

Smackdown – January 31, 2017: The Future Price of Gold Takes a Hit

Smackdown

Date: January 31, 2017

Location: American Bank Center, Corpus Christi, Texas

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, John Bradshaw Layfield, Tom Phillips, David Otunga

We're less than nine weeks away from Wrestlemania and most of the interesting things at the Royal Rumble were from the blue brand. John Cena is the new Smackdown World Champion and Randy Orton won the Royal Rumble but there's a good chance things will change inside the Elimination Chamber in twelve days. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the Royal Rumble with a variety of media quotes about the show.

AJ Styles is glaring at the video of Cena posing with the title when the bosses appear on either side of him. He wants his rematch and doesn't want it inside the Elimination Chamber. As for tonight though, it's time to start getting ready for the Chamber, which will feature Cena, Styles, the Miz, Baron Corbin, Bray Wyatt and Dean Ambrose. Speaking of Ambrose, he comes in and a main event of Styles vs. Ambrose is set for later tonight.

Here's John Cena for his first comments as champion. After telling the fans to let him know what they think of him, he praises AJ Styles as an elite athlete and more than just a guy from Atlanta. That brings him to the Elimination Chamber when it's not time to celebrate because it's time to fight. That makes Smackdown the place to be and John Cena the man to beat so if you want some, come get some.

Cue Wyatt and Randy Orton with Bray talking about how destiny has brought them here and the title is coming to the Family no matter

what. Orton promises to end the vicious cycle at Wrestlemania when the championship will be set free. The Wyatts slowly come to the ring but Luke Harper shows up for the save, which fires Cena up WAY more than you would expect. The Wyatts bail and here's Shane to make the tag match.

John Cena/Luke Harper vs. Bray Wyatt/Randy Orton

Cena shoves Wyatt around to start and it's quickly off to Harper vs. Orton with Luke going rather violent. Harper takes Orton to the floor for a belly to back suplex onto the announcers' table and the fans are WAY into Luke here. Wyatt comes in and Harper immediately backs off for the tag off to Cena. JBL: "This doesn't bode well for John Cena!" Uh, it's not that big a deal John. Just pair off appropriately and everything is fine.

Cena gets double teamed in the corner and we take a break. Back with Cena hitting the elevated DDT but getting in a clothesline to put both guys down. Bray comes in and stares Harper down to break up another hot tag attempt. Harper doesn't mind and comes in anyway to go after Wyatt but Orton saves his buddy from Sister Abigail. That earns Randy a big boot but Harper eats Sister Abigail. The RKO ends Cena at 13:29.

Rating: C+. That's an interesting ending as the trolling continues with the WWE actually wanting us to believe that Orton vs. Cena will take place at Wrestlemania. Wyatt vs. Harper could be interesting and I'm VERY glad they didn't have Harper take the pin. In a way, Cena taking the pin made the most sense here as he's easily able to bounce back no matter what. That's not always the case with champions but Cena isn't your normal name.

Carmella vs. Delilah Dawson

James Ellsworth introduces Carmella and JBL describes Dawson as a cross between Rey Mysterio and a Smurf (she has blue hair). Dawson actually gets in a rollup for two until Ellsworth trips her up. The Code of Silence makes Dawson tap at 1:30. Ellsworth is kind of perfect in this role and with the amount of t-shirts he sold, there's nothing wrong with keeping him around.

Kalisto vs. Dolph Ziggler

Ziggler takes him straight down and drops the big elbow with Kalisto holding his heart. Apollo Crews is watching in the back and Kalisto gets caught in a neckbreaker for two. The superkick ends Kalisto at 2:02.

Ziggler goes for the mask but Crews chases him off.

Naomi and Becky Lynch are ready for Alexa Bliss and Mickie James.

Naomi/Becky Lynch vs. Alexa Bliss/Mickie James

Becky chases Bliss off to start and it's off to Naomi, who misses a charge into the ropes. Alexa hits the knees into the moonsault knees but hurts herself (doesn't seem serious), allowing the hot tag off to Mickie. The Bexploder gets two on Mickie and everything breaks down as we take a break.

Back with Alexa holding Becky in a chinlock until it's off to Mickie for one of her own. Becky kicks Alexa away and the hot tag brings in Naomi for a springboard clothesline. The dancing kicks and a faceplant get two on Alexa as Becky and Mickie fight to the floor. An enziguri and the split legged moonsault put Alexa away at 11:03.

Rating: C. I'm not wild on the two champions taking falls here but at least this one helps set up a title match. Coming into this feud I never would have thought Naomi would have a real shot at winning the title but they've got me thinking it could happen, which says quite a bit. This serves its purpose well and that's all that matters.

American Alpha wants some competition so they're going to issue an open challenge for the titles.

Smackdown Tag Team Titles: American Alpha vs. Usos

American Alpha is defending and JBL says this is going to be great, despite Alpha pinning the Usos in 34 seconds at one point. Actually hang on a second as the Ascension, the Vaudevillains, Breezango and Heath Slater/Rhyno all come out and turn it into a huge brawl.

Referees come out as well and we take a break with no bell. Back with the brawl still going on and no semblance of order whatsoever.

Slater and Rhyno and Alpha are the only teams left in the ring and Alpha's music plays with no match actually announced.

We look back at Nikki Bella and Natalya getting in a fight last week.

Daniel Bryan is on the phone with Brie when Natalya and her security come in. Natalya wants to talk about her new merchandise but Nikki comes in and interrupts. Daniel has enough and makes a match between the women at Elimination Chamber.

Dean Ambrose vs. AJ Styles

Non-title with Miz on commentary. Dean snaps off some armdrags to start and headlocks AJ to the mat. We hit a Texas cloverleaf of all things before Dean shifts it over to something like the Rings of Saturn. They head outside with Styles sending him into the announcers' table but Dean stomps him down in the corner to take over again.

Dean loads up a dive to the floor but here's Baron Corbin for a distraction as we take a break. Back with Corbin on commentary as well as Styles gets two off a pumphandle gutbuster. Dirty Deeds is broken up by AJ's rush of strikes (which Mauro dubs the Phenomenal Blitz) to put both guys down. AJ's rack neckbreaker is countered and Styles is knocked out to the floor.

The suicide dive is broken up by a forearm to the head and they trade some hot near falls, including one off the fireman's carry into a backbreaker. The rebound lariat puts AJ down but Dean doesn't cover. The top rope elbow on the floor has Styles in even more trouble as Corbin and Miz get in a brawl. That's not cool with Dean who baseball slides Corbin down, setting up the Styles Clash to put Dean away at 18:39.

Rating: B-. DANG this is a bad night for champions. Ambrose was a bit hotter than usual here and that made for a good match. I could have gone for a DQ or countout finish here though as you don't need yet another champion getting beat but this is about as good as you can get given the way the booking is going. I get the idea of AJ

needing a win and since the Chamber has four heels, there was nothing else that could have been done.

Miz gives Ambrose the Skull Crushing Finale but Corbin gives Miz and Dean the End of Days to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. This wasn't the best Smackdown but I think a lot of that is due to how fast everything goes on a major pay per view weekend. If you watched Takeover, this brought us up to over thirteen hours of wrestling in four days, which is a little more than most fans can take. On top of that they have two weeks to set up a pay per view card and that's just hard to do in general. Not a bad show but the company could use a breather at the moment.

Results

Bray Wyatt/Randy Orton b. John Cena/Luke Harper – RK0 to Cena

Carmella b. Delilah Dawson – Code of Silence

Dolph Ziggler b. Kalisto – Superkick

Naomi/Becky Lynch b. Alexa Bliss/Mickie James – Split legged moonsault to Bliss

AJ Styles b. Dean Ambrose – Styles Clash

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the History of the WWE's Big Four Pay Per Views, now in PAPERBACK. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/01/27/kbs-reviews-now-available-in-paperback/>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

Smackdown – January 24, 2017: Why Pretend Otherwise?

Smackdown

Date: January 24, 2017

Location: Huntington Center, Toledo, Ohio

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, John Bradshaw Layfield, Tom Phillips, David Otunga

It's the final show before the Royal Rumble and that means we might be in for a few more announcements for the big battle royal. At the moment, twenty one names have been announced and most of them are from Monday Night Raw. A few more Smackdown names wouldn't hurt anything and could be on the way tonight. Let's get to it.

We open with Miz complaining to Daniel Bryan that he and Maryse don't have their own private dressing room. Miz wants to know what will be done for someone with his star power so Bryan offers to curtain off a stall in the men's room. Bryan gives him a better offer: a rematch for the Intercontinental Title against Dean Ambrose. Miz suggests a No DQ match but Bryan thinks a lumberjack match would be better.

We get a long recap on Randy Orton joining the Wyatt Family and the team's issues since.

Randy Orton vs. Luke Harper

Bray is sitting in his rocking chair and stoically looking ahead. Orton elbows Harper in the jaw to start and they head outside for nothing in particular. Back in and Orton kicks him in the face to set up the elevated DDT. Harper's neck seems to be a bit banged up as they head outside again with Luke kicking Orton in the face.

Bray throws both of them back inside and it's off to a break. Back with Orton fighting out of a chinlock and scoring with a superplex.

Harper grabs his Michinoku Driver and kicks Orton in the face for two, drawing a smile from Bray. Orton gets two off a rollup so Harper tries the discus lariat, only to get caught in the RKO for the pin at 9:50.

Rating: C. This was much more about the angle than the match and I don't think there was much of a surprise with Orton winning. Harper is a talented guy but he has no business going over someone on Orton's level at this point. I wouldn't mind if Harper went out on his own but it didn't go all that well in the first try and he's about the same as he was back then.

Post match Wyatt gives Harper Sister Abigail. The announcers aren't sure if Harper is out of the Family or if it was just tough love.

Recap of last week's cage match and Mickie James being revealed as La Luchadora.

Renee Young brings out Mickie James to explain her actions from last week. She reads off her resume but Renee says that isn't enough. Mickie doesn't like having to explain herself because this Divas Revolution is nonsense. The only person that sees things the right way is Alexa Bliss, who has been fighting against the Revolution since it started. Becky Lynch is nothing special and Mickie would love to fight her anytime. Cue Becky to chase Mickie into the crowd but Alexa jumps her to start the double beatdown.

Last week, Carmella took James Ellsworth on a shopping spree. James wasn't sure about the prices but Carmella insists. First up: pants. Ellsworth starts with jeans but Carmella isn't happy. Various other goofy outfits ensue so Carmella finally takes over with the help of Dante the fashion guy. Eventually it's decided to make him into someone who belongs on Jersey Shore and that's it.

Battle Royal

Heath Slater, Rhino, Tyler Breeze, Fandango, Simon Gotch, Aiden English, Konnor, Viktor, Mojo Rawley, Curt Hawkins

The winner is in the Rumble and Baron Corbin is on commentary. English and Gotch are out in the first five seconds and Mojo punches

Hawkins out next. Slater and Viktor get rid of each other, followed by Mojo helping to get rid of Rhyno and Konnor. Mojo superkicks Fandango out and backdrops Breeze to the floor for the win at 3:15.

Rating: D. This wasn't much but they kept it quick enough that it couldn't cause any problems. Rawley is in a weird spot at the moment as he hasn't done any real singles work in a long time so it's not the worst idea to let him establish himself a little bit here. The match was so short that it's hard to complain so I'll spare you any issues with a three minute battle royal.

Nikki Bella was walking into the arena earlier when she explained that she and John Cena just happened to be next to her on the side of the production truck. Natalya comes up and lays Nikki out.

Here's AJ Styles to call out John Cena. Before he gets there though, he has an issue with the Royal Rumble poster. Cena is up near the front and Styles is almost in the back of a big group shot. Now it's Cena, who looks to have some new gear. Earlier this week, Styles turned on the Today Show and saw Cena as guest host. Cena talked about facing some guy from Atlanta and the incredibly marky host is confident Cena will win. AJ doesn't like being referred to as just some guy and says no one has missed Cena.

John is a sorry excuse for a wrestler so Cena finally goes on a rant about how he's been around for ten years while AJ has only been hot for six months. AJ might have been great on the indies but Cena was built for WWE and gets more done in one day than AJ does in a year. If Styles is so mad about the poster, learn how to Photoshop. AJ is just like everyone else: wanting to be Cena when he just can't do it.

Kalisto vs. Dolph Ziggler

The superkick ends Kalisto in 48 seconds.

Post match Ziggler grabs a chair but JBL stands up, allowing Apollo Crews to really chase Ziggler off.

Naomi vs. Natalya

No match as Nikki attacks Natalya in the back.

Naomi says she wants to fight someone so here's Alexa...to says he won't do it either.

Dean Ambrose says there aren't enough lumberjacks in the world to stop him from beating Miz tonight.

Intercontinental Title: Miz vs. Dean Ambrose

Ambrose is defending in the Rumble. Dean threatens Dirty Deeds to send Miz outside and the lumberjacks pummel him. That's only good for two though and we take an early break. Back with Miz sending Dean to the floor a few times, followed by the YES Kicks. Dean comes back with the top rope elbow for two and it's time for the lumberjacks to beat on Miz even more.

Back in and Maryse grabs Dean's leg, setting up a running knee ala Daniel Bryan (JBL says that's how Bryan won the title at Wrestlemania because JBL isn't as smart as he thinks) for two more. Miz is sent to the floor again and Dean dives on the big pile. The fans think this is awesome as Dean hits the rebound lariat for two, only to have everyone come in for....absolutely nothing because ten guys coming in and attacking both wrestlers isn't a DQ. Dirty Deeds ends Miz at 12:15.

Rating: C+. While I'm not sure this was awesome, I'm sure that the ending didn't make a lot of sense. Like, you can't do a no contest when ALL THE LUMBERJACKS come in at once? It's really that important to have Ambrose pin Miz here? Anyway, the match was fine as these two have chemistry together and that's all that matters.

Ambrose poses to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. This wasn't Smackdown's best work as it seems that they're getting ready for everything besides the Rumble. Now in a way I can get that idea as there's only so much hype you can do for a battle royal when your roster doesn't even comprise a third of the lineup and none of your entrants have any real chance. Still though, they did the best with what they had and that's fine enough.

Results

Randy Orton b. Luke Harper – RKO

Mojo Rawley won a battle royal last eliminating Tyler Breeze

Dolph Ziggler b. Kalisto – Superkick

Dean Ambrose b. Miz – Dirty Deeds

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book, KB's Complete Monday Nitro and Thunder Reviews Volume V at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01MQKDV50>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

Smackdown – January 17, 2017: It's No Big Deal Anymore

Smackdown

Date: January 17, 2017

Location: FedEx Forum, Memphis, Tennessee

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, John Bradshaw Layfield, David Otunga, Tom Phillips

I know I say this every week but it's a stacked show again with Alexa Bliss defending the Women's Title against Becky Lynch in a cage match to prevent interference from La Luchadora. Other than that we have the King's Court with Jerry Lawler and Shane McMahon opening the show with a major announcement. Let's get to it.

Quick preview of tonight's show.

Here's Shane to get us going with his major announcement. He gets straight to the point: in four weeks, the Smackdown World Title will be defended inside the Elimination Chamber with the winner going on to "Wrestlemania XXXIII" for the big title defense. This brings out champion AJ Styles to say that Shane is ruining Smackdown. Styles threatens to take the title back to Japan instead of fighting inside the Chamber but Shane brings up the idea that Cena will tie Ric Flair's record at the Rumble.

Cue Cena but Styles cuts him off because Cena doesn't get to say anything when his brother in law hands him title shots. This brings out the Miz and Maryse with Miz saying this is his time to kick 2017 off as only he can. Miz makes fun of the normal things people make fun of AJ for (Cena: "Sounds like he's trying to get to you AJ.") so Styles says Miz probably wrestles with a limp. AJ: "We can ask Maryse about that." Cena: "000000H!!!!" Cena gets them riled up enough to make the match happen next.

Back from a break with Shane running into Dean Ambrose, who wants in the Chamber. They'll talk about that later though because Dean wants a new belt which doesn't smell like cocoa butter. Shane can't do that but he'll give Dean the opponent he wants tonight: Randy Orton.

AJ Styles vs. The Miz

Non-title with Cena on commentary. They actually fight over a test of strength to start until AJ does the drop down into the dropkick so he can pose at Cena. A knee to the ribs cuts AJ off but he gets in a low Phenomenal Forearm. Maryse offers a distraction though and AJ gets kicked to the floor as we take a break. Back with Miz escaping the Styles Clash and hitting a snap DDT for two. Styles heads to the floor and gets into it with Cena, drawing the DQ at 10:45.

Rating: B-. This was good while it lasted and the ending was just about the only way they could go. You can almost guarantee that all three will be inside the Chamber and that's a good thing. I'm not sure who comes out of the next three pay per views with the title but it could make for some interesting stories.

Cena lays both of them out and holds up the title.

Here's Nikki Bella to call out Natalya, who is in the crowd for some reason. Natalya has something for us to see and goes back through the curtain to a conveniently placed merchandise stand. Natalya rants about how Nikki and Cena's merchandise is next to each other. Why isn't there a Natalya shirt there when there's a Bret Hart shirt? It's appropriate though because Nikki and Bret are going to die old and alone. Nikki FINALLY gets back there for the pull apart brawl.

Alexa Bliss is ready for the cage match.

Kurt Angle Hall of Fame video.

Dean Ambrose vs. Randy Orton

Non-title. Dean starts fast and slugs Orton down to the floor, giving us the big staredown from the middle rope. Back in and Ambrose headlocks him down, only to get draped ribs first across the top rope. The Wyatts suggest keeping it at Orton's pace as he grabs a chinlock to keep things slow. Orton gets bored of the slow pace and sends Dean outside for a trip over the announcers' table.

Back from a break with Ambrose fighting out of another chinlock and hitting a running forearm. Neither finisher can hit and the rebound lariat gets two for Dean. The elevated DDT is broken up so Dean can dive onto Harper but the distraction lets Orton get in the DDT. For reasons of storyline convenience, Harper gets on the apron and the distraction sets up the rollup pin on Orton at 13:42.

Rating: B. I'm looking forward to where this is going though I'm not sure who winds up turning out of all this. I can't imagine Harper as a face no matter what but I'm not sure where that leaves Wyatt and Orton, as you would expect to see them fight at Wrestlemania. You can almost guarantee they're both in the Chamber though and that's a fine way to go.

Post match Orton and Harper go at it with Bray trying to break it up. Luke lunges at Orton again and Bray hits Harper in the face. Bray tells Orton to bring it on and the fans want the RK0. That goes

nowhere though as Harper walks away while pointing at Orton.

Becky Lynch knows she's never run from a fight and she knows who she is.

Here's Jerry Lawler for the King's Court. After saying he's glad to be back, here's Dolph Ziggler as his guest. Dolph doesn't say anything as Lawler asks about the recent change in personality. Ziggler is one of Lawler's favorites but the star is fading as much as the bleach in his hair. We see a clip of last week's loss to Kalisto and Dolph's subsequent attack with a chair. Ziggler still has nothing to say and starts to leave but Lawler wants to know what's going on.

Dolph wants to know why Lawler agreed to do this and has his own footage. This clip is the series of elbow drops that might have caused Lawler's heart attack back in September 2012. Ziggler says that was on purpose and if Lawler doesn't stop with the questions, he'll finish what he started. Lawler asks his last question: how does it feel to always be a loser? That earns him a superkick to the chest and JBL actually gets in the ring to check on Jerry. Ziggler turns down an offer to come back and fight Lawler.

Bray Wyatt says the entire Family is in the Royal Rumble. Next week though it's Orton vs. Harper and no matter who wins, the Family will be stronger.

Women's Title: Alexa Bliss vs. Becky Lynch

Lynch is challenging and this is inside a steel cage. They go at it to start with both of them climbing the cage at the same time. That goes nowhere so Bliss sends her into the steel a few times, only to have Becky drop her face first onto the top turnbuckle. We take a break and come back with Lynch in trouble as Alexa stomps her against the cage.

Bliss' charge hits the steel though and Becky gets to the top, only to have a quick charge make the save. That goes badly for the champ as well though as Becky gets in a super Bexploder for a very close two. Becky goes for the door but here's La Luchadora to block the

way. A kick to the head sets up Bliss' DDT for the pin to retain at 9:43.

Rating: B-. Not great here but at least we had a good match in the process. The ending was pretty easy to guess but it's still really cool to see the women main event a show like it's no big deal anymore. In years past, this would be near the biggest moment ever in women's wrestling but instead it's just something that happened. Post match the beatdown continues until Becky fights back and unmask La Luchadora as...Mickie James. There's nothing wrong with that.

Overall Rating: B-. I had a good time with this show even if it felt a little emptier than usual. Three matches isn't exactly a high amount but the key thing here is how important everything seems. No matter what is going on at the time, that is all that matters right then and there. It could be Nikki and Natalya arguing or something over the World Title but it's important and treated as such. That's SUCH a big difference over Raw and it helps to no end.

Results

AJ Styles b. The Miz via DQ when John Cena interfered

Dean Ambrose b. Randy Orton – Rollup

Alexa Bliss b. Becky Lynch – DDT

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book, KB's Complete Monday Nitro and Thunder Reviews Volume V at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01MQKDV50>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

New Column: On and Off with the Showoff

Why Ziggler why?

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-off-showoff/>

Smackdown – December 13, 2016: Random Cameos Can Be Good Things

Smackdown

Date: December 13, 2016

Location: Verizon Center, Washington D.C.

Commentators: Tom Phillips, John Bradshaw Layfield, David Otunga, Mauro Ranallo

As has been the case more often than not lately, we've got a fairly stacked Tuesday show. Tonight it's a tag team battle royal to determine some new #1 contenders to go along with AJ Styles defending the Smackdown World Title against James Ellsworth. Smackdown doesn't have anything major to set up until the Royal Rumble so it's all about big TV until then. Let's get to it.

We open with Shane McMahon (What purpose does he serve? Can anyone answer that?) and Daniel Bryan watching Ellsworth cost Dean Ambrose last week's main event. Ellsworth comes in coughing and sneezing so Bryan says the title match is postponed. Therefore, we need a new #1

contender.

Opening sequence.

It's time for MizTV with special guest AJ Styles, who thinks Ellsworth has come down with Chingfluenza. AJ laughs off the idea of Ellsworth being a threat to the title, which is probably accurate. Miz says that he's the one who raised his title to greatness and beat Ambrose last week. It's true that Miz isn't on AJ's level because he's above it, meaning maybe it's time to make the WWE Championship legendary. A fight is teased but Ambrose and Dolph Ziggler come out because Heaven forbid we go a week without hearing from Dolph. Miz takes Dirty Deeds and actually so does Ziggler, only to have Luke Harper appear and lay Ambrose out.

After a break, AJ comes in and demands protection from the bosses. Tonight it's a fourway elimination match for the #1 contendership between Miz, Ambrose, Harper and Ziggler with interference being grounds for an elimination. The title match will take place on the December 27th episode of Smackdown.

Carmella vs. Natalya

Nikki Bella is on commentary because this is her division. It's a catfight to start and we head to a rather early break. Back with Carmella sending Natalya into the corner for the Bronco Buster. We hit the bodyscissors, meaning a lot more screaming. Nikki keeps babbling on about how she trusts Natalya and a friend would never do that because it needs to sound like a reality story. Natalya powers out with a Michinoku Driver but opts to argue with Nikki even more. She even shoves Nikki out of the way of a charging Carmella but the distraction lets Carmella grab a small package for the pin at 9:05.

Rating: D+. So like did you know that Nikki and Natalya were the best friends EVER and would never ever stab each other in the back? I need a camera to awkwardly stare into while I list off various emotions I'm feeling as I talk about this because it's one of the worse reality show stories they've done in a long time.

Video on John Cena hosting Saturday Night Live. Cena is back in two

weeks.

Gabriel Iglesias (standup comedian) talks to Apollo Crews about being on tomorrow's Tribute to the Troops. Miz and Maryse come in so insults can be exchanged.

Tag Team Battle Royal

American Alpha, Heath Slater/Rhyno, Ascension, Vaudevillains, Hype Bros, Breezango

The winners are the #1 contenders and both members have to be eliminated. Simon Gotch is knocked out two seconds into the match off a hard clothesline from Mojo Rawley. Thing slow down considerably with people taking various shots at each other around the ring. In other words, it's a battle royal. Slater and Rhyno start double teaming English as Chad Gable pulls Viktor over the top for an elimination.

Konor gets rid of Gable a few seconds later and we're down to nine. Slater accidentally puts Rhyno out and another team is split. We take a break and come back with English being dumped out, meaning the Vaudevillains are done. Fandango is swept out to the floor and we're down to Jordan, Breeze, Slater, Konor and Ryder, meaning Rawley was put out during the break.

Jordan starts to clean house with shoulders and suplexes but Breeze and Konor get together for the elimination. Dang American Alpha just can't get there. Slater snaps off some neckbreakers but the numbers game catches up with him, allowing Konor to throw him out. Breeze tries to turn on Konor but gets dropkicked down by Ryder. Konor knocks Breeze out to the floor and Zack gets rid of him for the win at 13:33.

Rating: D. Battle royals almost always suck by definition and it certainly didn't help that the Hype Bros were built up as the next challengers last week. At least they had to do more than beat Ascension and Breezango to get the shot though, making this somewhat of an effective way to crown new #1 contenders.

Baron Corbin video.

Alexa Bliss vs. Deonna Purrazzo

Actually never mind as Bliss says this is beneath her so no match. Bliss lays Purrazzo out but here's Becky Lynch to interrupt. She wants her rematch right now but Bliss says not tonight. Actually never mind again as Shane McMahon comes out to say the title match is on.

Smackdown Women's Title: Alexa Bliss vs. Becky Lynch

Lynch is challenging and Bliss hides in the ropes to start. The threat of a Disarm-Her sends Alexa even further into the ropes, followed by some armdrags to keep the champ in trouble. Bliss gets rolled up for two as JBL talks about blocking Mauro on Twitter. Another Disarm-Her sends Bliss outside and, claiming a knee injury, she takes the countout at 4:30.

Rating: C-. See, Smackdown is smart enough to not blow the big title match on a regular Smackdown with no hype. If this were Raw, the title match would have five minutes' build and then go fifteen minutes before we got the next match. The match was little more than an angle but it gives Becky a win over the champ and sets up another rematch.

Bliss goes after Becky with the knee looking just fine. The beatdown sends Bliss limping back to the floor.

Dean Ambrose vs. Dolph Ziggler vs. Luke Harper vs. The Miz

AJ is on commentary, elimination rules with the winner getting a title shot in two weeks and of course Miz's title isn't on the line. Harper absolutely cleans house to start by knocking Ziggler and Ambrose to the floor, followed by a Michinoku Driver to Miz. Ziggler and Ambrose get together to put Harper on the floor, leaving Miz to DDT Ziggler for two.

Miz starts firing off some baseball slides but stops to mock Bryan's pose. That means it's time for YES Kicks and the corner dropkicks to make it even worse. It's Dean coming back in to cut Miz off but Harper just blasts him with a boot to the face. Ziggler gets caught in a torture rack but Ambrose makes the save and takes Luke down

with the rebound lariat. Miz tries to steal a fall but gets small packaged for the elimination at 6:45 as we take a break.

Back with Ambrose hitting a spinning backbreaker for two on Ziggler while Luke it out on the floor. The Zig Zag puts Harper down but Dean drops the top rope clothesline for two on Ziggler. Harper comes back with a sitout powerbomb for two more on Ziggler but a superkick into Dirty Deeds gets rid of Luke at 15:13.

So what was the point of adding him to this match in the first place? Couldn't they do the exact same thing with three instead of four? The catapult sends Ziggler face first into the post but he's fine enough to hit a super X Factor for two. Cue Miz to offer another distraction but Ambrose takes him down with a suicide dive. Ziggler uses the distraction to get in a superkick for the pin and the title shot at 19:05.

Rating: B-. Harper being there for no apparent reason aside, this was a nice long match with everyone looking good to quite good. I really could go without Ziggler getting ANOTHER World Title shot but at least it's only two weeks away on a TV show and not six weeks away at the Rumble.

Rich Swann tells us to check out 205 Live.

Overall Rating: C+. This was an interesting show as they set up a lot for what feels like it could be a major show on December 27. I can go for the Hype Bros as the next victims for the Wyatts and it should be interesting to see what happens when Lynch finally gets a big time title shot. Good show here and I think I can handle another week without Ellsworth getting his title shot.

Results

Carmella b. Natalya – Small package

Zack Ryder won a battle royal last eliminating Konor

Becky Lynch b. Alexa Bliss via countout

Dolph Ziggler b. Luke Harper, Dean Ambrose and the Miz – Superkick to Ambrose

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book, KB's Complete Monday Nitro and Thunder Reviews Volume V at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01MQKDV50>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

Smackdown – November 29, 2016: Going Home With A Smile

Smackdown

Date: November 29, 2016

Location: Colonial Life Arena, Columbia, South Carolina

Commentators: Tom Phillips, David Otunga, Mauro Ranallo, John Bradshaw Layfield

It's the go home show for Tables, Ladders and Chairs 2016 and Smackdown has managed to put together a pretty decent build in such a small time frame. Tonight we've got Dean Ambrose hosting the Ambrose Asylum with James Ellsworth as his guest, meaning AJ Styles is bound to get involved. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

There are tables, ladders and chairs all over the arena.

Renee Young is in the ring for a contract signing for the Women's Title match. Alexa Bliss and Becky Lynch come out with Alexa telling Renee to get out of here because they need someone with better

fashion sense. They recap the feud with Becky saying Bliss has the mentality of a four year old. The champ signs but Alexa keeps talking about Becky's accent and how this isn't the Disney Channel where you get further by being nice. Becky rips into her for not accomplishing anything in her time here other than having a loser mentality. Alexa signs as well and the fight is on with Becky actually being knocked through the table.

Dolph Ziggler/Kalisto vs. Baron Corbin/The Miz

Corbin knocks Ziggler down to start and we take a break less than thirty seconds in. Back with Corbin whipping Dolph hard into the corner and doing that slide underneath the bottom rope to keep Dolph in trouble. It's off to Miz, who pulls out a ladder to lean up against the steps. Ziggler gets in the running DDT on the floor, followed by a superkick to Miz.

The hot tag brings in Kalisto for his usual, including the hurricanrana driver for two on Miz. A big suicide dive sends Miz into the announcers' table. Everyone is staggered and Maryse shoves the ladder onto Ziggler. Back in and the Salida Del Sol looks to finish, only to have Corbin use a chair for the DQ at 7:31.

Rating: B-. For a match this short, they packed in a lot of action into the time. Kalisto could be an interesting guy if they would stop cutting his legs out from underneath him. The same is true with Corbin, who certainly has the look but I'm not sure if he has enough in ring skills yet to hang at this level.

American Alpha isn't scared of the Wyatts and are ready to levitate the Wyatts with suplexes.

The Wyatts are ready for American Alpha and don't like their positivity. Orton gives Luke Harper a pep talk for his match with Kane but Harper doesn't seem to trust Randy.

Carmella comes out for her match but first of all she has a message for John Cena. She promises to hit Nikki with a chair so hard that the real Bella Twins pop out of her back. Nikki charges to the ring and the brawl is on, meaning no match. Carmella is easily cleaned

out.

We recap last week's ladder match with Ellsworth earning his contract and a shot at Styles' World Title.

It's time for the Ambrose Asylum, complete with a single piece of carpet in the middle of the ring. Ambrose gets right to it by bringing out Ellsworth as the first guest. Dean asks how old James' boots are before letting James celebrate his win a little bit. Ellsworth offers to do anything Dean needs so Ambrose gives him money to pick up a six pack after the show. As far as James' future, he'd rather face AJ for the title after beating him three times in a row. Ambrose: "He's drunk with power ladies and gentlemen."

Cue AJ to stand on the announcers' table and make puppet jokes about Ellsworth. Dean: "So what you're saying is you lost to a dummy three times?" AJ gets in the ring and promises to get rid of Dean before dealing with the new superstar, as long as James shows up on Sunday. The brawl is on with AJ shoving both guys through the furniture. Ellsworth is hung upside down for a chair shot to the back, followed by a Styles Clash onto the steps. That should get rid of him for awhile but odds are he'll be at the pay per view.

Post break, Ellsworth is taken out on a stretcher.

Kane vs. Luke Harper

Harper's headlock doesn't get him anywhere as Kane comes back with his own power offense. A big boot and clothesline puts Harper on the floor and we take a break. Back with Harper kicking him in the knee and head, only to get caught with the running DDT. Harper hammers away in the corner but gets powerbombed out for two more. The swinging Boss Man Slam gives Luke two of his own and a superkick drops Kane again. Back up and Harper misses the discus lariat, setting up the chokeslam to give Kane the pin at 11:05.

Rating: B-. What is with the good matches on here tonight? These two beat the heck out of each other in the only kind of match they should have had. Kane has taken a backseat since the Draft but he's still fine for something like this. You can tell they're doing

something with Harper so maybe he'll wind up getting a push out of the thing.

We recap the contract signing.

Becky has a sore back but doesn't care what kind of match she has with Alexa. Again, and I can't emphasize this enough: they've taken a simple idea and ran with the thing, which can often make for something very entertaining.

Bray Wyatt/Randy Orton vs. American Alpha

The winners get the title shot on Sunday. Orton and Jordan get things going with Jason snapping off some armdrags and working an armbar. It's off to Wyatt who throws Jordan throat first into the ropes to take over. The beatdown begins with Orton draping him over the top rope and grabbing a chinlock.

Jordan fights up and makes the tag off to Gable, who cleans house for a bit until being sent hard to the floor as we take a break. Back with Gable getting DDT'ed onto the apron for two as the beating continues. Bray hits the release Rock Bottom and Orton's awesome looking superplex has both guys down.

Unfortunately it's actually enough for the hot tag to Jordan as everything breaks down. The suplexes begin on Bray but the lights go out, revealing Harper at ringside. Gable breaks up Sister Abigail but an RK0 breaks up the Grand Amplitude. Jordan's spear hits the post and Sister Abigail sends the Wyatts to the title match at 15:29.

Rating: B. Heck of a match here with the right team going over. Bray almost has to win a title soon and they even protected Alpha in the loss. There's something so cool about watching Jordan fighting for all he's worth as he does the big comeback as well as almost anyone in the company right now. This was better than I was expecting and I had a good time with it.

Slater and Rhyno are ready for the challenge when Styles comes up to say no one cares about the Tag Team Titles. Ambrose runs in and beats AJ up to end the show.

Overall Rating: A. Now THIS is how you go into a pay per view. Smackdown had a battle plan tonight and executed it to near perfection. I'm pretty sure every match on Sunday got some focus here and the wrestling was even good on top of that. You really can tell that there's a lot of effort put into the planning of these shows and they know exactly what they want to do on almost any given week. This was one of the better go home shows I've seen in a very long time and it was everything they needed to do and more.

Results

Dolph Ziggler/Kalisto b. The Miz/Baron Corbin via DQ when Corbin used a chair

Kane b. Luke Harper – Chokeslam

Randy Orton/Bray Wyatt b. American Alpha – Sister Abigail to Jordan

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book, KB's Complete Monday Nitro and Thunder Reviews Volume V at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01MQKDV50>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

Survivor Series Count-Up – 2015 (2016 Redo): Has Anybody Seen My Ambrose?

Survivor Series 2015

Date: November 22, 2015

Location: Phillips Arena, Atlanta, Georgia

Attendance: 14,481

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

Now this is an interesting one as I barely remember anything about it from just a year ago. The big story here is the World Title having to be decided in a tournament as Seth Rollins destroyed his knee and is out for a LONG time. Other than that, the big match is the Undertaker teaming with Kane against the Wyatt Family to celebrate 25 years since his debut with the company. Let's get to it.

Oh and before we get going: ISIS was allegedly targeting this show for a terrorist attack. Nothing would come of the rumors but it got quite a bit of attention.

Pre-Show: Dudley Boyz/Goldust/Neville/Titus O'Neil vs. Cosmic Wasteland/Miz/Bo Dallas

The Cosmic Wasteland was a short lived mini stable comprised of Stardust and the Ascension. Goldust is a mystery partner, making his return after several months off due to a shoulder injury, to freak Stardust out. The brothers start things off but a right hand means it's off to Viktor, who is powerslammed and pinned in about thirty seconds. I'd bet on that being an injury.

Titus and Konnor come in for the big power showdown, meaning a bunch of whips and slams which are supposed to mean more because they're being done by bigger guys. D-Von gets a chant (for some reason) and a tag (because Titus wanted to come out), which means it's time for What's Up. The rest of the heels are sent outside for a big flip dive from Neville in a big crash.

Back from a break with Bubba Rock Bottoming Konnor for an elimination to make it 5-3. D-Von comes back in but gets beaten down to give the heels a little breather. A spinebuster drops Miz and that's enough for the tag off to Neville for the quick kicks to the face. Dallas grabs a Bodog and a Skull Crushing Finale gives Miz the pin on Neville to get us down to 4-3, only to have Goldust roll Miz up to get the fall back.

We come back from a second break with Dallas holding Goldust in a chinlock before it's off to Stardust for some brotherly stomping. The chinlocks continue and the remaining bad guys charge at the three remaining on the apron in a rare good shot for the villains.

Goldust shows he's really back with a Code Red of all things, allowing the tag off to Titus. The Clash of the Titans gets rid of Bo and a 3D finishes Stardust at 18:10. I have no idea why the announcers were talking about Gilligan's Island for the last two falls but I'd bet on some form of subtext.

Rating: D+. This came and went but it's fine for a way to warm the crowd up. At the end of the day you have a lot of people on the roster and it makes sense to throw people together like this in a nothing match. It's almost like part of the point of the series in the first place. There's not much to the match but Goldust returning was a nice little surprise.

Lillian Garcia sings the National Anthem as a big middle finger to the terrorism charges. I actually liked this and she can sing the heck out of that song.

The opening video looks at the Undertaker because that's really what this show is all about. The slow piano version of his theme is really cool. These recaps are actually really helpful because I had NO idea how we got to the Wyatts vs. the Brothers of Destruction. It turns out that they kidnapped Undertaker and Kane and now they're fighting them because Bray and company are up there with Scooby-Doo villains when it comes to effectiveness. We also look at the tournament as an afterthought before going back to Undertaker and Kane.

WWE World Title Tournament Semifinals: Roman Reigns vs. Alberto Del Rio

Del Rio's US Title isn't on the line of course. What should be on the line is Roman's career after the fans just erupt with boos during his entrance. Unfortunately this is also during the Zeb Colter period for Del Rio, which was just horrible on every level. They never clicked and there's no way around that.

The booing turns into LET'S GO ROMAN/ROMAN SUCKS as Reigns hits a shoulder for the first offense. Alberto takes over outside but Roman hammers away back inside because he doesn't have the strongest offense. The corner enziguri knocks Roman silly (that always looks great) and it's time for the arm to go into the steps. We see HHH watching with a smile on his face after Reigns turned down a chance to be the Authority's new protege because they're still trying to redo Austin vs. McMahon.

A chinlock slows things down and Roman goes shoulder first into the post to make the arm even worse. The running clothesline drops Del Rio and Reigns' good arm fires off the corner clotheslines. Del Rio gets in a Backstabber to take over again as this is going back and forth. They head to the corner so Del Rio can miss that still horribly stupid top rope double stomp and bang up his knee.

Not that it matters as it's cross armbreaker into the rollup into the powerbomb but Roman can't cover. Now the armbreaker goes on for a few seconds before Roman easily escapes (likely because it wasn't on the arm Del Rio had worn down) and spears his way to the finals at 14:05.

Rating: B-. Standard Raw main event here and I don't think anyone bought Del Rio was going to go to the finals. At the end of the day his main event run is LONG over at this point and there's no reason to believe Reigns is going to be the first top level face in forever to submit to the armbreaker. The match was entertaining but really more of a way to kill time until the inevitable spear. That's not necessarily a bad thing.

Ambrose praises Reigns for his win and Roman is happy to fight Dean for the title. That was pretty much the only possible ending to the tournament and everyone knew it when the brackets were revealed. Kevin Owens comes in after Ambrose leaves and thinks Reigns will screw up at the finish line all over again because Kevin himself will stop him.

WWE World Title Tournament Semifinals: Kevin Owens vs. Dean Ambrose

Owens' Intercontinental Title isn't on the line. Kevin grabs a headlock as JBL goes into his ridiculous rant about how Ambrose can't be the face of the company because he wouldn't look good on the Tonight Show and on billboards as that's pretty much just John Cena and John Cena alone.

Ambrose rakes Owens' eyes across the top rope and slingshots out to the floor as the fans seem to be paying more attention to this one because there's an actual chance either guy could win. It's funny how that works. Dean gets crotched on the top and hit with the Cannonball (insert your Otto Wanz reference here because JBL has to use the same references every single time someone does a move), followed by a chinlock.

That goes nowhere so it's the torture rack neckbreaker for another

near fall. The two count means it's time for some trash talking as only Owens can do. The fans are split again and I'm not sure if that's good or bad. We're right back to the chinlock (Owens: "CHINLOCK CITY BABY!") before a double clothesline puts both guys down. Kevin misses his moonsault (good looking one too) and the standing elbow gets two.

They head up top with Owens countering a superplex into that sweet swinging fisherman's superplex. Owens: "COLE TELL HIM TO STAY DOWN!" That's one thing I love about Owens: he does stuff that feels out of nowhere because he's a bit off. A trip to the floor means something like a gutbuster onto the announcers' table but the Pop Up Powerbomb is countered into a hurricanrana and Dirty Deeds sends Dean to the finals at 11:20.

Rating: B. I liked the energy here as it felt like a back and forth match with Owens not being able to keep Dean down and Dean just trying to sneak in anything he could at any time. It also helps that you could see Owens getting the win instead of waiting around until he got speared. That can do wonders and it made for a better match here.

TLC 2015 ad. I still love that video game theme.

We look at Undertaker's debut and the rest of his career. Of note in that debut match: Roddy Piper said if anyone can figure out Undertaker, Bret Hart could do it. Over their careers, Undertaker never pinned Bret Hart (save for one house show) in a singles match.

Team Ryback vs. Team Sheamus

Ryback, Usos, Lucha Dragons

Sheamus, King Barrett, New Day

There's no real rhyme or reason to these teams so I picked two singles guys for the captains. Also I'm pretty sure this was a bonus match for the sake of filling in some time and, you know, it's Survivor Series. Sheamus is Mr. Money in the Bank here. It's also REALLY weird to see New Day as heels, though they're definitely getting over as faces in a hurry. Atlanta native Xavier Woods has a rather impressive new hair style and Kofi brags about all the gold on their team. Sheamus: "And tonight, WE'RE GONNA GET JIGGY ON THESE POSERS!!! AM I RIGHT???" The silence is hilarious but Kofi turns it into NEW DAY ROCKS!

Jey and Woods get things going and Xavier's wishes for untouched hair are quickly ignored. Kofi comes in and gets splashed by Cara (with an assist from the twins) before Sheamus comes in and gets sent outside. Actually all of the heels are sent outside for a quadruple dive, followed by Ryback diving onto all of them. I'm sure WWE stifled the creativity he really wanted to display with that dive though and his idea was shot down.

We reset to Barrett working on Jey's ribs and the heels take over. Xavier busts out the trombone and dancing ensues with Barrett joining in for the GIF of the night. An enziguri is enough to set up the hot tag off to Jimmy for the house cleaning. The superkick sets up Cara's Swanton Bomb to get rid of Barrett and make it 5-4.

It's Kofi's turn to get beaten up but he grabs Jimmy in a backbreaker, combined with a top rope double stomp from Woods to tie things up. Big E. spears Cara through the ropes and there's the Brogue Kick for the elimination. That's not cool with Big E. as he thinks Sheamus stole his pin (true) so Ryback jumps E. from behind, setting up the Superfly Splash to tie things up again. Actually let's make that 3-1 as Kofi and Woods walk out, leaving Sheamus all by himself.

Sheamus slowly stomps on Kalisto and does the ten forearms. JBL: "It's like a pub in Dublin!" Cole: "They have masked luchadors over there?" Jimmy comes back in for the running Umaga attack as Lawler talks about Doink. A few shots slow Ryback down but Jimmy kicks Sheamus into the Shell Shock for the pin at 17:33.

Rating: D+. So Sheamus just lost to an Uso, a Lucha Dragon and Ryback and we're supposed to buy him as a future World Champion? I mean, I know they need to have him established as being in the building but can they really do nothing other than having him get pinned here? The match was fine but the energy died after New Day was gone. It's almost like the whole "Sheamus isn't interesting" thing is absolutely right.

We recap Team PCB (Remember them? Paige, Charlotte and Becky Lynch) splitting up with Paige turning on Charlotte, partially out of jealousy for Charlotte's Divas Title.

Divas Title: Paige vs. Charlotte

Charlotte is defending and isn't the most interesting face because heroines who are bigger, stronger and more athletic than most of

their opponents aren't really the best choices for the top of a division. Except Roman Reigns of course. He's just that cool. We actually get Big Match Intros and Paige has blue highlights for a nice look.

Charlotte easily wrestles her down to the mat and the frustration is setting in. Some knees to the chest have Charlotte in trouble and Paige's shouts get NOTHING from the crowd. Back in and we hit an abdominal stretch so she can shout about being the Divas Champion. A backpack Stunner gets the champ out of trouble and brings the match one step closer to a coma.

They trade kicks to the face and Paige escapes the Figure Four because it's WAY too early for a submission. The hold wasn't the right way to go so Charlotte puts her in an electric chair to drop Paige onto the apron. Back in and we hit the figure four neck lock so Charlotte can use those legs to torture her a bit. Charlotte goes shoulder first into the post, which Lawler thinks could be a game changer.

Paige grabs a crossface while bending Charlotte's leg forward at the same time as this continues to go from spot to spot because there's no real story. Like, they're both doing fine and the match is entertaining but I have no reason to care about either one of them. It's very TNA of them.

A neckbreaker out of the corner gets Charlotte out of trouble and the bad looking spear sets up Natural Selection. There's no cover though as it heads outside with Paige sending her into the barricade. Paige then poses on that said barricade and gets tackled off for a big crash, followed by the Figure Eight back inside to retain the title at 14:10.

Rating: B-. The match was fine but like I said, there was just nothing to get excited over. The story here was a team splitting up to set up the title match but that story doesn't work because when no one cared about the team in the first place because they were thrown together for the sake of a lame story. Good wrestling, horrible storytelling.

Earlier tonight, Ambrose said everyone knew this was coming and he'll fight his brother with no regrets. Reigns comes in to say he'll bring it and they're cool no matter what.

Tyler Breeze vs. Dolph Ziggler

Breeze debuted a few weeks ago (and lost his first match) and hooked up with Summer Rae, who had recently split with Ziggler, thereby setting up the mini feud. They trade laying on the top rope before Ziggler snaps off a dropkick. Breeze is knocked outside for the spot that would normally take us to a break in a TV match. I mean, this is a TV match but it's on pay per view because it got bumped from the pre-show for the sake of time.

Back in and Breeze slowly hammers away before grabbing a weak half crab. Ziggler dropkicks him out of the air and hits some running clotheslines into the neckbreaker. To be fair, he does touch his knee before doing the big jumping elbow for two. We hit the pinfall reversal sequence before Tyler kicks him in the knee and hits an Unprettier for the pin at 6:31.

Rating: D. Cole tried to make this out to be a huge win but at the end of the day, it's a win in a TV match disguised as a pay per view match against the guy that everyone beats. Breeze was dead in the water when he debuted on Smackdown and lost his first match because it was in the tournament against Ambrose. Hence why Breeze is where he is today. Ziggler is basically in the same spot he's been in for years: hovering in the midcard and being the exact same thing, save for an occasional bump up thanks to an actual interesting character in the Miz.

We recap the Brothers of Destruction vs. the Wyatts. Undertaker: "I'm creepy!" Bray: "I'm creepier than you!" Undertaker: "These young boys never learn." Bray also kidnapped both of them...and then let them go because he's weird that way.

Undertaker/Kane vs. Bray Wyatt/Luke Harper

The entrances take FOREVER with Undertaker's going even longer than usual, though it's a pretty special occasion. Before the bell rings, Undertaker and Kane have to beat up Rowan to fulfill a contractual requirement of any Wyatt match. Kane and Harper start, basically missing the purpose of the entire feud. A basement dropkick floors Luke and it's off to Undertaker for a nice reaction.

Cole declares Undertaker the greatest of all time as Luke's arm is cranked. Old School is broken up as JBL does his stat/history reading designed to sound like casual conversation and, as usual, it's horrible. Bray gets beaten up a little bit and NOW Old School connects. This time it's JBL talking about Undertaker doing Old

School for 25 years straight because we need to ignore shows he wasn't at and times when he didn't do the move. It's off to Kane, who Strowman throws through the announcers' table.

Somehow that's not a DQ so it's Bray taking over on Kane as we wait on the inevitable Undertaker hot tag. Sister Abigail is countered and the running DDT allows the aforementioned tag. Undertaker gets clotheslined to the floor where Strowman takes the double chokeslam through the other announcers' table. Sister Abigail gets two on Undertaker, we get the double situp to break Bray's spider walk and it's the chokeslam into a Tombstone to finish Harper at 10:41.

Rating: D. They would have been better off having Undertaker just fight Harper on his own here as there was no doubt on the win and the Wyatts lost any credibility they might have had. I'm cool with Undertaker getting the big moment on the big stage and all that jazz because twenty five years to the day is an impressive day but this was really just a way to waste about twenty minutes and talk about how great Undertaker is.

WWE World Title: Roman Reigns vs. Dean Ambrose

The title is vacant coming in. Dean wins the early slugout but is taken outside and whipped into the barricade. The fans are all over Reigns as Dean hits the suicide dive, followed by an armbar to follow up on the earlier match. Some powerbombs get two on Dean and the Superman Punch is good for the same. Dean's rebound lariat doesn't do much good as Reigns spears him down for two. It's really not a good sign that we're at the first kickout of a finisher five minutes into a pay per view main event.

Another spear is blocked by a boot before the shirt spear is sent shoulder first into the post. Dirty Deeds gets two more and most of the crowd doesn't seem to care, mainly because they're hip to the trading finishers concept. They start slugging it out while sitting on the mat with Dean getting the better of it and hammering away in the corner...before he gets speared for the pin and the title at 9:02.

Rating: D+. What in the world was that? Reigns just pins him in nine minutes to win the title? There's little drama, no surprise as everyone knew he was going to get the title here and barely any time for the match because all these other things needed to go so much longer. Reigns is a legitimate champion after beating four people to

get the title but my goodness this was disappointing.

They take their sweet time celebrating as confetti falls...and here's HHH. The boss offers a handshake and gets speared down, which Cole calls the most important moment in Reigns' career. Cue Sheamus and the title match is on.

WWE World Title: Sheamus vs. Roman Reigns

Brogue Kick gets two, second Brogue Kick makes Sheamus champion at 34 seconds. Where did Dean go while this was happening?

The heels celebrate and Reigns looks like he's about to cry to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. I remember liking this at first but sweet goodness this does not hold up. So there's a tournament with the most obvious final ever and the most obvious winner ever and then "oh wait never mind because Sheamus cashes in because Money in the Bank ruins everything). The semifinal matches were fine for big time Raw main events but that's not what people remember and/or care about. This show was about Reigns winning the title and then they screw that over for the "surprise" ending.

What's even worse is where this would go. Reigns would go into Superman mode and win the title twenty two days later when he beat Sheamus on Raw, making this a huge waste of time and two cheap title reigns in a row. Sheamus is not a main event talent and this does more harm to Reigns than good. Just have Reigns fend off the cash-in attempt and hold the title until the HHH win in the Royal Rumble. Everything winds up the same and you don't have the lame story and lame ending to this show.

Other than the World Title scene, we have the mess that is the rest of the card. The only other thing that matters here is the Undertaker match, which was a cool moment with the setup but a really bad match and another moment with the Wyatts losing for the sake of giving Undertaker another big win. The women's match was fine albeit ice cold, the Survivor Series match had no story and was just a way to have New Day be funny and Breeze vs. Ziggler was advertised and therefore had to take place.

Now to be fair, they had to change A TON of stuff for the sake of the tournament and that's not on them. What is on them is going with the "surprise" factor over logical storytelling. Sheamus is a

multiple time World Champion and a Money in the Bank winner but that doesn't mean he's someone people want to see on top of the card at this point. If they want Reigns to be a top star, they need to let him be a top star. A five minute title reign after a bad match isn't the way to go about that.

Ratings Comparison

Dudley Boyz/Goldust/Neville/Titus O'Neil vs. Cosmic Wasteland/Miz/Bo Dallas

Original: C

Redo: D+

Roman Reigns vs. Alberto Del Rio

Original: B

Redo: B-

Kevin Owens vs. Dean Ambrose

Original: B-

Redo: B

Team Ryback vs. Team Sheamus

Original: C

Redo: D+

Paige vs. Charlotte

Original: C-

Redo: B-

Dolph Ziggler vs. Tyler Breeze

Original: C-

Redo: D

Brothers of Destruction vs. Wyatt Family

Original: D+

Redo: D

Roman Reigns vs. Dean Ambrose

Original: D

Redo: D+

Sheamus vs. Roman Reigns

Original: N/A

Redo: N/A

Overall Rating

Original: C-

Redo: D

I was WAY too kind to this one the first time around. The last hour and a half is dreadful.

Here's the original review if you're interested.

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2015/11/22/survivor-series-2015-rise-and-fall/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book, KB's Complete Monday Nitro and Thunder Reviews Volume V at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01MQKDV50>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

Survivor Series Count-Up – 2014: I Still Can't Believe It

Survivor Series 2014

Date: November 23, 2014

Location: Scottrade Center, St. Louis, Missouri

Attendance: 12,000

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Jerry Lawler

Now this is going to be an interesting one as the whole show is built around one match and that one match's big surprise. Last year they made no secret about the show being entirely built around one single match, which wound up making the way to make the whole thing work. That one match is Team Cena vs. Team Authority for Cena and company's jobs vs. the Authority having power. The jobs were thrown in at the last minute to really hammer home who was going to win but that's not always the worst thing. Let's get to it.

Pre-Show: Fandango vs. Justin Gabriel

This is the NEW AND IMPROVED Fandango, meaning he has Rosa Mendes and now wears a white shirt. We're ready to go after the dance sequence that kills even more time. They slowly punch each other to start with Gabriel, who has skeleton tights for no apparent reason (JBL: "The leftovers from Giant Gonzalez."), getting knocked to the floor.

Back in and Justin breaks out of a chinlock and gets two off a springboard kick to the face. For someone who flies around as much as Gabriel, the fans are almost totally silent. A suplex slam (as in a suplex where Fandango never left his feet) takes Gabriel down and the guillotine legdrop is good enough to put Justin away at 3:10.

Rating: D-. You know how Fandango still hasn't done anything since his "rebirth" here? After this match it really surprises me that he still has a job as this was so horribly boring. Naturally they did the same match again the next night on Raw because maybe they just didn't get the point across here. Really boring match.

Pre-Show: Cesaro vs. Jack Swagger

The battle of the former Real Americans. On the way to the ring, Cesaro talks about the history of Swiss neutrality before picking Team Authority. He proclaims his allegiance in various languages (which is NOTHING that could ever be capitalized in around the world) until Swagger and Colter come in to pick Team Cena. Swagger gets a quick rollup for two to start, earning himself a gutwrench suplex.

The Patriot Lock has Cesaro in early trouble but he's still able to throw Swagger down with a German suplex. More suplexes set up a chinlock. Back up and Swagger grabs a German of his own, followed by a chop block to stay on the leg. The Vader Bomb is blocked but Swagger grabs the Patriot Lock. That goes nowhere and more Germans are rolled, only to have Swagger counter into the Patriot Lock again for the submission at 5:23.

Rating: C-. They crammed a lot of suplexes into just five minutes. This also shows you how much better a match can be if you have interesting people in there. Swagger isn't the best in the world but there's at least a reason to care about him and more than one note to his character. I'll take Cesaro being all serious and speaking different languages over HE'S A DANCER IN A WHITE SHIRT any day.

The opening video recaps the main event, which was set up on Vince's whim. That's the problem with so much of what the Authority does: whatever happens can be changed by either the two of them or Vince because they're the ultimate powers. No matter how the story goes, someone with power can come in and change anything at the drop of a hat. Why hasn't Vince come back and changed something else on a whim? Eh no real reason other than the plot hasn't called for it. That's really bad writing.

Here's Vince to open things up with talking. Vince talks (see, I told you that's what he was going to do) about how epic this is really going to be and brings out the Authority because we haven't heard from them in the first five minutes. The sucking up begins immediately but Vince cuts them off to bring out Cena.

Vince recaps the main event as we're just burning through pay per view time here. Cena asks if the Authority will leave on their own accord if they lose tonight. HHH says that Cena is going to have a bad holiday because four men's responsibilities will be on his head after tonight. Those four men are going to be forgotten about because they're the ones with everything to lose. Cena will keep his job because he's such a big star, but he'll have that on his head forever.

Stephanie suggests that someone on Team Cena will turn on him because they have to think of themselves. She says the Authority will still have their jobs at headquarters and run things from afar, but Vince says not so fast. They'll still have desk jobs and be in charge of different departments but they'll have no authority on screen.

One more thing: if the Authority does lose tonight, only Cena can bring them back. That's the moment where they gave away the ending and everyone knew the Authority would be back by the end of the year at the latest. Stephanie goes into full STEPHANIE IS SHOUTING mode but Cena says the Authority will lose tonight.

So to recap the recap (which took us to fifteen minutes into the show): the Authority will still have jobs and huge salaries but they just don't have to deal with the headaches of running the show. On top of that, Cena can bring them back because FOREVER means until Cena says otherwise. This is all stuff that could have been done on Raw but why not waste pay per view time on it. I know their line is "But it's a free month on the Network!" That's not an excuse to do something stupid like this as it's a really bad way to get the show going when this could have been done in five minutes on any given TV show.

Tag Team Titles: Usos vs. Miz/Damien Mizdow vs. Los Matadores vs. Goldust/Stardust

Goldust and Stardust (villains here) are defending and Mizdow is one of the most popular guys on the roster because of how hard he's been working with the stunt double character. Diego and Stardust start things off as Cole reads Stardust's latest riddle. A quick rollup gets two on Stardust before it's off to Miz who is stopped by OLE! Mizdow does his stunt double stuff on the floor as JBL talks about Papa Shango putting a curse on Mizdow years ago. This isn't a rousing start to the commentary tonight.

Miz won't tag out, again missing the point of having a stunt double. Jey comes in to chop Diego but Goldust tags himself in and chinlocks the Samoan. The fans continue to want Mizdow but Stardust waves them

off and uppercuts Jey instead. This time it's Miz tagging himself in but Fernando tags Jey and flips off the top and onto Miz.

It's FINALLY off to Mizdow, only to have Goldust tag himself in ten seconds later to bring the crowd back to silence. Lawler brings up a great point: if Mizdow comes in and Miz is on the apron, shouldn't Mizdow just stand there? Stardust comes in and stomps Fernando before cranking on both arms to slow things down a bit. Goldust stomps Fernando on the floor (brothers think alike) and we hit the chinlock. Things stay slow as we hear about Grumpy Cat appearing on Raw. I had been trying to forget that guys.

Stardust loads up what looks like a Tombstone but Fernando spins out into a tornado DDT (good one too) and it's off to Jimmy. Now we pick things up a bit with the Usos cleaning house with Umaga attacks and superkicks (and a shaking camera, which has happened multiple times tonight). Goldust powerslams Jimmy down for two but the double Uso dive takes down a few people.

There's the Falling Star from Stardust, giving us this brilliant exchange: Cole: "That's the Falling Star!" JBL: "I have no idea what that is!" Cole: "It's the Falling Star!" JBL: "I know!" Torito gets thrown onto the pile and Diego does the same. Back in and a quadruple Tower of Doom takes down Los Matadores and the champs, allowing Mizdow to tag himself in and pin Goldust for the titles at 15:25.

Rating: C. This was a big longer than it needed to be but the payoff was exactly what it needed to be. There was no reason to wait any longer on giving Mizdow something and this opens the door for some new possibilities in the story. The match was fun but they could have cut out a few minutes to make it flow better. It's fun enough though (annoying commentary aside) and a good way to open the show, after the long talking of course.

Miz takes both titles and Mizdow keeps posing.

Larry the Cable Guy is guest hosting Raw. As usual, WWE is about ten years behind the pop culture times.

Vince will be on the Steve Austin Show. Now that could be entertaining and it kind of was if I remember correctly.

Adam Rose and the Bunny do a toy commercial until Heath Slater and Titus O'Neil come in to set up a match for later. Fans: "NO! NO! NO!" Is it bad that I miss the Bunny and wanted to see more of him?

Team Paige vs. Team Team Fox

Paige, Cameron, Summer Rae, Layla

Alicia Fox, Natalya, Emma, Naomi

Natalya is accompanied by Tyson Kidd, who clearly doesn't care in a great short run character. Paige and Natalya start things off on the mat and we hit the King's Court reference which turns into a discussion of Lawler having a foursome. Paige is sent to the floor for a quick spank from Natalya (because of course) before it's off to Layla vs. Emma, neither of whom are still on the main roster. Lawler: "Emma could trip over cordless phones." That's not very hard to do King.

It's back to Paige for a headbutt and THIS IS MY HOUSE. How can she afford this many houses? Cameron comes in to break up a tag attempt and this could go badly. The fans want Mizdow again and good grief it's the Daniel Bryan story all over again. You just had him for fifteen minutes when he won a title. Be happy with what you got and shut up already. Emma rolls over and tags Naomi for the big showdown that no one wanted to see. Naomi runs through Cameron and a bad looking wheelbarrow Stunner gets two.

Everything breaks down and Cameron does an awful bulldog, allowing Naomi to roll her up for the elimination at 6:12. Summer kicks Naomi down to take over, only to miss a splash. Fox comes in as the announcers ignore the match to talk about old Survivor Series teams. The heels bail so Fox tries to get a CHICKEN chant started. It's off to Layla for her bouncy cross body but a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker gives Alicia the elimination at 9:29.

Summer comes in and misses a charge, allowing Natalya to dropkick her down. It's off to Paige who takes over, only to have Summer do

Paige's scream and get decked as a result. Emma comes in for the Dilemma, a forearm to Paige on the apron and the Emma Lock for the submission on Summer at 12:04. So Paige is all alone and starts with Emma, who quickly faceplants her down. Natalya eats a superkick so it's off to Naomi for the Rear View and the headscissors DDT for the final pin at 14:16.

Rating: D-. Oh sweet goodness the Divas Revolution needed to happen soon. This match felt like it was going on forever with almost none of them looking like they should have been out there this long. Between "CHICKEN! CHICKEN!" and Layla's face offense under the guise of a heel and Cameron being the disaster that only she can be, this was horrible with Paige and Natalya not being able to hold it together.

Kidd, who didn't do a thing all match, celebrates more than anyone else in a great touch. That's the highlight of the last fifteen minutes.

We recap the pre-show, which also included the return of Bad News Barrett. As usual, Cesaro gets left out. The best part: Renee Young with long hair. I had forgotten about that and it says a lot that she's just as beautiful with her hair hacked off.

The panel talks for a bit.

We recap Bray Wyatt vs. Dean Ambrose, which started when Wyatt targeted Ambrose in October for whatever reason Bray picks his next target. There was something about Dean's dad being in prison but it was never really explained. Ambrose said he didn't care why Wyatt did it anyway so it didn't really matter. Tonight is the first match.

Dean Ambrose vs. Bray Wyatt

They slug it out to start (shocking) before heading outside (even more shocking) where Dean takes over with some clotheslines. Back in and Bray runs Dean over before knocking a dive out of the air with a right hand. I can never get used to Bray's blood red tattoos as they always fool me. We hit a seated full nelson on Dean (always nice to

see them mix up the rest holds) before he fights up for a double cross body.

They go outside for the third time for a double clothesline and both guys are down again. Back in and Dean takes over before doing Bray's lean upside down out of the corner in a nice touch. Dean ties him in the ropes and kisses Bray on the head before a dropkick and legdrop get two. Bray counters the Rebound Lariat into a release Rock Bottom for two as this match really hasn't taken off yet.

The middle rope backsplash misses because it would have killed Dean and the top rope elbow gets two for Ambrose. Back up and Bray EXPLODES with a clothesline and he makes it even worse with another Rock Bottom onto the steps. That's only good for two so Bray grabs a mic and says they could have ruled the world together. Dean has chosen his path though so Bray grabs a chair and drops to his knees like he did with Cena at Wrestlemania. Dean isn't Cena though and he hits Bray with the chair for the DQ at 14:00.

Rating: C+. Much like the Cena match at Wrestlemania, this felt a lot more like it was designed to set up something else (which it was) instead of being a big showdown. Bray's babbling gets to the point where you stop caring what he's talking about and that doesn't make for the most interesting matches. No matter how you look at it, the whole thing always feels like you're waiting on the next big thing, which gets repetitive in a hurry. It's still a fun brawl though and got going after the first few minutes.

Post match Dean lays Bray out and elbows him through a table. That's not enough for him as he buries Bray under another table and a pile of chairs. That's only T and C though so why not pull out a ladder? Dean climbs the ladder but is all like "this is the free month so you have to pay to see me dive off." Referees won't let him shove the ladder onto the pile either.

The Authority gives their team a long pep talk, including Stephanie crying at the thought of only having a huge salary and working in an office. This is one of the problems of having such a big main event: there's so much time to fill which certainly couldn't have been

filled with another Survivor Series match. This talk eats up WAY too much time and is summed up as “we’re betting everything we have tonight so win or else.”

Adam Rose/The Bunny vs. Heath Slater/Titus O’Neil

Slater and the Bunny get things going but Rose tags himself in quickly. Heath gets him on the mat before it’s off to Titus for some forearms to the back. Rose dives over and makes the tag. Lawler: “Maybe we should explain why there’s a bunny in the ring.” Cole: “Well it’s actually a man in a bunny suit.” Good grief just start speaking gibberish to us since they clearly think we’re that stupid. The Bunny pins Slater off a middle rope dropkick.

The Rosebuds leave with the Bunny.

More commercials. Counting the opener, the pep talk and all these commercials, there’s probably been seventeen minutes wasted, or about the same amount of time spent on a quick Survivor Series match.

The injured Roman Reigns has a satellite interview where he talks about wanting to be here punching people. We’ll make it nineteen minutes of filler. Reigns will be back in a month.

Team Cena says they’re ready.

Divas Title: Nikki Bella vs. AJ Lee

AJ is defending and Nikki has Brie as her unwilling assistant. After the big match intros and Brie gets on the apron for a distraction, followed by kissing AJ (and launching a thousand fanfics). The Rack Attack gives us a new champion at 38 seconds in the Daniel Bryan vs. Sheamus finish. Allegedly this was the way the match was going the entire time and it wasn’t cut down, making me shake my head even more.

Of course the sisters are back together with an eventual explanation of “we’re sisters.”

Ambrose vs. Wyatt is announced for TLC in the namesake match.

We recap the main event. The Authority is all corrupt so Vince came

in and said let's put their power up against Team Cena. John put together a team of the few people who would fight with him so the Authority made them as miserable as they could. It's a simple story but they've made this feel like a legitimately huge match.

Team Cena vs. Team Authority

John Cena, Big Show, Ryback, Dolph Ziggler, Erick Rowan

Seth Rollins, Kane, Rusev, Mark Henry, Luke Harper

Cena's partners' jobs vs. the Authority's authority. Harper is Intercontinental Champion and Rusev is the undefeated US Champion. The eleven entrances eat up even more time but in a good way this time. They've done a really good job at making this feel like a big deal and it's working well here. Henry and Show start but HHH has to get in one last pep talk, allowing Show to knock him out for the elimination at 50 seconds.

It's Rollins in next but Show chops him down to the floor. Kane comes in but Show drags him into the corner for the tag off to Cena, who pounds on Kane even more. Now we get a showdown that the fans find bigger than it probably is with Rowan vs. Harper. This was during that short period where Rowan was a genius, which has been completely forgotten since. Rollins tags himself back in before anything can happen and is immediately caught in the wrong corner.

Ryback comes in to join in on the fun but Rollins tags out to Harper. That's fine with Ryback as he grabs a vertical suplex, only to get punched in the face by Kane. The big bald is beaten down as well so we'll try Rusev. A spinebuster ends the slugout but Shell Shock is broken up. Everything breaks down and it's a Curb Stomp from Rollins and the jumping superkick from Rusev to eliminate Ryback and tie us up.

Show comes back in but Rusev escapes a quick chokeslam attempt and brings in Harper. A dropkick of all things puts Show down and it's back to Kane for some stomping. Kane follows Harper's suit with a (basement) dropkick, followed by the Gator Roll (he's stopped using that) from Harper. Show throws Harper away too so it's off to

Ziggler, who Harper beat (through some shenanigans) to win the title.

The heels start taking over on Ziggler with Kane's sidewalk slam getting two. A comeback is stopped by a boot to the face and it's off to Rusev for some knees to the ribs. Ziggler tries to punch Rollins in the face but gets caught in a downward spiral into the corner. We hit the chinlock for a bit before the running DDT plants Rusev. Everything breaks down again and we hit the parade of finishers (always a favorite).

Rollins is thrown onto a pile but Rusev throws Ziggler onto that pile. It's time to load up the announcers' table but Rusev misses Ziggler and splashes through the table instead, leading to a countout at 21:02 to make it 4-3. Cole: "COUNTOUTS ARE A FACTOR! COUNTOUTS ARE A FACTOR! COME ON DOLPH! COME ON DOLPH! ZIGGLER'S IN! ZIGGLER'S IN! RUSEV IS OUT! RUSEV IS OUT!" Get the parrot a cracker and shut him up already.

Back in and the exhausted Ziggler tags Cena for a quick AA to Kane. Rollins makes the save with a Curb Stomp and everyone is down. A double tag brings in Harper and Rowan with Erick cleaning house. Kane's chokeslam is broken up but the springboard knee from Rollins sets up Harper's discus lariat to put Rowan out at 24:14. So it's Show/Cena/Ziggler vs. Rollins/Kane/Harper and we get a big six man staredown....until Show KO's Cena, turning heel again to fill his quota for the year. Rollins steals the pin to eliminate Cena at 25:11. Now THAT is a shock.

Show stares down at the Authority and then walks out at 26:30, leaving Ziggler down 3-1. Ziggler can barely stand after the long beating he took but it's now the Shawn formula in 2005. The fans want Orton (who was put out by Rollins a few weeks ago but why have the hometown boy here to make the save when you can have him on a movie set instead? To make it worse, Stephanie chants "OH YEAH! OH YEAH! OH YEAH!" in what was supposed to be cheerleading.

Kane throws Ziggler into the barricade and Rollins drags him over to the corner for some tags to the eliminated partners. Kane's

superplex is broken up though and a quick superkick and Zig Zag make it 2-1 at 29:35. Harper is right in though and kicks Ziggler's head off to send him outside, followed by a nice suicide shove. A great sounding superkick gets two on Ziggler and the sitout powerbomb amazingly only gets the same. Ziggler somehow grabs a rollup (and jeans) for a fast elimination at 31:35, leaving us one on one.

Dolph can barely stand but he still grabs a DDT for two. Rollins has way more gas though and hammers Ziggler down, only to miss a top rope knee. The Fameasser gets two out of nowhere as HHH and Stephanie are losing their minds on the outside. Noble and Mercury are dispatched and the Zig Zag connects but HHH pulls the referee out at two.

The J's are dispatched again and Stephanie is knocked off the apron (onto HHH of course because Heaven forbid she not have a soft landing). Another Curb Stomp misses and there's a second Zig Zag for two with HHH breaking up the pin one more time. HHH beats on Ziggler for a bit and hits a Pedigree....and there's a crow.

In one of the biggest surprises of all time, STING makes his WWE debut (with JBL listing off his resume to make sure you know this was planned in advance) and HHH is in shock. Sting decks HHH's crooked referee and does the big staredown with HHH, setting up the Death Drop (sold really well too). Sting pulls Ziggler on top of Rollins (who hasn't moved in over six minutes) for the final pin at 44:07.

Rating: A. I liked this even better knowing what was coming. They did a really good job of setting up the story here as both teams were in enough trouble at different points to keep it interesting with the Cena elimination being the biggest of them all. I was genuinely surprised when that happened and it holds up well enough as a moment today. The near falls near the end were great as well, making this a really great match. This should have been a total star making performance for Ziggler but since WWE is in charge, it was pretty much forgotten in about a month.

HHH looks like reality sets in while Stephanie shows her horrible

acting skills one more time. For once I'm fine with the focus being on them but good grief that screeching is killing it. On top of that, everyone knew they would be back sooner than later and it didn't even last a month.

Overall Rating: B-. This is the definition of a one match show and thankfully that one match delivered because the rest of this show was pretty horrible. Everything from the end of Ambrose vs. Wyatt to the start of the main event was a waste of time or boring, as was so often the case in WWE at this point. The main event bails the show out, but that's the ONLY thing worth watching on here.

Ratings Comparison

Fandango vs. Justin Gabriel

Original: D

2015 Redo: D-

Cesaro vs. Jack Swagger

Original: C-

2015 Redo: C-

Usos vs. Miz/Damien Mizdow vs. Goldust/Stardust vs. Los Matadores

Original: C+

2015 Redo: C

Team Paige vs. Team Fox

Original: D-

2015 Redo: D-

Dean Ambrose vs. Bray Wyatt

Original: B-

2015 Redo: C+

Slater Gator vs. Adam Rose/The Bunny

Original: N/A

2015 Redo: N/A

AJ Lee vs. Nikki Bella

Original: N/A

2015 Redo: N/A

Team Cena vs. Team Authority

Original: B+

2015 Redo: A

Overall Rating

Original: C

2015 Redo: B-

Here's the original review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2014/11/23/survivor-series-2014-i-believe-it/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book, KB's Complete Monday Nitro and Thunder Reviews Volume V at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01MQKDV50>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

Main Event – November 15, 2016: Setting The Early Bar

Main Event

Date: November 15, 2016

Location: Mohegan Sun Arena, Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Tom Phillips, David Otunga

I can get through this. I can get through this. Ok so maybe I can't but repeating the same thing over and over again without changing it up was fine for Raw this week so maybe it can work on this show too. It's hard to say what you're going to get here but I could go for more of this tag team focus. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Breezango vs. Vaudevillains

This fashion police idea is starting to grow on me but I'm a Breezango fan in the first place. The Vaudevillains' entrance is toned down a bit with no barker. English is sent into the corner to start but poses on the corner for a bow instead. Fandango isn't cool with that though and clotheslines him down before starting in on the knee.

It's off to Gotch but English gets in a cheap shot to take over. I'm not sure if I should be happy with that or not as this is a rare all heel match. English says THEY should be on Team Smackdown as he drops Breeze face first on the apron for two. An enziguri gets Breeze out of trouble and it's the hot tag to bring Fandango in so house can be cleaned. Breeze Supermodel Kicks English into a Falcon's Arrow for the pin at 3:43.

Rating: C-. Am I really supposed to boo Breezango? I know they're heels but they were playing some pretty sweet faces here and with something as simple as the fashion police gimmick, maybe they could actually go somewhere for a change. I had a good little time with this and it was cool to see Breeze looking solid again.

We look at two of the three big Survivor Series matches before going to our first Raw selection.

Roman Reigns/Kevin Owens vs. Cesaro/Sheamus

Naturally Reigns and Owens have to do entrances again after being on the stage before the break. Cesaro and Reigns get things going and Owens is looking bored on the apron. A dropkick sends Reigns into the corner and it's time for an argument between the dysfunctional team over who gets to beat him up. Sheamus dives into an uppercut as I cringe at the thought of that being a World Title feud about a year ago. Owens finally gets involved, only to be taken down by a slingshot dive as we take a break.

Back with Owens clotheslining Cesaro in the corner to set up the Cannonball for two. The hot(ish) tag brings in Sheamus for the apron forearms but he loses a fight to Reigns on the floor. Apparently there was a tag in there somewhere as Reigns is allowed to come in and beat on Sheamus, including the Superman Punch for two. Owens tags himself back in and eats a Brogue Kick, only to have Reigns spear Sheamus to give Kevin the pin at 12:10.

Rating: D+. This is feeling like the leadup to Money in the Bank with the random matches that don't go anywhere. This was a boring tag with the "regular" team losing clean and the makeshift team seemingly setting up something after Survivor Series. I really wasn't feeling this one and the rest of the show doesn't seem like it's going to be much better.

Again from Raw.

It's time for Lesnar and Goldberg as it's nearly halftime of Monday Night Football. Lesnar slips a bit during his jump to the apron but it's not bad. There's a wall of security as Goldberg tells Lesnar to shut up and stay out of this. Heyman gets cut off by the GOLDBERG chants before finally going on about all the people Lesnar has killed. Goldberg cuts him off again to say his name isn't on that list, only to have the chants start up again. Heyman starts to offer something but Lesnar grabs the mic and tells the fans to shut up.

The offer is for Heyman to find a replacement for Sunday's match. That means Goldberg takes off his shirt so Lesnar shoves some guards down. Heyman says the beating will be so bad that Goldberg's son will call Lesnar daddy. The security is quickly dispatched and there's no one left between them. Lesnar, with one of the palest chests I've ever seen on a wrestler, walks away. This was WAY too long but they don't have a choice because there's nothing left for them to do on the show.

Luke Harper vs. Apollo Crews

It feels like I haven't seen Harper have a match in a long time. Luke immediately knocks Crews into the corner and grabs a headlock on the mat. Back up and Apollo sends it outside where he moonsaults over Luke, only to eat a superkick to send us to a break. Things aren't much better for Crews as we come back to see him in the Gator Roll.

A Boss Man Slam gets two and it's time to walk around shouting "YEAH YEAH YEAH". Harper's chinlock works as well as any given chinlock is going to work and Apollo gets up for a high crossbody. A standing shooting star press gets the same but the Toss Powerbomb is easily broken up. The discus lariat knocks Crews cold for the pin at 9:55.

Rating: C+. I liked this a lot more than I was expecting to. It's amazing what an actual fresh match between talented people can accomplish. I'm not wild on the idea of having Crews go down again but at least Harper finally won something. Maybe if he had done this while he was Intercontinental Champion, that might not be such a forgotten reign.

We wrap it up with most of the closing segment from Monday.

Here are all four bosses for the really long closing segment. They bicker a lot, the fans chant for Smackdown, Stephanie gets in a funny line with "YOU GUYS ARE AT RAW!", Bryan points out that Foley and Shane are known for jumping off of tall structures and they debate the cruiserweight division being on the line.

Stephanie brings out the Raw team but here's the Smackdown team

through the crowd. Owens and AJ get in an argument over whose title is more important with Owens saying it's his because he holds it. AJ suggests that Owens might wind up on the list but Jericho gives him a hug to calm things down. That means AJ JUST MADE THE LIST (pop of the night). Oh and that stupid soccer mom haircut? IT JUST MADE THE LIST! Jericho still isn't done as he sees James Ellsworth, who is a weird looking guy. "Do you know what happens to weird looking guys on Raw? YOU JUST MADE THE LIST!"

Bray grabs the mic and yells at Braun for abandoning him after being given the keys to the kingdom. This Sunday, Smackdown destroys the monster that Bray created. A staredown ensues but Seth grabs the mic, only to start the brawl. Everyone goes after Braun with Shane getting to knock him outside. Orton gets back in but it's Reigns cleaning house and getting booted out of the building. A DoubleBomb sends AJ onto Team Smackdown to end the show. This got really good once the bosses shut up but it's way too late to save this dog of a show.

Overall Rating: C+. That closing segment was enough to carry it over the finish line. Couple that with two totally acceptable if not entertaining matches and this was one of the better entries in the Main Event series that I've seen so far. I mean granted that's four shows but still, you have to start somewhere.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book, KB's Complete 2014 Raw and Smackdown Reviews Part I at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01LY6766K#nav-subnav>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

Smackdown – October 25, 2016: Just Like Rip and Randy

Smackdown

Date: October 25, 2016

Location: Resch Center, Green Bay, Wisconsin

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, John Bradshaw Layfield, David Otunga

It's another big week as we have a pay per view rematch from Backlash with AJ Styles facing Dean Ambrose in a non-title match. If Ambrose wins, he gets a title shot at some point in the future. There's a good chance James Ellsworth will get involved to possibly wrap up his story. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week's AJ Styles vs. James Ellsworth title match with Ellsworth winning via DQ. After the match, Daniel Bryan made Styles vs. Dean Ambrose for this week.

Ambrose is in the back talking about his match with Styles. Ellsworth comes up and offers to help but Dean thinks it's better for him to stay in the back.

Kane vs. Bray Wyatt

No DQ. They trade big uppercuts and clotheslines to start until Kane takes it outside and whips Bray into the steps. The chokeslam through the announcers' table is loaded up but Luke Harper appears and gives Kane the discus lariat. Back from a break with Kane fighting out of a chinlock (I thought these guys were different.) and stopping a charge with a big boot. Harper saves his boss from the chokeslam and Bray's release Rock Bottom gets two. Harper gets involved again so here's Randy Orton.....to RK0 Kane and freak the heck out of Wyatt. Bray covers Kane for the pin at 10:37.

Rating: C-. This was much more of an angle than a match but again, the difference from Raw is this is interesting. I'm curious to see

where this is going while most of the stuff on Monday comes and goes with little interest. My guess is Orton trying to get into Wyatt's head instead of a heel turn, which works for me as I've always liked Orton vs. Kane matches.

Styles is ready to take care of Dean and warns Ellsworth to stay away. AJ also says Ellsworth looks like an action figure that melted in a microwave. That's about as accurate as you're going to get with him.

Becky Lynch makes her return from injury but is immediately cut off by Alexa Bliss. She accuses Becky of leaving out of fear of losing her precious title. The Cinderella story is ending soon and Bliss will get the title that she deserves. The fight is on but Bliss lays her out and grabs a conveniently placed can of spray paint. A yellow streak goes up the champ's back and Bliss smirks as she leaves.

Survivor Series Qualifying Match: Ascension vs. Hype Bros

The winners are on the Survivor Series team along with Heath Slater and Rhino, who were granted an automatic spot. Mojo, a former Green Bay Packer, is VERY popular here as he starts with Viktor. Ryder is quickly in for a dropkick to knock Konnor off the apron, only to have Ascension take over with some double teaming. Too much trash talking allows Ryder to get in a jawbreaker but a spinebuster stops a hot tag. A middle rope elbow misses though and the hot tag brings in Rawley for his corner splashes. Viktor misses a charge and the Hype Ryder sends the Bros to Survivor Series at 3:50.

Rating: C. Well were you really expecting anything else? Ascension might have won one tag match in a year (on Superstars in February over Fandango and Damien Sandow) so it's kind of hard to buy that they're going to win here, or anywhere for that matter. The Hype Bros are already more successful than I was expecting and that's cool to see.

Orton says if you can't beat them, join them.

Bryan is talking about the need for strong team captains when Natalya comes in. She's been thinking about the Raw women's team and

thinks she should be captain. Daniel isn't sure but makes Natalya's match against Nikki Bella for the captain's spot. However, the loser is off the team entirely.

Survivor Series Qualifying Match: Nikki Bella vs. Natalya

Nikki actually tries an Oklahoma roll to start but makes the mistake of going outside, allowing Nattie By Nature to get two. An abdominal stretch and some stomps to the ribs set up the Sharpshooter but Nikki dives over to the ropes. Natalya misses a legdrop and something like the Beautiful Disaster gets two. The surfboard goes on but Nikki powers out and grabs an STF (prepare to hear about her being a great submission wrestler) for the tap out at 6:07.

Rating: D+. I wasn't feeling this one but there's really no way around Nikki being the captain. Natalya is just there while Bella has been one of the top stars in the division for a long time now. The STF is a nice change of pace for Nikki and she even added a little twist by hooking the foot and chin at the same time.

Carmella attacks Nikki after the match and gives her a Bella Buster. Ambrose is ready to win because karma is a bad thing.

Here are Miz, Maryse and the Spirit Squad to talk about the Intercontinental Title. Miz feels sorry for the legends that fought to make the Intercontinental Title so important. As Miz talks about Pat Patterson, here comes Dolph Ziggler to say he wants to fight. The Squad is ready so Heath Slater and Rhyno come out to even the odds. Maryse gets in the way and insults are exchanged. Miz suggests that the Spirit Squad get a Tag Team Title shot but thinks Heath is too scared. Rhyno accepts for the team and we're got a title match.

Tag Team Titles: Spirit Squad vs. Heath Slater/Rhyno

Miz and Ziggler are on commentary. Slater and Rhyno are defending and this is joined in progress with Slater caught in a chinlock. The comeback is cut off and we hit another chinlock to keep the champs in trouble. Slater fights up and dives over for the tag as everything breaks down. The commentators get in the expected argument and it's Mikey being knocked off the apron onto Miz. A Gore

to Kenny retains the titles at 4:03.

Rating: C-. This was fine and a basic tag match with Slater and Rhyno beating yet another team. I don't think anyone really considers them to be great champions but they could have been a joke and are turning into perfectly acceptable champions. Also, by having them win matches like this one, it's going to mean more when they lose the belts. It's putting in effort early for a later payoff, which is a lost art in wrestling.

Hell in a Cell preview.

Ambrose is on the way to the ring when he runs into Ellsworth. Dean: "Didn't I tell you to stay in the back and sulk?" James begs to be in Dean's corner and Ambrose eventually relents, much to the audience's delight.

AJ Styles vs. Dean Ambrose

Non-title with Ellsworth in the corner and a win makes Dean #1 contender. Ambrose starts fast and stomps away in the corner but AJ comes right back with some shots of his own. With a look towards Ellsworth, AJ scores with the slingshot dive to take us to a break. Back with Dean hitting the suicide dive and grabbing a Fujiwara armbar of all things. AJ rolls out but gets caught in a Texas cloverleaf, sending him crawling over to the ropes. Back up and they fight over a suplex off the apron, only to have AJ suplex him out to the floor for a crash.

We come back from another break with Dean fighting up and hitting the top rope standing elbow drop. AJ's strike rush is countered into a swinging neckbreaker but he scores with the springboard into the reverse DDT. The Styles Clash is countered into a rollup for two and the rebound lariat drops both guys. AJ comes right back with the Calf Crusher but Dean grabs the champ's head and slams it into the mat for a break.

The hold goes on again but the power of Ellsworth makes Dean crawl to the ropes, just like Randy saved Rip in No Holds Barred. That's enough for AJ who takes James out with a baseball slide. The Pele

looks to set up the Styles Clash but Dean backdrops AJ to the floor. Ellsworth superkicks Styles.....and that's a DQ at 19:57 with Dean nearly losing his mind.

Rating: B. Good match here and the ending makes sense. I'm not sure where this leads and you have to imagine that Ambrose will get a title shot somehow down the road anyway. Above all else, Ambrose can only blame himself as he invited Ellsworth to come out to ringside. It's also a good way to protect both guys, which you also don't see enough.

Overall Rating: B-. This felt like another NXT show with Smackdown banners. The wrestling wasn't great at times but they advanced almost every story and treated them all like big deals. I'm curious to see where Orton and the Wyatts go, as well as finding out what's next for AJ and Dean. I don't get those feelings on Raw and that's a big reason why Smackdown is better.

Results

Bray Wyatt b. Kane – Pin after an RKO from Randy Orton

Hype Bros b. Ascension – Hype Ryder to Viktor

Nikki Bella b. Natalya – STF

Heath Slater/Rhyno b. Spirit Squad – Gore to Kenny

AJ Styles b. Dean Ambrose via DQ when James Ellsworth interfered

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book, KB's Complete 2014 Raw and Smackdown Reviews Part I at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01LY6766K#nav-subnav>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>