zayn is ready to beat Jericho tonight and make him second best.

Seth Rollins arrives and runs into Jey Uso. Some Samoan family insults are made and a match gets the same treatment. I could go for these quick vignettes becoming a regular thing. It worked for Saturday Night's Main Event and it works here too.

Opening sequence.

Here's Dean Ambrose to say he wants to try his hand as a ring announcer

because he could be a taller Howard Finkel.

### Jey Uso vs. Seth Rollins

Seth is apparently from a place where he didn't get enough hugs as a child. That's sad. Jey takes over with an early armbar as the fans (or at least the canned versions) are behind the Samoan. Seth gets two off a backbreaker as Dean plugs his new t-shirt and the Seth Rollins ice cream bars but apparently they don't taste very good. A high crossbody gets two on Rollins and there's a suicide dive to take Rollins out again. Dean says that's five minutes (not quite) and asks Seth if it's time to go to a commercial.

Back with Seth hitting his running knee off the apron and throwing on a chinlock. Seth goes to the middle rope but Dean makes an announcement that a 1997 Ford is about to be towed for being in the fire lane. This one doesn't work as well as Seth scores with an enziguri, only to run into a Samoan Drop. The Superfly Splash hits knees though and the Pedigree puts Jey away at 10:25.

**Rating:** C. Dean was amusing enough here and it's better than just having him do guest commentary for the tenth time Rollins has a match. It's also a good sign that the Usos can work as singles wrestlers and do well enough as so many teams can't do anything without their partner around.

Dean: "The winner of the match, the human equivalent of a root canal."

Seth bails at the threat of a fight so Ambrose can't raise his hand.

Dean: "I'll just raise this instead." And he holds up the title.

We look back at Sami and Kevin Owens beating Jericho up two weeks ago.

### Zack Ryder vs. Sheamus

Ryder has a new rock version of his music and it's actually working for me. Sheamus pounds him down with forearms and clotheslines to start, followed by the forearms to the chest. A slam onto the apron makes things even worse but Ryder kicks him in the face and comes back with more forearms. That just earns him an Irish Curse before Sheamus loads up a superplex. Ryder knocks him off and drops the Elbro for the completely

clean pin at 2:43. I know Sheamus isn't what he used to be but this is a big drop off. At least Ryder is getting a push though and that's a good thing.

Ryder wants to get his US Title back and issues the challenge to Rusev.

Baron Corbin video.

Rusev accepts the challenge.

### Becky Lynch vs. Natalya

No match as Natalya jumps Becky from behind and puts her in the Sharpshooter. Naturally she tells Becky to tap, which always makes me chuckle.

We recap the Wyatt Family and New Day from Monday.

Xavier Woods is worried about going to the Wyatt Compound because they have no idea what's going to happen there. Woods isn't happy with what his brothers have decided but he'll stand by them. Did the Wyatts send them directions to get there? Otherwise we could be in for a long scavenger hunt.

Here are Enzo and Big Cass to talk about deciding to help John Cena on Raw. That wasn't about them saving Cena or any personal issue with the Club. Monday was about sending a message to the Club to tell them that they can't beat down anyone they want. This brings out the Club with AJ saying they owe the Club an apology for interrupting them as they beat up John Cena.

Anderson thinks they should beat up Enzo and Cass, then hit some golf balls, have some strawberry shortcake and then BEAT UP JOHN CENA. AJ wants to fight Enzo, who says they're not a good original or a good remix. After one round with Sugar Ray Amore, they'll walk out a diabetic.

### AJ Styles vs. Enzo Amore

AJ wrestles him down and smirks a lot, only to have Enzo do the same right back. Enzo sends him outside for a big dive but trips on the top



for a big crash onto the floor. Thankfully he gets up and is fine this time with AJ hammering away in the corner. Enzo gets in a dropkick but AJ easily takes him down for a chinlock. Back up and the tornado DDT is countered into a suplex to send Amore crashing into the corner. The big guys get in a fight on the floor as AJ crotches Enzo, setting up the Styles Clash for the pin at 5:37.

**Rating:** C-. This was fine despite the ending not being the biggest surprise in the world. Enzo is fine for a spot like this as he isn't expected to beat almost anyone on his own but he can do such an effective job of talking that he can get back whatever he lost in all of ten seconds. The six man could be a lot of fun.

Apparently Owens stole Jericho's scarf because he wanted to see if he could get one for his wife. Owens had some popcorn earlier and got the thing all greasy so Jericho demands money to have it cleaned. Kevin drops some change into Jericho's hand but Owens makes sure to get the button back. Jericho wants one more quarter but Owens gives him a Jolly Rancher. Oh and he'll be ringside for Jericho vs. Sami later. Jericho thinks it smells like soup. This was a completely face promo from Owens and he was just as good as always.

### The Miz vs. Kalisto

Non-title. This is the result of Kalisto being the one to throw potato salad at Maryse on Monday. Apparently she's allergic so this could have been an international incident. Kalisto starts fast with a top rope corkscrew armdrag to send Miz outside where Maryse prevents a dive. Miz sends him into the steps and we take an early break. Back with Miz working on the back with some forearms before he charges into Kalisto's raised boots. Miz comes right back with a slingshot powerbomb for two before sidestepping the corkscrew forearm. The Skull Crushing Finale puts Kalisto away at 7:54.

**Rating:** D+. So much for the Kalisto experiment as he's gone from defending the US Title at Wrestlemania to losing a match started over potato salad. He's just the latest victim of the writers throwing a toy out of the crib and it's still pretty sad to see. They had something

there but so much for that because it's time to go with....well nothing actually.

Sasha Banks talks about how awesome she is when Charlotte comes in dressed as Banks. Insults are exchanged and Sasha vs. Dana is set for Monday. Charlotte throws down her Sasha gear because it's not her look.

We get Monday's Darren Young/Bob Backlund segment. This has to be close to the last one.

Brock Lesnar's official opponent for Summerslam is.....Randy Orton. Scott Stanford, Booker T., and Corey Graves preview the match a bit from WWE world headquarters.

Golden Truth plugs Sonic with Truth putting the food on top of a ladder to get ready for Money in the Bank. This was no "we got a couple of taters" from Monday.

#### Sami Zayn vs. Chris Jericho

Kevin Owens is at ringside and starts ripping on Byron before his music even ends. Owens: "Hi Sami! Hope you have a good match! I hope you break your ankle." Jericho wristlocks him down for a bit until Sami scores with three straight armdrags. They head outside with Sami hitting his barricade moonsault but Jericho punches him in the face and mocks the OLE chants as we take a break.

Back with the Lionsault (Owens: "I taught him how to do that.") connecting for two before we hit the chinlock. Jericho: "WHERE'S THE OLE??" Sami comes back but Jericho bails to the floor, only to take one of those running clotheslines. Back in and Owens talks about wanting to see Jericho kick Sami in the face, which is exactly what Chris does a second later.

Sami tornado DDTs Jericho to the floor for the big flip dive but Sami goes to take out Owens so Jericho can take over again. The exploder suplex sends Jericho into the corner but the Helluva Kick has to take Owens down. Jericho's Walls attempt is countered into a quick rollup to give Sami the upset pin at 12:12.

**Rating:** B-. This is exactly the kind of match you have Jericho around for. He's been built up for the last few months and now you have a young guy like Sami get a big win that makes him seem important. Owens interfering was a nice touch but the key here was Sami having Jericho beat with the Helluva Kick before having to recover and then win with the rollup. In other words, Sami was the better man and didn't just win off a fluke.

Jericho lays Sami out and Owens comes in for a Pop Up Powerbomb to leave Sami laying as the show ends.

**Overall Rating:** C. There was an energy to this show that has been missing in the last few weeks and that's a good sign going into the Draft. Above all else though they actually had some stuff happen here with the Lesnar announcement and Ryder challenging Rusev for the title. It's the start of making people feel like they need to see Smackdown instead of it just being a show that they'll stop on if they flip over to USA by mistake. There's a long way to go but hopefully this was a first step.

### Results

Seth Rollins b. Jey Uso – Pedigree

Zack Ryder b. Sheamus – Elbro

AJ Styles b. Enzo Amore – Styles Clash

Miz b. Kalisto – Skull Crushing Finale

Sami Zayn b. Chris Jericho – Rollup

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