

Smackdown – July 19, 2013: Deja Vu All Over Again

Smackdown

Date: July 19, 2013

Location: Dunkin' Donuts Center, Providence, Rhode Island

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

With Money in the Bank passed we're now in the period of waiting for Sandow to cash in. After Monday night we have some of the main events set for Summerslam which means we need some blue matches to balance it out. Also Ziggy is officially a face after breaking up with AJ and being destroyed by Langston. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence again, which I think is the norm now.

Here's Teddy Long to get things going. Tonight there's going to be a new general manager named and Teddy wants to throw his name in the hat. He doesn't know how good he'd be but he'll be better than Vickie Guerrero. Vince will be here in person tonight to give Teddy a job evaluation. Teddy polls the crowd who seems to like the idea of Long being the boss long term.

This brings out the returning Booker T to thank Teddy for filling in while Booker was out getting triceps surgery. Booker is back to be the GM now but here's Vince with something to say on the subject. Vince asks Teddy what match he would make to impress the fans so Teddy suggests Axel vs. Jericho for the Intercontinental Title. Booker's offer is Del Rio vs. Orton, which brings out Raw GM Brad Maddox. He thinks he should be GM of both shows because he was going to suggest both matches as well as the Smackdown return of RVD.

Vince's pick for the permanent Smackdown GM: Vickie freaking Guerrero.

Well of course she is, because if there's one thing WWE needs it's ANOTHER heel boss character. She blames the fans for getting her fired from Raw so she hates us all. Vickie goes into crazy mode, yelling about how she runs this show and is going to take everything out on the fans. You know, because we haven't done this same idea for the last year or so on Raw.

Jack Swagger vs. Dolph Ziggler

Before the match we get a clip from Raw of Ziggler breaking up with AJ and then having her cost him a match against Del Rio. A rollup sends Swagger to the floor as AJ and Langston are watching in the back. Back in and Dolph pounds away in the corner and takes Jack down with a dropkick. Cesaro trips Dolph off the apron and hits an uppercut, earning him an ejection along with Colter. Back in and a sunset flip gets two for Dolph but he has to escape the Patriot Lock. The Zig Zag is good for the pin at 3:13.

Rating: D+. Ziggler was fine here and the fans loved him which is the right idea. It's a lot easier to get behind a feud with Langston instead of Del Rio as the matches and promos will actually be entertaining. This is a big upgrade for Dolph as he can go after the title later on and get some character development against Big E.

Post match Ziggler says he's sorry he dumped AJ on Monday because he should have done it a lot sooner. That's the kind of stuff he's been needing to say to help cement his face turn.

AJ freaks out in the back and throws a lot of chairs. Langston grabs her to calm her down and they look at each other but he kisses her on the forehead.

Seth Rollins/Roman Reigns vs. Usos

Non-title. The Usos charge the ring and the fight is on before the bell. Ambrose comes in as well until Mark Henry comes out to clear the ring. The good guys stand tall and Henry is a face.

Daniel Bryan vs. Wade Barrett

The place goes NUTS for Bryan. Barrett catches a cross body and puts Bryan stomach first on the top rope for some forearm to the back. A slingshot into a backbreaker gets two and it's off to a bow and arrow submission. Bryan fires off kicks in the corner and backflips over Barrett, only to be caught in the Winds of Change which are countered into a crucifix into the YES Lock for the submission at 1:54.

Maddox runs into Vickie in the back and Vickie slaps him in the face for taking her job.

Time for MizTV with guest Paul Heyman. Heyman says he doesn't want to answer any of Miz's questions but is cut off by a CM Punk chant. The fans don't realize how hard this is for Heyman because he still loves Punk. He advises Punk to stay down and leave the WWE Universe behind because if he comes back Brock Lesnar will take his head off. Miz doesn't believe a thing Heyman is saying because he swore on the life of his children and still lied. He walks out but Heyman introduces Axel as the man who beat Miz at MITB.

Intercontinental Title: Curtis Axel vs. Chris Jericho

Axel takes over with a headlock to start but Jericho dropkicks him down. A top rope elbow to the jaw gets two for Jericho but Axel punches him back down. Axel cranks on an armbar but gets caught in a northern lights suplex for two. Jericho tries to jump over the champion in the corner but gets clotheslined in the back of the head for two instead. The Codebreaker is countered into a spinebuster for two but Jericho sends him into the corner as we take a break.

Back with Jericho fighting out of a chinlock but going shoulder first into the post to stop his comeback. Axel misses a middle rope elbow and Jericho gets two off a quick enziguri to make Heyman even more nervous. Axel comes back with the McGillicutter for two but misses a dropkick, allowing the Lionsault to get two. Axel blocks the top rope ax handle into a PerfectPlex but Jericho counters into a Walls attempt.

Heyman distracts Jericho into dropping the hold but the second attempt has Axel in a lot of trouble. Curtis hangs on for a very long time and finally crawls over to the ropes. He goes to the floor but gets caught by a suicide dive from the Canadian. As they head back in though Heyman shouts at Jericho, allowing Axel to hit the neckbreaker/cutter for the pin at 9:15 shown of 12:00.

Rating: C. This was a decent back and forth match but Jericho going after the Intercontinental Title is hard to get into anymore. Axel still isn't where they want him to be but he's not a total disaster either. This was a fine enough way to kill fifteen minutes and the fans got into the Walls so there isn't much to complain about here.

Post match Ryback comes out and destroys Jericho with a Shell Shock. This is Jericho's last appearance for awhile as he's going to be on tour with Fozzy.

Here's Damien Sandow to talk about forgiveness with quotes from Gandhi. He did NOT screw Cody in the Money in the Bank match, which makes him wonder why Cody attacked him on Raw. We get a clip from Raw but Sandow says he isn't going to hold this against Cody. That would make him a mouth breathing knuckle dragging halfwit like the audience. He invites Cody out here to talk through this because they're still best friends.

Cody gets in the ring but Sandow says there's no explanation required because he's forgiven. Damien did prevent Cody from being Mr. Money in the Bank but Sandow has an olive branch for him: Cody can be the keeper of the case until Sandow is ready to cash it in. Cody has earned this but

he hits Sandow in the head with the case, sending Damien running off. Rhodes throws the case at him and the fans seem quite pleased.

Rob Van Dam vs. Darren Young

Darren takes him down with an armdrag worth millions of dollars. Van Dam hits his step over kick and a standing moonsault for two, sending Young out to the floor. Back in and Titus distracts RVD's Rolling Thunder attempt, allowing Young to take over for a bit. Van Dam comes back with a kick to the head and a springboard spinning cross body for two. A springboard kick to the face puts Young down and after kicking Titus to the floor, Van Dam hits the Five Star for the pin at 3:16.

Rating: D+. Not much to see here again but Van Dam getting another win makes sense. Also it's nice to see people like the Players being used to put over bigger stars. A loss to a former world champion doesn't hurt their credibility at all so why not do it more often? I still don't see the appeal of Young but Titus at least has charisma.

The Raw ReBound focuses about the Wyatt Family.

Vickie offers to bury the hatchet with Teddy but she's just kidding and has Teddy escorted out by security.

Big Show returns on Raw.

Alberto Del Rio vs. Randy Orton

Non-title again. Orton rains down punches in the corner to start but Del Rio counters into the armbreaker over the ropes. He stomps away on Orton and chokes on the ropes for a few seconds. Orton bails to the floor to hold his arm but he drops Del Rio ribs first onto the barricade. Alberto whips him into the steps but Orton dropkicks Del Rio out of the air back inside. He loads up the powerslam but Del Rio holds the ropes to send

Orton to the mat.

The armbreaker doesn't go on full as Orton is in the ropes and Del Rio is getting frustrated. A backbreaker gets two on the champion but the Elevated DDT is countered by an enziguuru for two. Del Rio kicks him in the shoulder and loads up an RK0 of his own, only to be countered into the powerslam for two. The Elevated DDT connects but the RK0 is countered into a Backstabber for two. Not that it matters as Orton rolls out of the armbreaker, ducks the superkick and hits the RK0 for the pin at 8:50.

Rating: C. Del Rio is officially a jobber to the stars. There was almost no chance he was going to beat Orton here and he lost clean to the RK0 after two straight wins where he escaped through interference. The match was ok but nothing more than that as the ending was barely in doubt at all. Both guys were their usual selves here and didn't seem all that interested in trying.

Overall Rating: D+. The show was just there this week with some ok matches but nothing we haven't seen before. This is the kind of show that made Smackdown very boring for a long time and I really hope that doesn't become the standard again. Vickie being GM again made me roll my eyes as this is her fourth stint as full time boss of a show. That sums up this episode: we've seen all this before.

Results

Dolph Ziggler b. Jack Swagger – Zig Zag

Daniel Bryan b. Wade Barrett – YES Lock

Curtis Axel b. Chris Jericho – Neckbreaker into a cutter

Rob Van Dam b. Darren Young – Five Star Frog Splash

Randy Orton b. Alberto Del Rio – RK0

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Thought of the Day: It's The Story, Not The Characters

The Divas are teaching me something. AJ vs. Kaitlyn started out as a feud I had zero interest in and that I usually rolled my eyes at. Over time though, the story has won me over. I still don't care about Kaitlyn, but I care about how she's been abused and made fun of and I want to see her destroy AJ because of it. It's the first story in the Divas division in months if not years and it's working like a charm. Think about it: how many times has the Divas Title match been set up by a one off #1 contenders match or a lame battle royal? Now how many times has it been because of some personal issue? Which do you care about more?

It's the story that sells the feud.

NXT – June 26, 2013: The Show Before The Show

NXT

Date: June 26, 2013

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: William Regal, Tom Phillips

The focus shifts back to the titles tonight as Bo Dallas and Big E. Langston both return to the NXT Arena after their title match two weeks ago. We also have Dawson'Dylan vs. Ohno/Graves for a future title shot against the Wyatt Family. This is a pretty stacked show by NXT standards so let's get to it.

Big E. Langston vs. Aiden English

Langston slams him down twice and the Big Ending finishes English in 42 seconds.

Another Big Ending is good for the five count. Langston goes to leave but comes back in and hits a third Big Ending for a second five count.

Emma is blowing bubbles in the back and says her plan for the match tonight is to win. She says Renee can't have her bubbles but can hold them while Emma has her match.

NXT Women's Title Tournament First Round: Emma vs. Aksana

Aksana takes her to the mat to start and gets two off a backbreaker. Emma avoids a charge in the corner and slides into a sunset flip for two. Aksana works on the arm but the match turns into a catfight with neither being able to take over. Off to a headscissors on Emma before Aksana takes her into the corner for some gyrating. Emma kicks her to the mat and hooks a bridging Indian deathlock called the Dilemma for the tap out at 3:38.

Rating: D. Aksana looks great in her outfits but the girl is a

disaster in the ring. Thankfully they don't treat her like anything serious and she's just there to fill in a spot when needed. Emma continues to be entertaining by being so goofy that it's hard not to chuckle at her. She's getting better and better in the ring as well.

Emma brings some kids in the ring to dance with her.

Leo Kruger is hard to understand. Everything changes next.

Dante Dash vs. Leo Kruger

Dash takes him to the corner to start as we hear about Kruger being a mercenary. Leo pulls him down to the mat and drives some knees into Dash's shoulder to take over. Back up and Kruger bends Dash's arm over the shoulder before sending him into the post. The shoulder goes into the post again and a big clothesline puts Dash down. Kruger's GC3 (seated arm/triceps pull) gets the submission at 2:46. Squash.

The Ascension will rise. Again.

Mickey Keegan vs. Bo Dallas

Dallas takes him down with an armdrag for two as the crowd is SILENT. A pair of atomic drops and a dropkick put Keegan down again and some forearms set up a climbing the corner bulldog. Dallas hits the belly to belly for the pin at 1:47. The fans do not care at all.

Post match Leo Kruger comes in and lays out Keegan before reaching for the title.

Kassius Ohno/Corey Graves vs. Scott Dawson/Garrett Dylan

The winners get a shot at the Wyatt Family at some point to be announced. Ohno starts with Dawson with Kassius cranking on the arm. Off to Graves for more arm cranking before Ohno takes him down with a headlock. Graves comes back in to work on the arm as Phillips inaccurately says the Wyatt Family is undefeated as a tag team. Dawson finally escapes and takes Graves down to bring in Dylan for a neckbreaker for two.

We take a break and come back with Graves still in trouble as Dawson and Dylan continue to cut the ring in half. Dylan hooks a chinlock before a clothesline gets two for Dawson. A jawbreaker gets Graves out of trouble and it's back to Ohno to clean the lower half of the house. A kind of spinning release suplex gets two for Kassius but Dylan makes a blind tag and the trailer boys hit Southern Pride for two. Now it's Ohno in trouble with Dawson getting two off another clothesline.

Dylan comes in to crank on the neck as Regal actually acknowledges a YOU CAN'T WRESTLE chant. Ohno fights up but can't make the tag after sunset flipping Dylan. An elbow to the jaw is enough for the tag to Graves and the fans aren't all that interested. A knee to the face gets two for Graves as everything breaks down. Corey ties Garrett's legs up in the ropes to pound away even more before getting two off a fireman's carry into a backbreaker. Dawson and Ohno go to the floor as Graves takes out Dylan's leg and the Lucky 13 leg lock gets the submission at 9:34 shown of 13:04.

Rating: C-. The match wasn't terrible but like the live crowd I couldn't get into it. Given the story going on with the Wyatt Family the ending was never in doubt whatsoever which makes the match less interesting to sit through. Add in the fact that Dawson and Dylan are a black hole of charisma and this was long and not very interesting.

Post match the Wyatt Family hits the ring to beat down their #1 contenders but Adrian Neville comes out for the save. He loads up the Red Arrow but Dawson and Dylan break it up. William Regal of all people runs in for the save but the heels have too much of a numbers advantage. Bray splashes Regal in the corner and the Family's music plays to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. This was one of those shows that builds for later instead of being entertaining in its own right. A ticked off and serious Langston is interesting as is Kruger going after the title, but Dallas seemingly as a face and Dawson/Dylan in general do nothing for me or the live crowd it seems. The post main event stuff helped as the Wyatt Family are far more interesting heels than the trailer boys.

Results

Big E. Langston b. Aiden English – Big Ending

Emma b. Aksana – Dilemma

Leo Kruger b. Dante Dash – GC3

Bo Dallas b. Mickey Keegan – Belly to belly suplex

Corey Graves/Kassius Ohno b. Scott Dawson/Garrett Dylan – Lucky 13 to Dylan

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Smackdown Money In The Bank Match

Why do so many people think this match isn't happening? You need seven people for the match right? Here are some options:
Rhodes

Sandow

Ambrose

Sin Cara

Rey Mysterio

Khali

Cesaro

Langston

Big Show

Fandango

Miz

Barrett

Axel

R-Truth

There are a TON of people you could throw in there. Why do so many people think it's not happening?

NXT – June 19, 2013: It's Morphing Time!

NXT

Date: June 19, 2013

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Brad Maddox

We're into the Bo Dallas era on NXT as he won the title from Langston last week. Due to the title situation the rest of the main stories have been put on hold for the last few weeks. The only other major story going on is the Women's Title tournament which is only halfway through the first round. Hopefully things pick up a bit tonight. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Langston losing the title to Dallas last week. They treat the title win like a big feel good moment even though the fans seem to universally hate Dallas.

Welcome Home.

Adrian Neville vs. Bray Wyatt

This is a result of the long feud the Wyatt Family had with Neville/Oliver Gray over the tag titles as well as Adrian eliminating Wyatt from the battle royal a few weeks ago. Neville pounds away to start but a hard shot to the face puts him down. Adrian fights out of the corner but gets elbowed down for two. Bray sends him to the apron but charges into a kick to the head, only to have the Wyatt Family break up the corkscrew shooting star for the DQ at 2:07.

The Family comes in for the beatdown but Kassius Ohno and Corey Graves come in for the save. Dusty Rhodes comes out to make a six man tag for the main event.

Dolph Ziggler tells us not to try this at home.

Angelo Dawkins vs. Sami Zayn

This is Angelo's debut. Dawkins tells Zayn to bring it on but gets caught in some crisp armdrags to send him into the corner. The powerfully built Dawkins slams Zayn down and we hit the chinlock. Sami fights up but Angelo knocks him into the corner with a hard elbow to the face. Dawkins charges into a leg lariat and Sami climbs the corner for the tornado DDT to pin Angelo at 2:57. Both guys looked good here.

Video on Leo Kruger who says he isn't as creepy as people think he is. He's lived a peculiar life which has made him an exotic human being. Everything is about to change.

NXT Women's Title Tournament First Round: Sasha Banks vs. Summer Rae

Rae gets a quick two off a Russian legsweep as the fans are behind Sasha. Summer stomps on her in the corner and pulls her to the middle for a two count. A modified Stroke gets two for Rae before she pulls on Sasha's arms and puts her feet on Sasha's shoulders for a painful looking submission hold. Banks counters into a rollup for two and the match turns into a catfight. They slap it out and Sasha hits a Sin Cara style armdrag out of the corner for two. Summer comes back with a reverse DDT into a standing legdrop for the pin at 3:32.

Rating: D+. Summer looks great in her outfits but the work in the ring isn't nearly as good. Paige carried her to a good match but Sasha isn't ready to do something at that kind of level. The match wasn't horrible but Summer's time on offense didn't look very good at all. You can see

Rae vs. Paige for the title coming though and there's nothing wrong with that.

Here are the updated brackets:

Paige

Alicia Fox

Summer Rae

Emma/Aksana

Xavier Woods says we might remember him from episodes such as #151 where he beat El Local or #155 where he beat El Local. Tonight he makes his return and a beep of his wrist communicator (same ringtone as the communicators the Power Rangers used in the old days) says it's time to go. "It's morphing time."

Xavier Woods vs. Jake Carter

Woods has been gone becoming a Jenga world champion and winning a Nintendo 64 tournament. He takes Carter down by the arm but gets caught by a hard shoulder block and a headscissors. Off to an armbar on Carter as Maddox talks about Woods' plan to find and marry Topanga from Boy Meets World. I can't believe I've reached the age where my childhood has a nostalgia character. Carter fights up and hits a Hennig neck snap for two. Xavier comes back with a dropkick and the IT'S MORPHING TIME rolling clothesline before Lost in the Woods (Gail Kim's Eat Defeat) ends Carter at 3:10.

Rating: D+. The match was nothing of note but this is the kind of fun character that is going to appeal to late 20s nerds who miss the 1990s. Woods has been around before and it's been long enough that I had forgotten how much fun a guy like him can be. The match wasn't all that

great, but the fun carried this.

Sami Zayn says that the match with Dawkins wasn't impressive. It was a message for Antonio Cesaro because Zayn wants a rubber match because Cesaro attacked him after their match last week. Your move Antonio.

Dusty Rhodes comes in to see Sylvester LeFort. Next week Dawkins and Garrett have a #1 contenders match against Ohno and Graves for a shot at the Wyatt Family.

We get a video of Bo Dallas shouting in a car, saying that he won't be at the show this week because he's been doing so much stuff since winning the title. We get photos of him at Disney World like he promised. "Don't stop Bo-Leaving!." He'll be back next week. This has to be a heel turn.

Langston is back next week as well.

Wyatt Family vs. Kassius Ohno/Adrian Neville/Corey Graves

Harper starts with Graves with Corey going straight at the big man. A headlock brings Harper to the corner and it's off to Ohno to pound away. Harper gets in a right hand and it's off to Rowan for a slugout. Ohno comes back with a running boot to the face and it's back to Adrian. Wyatt comes in and this a running splash in the corner but Neville counters a slingshot into a double stomp into Bray's chest to take over.

Bray punches him down and brings Harper back in but Adrian hooks a quick hurricanrana to take Luke down. Back to Graves as things stay fast. Graves goes to the corner and wraps Luke up in a figure four neck lock over the top rope but gets dragged into the wrong corner as we take a break. Back with Harper dragging Adrian to the corner for a heavy beating from Wyatt.

Off to a chinlock on Neville as Bray has a creepy look on his face.

Graves fights up and tries a sunset flip but has to avoid a seated splash from Wyatt. The hot tag brings in Ohno to face Rowan with the Family member launching Kassius over the top and out to the floor. It's back to Harper for some choking and a hard uppercut. Ohno is down but Harper would rather stand around than go for a cover. Some elbow drops get two for Luke and it's back to Rowan to continue the beating.

A pumphandle backbreaker gets two on Kassius but they ram heads off an Irish whip and everyone is down. Double tags bring in Bray and Adrian with Neville cleaning house. A standing shooting star press gets two on Wyatt followed by a big dive from Neville to take out Rowan, Harper and Ohno. Back in and Harper pulls Bray away from the Red Arrow (corkscrew shooting star), allowing Wyatt to pin Adrian at 9:00 shown of 11:30.

Rating: C. The ending was a mess but the rest of the match was a good old fashioned six man tag. The Family continues to be dominant and follows a formula similar to the Shield: you can beat them when you split them up but when you have the team united, they're nearly unbeatable. Bray looks awesome at this point though with the looks on his face being very disturbing when he's in the ring.

Overall Rating: C+. This is what NXT does better than anything: keep things moving and don't spent a ton of time on any given story. We also got something set up for next week in the #1 contenders tag match and the returns of Langston and Dallas. Good episode this week with a mix of fun and action in an entertaining hour.

Results

Adrian Neville b. Bray Wyatt via DQ when the Wyatt Family interfered

Sami Zayn b. Angelo Dawkins – Tornado DDT

Summer Rae b. Sasha Banks – Standing legdrop

Xavier Woods b. Jake Carter – Lost in the Woods

Wyatt Family b. Corey Graves/Kassius Ohno/Adrian Neville

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Smackdown – June 14, 2013: THEY DID IT!

Smackdown

Date: June 14, 2013

Location: Greensboro Coliseum, Greensboro, North Carolina

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

It's the go home show for Payback tonight so hopefully we can get to some more interesting stuff soon after this. The main story tonight is the continued rise of Daniel Bryan in his war against the Shield. Other than that Dolph Ziggler is back and will be in the ring on Sunday, meaning we may get a warmup match for him tonight. Let's get to it.

The opening recap focuses on Ziggler returning in a tag match with Langston to face Jericho and Del Rio. We also focus on Shield vs. HELL NO/Orton in a six man tag tonight.

Here's an upset Daniel Bryan to open the show. If you had asked him when he debuted in the WWE if he would be world champion, he would have said YES. If you had asked him if he would lose the belt in 18 seconds, the answer would be NO. YES he could win the tag titles with anyone, but NO he didn't think he'd spend nine months teaming with Kane. Either way, HELL NO is one of the best tag teams in WWE history, so Bryan asks Kane

to come out here.

Kane says all he cares about is the six man tag tonight. Bryan thinks they need to get everything out in the open because the last nine months were awesome. They've become a better team and better friends over the last few months, but on Sunday they're not going to be teaming together. After that, they're not going to be a team anymore because Bryan is going to win the tag titles with Randy Orton to make Team RK-NO!

Kane doesn't see why Bryan is getting this excited because no one can beat the Shield and Bryan and Orton can't get along. Bryan says he'll prove he isn't the weak link because he and Randy will do something that HELL NO could never do. Kane asks if he's the weak link but Bryan won't answer. He finally admits that Kane is the weak link and is grabbed around the throat. Cue Orton to keep Kane from killing his partner. If Kane chokeslams Bryan then it's going to cause an RK0.

Bryan gets mad at Orton for meddling in his business but Orton says he's just helping his partner. Kane goes to leave so Bryan says go run off like you always do. All three are about to fight when Shield shows up on screen and tells them to keep fighting. They'd be fighting too if the Shield had beaten them up for six months. Ambrose asks if they believe in the Shield after every super team has been beaten. Orton and HELL NO argues a bit more in the ring.

Sheamus vs. Antonio Cesaro

Cesaro gets the jobber entrance in case there were a few people that thought he had a chance. Before the match Sandow comes out to say that he's already humiliated Sheamus physically and intellectually, so Sunday will be Sheamus' Irish wake. Cesaro takes Sheamus into the corner and slaps him in the face before hiding on the floor. Back in and Sheamus pounds on him in the corner before taking him down with a clothesline. A tilt-a-whirl powerslam gets two on Antonio as Zeb Colter rants on the WWE App.

Cesaro comes back with the gutwrench suplex and a big forearm sends Sheamus to the floor. Sheamus catches a diving Cesaro coming off the apron and rams him into the barricade as we take a break. Back with Sheamus getting two off a backbreaker before they head to floor. Cesaro rams him into the steps before hooking a chinlock back inside. Sheamus fights up and hits some running forearms, only to be taken down by a European uppercut for two.

A double stomp to the chest gets two for Antonio but Sheamus sends him to the apron for the ten forearms to the chest. The Irish Curse gets two back inside but Cesaro comes back with the modified Angle Slam (looked more like an AA here) for two. Cesaro shoves Sheamus into the corner but the Celt comes out with the Brogue Kick for the pin at 7:26 shown of 10:56.

Rating: C. Cesaro has the same problem that Rhodes, Sandow or almost anyone else that faces Sheamus runs into: Sheamus hardly ever loses so it's hard to get into the matches as a result. The Brogue Kick out of the corner looked good but it's supposed to set up a match on Sunday that no one cares to see.

Post match Sandow jumps Sheamus from behind and lays him out.

The Wyatt Family is still coming.

CM Punk is returning on Sunday.

Teddy Long plugs Hardee's for sponsoring the show tonight. Ziggler and company come in and make fun of Teddy for his poor handling of Smackdown. Langston steals the burger.

Great Khali vs. Heath Slater

McIntyre is in different attire tonight. Khali pounds away to start but

has to swat away the other Band members. Slater gets in some shots in the corner but gets caught with the big chop. Khali has to go after the other Band members again, allowing Slater to hit a DDT for the pin at 2:20.

Alberto Del Rio/Chris Jericho vs. Dolph Ziggler/Big E. Langston

Del Rio wants to start with Ziggler but gets Langston instead. Big E. takes him into the corner and pounds away with shoulder blocks, only to have Del Rio come back with a running enziguri. Off to Jericho to pound away on the big man and hit an enziguri of his own. Langston takes him down and brings in the world champion for the first time in over a month. Dolph drops an elbow drop for two and brings in Langston to face Del Rio. A backstabber puts Big E. down and it's back to Dolph who immediately runs away.

We take a break and come back with Jericho sending Langston into the steps. AJ interferes with a slap to Chris' face, allowing Langston to run Jericho over. Back in and Ziggler drops Jericho with a neckbreaker for two. Ziggler misses a charge into the corner and it's hot tag off to Alberto. Everything breaks down Langston runs Alberto over. A dropkick puts Alberto down but he rolls up Ziggler for the pin at 8:10 shown of 11:40.

Rating: C+. This was a fine return for Ziggler but the feud was built up enough for Sunday without having Ziggler lose in his comeback match. I get the idea of Del Rio pinning the champion, but he didn't need to do it. Jericho was just kind of there but he's perfect for filling in a spot like this.

We recap the opening segment.

Jericho says he's going to be ready for Punk on Sunday and goes over his history in Chicago. Heyman comes in and says that Jericho can claim to be the best in the world until Punk pins him or makes him tap out at Payback.

Video on Kaitlyn's secret admirer being revealed on Monday.

Kaitlyn vs. Aksana

Kaitlyn goes right at her and pounds away before the bell. The referee tries to pull her off and takes a quick beating as well. Aksana finally runs away so no match.

Recap of Ryback vs. Cena over the last few weeks with a focus on the events of Raw.

Curtis Axel vs. Wade Barrett

Non-title of course. Before the match, Barrett wants to have a businessman to businessman with Heyman. He doesn't know why this match is happening as he could injure Axel on Sunday, thereby taking away his title shot. Wouldn't it make sense to save this until Sunday? Cue Miz to say really a lot and make some thinly veiled gay jokes. Barrett pounds away to start but gets caught by a dropkick for two. They head to the floor where Axel blasts Miz in the face for no apparent reason. As they come back in, Axel hits a horrible looking McGillicutter for the pin at 2:05.

Post match Miz lays out Axel.

Video on the Wyatt Family with Bray quoting the Bible and talking about the riddles of your mind.

Shield vs. HELL NO/Randy Orton

Rollins starts with Bryan and pounds him down into the corner, only to have Bryan come back with kicks to the chest of his own. Kane comes in with a low dropkick and suplex for two each. Off to Orton for some headbutts to Ambrose in the corner before it's back to Bryan. Rollins

comes in and fires off elbows to the head before Ambrose gets the tag for a dragon sleeper. Bryan hits some knees to the head and one to the ribs to escape before bringing Orton back in to clean house.

Ambrose and Rollins break up the Elevated DDT before Rollins hits an enziguri for two. We take a break and come back with Orton being elbowed down for two. It's back to Reigns who pounds on Orton's head but gets caught in the Orton backbreaker to give Randy a breather. Reigns misses a charge into the post and it's off to Kane vs. Ambrose with the big man getting two off a side slam.

Kane misses the top rope clothesline and stumbled into the hot tag to Bryan. Daniel hits the springboard missile dropkick on Ambrose and gives Reigns and Rollins a dropkick each. FLYING GOAT puts the tag champions and Rollins takes a pair of dropkicks in the corner for two. Bryan kicks the tag champions down again but can only get two on Seth.

Ambrose delays the swan dive and allows Rollins to roll away at the last minute. Kane and Ambrose go to the floor but Reigns spears Orton down. Kane avoids a spear from Roman and chokeslams Dean onto Reigns on the floor. Rollins hits the buckle bomb but Kane shoves him off the top into the RK0. Bryan throws on the NO Lock and THEY DID IT! Rollins taps out at 13:48 and the Shield loses for the first time ever.

Rating: B+. The ending was INSANE and a great bit of storytelling as HELL NO and Orton finally learned from their past mistakes and made the adjustments to beat the Shield. That is a huge win for Bryan as he is looking more and more like a star every day. They had to lose eventually and while I'd question doing it on Smackdown, the moment was awesome and the place went nuts at the ending.

Lillian announces it as the first time the Shield has ever lost a six man tag as the winners celebrate to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. This is the kind of wrestling centered show that

Smackdown needs to be. Tonight was about longer matches which built up the matches on Sunday. I'm not sure on having Shield lose here, but it certainly launches Bryan up the charts and gives him his biggest win in a very long time. Payback is going to do horrible numbers due to the lame build, but tonight was a good show.

Results

Sheamus b. Antonio Cesaro – Brogue Kick

Heath Slater b. Great Khali – DDT

Alberto Del Rio/Chris Jericho vs. Dolph Ziggler/Big E. Langston

Curtis Axel b. Wade Barrett – McGillicutter

HELL NO/Randy Orton b. Shield – NO Lock to Rollins

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NXT – June 12, 2013: Who Better Than Langston?

NXT

Date: June 12, 2013

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: William Regal, Tony Dawson

It's a big week here on NXT with Bo Dallas finally getting his title shot

against Big E. Langston. Last week Langston sounded as serious as he ever has in NXT and the match was well set up. Dallas however still comes off as a lame imitation of a good heel rather than someone we have a reason to dislike. Other than that we should get another Women's Title tournament match. Let's get to it.

The opening video recaps the battle royal which earned Dallas his title shot.

Welcome Home.

Sami Zayn vs. Antonio Cesaro

This is a rematch from Zayn's debut three weeks ago when he beat Curt Hawkins and Antonio Cesaro in one night. Cesaro charges to the ring and runs Zayn over with a clothesline. They head to the floor with Sami being sent into the barricade before the bell. Sami says he can go so Cesaro hits a running European uppercut for two as the match officially begins. Zayn springboards off the bottom rope to jump over Antonio but Cesaro spinebusts him right back down to stop the comeback.

Sami fights out of a chinlock and gets two off a leg lariat but Cesaro takes over with some HARD chops in the corner. Back up and Zayn's leapfrog is countered into a tilt-a-whirl slam for two as we take a break. We come back with Cesaro hitting a double stomp to the ribs for a series of two counts before stomping on Zayn's fingers. Back to the chinlock for an extended period before Zayn fights up with a spinning sit out belly to back suplex into a powerbomb. A big European uppercut and the gutwrench suplex get two each for Cesaro and the frustration is setting in.

Cesaro pounds away in the corner but Zayn hooks a bodyscissors to catch Cesaro off guard. A headscissors sends Antonio to the floor and Sami hits a big flip dive over the top to take both guys down. Back in and Zayn dives off the top into another uppercut for two. Cesaro looks for the

Neutralizer but Sami hits a running sunset bomb for two. Zayn tries the same thing he used to win the first time by rolling through a suplex into a cradle but Cesaro kicks out at two. Cesaro hooks a hard standing chinlock which is enough to set up the Neutralizer for the pin on Zayn at 10:00 shown of 13:30.

Rating: B. This was a solid back and forth match which told a good story. Zayn was trying every speed move he could but Cesaro was too strong and too skilled to get caught off guard a second time, which makes both guys look good. A serious Antonio like this could be a big deal in WWE if he wasn't fed to every top star on the roster so often. Zayn continues to look good as well.

Baron Corbin/Travis Tyler vs. Scott Dawson/Garrett Dylan

Sylvester LeFort introduces Dawson and Dylan and again is far more interesting than the team. Dawson and Tyler start things off with Tyler grabbing a headlock. Scott takes it to the corner and brings in Dylan to stomp on Travis in the corner. Dawson and Dylan tag in and out to pound on Tyler with both guys slamming the back of Tyler's head into the mat.

The beating continues with Dawson dropping a leg and kicking at Tyler's back. Tyler finally gets in a kick to the face and makes the tag off to Corbin who cleans a few rooms of the house. Corbin hits the ropes and walks into a spinebuster from Dawson followed by a middle rope ax handle to the face from Dylan (the combination is called Southern Pride) for the pin at 4:27.

Rating: D+. Dawson and Dylan aren't interesting but their in ring work isn't horrible. They're kind of a throwback team reminiscent of the Andersons in the 80s. The problem though is there's no reason to care about them. All we've been told is they're from a trailer park in the south. In other words, they're a slightly better Cade and Murdoch, which doesn't make them anything to care about.

NXT Women's Title Tournament First Round: Bayley vs. Alicia Fox

Bayley is innocent enough to offer a handshake but Alicia says no. Instead Bayley hugs Alicia to freak her out and earn Bayley a whip into the corner. A quick northern lights suplex gets two for Fox and it's off to a chinlock. Fox takes her into the corner for a slap and Bayley goes NUTS, taking Fox down with a bunch of clotheslines and a knee drop for two. An exploder suplex gets two on Alicia but she pops back up and hits an ax kick to pin Bayley at 3:26.

Rating: D+. Bayley looked good and Fox was her usual self, meaning this wasn't much to look at. It does help to have a former Divas Champion move on in the tournament as the eventual winner will look better having beaten a top level Diva. Not the best match in the world but it did its job well enough.

Here are the tournament brackets:

Paige

Alicia Fox

Sasha Banks

Summer Rae

Emma

Aksana

We recap Dallas winning the battle royal to earn his title shot tonight.

NXT Title: Big E. Langston vs. Bo Dallas

Langston easily throws Dallas down before leapfrogging over Dallas (you

read that right) and running him over with a shoulder. Bo goes after the leg and is immediately booed out of the building. The champion is sent to the floor but comes back in to throw Dallas into the corner to take over. Langston hits five hard shots to Dallas' ribs as this is one sided so far. A big splash hits Dallas and he rolls out to the floor for a breather.

Back in and Langston tells Bo what a bad decision this was for him. Another splash misses and Bo fires off some clotheslines to little effect. Big E. charges into a knee in the corner and Dallas runs the corner into a bulldog for two. Langston comes back with a belly to belly and looks to be perfectly fine. Five knees to the chest have Dallas in trouble and Langston runs him over for good measure. Dallas blocks the Big Ending and sends Langston into an exposed turnbuckle two times. That and a belly to belly suplex gives him the belt at 7:46.

Rating: C-. The match was basically a squash for Langston with a surprise ending. I have no idea what WWE sees in him, but Bo Dallas is the least interesting guy being pushed to the top of a promotion that I've seen in a very long time. He's neither a dominating nor a convincing heel and the fans absolutely hate him. His arrogant attitude due to being on the main show a few times doesn't hold up either as several people on NXT have been around longer than he has. This didn't work and wasn't the best way of getting the title off of Langston.

Dallas says he's going to Disney World to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. This episode didn't do much for me. The opening match was great but everything after that was lame. Dawson, Dylan aren't guys that show promise but they're being pushed pretty hard. Langston will likely get a rematch but the shine is off of him now. What WWE sees in Dallas is beyond me, but they're going to have to push him hard as a heel in a hurry unless they want the fans to ruin every segment he's in.

Results

Antonio Cesaro b. Sami Zayn – Neutralizer

Garrett Dylan/Scott Dawson b. Baron Corbin/Travis Tyler – Southern Pride to Corbin

Alicia Fox b. Bayley – Ax Kick

Bo Dallas b. Big E. Langston – Belly to belly suplex

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NXT – June 5, 2013: Serious Langston Is Awesome

NXT

Date: June 5, 2013

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Brad Maddox

We have a new #1 contender after Bo Dallas won the battle royal last week, earning him a shot at Big E. Langston's NXT Title. On top of that we've got Corey Graves/Kassius Ohno continuing their feud with the Wyatt Family. The big story tonight though is the beginning of the NXT Women's Title Tournament to crown the first champion. Let's get to it.

Welcome Home.

Here's Jim Ross to host the contract signing between Langston and Dallas. Both guys come out as we see some exclusive footage of them staring each other down after the battle royal last week. Langston is in street clothes which don't quite suit him. Big E. signs but Dallas has something

to say. He didn't like Langston looking down at him last week like a joke. Since Langston won the NXT Title, he's moved on to bigger and better things like hanging out with Dolph Ziggler and debuting at Wrestlemania.

Dallas thinks he should be doing those kinds of things but he isn't because he's not NXT Champion. He needs to be champion and is about to sign a contract that could change his life. All he needs are three seconds to change his life and make history. Dallas goes to sign but Langston says Dallas isn't a joke. Langston started to respect Dallas when he fought Big Show, even though he got knocked out.

Dallas wants to be like Langston but Bo is a geek who probably lives at home with his mama and never stops smiling no matter what he's doing. Bo was talking about three seconds, but Langston will crush his dreams in five. Dallas signs and walks away. Great stuff here from Langston but Dallas continues to look and sound like nothing special.

Corey Graves says his match tonight isn't just about winning the tag titles but about taking the Wyatt Family down. Bray Wyatt likes to play mind games, but in Graves' mind, they're not playing games. Graves says he doesn't like Ohno and doesn't care what Kassius does in the match tonight.

NXT Women's Title Tournament First Round: Tamina vs. Paige

I really like the look of the new belt as it's very basic but classy looking. The centerpiece is oval shaped with the letters NXT in the middle and side plates coming off the centerpiece. Tamina shoves the much smaller Paige down with ease and chokes her down in the corner. A hair toss sends Paige flying and it's off to a chinlock.

A knee drop gets two for Tamina and it's back to the chinlock. Tamina slams her down for two more and it's off to chinlock number three in a three and a half minute match. Paige fires back with some elbows in the corner but Tamina hits a superkick to drop Paige again. The Superfly Splash hits Paige's knees, giving her a rollup to pin Tamina at 4:20.

Rating: C-. Paige did win, but I'm not sure having her get in a counter

and a rollup for the pin is the best way to go about things here. It's hard to imagine Paige not being in the tournament's final and a win over a WWE Diva isn't going to hurt her, but she could have looked much stronger here with the same result.

Kassius Ohno says his plan of attack is to attack. He's bringing mayhem at the Wyatt Family fortress to get at Bray himself. Kassius doesn't care what happens to Graves because Graves has proven he can't handle three monsters by himself before. Tonight, it's a war.

Colin Cassidy vs. Mason Ryan

Colin is a big guy who probably stands close to 7'0 tall. Cassidy pounds away at Ryan but is taken down by a single punch. Mason pounds away in the corner with right hands and a few headbutts before the Torture Rack neckbreaker ends Cassidy at 2:00.

Sami Zayn says it was a big deal to beat a WWE Tag Team and US Champion on the same night and maybe he could do it again. Cesaro comes up and says that was a cheap win. Zayn says that the only cheap thing that night was the cheap shot from Cesaro after the match. Cesaro wants a rematch and Zayn is up for it, as long as Cesaro tells him where he got his sweet man purse. The brawl is on but referees quickly break it up.

Alex Riley vs. Conor O'Brian

Conor easily runs Alex over a few times to start before throwing him into a headlock. Riley fights up but his chops get him nowhere. A dropkick puts O'Brian down and a top rope clothesline gets two but Alex gets caught by a splash in the corner. O'Brian flapjacks him down and puts Alex in the Stockade, a kind of seated Octopus Hold for the submission at 2:12. Riley looked good while getting squashed.

Tag Titles: Kassius Ohno/Corey Graves vs. Wyatt Family

Wyatt says he isn't afraid of snakes or disease or fire. He's only afraid of himself but the two guys in the ring aren't scared enough of him. His name is Bray Wyatt and he is the eater of worlds. The men behind him are his brothers but tonight they're going to give him an introduction of

their own. Ohno starts with Rowan and puts on a cravate to take over. Erick can't even slam his way out of the hold so he throws Kassius into the corner instead.

Off to Graves vs. Harper with Luke carrying him to a neutral corner like a rag doll. Why you would carry a rag doll to a neutral corner is beyond me but it's not the best simile in the world. Graves armdrags his way out of a hiptoss before it's back to Ohno to crank on Luke's arm. It's back to Rowan as we take a break. Back with Rowan holding Kassius in a cobra clutch before it's back to Harper who gets two off an uppercut. Ohno escapes a powerslam by Erick and takes him down with a jawbreaker.

The hot tag brings in Graves to take out Rowan's leg with a chop block but a Harper distraction prevents the 13th Step from going on. Luke kicks Graves in the head to give Erick a two count before dropping a knee for two of his own. The Family keeps tagging in and out with Rowan getting two off a backbreaker. Off to an over the shoulder backbreaker for good measure (Maddox: "He's going to break his back!" The name fits the move if nothing else) before it's back to Harper who says yeah yeah yeah a lot.

Graves counters a suplex into a small package for two and a crucifix gets the same. Harper has a powerbomb countered with a backdrop and it's off to Ohno to clean house. Ohno hits a series of forearms to Harper and gets two off a senton. A Bray Wyatt distraction doesn't do his Family much good as Ohno hits a rolling headbutt for two. A clothesline from Graves sends both he and Rowan to the floor but the distraction allows Wyatt to blast Ohno in the head. Graves takes out Bray but Harper pins Kassius to retain at 10:00 shown of 13:00.

Rating: B-. They had me believing something the titles were in jeopardy at the end which is the right idea for a match like this. This match went a long way towards strengthening Ohno and Graves in their war with Wyatt which will definitely continue. The Family looks great in the ring for a pair of monsters with Harper having a lot of potential after the team eventually splits up.

Overall Rating: C+. This was a return to form for NXT after last week's

show. The main event for next week is advanced, we get a tournament match and a decent tag title match with a few squashes mixed in. What more can you possibly ask for in a forty five minute show? The title match next week has a better hype than I was expecting and Langston showed that he can be serious when he needs to be. Good show this week.

Results

Paige b. Tamina – Rollup

Mason Ryan b. Colin Cassidy – Torture Rack Neckbreaker

Conor O'Brian b. Alex Riley – Stockade

Wyatt Family b. Kassius Ohno/Corey Graves – Rollup to Ohno after interference from Bray Wyatt

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NXT – May 15, 2013: Wyatt Family Business

NXT

Date: May 15, 2013

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Brad Maddox

The main event tonight is Langston defending the title against Damien Sandow which is a good match for him. Sandow is a main show guy and a match against him wouldn't do any harm at all to Langston's status in NXT. Other than that we'll get to see where the Wyatt Family goes with their new titles. Let's get to it.

After a quick video on the title match tonight and the theme song we're ready to go.

Summer Rae vs. Natalya

Summer is now doing the Maryse hair toss. A quick headlock takes Natalya down but Summer uses those long legs of hers to counter into a headscissors. They stay on the mat with Natalya grabbing an armbar until we hit a standoff. After hitting the ropes a few times, Natalya tries the Sharpshooter to no avail. Instead it's a discus lariat for two on Summer but she manages to send Natalya to the apron. An enziguri gets two on Natayla and we take a break.

Back with Summer getting two off something we didn't see and firing off kicks in the corner. Apparently this is happening because Summer said Natalya hung out with freaks in Horny and Khali. A back elbow to the face gets two for Summer and she cranks on Natalya's arm on the mat. Cue Paige as Natalya counters into the Sharpshooter, only to have Summer kick off and send Natayla into Paige. With Paige on the floor, Summer rolls Natalya up for the pin at 5:46 shown of 9:16.

Rating: C+. This was exactly what it needed to be. Summer looked great out there (both in the ring and in those shorts of hers) and didn't at all look to be in over her head. While she isn't lighting the ring on fire or anywhere close to it, she looks more than competent out there and worked a decent enough match here. Also she won as close to clean as you can get as she didn't even see Paige behind Natalya.

Paige chases Summer off post match.

Sami Zayn (El Generico) is debuting against Curt Hawkins next week and says this isn't his first rodeo.

Here's Bray Wyatt with a gray mask on his face (due to a broken nose) and what looks like a leather apron. He says this is the new face of fear and no matter who looks into his face, they can't hurt him because he is already dead.

Danny Burch vs. Bray Wyatt

Burch is from London and has his own music. Wyatt starts with a slap to the face and takes Burch down with ease. A chinlock allows Bray to drill him in the face with a forearm before hitting that cross body of his. The splash in the corner sets up Sister Abigail for the pin at 2:07. Total squash.

Bo Dallas comes up to Adrian Neville but doesn't seem to care about Neville's update on Oliver Grey's injury. Instead he'd rather talk about John Cena winning the Rumble, which Dallas happened to be in. Neville might just make it after all. Adrian has no idea what Dallas is talking about, but Dallas would rather talk about a #1 contenders battle royal in two weeks. Neville is in as well...and that's that. This was pretty awkward but Dallas was acting rather heelish.

Conor O'Brian vs. Sakamoto/Briley Pierce

O'Brian beat up both guys last week so tonight it's a handicap match. Sakamoto starts and is easily thrown down off a double chicken wing lift. Off to Pierce who is caught in a series of headlock takeovers. A suplex puts Briley down and it's back to Sakamoto who has no effect with some chops. O'Brian pounds them both down with ease before hitting a splash to both guys at once in the corner. A very impressive double flapjack sets up a double pin for O'Brian at 2:36. Another total squash.

Post match Rick Victor comes out to the stage for a staredown with O'Brian.

Corey Graves says that his entire life has been ups and downs. You have to fail before you can succeed, but if you keep fighting you can win. He'll be in the battle royal in two weeks and get the title shot he wants. Bray Wyatt of all people comes in and wants to know why Graves is here while the greatest war in human history is going on outside his door. Kassius Ohno knows what Bray talking about but Bray doesn't go into any more depth than that. He says he owns NXT and that he's the eater of worlds. Corey says he doesn't have his own family but if the Wyatt Family keeps messing with him, they're going down.

NXT Title: Damien Sandow vs. Big E. Langston

Apparently it's Graves vs. Wyatt next week. Langston powers Sandow into the corner to start before running him over with a shoulder. Damien escapes the Big Ending so Langston shouts FIVE. A slam puts Sandow down again and Big E. pounds away on the ribs. Maddox says that wrestling Langston is like wrestling a frozen bison. Sandow is dropped on his back out of the corner but fights out of another Big Ending attempt.

We take a break and come back with Langston suplexing Sandow down. Big E. misses a charge into the corner though, allowing Sandow to clothesline him in the back of the head to take over. We hit the chinlock but Langston powers up, only to be hit with a dropkick. Off to a headscissors by Damien for a bit before he gets two off a top rope ax handle. Some knee drops to the chest get the same and it's back to the chinlock.

Langston fights up and hits a quick belly to belly suplex and a series of hard clotheslines. Big E. fires off five knees to the ribs but Damien counters the Big Ending into an Edge-0-Matic for two. The Wind-Up elbow misses but Damien hits a swinging neckbreaker. A second attempt at the elbow connects but the Terminus is countered into the Big Ending to retain Langston's title at 11:28 shown of 14:58.

Rating: C+. This was exactly what it was supposed to be. I don't think Sandow was ever a real threat to win the title here, but at the same time it gave Langston a good looking win over a main show regular. It wasn't a bad match at all and there were some nice false finishes at the end with Sandow countering the Big Ending a few times.

Post match another Big Ending gets Langston the five count to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. Another good episode here as we have something set up for next week as well as two weeks from now. Sandow did a fine job here of giving Langston something to do until we have a new #1 contender for him to fight. The Graves vs. Wyatt Family story is interesting, as is Dallas' teased heel turn. Good show tonight, as is the norm in NXT.

Results

Summer Rae b. Natayla – Rollup

Bray Wyatt b. Danny Burch – Sister Abigail

Conor O'Brian b. Briley Pierce/Sakamoto – Double Flapjack

Big E. Langston b. Damien Sandow – Big Ending

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Monday Night Raw – May 13, 2013: Everything Bad About HHH Rolled Into One

Monday Night Raw

Date: May 13, 2013

Location: BOK Center, Tulsa, Oklahoma

Commentators: John Bradshaw Layfield, Michael Cole. Jerry Lawler

It's finally the go home show for Extreme Rules and the main attraction of tonight's show is that HHH and Lesnar will be face to face. You know, because that hasn't happened far too often already. Other than that we have Jericho vs. Fandango in a dance off which at least should be funny. Oh and maybe Ryback vs. Cena too if we have time between all the Lesnar vs. HHH recaps and replays. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the end of last week's show with Ryback beating down Cena with a chair.

Lawler is in the ring to host the dance off. We get clips of Fandango vs.

Jericho from Wrestlemania with Fandango getting the pin. Apparently there's a rematch on Sunday. There's a wood floor on the mat for the guys to dance on. Fandango is dancing with Summer Rae and Jericho has a woman from Dancing with the Stars as his partner.

Lawler insists that this is NOT a popularity contest and you're supposed to judge based on their skills only. Fandango insists he didn't lose to Khali because the fans just didn't know what they were talking about. Also as long as there's a Chris Jericho, there's a better man named Fandango.

Jericho talks about all of the contests he's won in WWE history that didn't involve wrestling and says he's winning tonight. Then he'll win on Sunday as well, and then there's going to be a song about Jericho dancing all over Fandango's face. Fandango and Summer go first...or rather they're about to when Fandango says cut the music. Apparently the fans were being too loud and he can't focus. They get started and a few seconds in Summer twists her ankle.

The pro dancer goes to look at it as does the trainer but Fandango starts to leave. As Jericho is looking at Summer, Fandango jumps Jericho and beats him down. Fandango beats him down for a good while, whipping Jericho into whatever object he can find. He picks up a piece of the wooden floor and blasts Jericho in the face with it for good measure. To the shock of no one, Summer is fine and walks off.

Tonight it's Shield vs. Cena/HELL NO in an elimination match.

We see the end of Raw from last week again.

Ryback vs. Zack Ryder

Ryder now has long tights. As the destruction is going on, we get a commercial for the WWE App where Del Rio is having an interview right

now. What also is going on right now is a Shell Shock to Ryder for the pin at 1:04. Total dominance.

We get a clip of HHH being attacked by Lesnar last year and breaking his arm. According to Cole, this was "when HHH was COO of the company."

Didn't the sign on his office last week

say he was still COO?

Tons of Funk vs. Prime Time Players

Tensai crushes Darren to start but gets kicked in the face by Titus. Cole talks about all the countries watching the show tonight so he doesn't have to talk about the match. Titus misses a running charge into the corner and it's off to Brodus to clean house. As Clay knocks Darren down, Titus rolls up Brodus for the pin at 1:38. Replays show that Darren hit Brodus in the throat with his hair pick to allow the pin.

We look at the clip from Smackdown where Swagger gave Ziggler a concussion, meaning the world title match is in jeopardy.

Here's Teddy to make the announcement about the World Title, but Colter and Swagger come out and say Swagger should be made champion. AJ and Langston come out to argue about Ziggler keeping the title, but Teddy cuts them off. Ziggler won't be losing the title, and Swagger vs. Del Rio on Sunday is now an I Quit #1 contenders match. Also tonight it's Langston vs. one of them, with the opponent being decided by a poll on the WWE App.

Kofi Kingston vs. Damien Sandow

Ambrose vs. Kingston for the US Title is official. Damien says he won't be singing a song tonight because Kofi's song is foolish. Sandow pounds away to start and hits his rapid fire knees to the chest followed by the Wind-Up Elbow for two. The announcers are of course talking about comic

books. We go WAY old school with an abdominal stretch by Damien but Kofi reverses into one of his own. Kofi comes back with a dropkick and the Boom Drop, only to miss the cross body out of the corner. Sandow hits a running flip neckbreaker for two but Kofi pops up and hits Trouble in Paradise for the pin at 2:28.

Here's Mark Henry with a strap to call out Sheamus and induct him into the Hall of Pain. We get some clips of how this match is set up, including Henry pulling the semi trucks on Smackdown. Henry tells Josh Matthews to put the strap around his wrist before shoving him down. He easily touches all four corners and lets Josh go, saying that he feels very generous.

Sheamus comes out and says Henry isn't the brightest man in the world. He doesn't want to get in the ring at first but Henry calls him a coward and that's enough to get Sheamus to come out. Henry won't let him in with the strap, but Sheamus pulls one of his own out from under the ring. Sheamus beats on Henry enough to send Henry running off.

We get a clip of Lesnar attacking Vince many months ago.

Trailer for 12 Rounds 2, starring Randy Orton.

We look at a clip of the opening segment again in case you've forgotten about it already.

Antonio Cesaro vs. Randy Orton

This is a rematch from Main Event where Orton won. Cesaro pounds away to start and has to be pulled off Orton in the corner. Off to a chinlock for a but but Orton comes back with a kick to the face and the powerslam. Cesaro counters the Elevated DDT into a rollup for two, only to stand up and get caught in the RK0 for the pin at 3:10.

Rating: D+. Last week Cesaro talked about being the best in the company. Within the next week, he's been pinned by Orton twice, one of those times being in three minutes and ten seconds. But hey, I'm sure this somehow makes him a bigger star right? This show is REALLY flat tonight but we are getting a lot of matches at least.

The Miz vs. Heath Slater

Feeling out process to start but Miz hits a quick sunset flip and backbreaker for two. Mahal trips up Miz and Slater gets a big boot for two. A neckbreaker gets two for Slater and it's off to a quick chinlock. Miz comes back with a forearm and a boot to the face as we get ANOTHER commercial for the WWE App. A top rope ax handle puts Slater down but he grabs the rope to avoid the figure four. Slater goes up but gets thrown down onto the rest of his band and injures his knee in the process. Back in and the figure four ends this at 4:14.

Rating: D. I like Miz in general, but this figure four stuff is just nonsense. It doesn't give him credibility because Flair "gave" him the move and it doesn't make us care about him any more. He had a good finishing move and won the main event of Wrestlemania with it, but we MUST praise Flair somehow because....I have no idea why we have to pay tribute to him so often actually.

Clip of Alicia Fox and Layla at a cancer walk.

Back in February, HHH beat up Lesnar with a chair. They're doing the whole history of the feud tonight to show us just how important it's been.

John Cena/HELL NO vs. Shield

This is elimination rules like a Survivor Series match. The tag champions are defending the titles against Rollins and Reigns in a Texas Tornado

match. Ambrose and Kane get things started with Kane pounding Dean into the corner. Bryan comes in with kicks to the chest and a painful looking arm hold. Off to Rollins vs. Cena with John putting on a front facelock as we take a break.

Back with Shield beating on Bryan in the corner as the Shield makes their traditional quick tags to pound away on him. Ambrose stomps away but the bearded one gets up and fires back, hitting a running knee to the ribs and making the tag to Kane. Kane cleans house with clotheslines all around and a sidewalk slam gets two on Ambrose. A DDT gets the same result and there's the top rope clothesline. He loads up the chokeslam but has to shove Ambrose and Rollins to the floor. Kane follows them out and winds up getting counted out for an elimination.

We take another break and come back with Reigns pounding on Cena in the corner before it's off to Rollins to take out Cena's bad leg. Cena finally gets in a shot to the face and dives over for a tag off to Bryan. Daniel immediately hits a suicide dive onto Reigns and a missile dropkick on Rollins for two. Ambrose sneaks up on Bryan and the bulldog driver is enough to put Bryan out, making it 3-1 with Cena in trouble.

John charges right at Ambrose but gets caught by all three. Cena fights them off and gets down to Rollins alone in the ring. The champ initiates his finishing sequence and hits the Shuffle, only to have Ambrose break it up. Cena clears away Ambrose and Reigns before hitting the AA to eliminate Rollins. Ambrose charges into the AA but Cena spears him down, although he draws a DQ for shoving the referee. Dean covers him for two as we're down to one on one. The STF goes on but Rollins and Reigns come in for the DQ at 23:21.

Rating: B-. I was thinking for a minute there that they were going to let Cena beat all three guys in a row but thankfully they didn't let it happen via submission. At the end of the day though, Cena did beat the Shield via pinfall when it was 3-1 so bet on people complaining about that. Still though, good long match here which is what we needed on this

Raw.

Post match the Shield hits the TripleBomb and leaves, allowing Ryback to come out and hit Cena's leg with a chair.

Video on HHH vs. Ryback from Wrestlemania.

Swagger wins the poll by a wide margin of 65-35.

Big E. Langston vs. Jack Swagger

Swagger pounds away to start but Langston shoves him into the corner with raw power. Jack fires off some right hands and tries for the Patriot Lock, only to be kicked away as we take a break. Back with Langston hitting some backbreakers on Jack for two before Swagger fires off some shots to the ribs.

The Vader Bomb gets two but Langston pops up and runs Swagger over. A superplex puts Swagger down for two more but Jack escapes the Big Ending. Swagger hits a chop block and there's the Patriot Lock, but Langston makes the rope. Jack is backdropped to the floor but manages to clothesline Langston over the barricade for the countout at 10:00.

Rating: D. Well that happened. Swagger likely would have beaten Ziggler here for the same result because that's what happens in this feud. The I Quit match likely would have happened had it not been for the MITB cash in and it could be an interesting match, although I can't picture Swagger winning.

Post match Del Rio runs out but gets put in the Patriot Lock. Ricardo tries to help him but gets kicked in the head, allowing Del Rio to put Swagger in the cross armbreaker for a tap out. Langston breaks it up for absolutely no apparent reason, but Del Rio clears the ring.

Natalya vs. AJ

Kaitlyn and the Bellas are on commentary while Horny and Khali are standing off to the side. Kaitlyn gets another gift as the match is ignored yet again. It's a Simpsons trivia game or something like that but we have to talk about clothes as AJ is sent to the floor for a hard shot from Natalya. Another one seems to knock her out but after sending AJ back in, she locks in an octopus hold called the Black Widow for the tap out from Natalya at 3:10.

Jericho says he'll teach Fandango to dance Jericho style on Sunday.

Time for HHH and Lesnar's showdown, which is the real main event tonight. A cage is lowered for some extra atmosphere. HHH talks about how he's learned to hate this but he feels at home in the cage. He wants Heyman and Lesnar out here right now, and of course what HHH wants, he gets.

Paul and Brock come out but HHH tells them to shut up. Heyman talks about how they're not allowed to say hate on WWE programming but Heyman will do it anyway. Paul talks about how HHH is going to have to lose in the cage and face everyone after it whether he likes it or not. HHH again says bring it on but apparently Brock doesn't fight for free.

That's fine with HHH because he's figured out why Lesnar won't fight. See, HHH has done the unthinkable and beat Brock while knocking him out. I guess Extreme Rules from last year is erased from history. He talks directly to Brock and says bring it on. Lesnar walks to the ring with Heyman saying don't do it. Lesnar slowly climbs the steps, puts one leg in the ring, and actually gets inside. As is usually the case, HHH is more than capable of fighting Lesnar one on one and sends him flying through the door while looking like it's not a problem at all. Oh and Brock looks scared.

Overall Rating: D+. This show was ALL about HHH vs. Lesnar. Yeah a few other things got some time, but it was all revolving around the one

underlying theme of HHH vs. Lesnar. This feud has been every bad thing about HHH rolled into one: the matches aren't as good as they're made out to be, his stories dominate everything else, and they go on WAY too long. At the end of the day, people just do not care about seeing these two fight anymore. It should have been a one off match at Summerslam with HHH going away for months and never mentioning Brock again.

Instead it's gone on EIGHT MORE MONTHS and yeah, Lesnar will likely win on Sunday, but the loss will wind up being all about HHH and Lesnar will be none better off as a result. But hey, HHH gets to headline another show right? Lesnar could have feuded with ANYBODY else in the company and given them something out of it, but instead HHH needed to occupy a year of his time.

As for the rest of the show....it wasn't easy. The problem on this show anymore is that WWE is so obsessed with everything they can put around their product (the App, the charity stuff, videos, unfunny commentary, celebrities etc) that they ignore the in ring action and the stories. Shield is the only interesting thing right now, as Ryback vs. Cena is feeling more and more worthless every second they're together because Cena isn't losing the title to him, period. This show felt way too long and it was mainly because of the HHH vs. Lesnar overkill.

Results

Ryback b. Zack Ryder – Shell Shock

Prime Time Players b. Tons of Funk – Rollup to Clay

Kofi Kingston b. Damien Sandow – Trouble in Paradise

Randy Orton b. Antonio Cesaro – RK0

John Cena/HELL NO b. Shield – Cena last eliminated Ambrose via DQ when Reigns and Rollins interfered

Jack Swagger b. Big E. Langston via countout

AJ b. Natalya – Black Widow

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