

Monday Night Raw – June 24, 2002: The Lesnar Problem

Monday Night Raw

Date: June 24, 2002

Location: Gund Arena, Cleveland, Ohio

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

Thank goodness we're past the miserable King of the Ring and that means it's time to get read for Vengeance. Brock Lesnar is the new King and that means he'll be challenging for the title at Summerslam, but that's still a long way away. On top of that we've got the NWO running around doing....something that isn't entirely clear. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

The midcard is around the ring and here's Vince for the opening speech. Vince is often asked what makes him such a success and without a doubt it's RUTHLESS AGGRESSION. We hear about how he beat WCW and the federal government before Vince asks which of them has the ruthless aggression he's looking for. For some reason he keeps getting in Bradshaw's face during this speech. Well that would fit the idea of pushing mostly older names who aren't getting over anytime soon.

Vince starts praising Brock for winning last night while getting in Rob Van Dam's face. A few matches are set up for later and Vince goes on a big rant about how important it is to be ruthless. This brings out the NWO with Shawn Michaels offering the team's services to clear out some of the weaklings. Nash says if anyone has issue with that, go headline a few Wrestlemanias and then give them a shot.

Booker and Goldust are ready to fight the NWO because there's no one tighter than the two of them. I mean, they're buddies! Homies! They're practically married! Thank goodness they're not on the same show as Billy and Chuck. Vince makes Booker/Goldust vs. X-Pac/Big Show and threatens to fire Nash, just like he did to Scott Hall. Booker can dig that, sucka.

Bradshaw/Spike Dudley vs. William Regal/Christopher Nowinski

Lawler is too busy looking at the Harvard yearbook as Bradshaw throws Spike onto the two pompous jerks. Nowinski gets beaten up to start but Spike gets pulled out to the floor so Regal can start the beating. A very quick hot tag brings in Bradshaw for the house cleaning, including the Clothesline to Regal, only to have Chris grab a rollup and trunks for the pin.

Vince has a few names he wants fired, starting with Tommy Dreamer and Raven. They'll have a match tonight and the loser is banished from Raw. The boss heads into a locker room and gets to see Jackie Gayda in her lingerie. That's part of the build for the Divas Undressed special you see. Undertaker comes in but Vince tells him to not worry about Jeff Hardy because Jeff is a pushover. This was another version of beating you over the head with exposition.

Bubba Ray Dudley vs. Eddie Guerrero

Before the match, Eddie says there's no way he's going through a table. Bubba goes right after him with the high powered offense before trying an early Bubba Bomb...which is reversed into a rollup to give Eddie the pin in less than a minute. Huh?

Post match Eddie gets powerbombed through a table. Chris Benoit runs out to put Bubba in the Crossface. Again I say: huh? This whole thing, including Eddie's long pre-match promo, took less than five minutes.

Rey Mysterio is coming. Now THAT is a way to fire up a show.

Goldust is now the Crocodile Hunter to check out the NWO locker room. Big Show is sound asleep and doesn't hear Goldust loudly talking just a few feet away. X-Pac chases him off and Big Show talks about cheeseburgers. He was awake like half an hour ago and he's already talking in his sleep?

The Hardys need to become singles stars because they don't have any Tag Team Titles to win.

X-Pac chases Goldust but runs into a trashcan lid shot from Booker. This has turned into a bad comedy chase movie.

GET THE F OUT!

Raven vs. Tommy Dreamer

Dreamer doesn't even get an entrance. Raven starts fast and uses a middle rope knee to drive Tommy head first into the mat. As you might expect, Lawler is all over the history of ECW, saying the loser here could get a job in fast food if they're lucky. Dreamer goes shoulder first into the post but grabs a DDT for two. A Death Valley Driver gets rid of Raven in a short match.

Paul Heyman is ready to crown Brock as King.

Raven leaves without even getting to change. Matt Hardy jumps him to make up for last week.

It's time for the coronation with Heyman taking credit for everything. On top of that though, it was his idea that the winner of the tournament get the title shot at Summerslam, which must have been the idea that he mentioned to Vince a few weeks back. That's not exactly an earth shattering revelation or anything but I'll give them points for at least addressing it. Brock comes out so Heyman can talk about how awesome he is but Van Dam runs in for the attack.

Post break, Heyman begs for and is granted a match tonight between Lesnar and Van Dam. Vince even makes it for the title, sending Heyman through the roof with elation.

Video of Undertaker destroying Jeff Hardy in recent weeks.

Jeff Hardy vs. Undertaker

Non-title. Jeff is thrown shoulder first into the post and a powerslam gets two with Undertaker pulling him up. The apron legdrop misses and Jeff gets in a dive, only to be chokeslammed on the floor. The Last Ride completes the destruction.

Undertaker rides away but Jeff says not so fast. He may have been beaten down time and time again but Jeff wants one more match: A LADDER MATCH for the title.

By the way: we're over an hour and fifteen minutes into this show and no matches have broken three minutes yet.

Trish Stratus/Linda Miles vs. Molly Holly/Jackie Gayda

So...weren't the Tough Enough girls on Smackdown recently? Like, in theory EXCLUSIVELY on Smackdown? Before the match, Molly says she earned the title but Trish brings up the whole cheating thing. Thankfully Trish and Molly get things going and, not so thankfully, the fat jokes are rolling early.

For some reason it's off to both rookies at the same time, even though it would make sense to have them work with a veteran who can keep things under control. Trish and Linda take turns on Jackie's arm until Molly starts choking on the top rope. The hot tag brings Trish back in and a Chick Kick gets two on Molly. Everything breaks down and Stratusfaction gives Trish the clean pin on the champ.

Rating: D. I get the idea of Linda and Jackie getting ring time but things might actually be able to go somewhere once we get passed Divas Undressed, which is suddenly the most amazing thing ever. It's being treated as more important than the Women's Title right now and that's getting old in a hurry. But hey, that's all the women are good for right?

We look back at Van Dam attacking Lesnar.

Van Dam and Lesnar are ready for each other.

Nash fires up the NWO.

NWO vs. Booker T./Goldust

Show powers Booker into the corner to start and the chops are enough to bring in X-Pac. Goldust comes in as well and hits his own Bronco Buster but the slow beatdown begins as the NWO takes over. Riveting stuff you see. Of course it's time for a chinlock for a bit but a good looking spinwheel kick gets two on Goldust.

Show's Final Cut gets two and it's time for more kicks, only to have the Bronco Buster miss. Some heel miscommunication allows Booker to hit his

trio of kicks on Big Show. Everything breaks down and Booker kicks X-Pac outside, leaving Goldust to load up Shattered Dreams on Big Show. This of course takes WAY too long and it's the chokeslam to put Goldust away.

Rating: C+. Not bad here as they were smart enough to put Show on the apron for most of the match. He's fine when they just let him beat people up and doesn't do much otherwise, which is the best idea when you have three people this talented out there. Also at least they had Goldust take the fall instead of Booker and now Nash can be happy.

Intercontinental Title: Rob Van Dam vs. Brock Lesnar

Lesnar is challenging and runs Rob over in the corner to start. The fans get distracted by something in the corner of the arena but a jumping kick to Brock's face brings their attention back. The beating begins though with Lesnar taking Brock down and ignoring the GOLDBERG chants. We hit the suplex for another near fall, followed by the backbreakers into a bearhug which gives me time to think about the Lesnar problem.

Brock is in such a weird place as he looks great and has all the physical tools but he feels like someone who is just doing the things a great heel can do instead of actually doing them. Instead of someone who is the top star, he comes off like the ultimate dragon for the real top star to slay. Van Dam breaks out and starts the comeback with the usual, including the top rope kick to the face. Heyman offers a distraction to break up the Five Star and then comes in to break up the cover off a split legged moonsault.

Rating: C. You could hear the crowd go silent on the finish and I can't say I blame them. It's pretty clear there's going to be a rematch at Vengeance but that doesn't make this much better. Like I said, Brock really isn't the most interesting heel in the world. We really haven't heard anything actually from him as it's all Heyman saying "this guy is a monster", which we could see without Heyman around.

Heyman gets the Five Star but Brock powerbombs Rob through the announcers' table to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. Until the aftermath of Jeff vs. Undertaker, this could

have been on an episode of Heat. Yeah Vince addressed the locker room and that seems to mean a grand total of nothing. Really what it came down to was “now you all work extra hard” and then it was just another episode of Raw with a first hour that meant nothing. How can you go through a show and have so little happen until nearly the last third?

Above all else though, I’m not sure what the biggest story was on this show. In theory it’s the Ruthless Aggression part but what does that even mean? Vince said it like a new buzz word but the big thing I saw was the NWO leadership treating their two active wrestlers like rookies and teasing a Vince vs. NWO feud while Lesnar destroyed Van Dam to crickets. They need to fix something in a hurry because this show was really bad with the last half hour barely keeping it afloat.

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/B01M0KDV50>

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

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

Monday Night Raw – November 21, 2016: There Is Logic In

What They Do

Monday Night Raw

Date: November 21, 2016

Location: Air Canada Centre, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

We're still in Toronto as the big pay per view weekends are starting to feel like an old Raw TV cycle. The big story last night is Brock Lesnar's complete destruction at the hands of Goldberg, who beat him in a mind blowing 87 seconds. Tonight we get started towards Roadblock in about four weeks so let's get to it.

We open with stills of Lesnar vs. Goldberg because a match running less than a minute and a half needs to be clipped.

Here's Goldberg getting the full entrance to open things up. Goldberg thanks the fans for letting him be Goldberg again. He also thanks his wife and son for putting up with him and he got to be a star again one more time. Last night he ran into Stephanie McMahon who said he did have one more spear and Jackhammer in him (three spears and two Jackhammers if you're counting) but the question is does he have one more title run left in him. The fans go NUTS over that prospect and Goldberg says he's in the Royal Rumble.

Raw Tag Team Titles: New Day vs. Sheamus/Cesaro

New Day is defending and talk about breaking Demolition's record for longest Tag Team Title reign in just 23 days. A powerslam gives Cesaro two on Big E. to start but Kofi escapes an early Swing attempt. Instead Cesaro sends him into the barricade and we take a break. Back with Kofi dropkicking Sheamus out of the air but getting Irish Cursed for two.

Sheamus won't tag out though and we get some heel (I think?) miscommunication with Cesaro being knocked off the apron. The hot tag brings in Big E. to clean house as everything breaks down. The Warrior Splash gets two on Sheamus but he rakes Big E.'s eyes to set up White Noise for the same.

It's back to Cesaro vs. Kofi with the Uppercut Train taking off, only to have an SOS get two. Trouble in Paradise is countered into a Cesaro Swing which goes into the Sharpshooter. The Brogue Kick puts Big E. down but Woods gets on the apron for the distraction as Kofi taps. Ever the moron, Cesaro lets the hold go and gets small packaged for the pin at 12:18.

Rating: C+. So they seem to be turning New Day heel. I think I can actually go with that as I'd much rather go there than have Cesaro and Sheamus stop them just before the record. Obviously they haven't gotten there yet and there's always the possibility that they'll switch the titles with two days to go, but at least they didn't do it here.

Chris Jericho is distraught that the List of Jericho was destroyed last night. Tonight, he's going to say who's to blame for this travesty.

Enzo Amore is stuck outside his locker room....and he's missing his clothes. After running into the Shining Stars and Titus O'Neil with the expected results. Enzo runs into Lana and, of course, asks how she's doing. Rusev comes in to yell and Cass comes to Enzo's defense. There's no offer of a shirt for Enzo or anything but a match is set up for later.

Mick Foley and Stephanie McMahon do their standard "we're awesome" segment and talk about needing to punish the Raw stars who lost last night. Sami Zayn comes in and gets a match against Braun Strowman. So Foley is a heel too.

Ariya Daivari vs. Cedric Alexander

Before the match, Daivari says Canadians are just as bad as Americans and rants in some foreign language. Alexander armbars him before the bell but Daivari takes over as the match gets started. Cedric's springboard is broken up into a big crash but he nails a handspring into a kick to the face. Another springboard into a clothesline sets up the Lumbar Check for the pin on Daivari at 3:10.

Rating: C+. The match was fine, even entertaining at times, but as usual I have no reason to care. I'm not sure if the 205 Live show is the solution but maybe they can get the focus back and find some of that spark that made Cruiserweight Classic so entertaining. This was better

than the usual stuff at least.

It's time for the Highlight Reel with a serious Jericho wanting to find out what happened with the List of Jericho. Kevin Owens cuts him off and asks when Chris upgraded to the Jeritron 6500. Jericho isn't happy with Owens for not realizing he was there when Jericho upgraded.

We see Owens saving Jericho from the Styles Clash with the List of Jericho, sending Jericho into a rant about everything that could have been seen. Owens: "Who cares???" That seems to be a breaking point for Jericho, because he cares. Owens yells at Jericho for screwing up by walking into an RK0 a few seconds after he sacrificed himself. If that's how Owens feels, maybe they don't have much of a friendship.

Owens is never there when Jericho needs him and Chris is done with him. Kevin spins him around and they both blame Roman Reigns, setting up a big hug. The ranting goes on about Reigns and Rollins (who are hair conditioner brothers) until Seth comes out, demanding his title shot tonight. The brawl is on and here's Reigns, slowly walking to the ring for the save. Cue Foley to make the title match tonight, No DQ, with Jericho and Reigns banned from ringside.

We recap the opening segment.

Enzo Amore vs. Rusev

Before the match, Enzo says if Lana wanted to see him sans clothes, she just had to hack his phone. The Accolade finishes Enzo in 58 seconds.

Anderson and Gallows vs. Golden Truth

Winners get a shot at New Day next week. Anderson and Gallows take Truth into the corner for an early beating, including a bunch of stomping and a Gallows big boot for two. A kick to the face allows the hot tag to Goldust, who tries to go up top. That just earns him a crotching, followed by the Magic Killer for the pin at 6:02.

Rating: D. This was a bit more academic than it should have been and there's nothing wrong with that. It seems that New Day is going to have to run a gauntlet to get to the record, which is kind of a cool idea as

long as they don't switch the belts with two days left for a slip on a banana peel moment.

Video on the Wrestlemania tickets going on sale. This includes someone making a fourteen hour drive from Houston because Houston has never heard of an online sale.

Braun Strowman vs. Sami Zayn

Strowman jumps him before the bell and Sami is in big trouble to start. A running splash crushes Sami again and the match is almost stopped. Some hard clotheslines make things even worse. Strowman ties Sami in the Tree of Woe and Mick Foley comes out to stop the match at 4:00.

Rating: D. You really can't rate this match fairly but it did exactly what it needed to do. Sami can sell as well as almost anyone I've ever seen and that's what he did here to almost perfection. I'm really curious to see where this goes and I didn't expect that to be the case for this kind of story.

Emmalina video.

Here are Charlotte and Dana Brooke with something to say. She looks at some stills of the postmatch beatdown on Bayley before calling herself the Wayne Gretzky of WWE. Charlotte is so happy she doesn't have to deal with the Team Raw peasants but here's Sasha Banks to interrupt.

Sasha wants her rematch tonight and Charlotte agrees with one condition: it's in her hometown next week so she can beat Sasha again. Cue Nia Jax to say she dominated the Smackdown women, unlike Sasha, the short, purple headed Barbie. Dana finds this hilarious so Sasha decks her, only to get sent into the corner for the running splash. Bayley comes out for the save, meaning Sasha is thrown out to her.

Sasha Banks/Bayley vs. Charlotte/Nia Jax

Joined in progress with Nia throwing Bayley around and bringing in Charlotte for a chinlock. A failed monkey flip allows for the hot tag to Banks, who helps out with a double suplex to Nia. The Bank Statement makes Charlotte tap at 4:37.

Rating: D+. This did exactly what it needed to do and protected Nia at the same time. Jax is going to devour someone for that title eventually and whoever gets to take it off of her is going to be a star. As long as this leads to a big match with (hopefully all of) the Four Horsewomen at Wrestlemania, everything will be fine.

We look at the opening segment for the third time.

Seth Rollins is ready for his match with Owens.

Noam Dar vs. Rich Swann vs. TJ Perkins

The winner gets Brian Kendrick, on commentary here, for the title on the debut of 205 Live. Kendrick says the new show was created for him as Dar dropkicks Perkins out to the floor, only to have Swann do the same to Noam. Perkins kicks Rich's knee out and we take a break. Back with Perkins kicking Dar in the face but getting caught in an ankle lock. Swann makes a save, followed by Dar breaking up TJ's kneebar. Another kneebar is broken up by a splash and Swann kicks Perkins in the head for the pin at 7:50.

Rating: C. Not bad here and Swann winning makes the most sense, which is a common theme tonight. Swann has already beaten Kendrick twice and it would be a big waste to not have him go anywhere with the title shot. It also helps that Rich has more charisma than most of the division combined so the fans can get behind him for a change.

Owens brags about beating AJ Styles and knows he's ready to beat Rollins, who failed him last night.

Enzo and Cass still merchandise.

Raw World Title: Kevin Owens vs. Seth Rollins

Owens is defending and there are no disqualifications with Jericho and Reigns barred from ringside. Kevin tries to bail to the floor and gets kicked in the face for his efforts. The springboard knee to the head gets two inside thirty seconds so it's already table time. Owens grabs the package piledriver slam and we take an early break.

Back with Owens in full control and hammering Seth in the head. A Sling Blade and suicide dive take Owens out, leading to another commercial. Back again with an exchange of strikes to the face putting both guys down. The frog splash misses Owens and it's a Cannonball into a chair onto Rollins for a close two. Owens sets up a pair of chairs for a powerbomb and you can see the backdrop counter coming before it happens.

Another table is set up in the corner and the Buckle Bomb drives Owens through it for a very close two. They fight into the crowd with Rollins getting the better of it by throwing a trashcan at the champ. Owens tries the powerbomb but Seth grabs the balcony wall and pulls himself up for a big dive. They make it back to ringside but a masked man shoves Rollins off the barricade. Of course it's Jericho and of course he gets a Pedigree on the floor. The Apron Powerbomb wipes Rollins out though and Owens throws him back in to retain at 23:07.

Rating: B+. Really good stuff here as it felt like a full on pay per view main event with high spots and near falls. The Jericho interference was a stretch and I'm kind of hoping it isn't used to set up another rematch at Roadblock as I'm pretty much over Rollins vs. Owens after this one. Really good main event though and I bought Rollins as a title threat.

Overall Rating: B. I liked this show a lot more than I was expecting to and it's mainly because of the logical booking throughout (most of) the night. You can see where they're going with so much stuff and they set up three title matches in a single show while also having two titles defended. This felt like a completely different kind of Raw and while I don't believe it's going to last, this was a lot of fun and a welcome change of pace.

Results

New Day b. Cesaro/Sheamus – Small package to Cesaro

Cedric Alexander b. Ariya Daivari – Lumbar Check

Rusev b. Enzo Amore – Accolade

Anderson and Gallows b. Golden Truth – Magic Killer to Goldust

Braun Strowman b. Sami Zayn via stoppage

Bayley/Sasha Banks b. Nia Jax/Charlotte – Bank Statement to Charlotte

Rich Swann b. Noam Dar and TJ Perkins – Kick to Perkins' head

Kevin Owens b. Seth Rollins – Apron powerbomb

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/B01M0KDV50>

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

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

Monday Night Raw – June 17, 2002: Maybe He Should Have Left Earlier

Monday Night Raw

Date: June 17, 2002

Location: The Arena in Oakland, Oakland, California

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

It's the go home show for King of the Ring and that means we're getting the first two quarterfinal matches tonight. Unfortunately it means we're also getting more of the mess that Raw has become. However, with WWE having to hit a big reset button last week, it should be interesting to

see where things go from here. Let's get to it.

The opening recap looks at Shawn Michaels superkicking Booker T. out of the NWO, somehow managing to make them even less interesting.

Opening sequence.

Tonight: the REAL STORY on Steve Austin from Confidential (a news style show that aired in 2002). Oh that could be good.

King of the Ring Quarterfinals: X-Pac vs. Rob Van Dam

Non-title. We get the loud X-PAC SUCKS chants as he rides Van Dam on the mat, likely trying to show the fans up a bit. That earns him some kicks to the face and it's time for the RVD chants. The spinning kick to the back on the apron has both of them down on the floor but it's X-Pac coming back with a good looking kick to the face. They're already ahead of Ernest Miller vs. Jerry Flynn so that's quite the good sign. The Bronco Buster doesn't work and Van Dam mostly hits the step over kick to the...we'll say face. X-Pac sends him to the floor but Booker runs in for the Bookend, setting up one heck of a Five Star for the pin.

Rating: C+. Litany of kicks aside, this was actually quite the entertaining match, which isn't something you see enough around here. X-Pac is still a very talented in ring worker and can hang with a high flier like Van Dam, who was on his game here as well. Van Dam going forward is interesting but I'm not sure if it's the best idea to push the Intercontinental Champion deep into a tournament as it means either giving him two accolades or having the champ lose a big match.

We get the first Confidential clip with JR saying Austin leaving was like John Wayne becoming a coward and walking away. This is going to get bad in a hurry.

X-Pac wants Booker but Kevin Nash has a plan.

Here's Vince McMahon for the big Austin segment. Austin really is gone and odds are he's not coming back. Last week, Austin was booked for Raw but didn't show up, just like he didn't after Wrestlemania. A few months ago, Austin said he was burned out and that's understandable so the

company forgave him. This time is too much though and Austin owes a lot of people an apology. True.

Last week, Austin was in town but he wouldn't take any calls save for one from Jim Ross. However, Austin refused to come to the arena and air his grievances, which Vince calls uncharacteristic of Austin. The company will move on and develop new ideas and new concepts, including the King of the Ring winner receiving a title shot at Summerslam. Vince knows Austin wishes everyone well and says thank you on behalf of the fans and company. A beer toast wraps this up.

This could have been much, much worse and the company comes off as taking the high road for a change. Vince made sure to say that this isn't like Austin and it would have been ridiculous for the company to turn its back on the man who saved them at their darkest hour for one such issue. If nothing else, consider all the people who have no showed over the years and been welcomed back later. It's nice to see them acting professional and not turning this into a comedy routine for a change. Well done here, though the show isn't over yet.

Jeff Hardy vs. Raven

This is fallout from a match on Heat where Jeff snapped and choked Raven with a cord. Undertaker comes out at the bell and it's Jeff taking over with an armdrag to send Raven outside. The Undertaker distraction lets Raven send Jeff outside as well though, followed by a knee to the back of the head. A quick headscissors sends Raven into the buckle and Jeff breaks up a superplex attempt, setting up the Swanton for the pin.

Rating: D+. Just two guys having a match here as Jeff's singles push actually begins. Granted it's not likely to get very far with the feud being against Undertaker, who isn't known as the greatest seller of all time. At least they're pushing someone new though as it's one of their biggest issues.

Goldust is now dressed like a noble because he likes the sound of King Booker. So Goldust came up with that fairly awesome character? Either way it seems to fire Booker up for his match with Brock. "Now can thou diggeth that sucka???"

Molly Holly is doing squats because someone in good enough shape to be a professional wrestler apparently needs to shed a ton of weight. Coach makes stupid puns and thankfully gets slapped.

Big Show finds that funny as X-Pac comes up and calls him G-Money. We get an NWO huddle until Paul Heyman and Lesnar come in. Heyman wants the NWO to stay out of Brock's way tonight and avoid any potential complications. X-Pac doesn't like the idea of a threat, which makes the NWO seem like the faces in this whole thing. Shawn and Heyman have a battle of the stupid looking hats and everyone stares at Lesnar.

Chris Nowinski vs. Spike Dudley

Nowinski has William Regal in his corner. Spike stomps him down in the corner as Chris is wrestling in khakis, which come off as Spike is sent outside. Back in and we hit the choking against the ropes as Chris' rookie offense isn't the most versatile yet. Spike comes back with a top rope double stomp (I still don't understand how that doesn't crack ribs) but Regal offers a distraction so Chris can get in some weird full nelson slam for the pin.

Rating: D-. Much like the Hardy match, points for trying to introduce some new characters. Chris wouldn't seem to be the answer to a lot of the show's problems but you have to try something somewhere. Unfortunately the match was rather horrible and it took help to beat Spike Dudley. You have to start somewhere though.

Regal and Nowinski put the boots to Spike until Bradshaw makes the save.

Here's Ric Flair for a chat. Last week people thought he lost everything but he realized he had to get out or put out. Ric decided that he's found himself again and is sorry for everything he's done. He might have lost a step but he's still the dirtiest player in the game, which he'll prove to Brock Lesnar.

Cue the glass shatter but of course it's a ruse so Eddie Guerrero can come out instead. Eddie goes on a rant about losing the chance to face Austin at King of the Ring, which he blames entirely on Flair. Now it's Benoit coming out, with Lawler still saying Benoit is on Smackdown. I get

the idea that they drafted him but since he's clearly going to be on Raw, just say something about a trade or buying his contract or something like that.

Benoit asks Eddie if he knows who he's talking to and holds up the Horsemen sign. Eddie still doesn't buy it so Flair offers to replace Austin at King of the Ring. The challenge seems to be accepted as Eddie says something about Ric's madre. Benoit jumps to Flair's defense...and then blames him for taking Austin away before Benoit can get revenge for the lost year. The beatdown is on with Eddie putting on the Figure Four.

Chris Nowinski (he's getting a lot of time tonight) introduces himself to Vince and doesn't seem to think much of Vince going to East Carolina University. Tony Garea of all people calls and says someone is on his way. Vince doesn't say who it is but thinks it's Austin.

Vince tells security to give Austin some leeway.

Trish Stratus/D'Lo Brown vs. Crash/Molly Holly

Brown and Crash got into it on Heat last night. The guys don't do much to start so it's quickly off to the women as Lawler tries to get the fans to chant that Molly is fat. The Chick Kick gets two but Molly puts her down, only to miss the Molly Go Round. Everything breaks down as the guys come back in with a Sky High putting Crash away. Lawler was DISTURBING here and this is getting harder and harder to listen to every week.

Molly pulls Trish off the apron, sending her face first into the announcers' table.

Lita, who can somehow look good even in a massive neck brace, thinks Matt is being too dangerous by fighting Undertaker tonight.

Vince has a separate camera crew ready to document everything Austin does. Jackie Gayda comes in and asks to be a Raw girl but has to compete in the Divas Undressed special next week.

Undertaker vs. Matt Hardy

Non-title. Matt goes right after him but has to punch his way out of the

Last Ride. A running chokeslam gets two as Jeff pulls the referee out but here's Raven to go after Jeff because that's still a thing. The Last Ride finishes Matt quick.

Raven handcuffs Jeff to the ropes so Undertaker can beat on him while Raven holds Matt in place. Matt Hardy can't handle Raven?

Post break, Undertaker says he doesn't want people making a name for themselves off of him. HHH better have been watching.

Vince gets another call but can't hear who is on the way.

Heyman tells Earl Hebner to do his job tonight and DQ Booker as soon as anyone comes to ringside. Hebner tells him to stay out of it. Booker comes in for the catchphrase.

King of the Ring Quarterfinals: Brock Lesnar vs. Booker T.

The NWO comes out for commentary as Heyman starts to panic as only he can. Booker chops away to start but is clotheslined out to the floor. JR tries to find out why Booker isn't NWO material. Shawn: "He's a showman, he's a dancer. There's no place for that in the NWO." Now Goldust comes out so we can have six extra people at ringside. A powerslam puts Booker down and Goldust decks Heyman for general purposes. The ax kick sets up the Spinarooni but the NWO gets on the apron, allowing Brock to hit the F5 (finally referred to as such) to advance.

Rating: D. This was more smoke and mirrors to protect Brock but at least Booker didn't lose clean. It was also smart to put Booker in there to guarantee the match went smoothly as someone like Brock still needs a guide to get him through a match. Lesnar is clearly getting the rocket push, despite how green he looks out there.

Goldust and Booker get the NWO beatdown.

Vince tells Slaughter to go greet Austin.

After a break, Vince is in the ring with a beer for Austin and you can feel the fans getting excited. Garea comes out to tell Vince that it was another he.....and here's the Rock. You know, the top Smackdown pick who was

around for like two episodes. Rock immediately hits the catchphrases and gives Vince fifteen seconds to get out of this ring. Vince is out at ten and Rock throws the beer over Vince's head (with Vince on the stage) as he goes.

Rock goes on a tirade against Austin (without mentioning his name), saying if anyone else doesn't want to be with the company, they can get the F out. He's scheduled to be back on Smackdown July 11 but we'll make that this Sunday at King of the Ring. In fifty years he'll be using the people's walker to get down to the ring because this is in his blood. We hit one more catchphrase to wrap this up. Rock was really the only name that was going to replace Austin so this was as good as it was going to get.

Overall Rating: C-. Maybe Austin should have left a long time ago. This was a much easier show to sit through as they actually advanced some stories and started focusing on some new stars. Brock is looking like a huge deal, Booker is a charged up face with people to feud with and Jeff Hardy is in a quick feud with Undertaker. Those aren't great developments but they're steps in the right direction, which you haven't seen on this show in way too long. Better, but still not good this week.

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>

I'm Going Back to Wrestlemania

So here's a good one.

The wife is going to England to visit family the week of Wrestlemania. We were looking around to see if there were any nearby airports with cheaper tickets (a really good travel tip) and found that in Knoxville (two and a half hours away), the price was cut in half. As a joke, I said maybe we should try Orlando so I can drop her off at the airport and then go on to Wrestlemania that weekend.

As luck would have it, Orlando actually WAS cheaper and, as a result, I'm doing Wrestlemania and all associated shows, (including an indy show or two as I'll be there by myself and can take a bit more wrestling than the wife), such as Wrestlemania (ticket already bought), Axxess (at least one session depending on who the VIP wrestlers are), Raw/Smackdown (in the same building for the first time that I can remember) and of course Takeover.

So yeah. I'm pretty happy and that's due to all of you people. I flat out could not do this without you all reading my stuff and buying my e-books (new one on Friday). It's the only thing I've ever wanted to do and somehow I get to do it every single day. Thank you all so much and you have no idea how much I appreciate you all reading my stuff day after day. It means the world to me and I'm not exaggerating a single bit.

Thank you all so much.

KB

Monday Night Raw – November 14, 2016: Nope. Send This Back.

Monday Night Raw

Date: November 14, 2016

Location: First Niagara Center, Buffalo, New York

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

We're ready for Survivor Series on Sunday and tonight is the last chance for the red show to pump things up. The big story here is Goldberg and Brock Lesnar being in the same ring before their showdown, which you may or may not find interesting. Finally we should get to hear about the big debate between Stephanie and Shane McMahon tonight...which is taking place on the Network after the show. Let's get to it.

All of the Raw Survivor Series participants are on the stage as the bosses are in the ring. Stephanie plugs the debate after the show tonight and Foley says Sunday is about proving what's better between the two shows. This leads to Foley doing Enzo Amore's dance, much to Amore's delight. Stephanie threatens to change Sunday's lineup if some people don't impress them tonight. That includes Cesaro/Sheamus vs. Kevin Owens/Roman Reigns, Chris Jericho/Seth Rollins/Braun Strowman vs. New Day and Charlotte/Sasha Banks vs. Alicia Fox/Nia Jax.

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.

Jericho tries to get Rollins and Strowman to calm down and work together later, ala Owens. He even has presents for both of them: scarves! Rollins declines and Strowman rips up Jericho's scarf because he doesn't like Chris.

Sami Zayn vs. Bo Dallas

This is over Dallas not being happy with Sami getting the Intercontinental Title shot. The standard arm work doesn't last long so it's Dallas being aggressive in the corner to take over. Sami comes right back and hits the exploder into the corner followed by the Helluva Kick for the pin at 2:30.

Brian Kendrick has a speech for the cruiserweights. He knows everyone is concerned about moving to Smackdown but there's no way he's going to lose because he's the standard bearer of this division. Most of the division starts talking about how they could beat Kendrick and an argument breaks out. This really didn't need to exist.

New Day comes out for their match and they've got a merchandise cart. They've been WWE Tag Team Champions for nearly 450 days because they know how to survive. With the holidays right around the corner, you need their gear to survive, with gear such as New Day Socks. You can stuff that sock

with a unicorn horn or a certain brand of cereal.

New Day vs. Seth Rollins/Braun Strowman/Chris Jericho

Jericho and Kofi start things off and that's not a bad thing. An elbow to the jaw puts Kofi on the mat and it's quickly off to Woods vs. Rollins with the latter coming in off a chop to the chest. That goes nowhere either as they hit the mat for Seth's headlock before it's back to Jericho as New Day takes over. The Warrior splash gets two and Kofi comes back in, only to get slammed by Braun as we take a break.

Back with Braun holding Kofi in a nerve hold before handing it back to Rollins. Some double knees put Seth down but it's Strowman running cross the ring to kick Big E. in the face. We wind up with Woods kicking Jericho in the back and Strowman plowing through the other two opponents. Woods finally kicks him in the face and forearms Rollins in the jaw. That's enough for Braun though as it's a powerslam to end Xavier at 14:06.

Rating: C. This picked up a lot near the end as Woods continues to be great at the last chance offense. Strowman is getting better at being a rampaging monster but he's still in need of some more experience. I liked the match well enough though and New Day will be fine with a loss like this. That being said, it's getting harder and harder to care about these one off matches between people with no animosity.

Paul Heyman interrupts the bosses and suggests that there won't be a match if Lesnar isn't happy. Mick orders more security.

Charlotte is in the back with Sasha for the weekly "women like to bicker with each other" segment. The big deal here is that Sasha has a title rematch down the line and they don't like each other.

Brian Kendrick vs. Sin Cara

Non-title and Kendrick jumps him during the entrances. Cara says ring the bell so Brian beats him up in the corner as we hear about 205 Live, which really isn't the best idea during this dull match. The chinlock evolves into the choking on the ropes but a backdrop puts Kendrick outside for a

suicide dive. A second dive hits the barricade and we take a break. IN THIS MATCH.

Back with Kendrick choking even more because that's what a heel cruiserweight does. Brian misses a charge in the corner and a top rope spinning splash gives Cara two. The crowd is just GONE here as Cara gets two off a sitout powerbomb. Kendrick goes for the mask and puts on the Captain's Hook (looks terrible) for the tap out at 11:05.

Rating: D. Was this Cara's punishment for the fight with Jericho? This was slow, boring and completely killed what little energy the crowd had left. As has been the case for months now, WWE has no idea what to do with a cruiserweight division. An eleven minute match is bad enough but having it be mostly spent on chinlocks and choking before finishing with a chinlock. This division really needs to go somewhere else and maybe its own show is the solution, but not without some major changes.

Enzo and Big Cass are in the back when Anderson and Gallows come up. They don't trust each other in their eight man tag tonight.

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.

Sasha Banks/Charlotte vs. Nia Jax/Alicia Fox

Bayley is on commentary. Charlotte gets to face Nia to start and Sasha bails to the floor because they're partners that don't like each other. I didn't know if they had made that clear in the two previous matches with the same stories. The champ can't get anywhere with the monster and bails to the floor for an early break.

Back with Sasha rolling Alicia up for one and hitting the chinlock. Charlotte and Sasha finally break down and get in a fight, allowing Fox to bring Alicia back in. A big boot staggers Jax but another fight allows Alicia to come in with a high crossbody. Charlotte neutralizes Nia and the Bank Statement makes Fox tap at 7:45.

Rating: C-. Boring match (due to seeing the same story for the third time in just over two hours) but it makes sense to actually have them get in a fight for a change. I really don't need to see Charlotte vs. Sasha again but I'm sure they'll have one more gimmick match to really hammer home how important it is. Also, well done on having Alicia job here, which you can imagine them screwing up to try to swerve the audience.

Foley gives the Raw team another pep talk.

Enzo Amore/Big Cass/Anderson and Gallows vs. Shining Stars/Golden Truth

Cass throws Epico around to start and everything breaks down, leaving Golden Truth vs. Enzo and Cass. Uh, epic? We take a break just over a minute in and come back with a double Russian legsweep to Anderson. Karl pops right back up and grabs a chinlock on Truth as the fans are some combination of confused over who to cheer for and bored half to death. Primo tags himself in and gets to face Big Cass as everything breaks down. The Magic Killer plants Primo and Anderson tells to go up for the Bada Boom Shaka Lacka before just taking the pin himself at 9:03.

Rating: D. Yeah go back and look at one of the ratings for the same idea earlier on and substitute in the appropriate names. I don't think there's much that I can add to this one because there's almost no story here. Anderson and Gallows don't like the rest of the division and they're mean to their partners. Next segment please.

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 booed 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: D. The wrestling was acceptable (albeit boring) but the problem here was the lack of effort. This three plus hour show had two main ideas: wacky tag team partners who don't get along and Goldberg vs. Lesnar. The latter of those ideas took fifteen minutes and the other idea took up the rest of the show. Save for a WAY too long cruiserweight match (Yeah I know, I criticize the cruiserweights. Get over it.) and a nothing Sami vs. Dallas match, that's all this show was. For three hours. Two ideas.

I can tolerate a show focused on one thing or a show that is trying to accomplish a goal but this was WAY over the top. You can't showcase someone on the team against people not on the pay per view roster? Or do ANYTHING other than the same idea for most of the show? I checked out on this show as soon as I realized they didn't have anything tonight and

that's not something that should ever happen. The quality wasn't the worst here and the ending segment did it a lot of favors but the lack of effort destroys it.

Results

Kevin Owens/Roman Reigns b. Cesaro/Sheamus – Spear to Sheamus

Sami Zayn b. Bo Dallas – Helluva Kick

Braun Strowman/Seth Rollins/Chris Jericho b. New Day – Powerslam to Woods

Brian Kendrick b. Sin Cara – Captain's Hook

Charlotte/Sasha Banks b. Alicia Fox/Nia Jax – Bank Statement to Fox

Enzo Amore/Big Cass/Anderson and Gallows b. Shining Stars/Golden Truth – Magic Killer to Primo

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>

Survivor Series Count-Up –

2008: The Cena/Jericho Special

Survivor Series 2008

Date: November 23, 2008

Location: TD Banknorth Garden, Boston, Massachusetts

Attendance: 12,498

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, Todd Grisham, Matt Striker, Jim Ross, Tazz

The other major story on the show is Team Orton vs. Team Batista. Randy Orton vs. Batista had always been a match WWE wanted to push on a big stage but this is about as high as they ever got. They would face each other at various other pay per views in singles matches, but none as high profile as this one. Let's get to it.

The opening video is the exact same thing it's been for two years. Literally, they're the same clips before we get to the stuff about the main events.

JR and Taz talk about the Hardy issue and say that ABC and TMZ picked up the story. I seem to remember that being a lie.

Team HBK vs. Team JBL

Shawn Michaels, Rey Mysterio, Cryme Tyme, Great Khali

John Bradshaw Layfield, The Miz, John Morrison, Kane, MVP

Shawn and JBL are feuding over Shawn being broke and needing money from JBL, Cryme Tyme (Shad Gaspard and JTG, two thug characters) are feuding with Miz and Morrison, Kane has been hunting Mysterio and Khali and MVP (in the middle of a massive losing streak that would result in a face turn and the US Title) are there to fill out the lineups. MVP and Mysterio get things going as all of the commentators are talking at once.

Rey hits a quick hurricanrana and a clothesline for two before it's off to JTG for a double dropkick. JTG hits a HARD right hand but MVP gets in

a shot to the ribs and hits the Drive-By (running kick to the side of the head) for the elimination. Khali immediately comes in and chops MVP in the head for the elimination to tie things up.

Kane comes in for the staredown of the giants and Khali clotheslines him down with ease. Khali slugs him down and easily breaks up a chokeslam attempt. There's the chop to the head and Rey climbs on Khali's shoulders for the splash and another elimination. Off to Morrison who speeds things up. Mysterio hits a quick kick to the head and it's time for Shad.

Now Cryme Tyme vs. Miz/Morrison was a feud ahead of its time: their internet shows got in an argument and a wrestling feud followed. Shad misses a charge into the corner and it's off to Miz. Since Miz isn't quite the worker he is at this point, it's back to Morrison very quickly. Shad runs over both members of the tag team and powerslams Miz down before hitting another overhyped elbow. Miz pops back up and hits the Reality Check (backbreaker/neckbreaker combo) to eliminate Shad.

It's off to Shawn who comes in via a slow, dramatic step. He gets to face the Miz, meaning that entrance was wasted. To the shock of almost everyone, Miz takes over and double teams with Morrison to work over Shawn's back. JBL, the slimmed down version, comes in to pound away and drop an elbow for two. Back to Miz who pounds away at Shawn's bad eye, busting it open again.

Morrison comes in again to crank on a headlock and send Shawn over the top. Naturally Shawn skins the cat to come back in, as he has for years. At least Morrison jumps him when Shawn gets back inside. A forearm puts Shawn down and Morrison nips up in a little jab at HBK. Morrison misses the top rope elbow and it's a double tag to bring in Miz vs. Mysterio. Rey hits a springboard hurricanrana into the 619 and the top rope splash puts Miz out.

JBL comes in and hits a hard shoulder to take Mysterio down. The crowd is WAY into Rey here. The fans think JBL can't wrestle. Off to Morrison with a European uppercut followed by a backbreaker. Rey gets in a kick to the face but it's off to JBL to hook an abdominal stretch with the leg being cranked on at the same time. Once Rey escapes, JBL uses something you

don't often see: a big boot to the back of the head. Rey blocks a belly to back superplex and hits a moonsault press to put JBL down and bust open his lip. There's the tag to Shawn who hits the forearm and nip up of his own to send Bradshaw to the floor.

Shawn dives out to take Bradshaw out and loads up the superkick to send JBL running away. With JBL running away from the kick, Shawn slides back in and beats the count by one second, meaning JBL is gone via a countout. Morrison tries to superkick Shawn but Shawn is like boy these boots are older than you and kicks Morrison's head off for the final pin and 3-0 victory.

Rating: C. This was fine but the ending was kind of anti-climatic. They were trying to save the Shawn pin over JBL which was a good idea as they would have a solid feud in the next few months which resulted in Shawn being JBL's lackey because Shawn was poor. The guys other than the captains in this didn't do much of note but that's kind of the idea behind a match like this. Not bad but nothing great either.

HHH doesn't think he needs to give his opinion on the Jeff Hardy situation. Either way, Hardy will be back. Tonight it's going to be him vs. Kozlov and HHH promises to give the Russian his first defeat.

Team Raw vs. Team Smackdown

Raw: Beth Phoenix, Mickie James, Kelly Kelly, Candice Michelle, Jillian Hall

Smackdown: Michelle McCool, Victoria, Maria, Maryse, Natalya

Candice is a model who wasn't horrible in the ring, Maryse is a French Canadian bombshell and Natalya is a member of the Hart Family. Beth is the captain of Team Raw (and is dating Santino Marella) and McCool is captain of Team Smackdown. They're also Women's and Divas Champions respectively. For the sake of simplicity, only Michelle McCool will be referred to as Michelle. Beth and Michelle start things off with Beth controlling via a top wristlock. Michelle uses some decent chain wrestling to set up a dropkick to send Beth backwards a bit.

Maryse tags herself in and gets in a brawl with her own partner Michelle. Team Raw: "LET THEM FIGHT!" Good thinking. After the brawl is broken up, it's Beth vs. Maria with Maria avoiding a charge and hitting a slow motion headscissors. Off to Kelly vs. Maria and hopefully this doesn't last long. Victoria tags herself in and gets caught in a hurricanrana by Kelly for the pin. Kelly tries the same thing on Maryse for two so Maryse hits a backbreaker and gets the pin as well.

It's 4-4 now and Mickie comes in while swearing a bit. A Thesz Press puts Maryse down and it's off to Michelle again. They try to bridge into a backslide, fail miserably, and try again to a standoff. McCool hits a Russian legsweep for two and Mickie hits a clothesline for the same. Maria's save hits McCool by mistake, allowing Mickie to hit the jumping DDT and pin Michelle. Mickie gets in an argument with Beth and gets rolled up by Maryse to tie it right back up.

Off to Candice vs. Natalya and they trade some rollups for two. Natalya busts out a Sharpshooter (it is the Survivor Series after all) but Jillian makes the save. Candice hits a spear for a quick pin on Natalya and it's 3-2 with Jillian, Beth and Candice vs. Maria and Maryse.

It's Jillian vs. Maria with Jillian getting two off a Samoan Drop. Maria grabs a quick victory roll to eliminate Jillian and ten seconds later, Candice hits a northern lights suplex to put Maria out. Maryse hooks an inverted figure four on Candice and we're down to one on one. Maryse gets in a few shots and a rollup but the Glam Slam (double chickenwing slam) gives Beth the final pin very quickly.

Rating: D. As decent as last year's was, this felt like your traditional Divas match. You had some decent workers but most of the girls are models who are there because of how they look in swimsuits. I've seen worse matches and the right choice was the survivor, but this just didn't work for the most part.

Matt Hardy says that Jeff was hit in the back of the head with a blunt object, ending any drug speculation.

We recap Undertaker vs. Big Show. Show isn't scared of Undertaker so he'll win the casket match tonight.

Undertaker vs. Big Show

Casket match and the casket gets the full druid entrance. I wonder if those guys hang out at catering after this. They have a nice casket this year too instead of the normally generic ones. Show took all of 2007 off and lost a ton of weight so he's still kind of slim here. Well slim for him that is. I don't think the bell rang but Show starts throwing punches anyway. One misses though and Undertaker tries to dump him into the casket to no avail.

They head to the floor and Undertaker's headbutt has no effect. Show pounds away at the ribs and rams Undertaker face first into the announce table to daze the smaller giant. The announce table gets loaded up but Show headbutts him instead of putting Undertaker on the table. Undertaker grabs one of those big monitors WWE uses and bashes Show's head in a few times with it. A BIG leg to put Show through the table in the huge spot of the match.

They slowly start heading back to the casket but take a detour into the ring instead. Old School is countered and things slow down again. There's a side slam from Show as the crowd is a lot less interested than they were when Undertaker was on offense. The casket is opened and Undertaker is put inside but Show has to close the casket himself.

Since Show won't close the lid, Undertaker comes back with a bunch of punches and the jumping clothesline. Show hits a big elbow in the corner to slow down Undertaker (and the crowd) again. For some reason Show loads up a Vader Bomb when Undertaker is half up and gets chokeslammed down.

The casket is opened again and a big boot to the side of Show's head knocks him inside, but Show blocks the lid from being shut again. Back in and Show hits the chokeslam...then destroys the casket. Show starts walking away and there's a wall of fire to stop him from leaving. Well of course there is. Undertaker goes after him and gets punched down again, but here are more druids with another casket.

Show punches Undertaker a bit more and stands the casket up so he can ram Undertaker into it and knock both of them down. The casket is stood up again but it's open this time. Undertaker punches Show to the edge of the

stage before whipping Show into the casket, causing it to fall and shut to give Undertaker the win.

Rating: D. This is considered a horrible casket match by some people but it's really not that bad. It's certainly a bad match but the ending was kind of creative and what are you expecting from Undertaker vs. Big Show? They're going to hit each other a lot and it's going to be slow, so why do people act surprised when any match with either of these two or Kane is the same formula? Not a good match but it's definitely not terrible.

Carlito and Primo (cousins) hit on the Bellas but can't tell them apart. In something I never thought I'd have to say again, the Gobbledygooker pops up and the Colons think it's Charlie Haas, but of course he pops up in the room and the Gooker is played by the Boogeyman. This would be another pointless segment.

Randy Orton doesn't want to be team captain but his team will win anyway. He implies Cody is the weak link of the team. Cody says that if Randy is eliminated first, it's addition by subtraction. The team has to hold them apart.

Team Orton vs. Team Batista

Randy Orton, Mark Henry, William Regal, Cody Rhodes, Shelton Benjamin

Batista, Kofi Kingston, CM Punk, R-Truth, Matt Hardy

Cody is being mentored by Orton in a group called Legacy, Shelton is US Champion, Matt is ECW Champion and Punk/Kofi are Raw Tag Team Champions. Orton cost Punk the Raw World Title back in October, Hardy and Henry are feuding over the ECW Title, Truth is chasing Shelton's Title and Regal has been helping Orton against Batista. This is quite the intricate match for a change.

Punk immediately charges at Regal and hits the GTS for the elimination in about ten seconds. Shelton gets a very fast two on Punk before pounding away on his back. Off to Kofi who grabs a front facelock. Kofi is even more over here than usual as he went to college in Boston. Kofi tries a monkey flip but Shelton lands on his feet and brings in Henry to pound

away slowly.

Henry apparently gets tired after a few seconds so here's Cody. Matt comes in, does nothing of note, and tags in Truth who pounds away. Striker talks about what a killing Truth is making as we can hear a lot of spots being called here tonight. I don't know if the ring is mic'd loudly or what but you can hear all kinds of stuff here. Batista comes in and everybody runs until it's only Cody left to face him. Rhodes quickly tags out to Shelton but Batista takes him down with ease and gets two via a powerslam. Off to Matt vs. Randy as things speed up. A bulldog gets two for Matt but a moonsault misses.

It's off to Henry who lost the ECW Title to Hardy a few months ago. Cody comes in and chokes a bit but there's the double tag to Truth vs. Shelton. A victory roll gets two for Truth and he does his backflip into the splits spot. The spinning forearm misses completely and Paydirt (a jumping downward spiral) gets the pin for Shelton. Kofi immediately comes in with a springboard cross body for two and a dropkick to put Shelton down.

The Boom Drop gets another two for Kofi but Henry blasts Kofi in the back of the head. Henry comes in legally now for more quick pounding and it's finally off to Orton. Orton does his really slow stomp but the knee drop misses. Randy drapes him over the top rope and hits the hanging DDT for the elimination. Punk is immediately waiting on Orton, who gets beaten up for a few moments but gets in a rake to the eyes and tags out to Cody.

Rhodes works on the arm for a bit but gets caught by the knee and bulldog combo for two. Punk goes up but Manu (the other member of Legacy who didn't last long) distracts him long enough for Cody to shove him off the top. A DDT eliminates Punk quickly and we're down to 4-2 with Batista/Matt vs. Orton/Cody/Henry/Benjamin. Matt comes in and hits a quick Side Effect for two on Rhodes but it's quickly back to Henry. Matt hits an elbow to the back of Henry's head and manages to pull off the Side Effect for two. That's about it for Hardy as the World's Strongest Slam takes him out, leaving Batista all alone.

Batista immediately spears down Henry to make it 3-1 as Shelton comes in.

Benjamin gets caught in a spinebuster almost immediately and the Batista Bomb gets is down to 2-1. Cody comes in and peppers Batista with some right hands before charging into a boot. Batista powerslams Rhodes down and says Orton is next. Batista hits the Bomb on Rhodes but Randy made a blind tag while Cody was in the air. The RKO gets the elimination and win for Rhodes and Orton.

Rating: B. This was a kind of throwback to the old school Survivor Series matches where the numbers finally caught up with the big face and he got beat. Orton vs. Batista was one of the big matches that WWE never really got to do on the scale I think they were hoping for. They would have a long match next month at Armageddon but that's hardly the second main event at Wrestlemania which they were capable of having. Still though, good stuff here and the best match of the night by far.

Kozlov says he'll win.

Hardy is officially out of the title match tonight.

The recap video is pretty pointless now because the video is mostly about Jeff. Kozlov is here because HHH wanted to have some big epic match with him that no one but him was interested in. Jeff is here because he keeps getting so close to winning the title so EVIL Vickie wouldn't let him in the match. Jeff invaded the contract signing and beat up a lot of people until he was put in the match.

Smackdown World Title: Vladimir Kozlov vs. HHH

HHH is defending. After the big match intros we're ready to go. The fans chant USA of course and for once it's actually appropriate. Kozlov, the amateur wrestler/combat sports expert, takes it to the mat with amateur stuff. Now remember that, because it'll become important later. HHH gets on the mat with him and hooks a headlock. The fans now chant boring as we hit a standoff. Now they want Hardy.

They trade arm holds on the mat and then trade even more arm holds on the same mat. Back up and HHH hits the high knee and a facebuster followed by the DDT for no cover. The fans chant for TNA before HHH hits the spinebuster. Kozlov counters the Pedigree and hits the headbutt to the

chest to take HHH down. Vladimir sends HHH into the corner and out to the floor where very little happens.

Back in and a fall away slam gets two for the challenger and he fires some shoulders to the ribs. A powerslam gets another two and it's off to a body grip to slow things down even more. Kozlov hits a pair of backbreakers for two and it's back to that grip. HHH comes back with some right hands but gets powerslammed down for another two. A comeback by HHH is countered into a belly to belly as Taz says Kozlov is going to win, further dooming him to lose. HHH hits a Pedigree out of nowhere and here's Smackdown GM Vickie Guerrero.

She says he's here and makes it a triple threat, with the third man being the returning Edge. Edge does the psycho eyes on the way to the ring and I think a cameraman fell off the ramp as he was filming. Edge spears down HHH and here's Jeff Hardy to destroy the Canadian. His chair shot hits HHH though, allowing Edge to steal the pin and the title.

Rating: D. There's a lot to say here. First and foremost, as usual I disagree with anyone who said this was the worst match of the year. It's arguably not even the worst match of the show, but think about this for a minute: are you telling me there isn't some terrible Divas match somewhere in the year worse than this? Or that Honky Tonk Man vs. Santino Marella at Cyber Sunday was indeed better?

This match was indeed bad, but let's think about this for a minute. Kozlov is supposed to be a combat sports expert and an amateur wrestler. So what did he do? He wrestled like his character was supposed to. Now was it boring? Absolutely. Was it a REALLY stupid move to put him in a World Title match? Absolutely. Were the fans interested? Not at all. If you want proof, back at Cyber Sunday the options for the title match were HHH vs. either guy, or a triple threat. The results were as follows:

Hardy – 57%

Triple Threat – 38%

Kozlov – 5%

Based on that alone, it's clear that almost no one wanted to see HHH vs. Kozlov one on one. The interest just wasn't there, so they booked a triple threat instead which there was interest in. Then they screw the fans out of their money by taking Jeff out of the match because of whatever their reasoning was. Then they flip the fans off AGAIN by having Hardy run in at the end. Hardy would pin Edge in another triple threat the next month to win the title in a shocker. Why this match didn't happen here is beyond me, but again it's screwing the fans out of what was advertised until the night before the show.

At the end of the day though, no one bought Kozlov as a real threat to the title. The guy just wasn't going to be WWE Champion with the response he got, which is why Hardy was the interesting factor in this match. Without him, you have twelve minutes of your time being wasted until the ending, which should have been Hardy. Anyway, nothing to see here but it's not the worst match of the year.

We recap Jericho vs. Cena. Jericho snuck into the Championship Scramble match last month at Unforgiven and stole the World Title while Cena was on the shelf. Tonight, Cena returns from a neck injury to try and get his title back. In his hometown. Against a guy that has literally only beaten him once. And we're supposed to expect Jericho to have a chance because we're supposed to ignore all that stuff.

Raw World Title: Chris Jericho vs. John Cena

Jericho is defending of course. Cena almost immediately tries the FU but Jericho bails to the apron. Jericho comes back with a headlock which works on the neck followed by a shoulder block to take Cena to the floor. John holds his neck a lot and looks shaken. Back in and Cena pounds away in the corner as they're hitting hard but the pace of the match is pretty slow if that makes sense. Jericho takes over and things continue to go slowly.

Cena comes back with the Throwback and goes up for the Fameasser, only to come down because that's the move that hurt his neck in the first place. Jericho takes over again and things go slowly. A kick to the side of Cena's head puts him on the floor for a nine count. Back in and Cena

slugs away but gets sent right back to the floor. Jericho throws him into the steps and heads back in for a neck crank.

After the hold is broken, it's time for more choking followed by a full nelson. The hold lasts almost a minute and a half but Cena blocks the bulldog. A shoulder puts Jericho down but the second shoulder connects. Jericho misses the Lionsault but the Shuffle is countered into the Lioneater (kneeling Walls of Jericho)! He hasn't used that in years but it looks awesome. Cena escapes the hold so Jericho puts on the regular Boston Crab instead. Cena, after being in the hold over a minute straight, grabs the rope to escape. Back up and Cena hits an FU out of nowhere but can't follow up.

Both guys head up to the top with Cena slamming him to the mat, followed up by the top rope Fameasser. Cena is all fired up now but Jericho breaks up the FU and hits a Codebreaker for a delayed two. Jericho takes over and hits a clothesline followed by an EVIL smirk. He smirks a bit too much though and Cena grabs the STFU. Cena has to try to pull the hold back to the middle of the ring and Jericho kicks him away. The champ tries a small package but Cena pulls him up into the FU for the pin and the title.

Rating: C+. The match itself was fine but there was less drama in this than in a Donald Duck cartoon. At the end of the day, Cena does not lose to Jericho and he does not tap out no matter what. The wrestling was fine and it told a story and all that jazz, but I'd rather have a main event where I wasn't sure what was going to happen than a match being designed for Cena to have everything come together and win and then everything coming together to win.

Cena celebrates to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. I don't know if it's because I've been doing so many of these lately, but this wasn't the most interesting show in the world. It was dull at times and almost felt like a chore to sit through. The first hour or so is WAY worse than the rest of the show, but even the last two thirds aren't all that great. This didn't work that well and it's not something I want to see again.

Ratings Comparison

Team HBK vs. Team JBL

Original: B+

Redo: C

Team Raw vs. Team Smackdown

Original: D-

Redo: D

Undertaker vs. Big Show

Original: D+

Redo: D

Team Orton vs. Team Batista

Original: C-

Redo: B

Edge vs. HHH vs. Vladimir Kozlov

Original: D+

Redo: D

John Cena vs. Chris Jericho

Original: B

Redo: C+

Overall Rating

Original: C-

Redo: D+

I've flipped on the two male Survivor Series matches but other than that it's about the same.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/11/17/history-of-survivor-series-count-up-2008-let-jericho-beat-cena-once-just-one-time/>

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>

Monday Night Raw – June 10, 2002 (2016 Redo): A Missing Rattlesnake, An Owner and One Disgusting Promo

Monday Night Raw

Date: June 10, 2002

Location: Phillips Arena, Atlanta, Georgia

Attendance: 8,000

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

Steve Austin is gone and he's not coming back for a long time. Austin walked out of the company earlier in the day before this show due to not wanting to lose to Brock Lesnar in a King of the Ring qualifying match with no build. He had been unhappy for a long time and this was the breaking point, meaning most of the show had to be rewritten at the last minute. There's not much of a point in recapping most of what's going on because everything is changing here so let's get to it.

Before we get to the show, let's talk about Austin a little more. There are two major points to get out of the way here: Austin was completely unprofessional by leaving like he did but he was absolutely right with a lot of his complaints. Let's look at the second part first. Austin losing to Lesnar in a one off match on Raw would have been a very, very stupid move and a huge waste of money. While he wasn't the star he once was, Austin was the undisputed biggest name on Raw and a win over him, no matter how it was attained, would be a big deal.

Austin has said (albeit years later) that he had no problem putting Lesnar over but he had a problem with doing it on Raw with no build. Put this up on a pay per view with a regular build and it's going to draw money. Putting it on a nothing Raw in a qualifying match (Austin vs. Lesnar should have been a featured match, as in the tournament final and one of the show's main events) was very shortsighted and fairly insulting to Austin at the same time.

On top of that, Austin had been doing some really stupid angles over the last few weeks. Whether it was the WAY too long feud with the NWO or relieving himself on Arn Anderson or probably making Ric Flair clean the toilets, Austin was a pretty long way away from his must see war against Vince McMahon and headlining Wrestlemania with the Rock. Austin deserved better than this and should have been in the World Title picture instead of taking care of all these people in Raw in a glorified midcard role.

All that being said, no one has the right to walk out on a show, especially when he was advertised as the big draw of the night. It's insulting to the company but more importantly to the fans who paid to see

Austin that night. Maybe Austin was looking for an excuse to get out or he finally snapped but there's no excuse for what he did, especially with the way he was barely in contact for several months after walking out. Maybe this will be better for Raw in the long term, but give the company a way to write him off TV and not be forced into a bait and switch. It's a bad moment all around and no one looks great but Austin looks worse.

Anyway, on with the show.

Opening sequence.

Here's Ric Flair to open the show. As he makes his way to the ring, JR makes the first Austin reference by talking about the personal assistant story. Flair recaps the story and says he isn't happy about it but Austin isn't here tonight. Before he can elaborate further, here's Vince McMahon to interrupt. Vince talks about Austin walking out and you can tell the fans are rather taken aback by the news. As for Flair, he's driven Raw into the toilet and sucks as an owner. Flair: "I'm sorry."

Ric wants to know what Flair plans to do about it so we hear about Vince's career resume. Vince gets to the point (how nice of him): tonight, one match between the two of them, no holds barred, winner take all. Flair takes off the jacket and calls Vince a Nature Boy wannabe. The match is on and Flair has just completed one of the most rushed face turns in recorded history.

Earlier today Shawn Michaels wouldn't let the rest of the NWO into the locker room so they read the paper instead. Big Show has some stomach issues due to eating Mexican food. Booker winds up singing Shawn's theme song and wants to "collabroatize" with Shawn over the lyrics. That goes nowhere so Booker sings his own version of Shawn's song.

Spike Dudley/Shawn Stasiak/Tommy Dreamer vs. NWO

Booker/X-Pac/Show here and Christopher Nowitzki is sitting in the front row. X-Pac powerbombs Spike to start and fires off the kicks in the corner. Stasiak and Show come in for the expected dominance but we cut to Nash and Shawn watching in the back. It's off to Dreamer with his bucket and it's full of confetti. Booker takes the DDT and everything breaks

down. The ax kick finishes Dreamer in a hurry.

Post match we get a big Spinarooni. That face turns needs to happen...oh I don't know, NOW perhaps?

After a break, Booker runs into Goldust (now in an afro as the Undercover Brother), who wants Booker to drop the team because, I kid you now, Shawn might be a racist.

Molly Holly doesn't like Terri because she's not a credible journalist due to some of her swimsuit photos and the Raw Sex column. Cue Trish Stratus, who says people don't like Molly because she's, shall we say, hippy. "You could show like a whole drive-in movie on that thing." Sweet goodness this is disturbing anymore. A match is agreed to and if Molly wins, she gets a title shot. If Trish wins, Molly has to wrestle in a thong. Naturally Trish reveals her own to make sure the fans ignore how evil she was here.

Chris Benoit and Eddie Guerrero try to talk Flair out of this and get nowhere.

European Title: William Regal vs. Bradshaw

Bradshaw is challenging and his Hardcore Title isn't on the line. Regal trips him to the mat to start but gets headlocked for his efforts. A good left hand puts Bradshaw down and it's time to slug away in the corner. The Regal Cutter gets two (for Regal if that's not clear) but Bradshaw sends him flying with the fall away slam. With the champ in trouble, Nowitzki jumps the barricade and throws Regal the brass knuckles for the knockout shot to retain.

Rating: D. Well that happened. They need to just retire the title already because there hasn't been a real feud over the thing in months and I don't remember the last time a title match broke five minutes. Nowitzki joining Regal could be interesting but let them do anything other than be around such a worthless title.

GET THE F OUT!

Molly Holly vs. Trish Stratus

Non-title. Lawler makes jokes about Molly's figure and it's already uncomfortable. Trish's face is sent into the mat and there's the handspring elbow in the corner for two. Stratusfaction is broken up with a belly to back suplex and the Molly Go Round finishes Trish clean. So to recap: the champ just lost clean (second time a champion has lost in a row) and apparently Molly is rather large in various areas. You know, because Trish is such a stick figure.

Arn Anderson (thankfully in a clean shirt) tries to talk Vince out of this.

King of the Ring Qualifying Match: Eddie Guerrero vs. Rob Van Dam

Non-title of course. They trade armdrags to start until Eddie grabs a leglock on the mat. Back up and Eddie sends Van Dam into the corner as an ECW chant starts up. Van Dam goes sailing over the top rope for a big crash but he's right back up to kick Eddie down. They're certainly keeping things moving so far.

Back in and Eddie grabs a cross armbreaker of all things (JR gets it wrong by calling it a Fujiwara armbar) to keep Van Dam in trouble. A superplex plants Van Dam again but Eddie can't follow up. Instead it's Van Dam missing the split legged moonsault to keep both guys down again. They start trading rollups and Van Dam actually gets the pin, though it looked like Eddie was supposed to kick out. It didn't look horribly botched but it didn't seem to be the planned finish.

Rating: B-. These two work very well together and I'm glad the champ won but they need to stop going back to this match over and over. Booker would be a good challenger for Van Dam and Eddie can go do something else, though I'm not entirely sure what at this point given the lack of top stories.

The replay shows that Eddie's shoulder was up at two but Van Dam went to a jackknife cover while the referee called for the bell. Definitely not how it was supposed to go.

Undertaker arrives.

Nash won't let Coach talk to Shawn.

Here's Undertaker for a talk. He's tired of people just not getting the fact that he's the Undisputed WWE Heavyweight Champion of the World. All he knows is that he deserves respect, which brings him to HHH. If HHH was so smart, why didn't he know Undertaker was waiting for him last week? The only hope that HHH has at King of the Ring is the hope that Undertaker doesn't kick his face in.

Moving on, Jeff Hardy dropkicked him into human vomit. JR: "Not any kind of vomit. HUMAN VOMIT!" Cue Matt Hardy with a ladder for a distraction so Jeff can get in a few shots. The beatdown is on but the brothers manage to drop him with the ladder before bailing. So they go from a big time tag team to getting squashed by Brock Lesnar to feuding with the World Champion in a side story while we wait on Undertaker vs. HHH?

Regal and Nowitzki leave together because they're both smart but Jeff runs in to say something remains unfulfilled before jumping into a jeep and driving off.

King of the Ring Qualifying Match: Brock Lesnar vs. Bubba Ray Dudley

Brock doesn't waste time by sending Bubba hard into the corner. That earns Brock a neckbreaker and it's already table time, only to have Heyman deck Bubba from behind. Heyman: "OH CENSORED!" The distraction lets Brock grab a belly to belly on the floor, followed by a modified t-bone suplex back inside. The suplex spamming continues as JR calls this breathtaking. Bubba gets in a release German suplex of his own and a regular German suplex gets two. The middle rope backsplash actually connects but Heyman's second distraction sets up the F5 for the pin.

Rating: D+. Watchable power match here with Lesnar looking a little better than usual. Granted that might be due to not having Van Dam and Guerrero around him to really show off how much better they are. Bubba is a good first feud for Lesnar but they really need to have good hands in there to walk Brock through these matches.

After a break, Heyman offers Brock to Vince. Once Vince gets total control, he should call Heyman, who has a great idea for King of the

Ring.

We see Rock say he'll be back soon.

Here's Shawn Michaels for his first comments since returning. Shawn talks about how in the WWF, they had everything from garbage men to clowns but the only real thing was....him. Then Wrestlemania XIV came along and it was time to go with Attitude and Steve Austin, who stole his spotlight. He's not blaming Steve though (or a back injury, the ratings or reality apparently) because the fans determine where this company goes as an organization.

So why is he here? Certainly not to wrestle, because the fans killed HBK. However, the only man who stood by him no matter what was Kevin Nash. Cue the NWO with Shawn singing Nash's praises before giving the rest of the team some love as well. We get a group hug but Shawn superkicks Booker off the team, which now has as many active wrestlers as injured ones. The beatdown is on and Booker's shirt is ripped off.

Vince McMahon vs. Ric Flair

No holds barred and the winner owns the whole company. No robe for Flair for some reason. They slug it out on the floor to start and go into the crowd with Ric in control. Some chops send Vince inside for the first time so he can slam Flair and grab the ring bell. The bell off the head busts Flair open and Vince kicks him in the cut. More shots to the head set up a low blow, only to have Ric kick the chair into Vince's face. A few kicks to the leg set up the Figure Four but here's Brock for the F5 to lay Flair out, giving Vince the easy pin and the company back.

Rating: D-. What else were you expecting here? They told you what you were getting before the back and it's not like you're going to get a face boss around here for more than about five minutes anyway. The match was the mess this was always destined to be as Vince can only do so much and Flair is limited with how hard he can go on him before it gets ridiculous.

Overall Rating: D. This was all over the place, though you have to give them a little bit of a break due to all the changes necessitated by

Austin leaving. Vince getting power back is fine, assuming you ignore the fact that the brands should be reunited now as there's no reason for them splitting. Complete lack of logic behind the top story aside, at least we had Booker T. thrown out of the NWO (which he never should have been involved with in the first place) and a good Van Dam vs. Guerrero match. There's still more bad than good but a few things are starting to look up.

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>

Monday Night Raw – November 7, 2016: It's Not Good Enough

Monday Night Raw

Date: November 7, 2016

Location: SSE Hydro, Glasgow, Scotland

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

It's a rare taped show this week as they're on the annual November European trip. We're also less than two weeks away from Survivor Series and that means we'll be getting some more names added so some of the matches. The main Raw team is eighty percent set and it's fairly clear

that Seth Rollins is going to complete the team. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week with Mick Foley setting up most of Team Raw along with Rollins saving Roman Reigns from a beatdown.

Opening sequence.

Here's Stephanie McMahon to a chorus of boos. She talks about how big the battle between Monday Night Raw and Smackdown Live is going to be before introducing the four competitors for the main Survivor Series match. Kevin Owens, Chris Jericho, Roman Reigns and Braun Strowman will be joined by....Seth Rollins in not that much of a surprise. Owens doesn't care for Rollins being on the team but Stephanie cuts him off to go through Smackdown's team. Raw better fight like their jobs are on the line because they are.

Stephanie leaves and Owens and Jericho talk about how they've taken over the show in recent weeks. Kevin thinks they need winners on the team, unlike the Shield who died because the members were all horrible human beings. The brawl is on with Braun standing behind until he cleans house. Strowman and Reigns have a staredown but here's Stephanie again to make a five way match for later tonight.

Rich Swann/Sin Cara vs. Brian Kendrick/Noam Dar

Dar is a Scottish wrestler and gets a huge ovation in his debut. Swann and Dar start things off as we hear that Dar also uses a kneebar submission. That would be another name on the list of people who use a style that goes against the idea of what made cruiserweights popular in the first place. The villains (Is Dar a villain? If so they're not presenting him as one.) are sent to the floor for a dive from Cara, who is sent into the barricade as we take a break.

Back with Cara in a chinlock before it's off to Dar for a neck crank. A faceplant gets Cara out of trouble and it's off to Swann for no reaction. Everything breaks down and Cara's slingshot Swanton Bomb crushes Dar. A rolling cradle gives Swann the pin on Kendrick at 7:23.

Rating: D+. The match was fun but it's another case of WHAT ARE THEY

THINKING. Dar is brought in to a huge pop and then they put him with the heel champion for reasons that still aren't clear. Oh and then let's have the champion get pinned AGAIN despite no indication that Swann is getting a title shot anytime soon. But they're cruiserweights and they're exclusive to Raw...for another three weeks until they get their own show.

Post match Kendrick yells at Dar and punches him out. Dar comes back and kicks Kendrick out of the ring to make sure you know Kendrick is worthless.

Video on Goldberg's career and his return to WWE a few weeks back. Brock has told Goldberg's family to not watch the match and that's not cool with Goldberg.

Stephanie is in her office to say she can't be on Smackdown this week but Shane McMahon and Daniel Bryan are welcome to show up next week. Sami Zayn comes in because Stephanie invited him here to say he drives her crazy. Foley wants Sami to answer Dolph Ziggler's Intercontinental Title open challenge but Sami is going to have to win a match to earn that spot. Let me get this straight: STEPHANIE is telling someone to tone it down? Is she kidding?

Here are Enzo Amore and Big Cass for a chat. Cass thinks Smackdown's team is going to be proven SAWFT. Anderson and Gallows, Golden Truth, Sheamus and Cesaro all join them and, after a break, Sheamus has something to say. After saying what a great Celtic country Ireland is, it turns into a four way insult exchange. New Day FINALLY shows up and they're in Braveheart gear. Woods has Francesca's Irish cousin: Agnes the bagpipes.

Xavier goes on a long speech about fighting for pride and Big E. finally does the William Wallace speech. Goldust: "You have such a brave heart." Cesaro says he and Sheamus are in but Sheamus says no because he's the captain. Sheamus: "On behalf of this team, we're in." Anderson and Gallows say they're going to stab New Day in the back the first chance they get. Woods is upset that Gallows throws his sword down but as luck would have it, a match has been signed for tonight. This was WAY too long and didn't really even establish anything new.

New Day vs. Anderson and Gallows

Non-title and joined in progress. Kofi and Big E. take turns stomping on Anderson until Gallows comes in for a running knee to Big E.'s jaw. Now it's the bald guys stomping and a reverse 3D gets two. It's chinlock time before Big E. finally fights up and makes the hot tag to Kofi. The Boom Drop sets up a crossbody for two but Gallows breaks up the Midnight Hour. A quick Magic Killer puts Big E. away at 6:45.

Rating: D+. We waited almost an hour for the second match and the best we can get is the Tag Team Champions losing clean in less than seven minutes to a team they've already beaten multiple times? This show has been a disaster so far and this was the latest bad moment in a series of them.

R-Truth suggests that he and Goldust take a break for a bit. Therefore, their spot on the team has been traded for a time share in Puerto Rico. They look through the brochure and Goldust realizes it's not as great as it seems.

Video on Brock Lesnar being all dominant and only having one blemish on his record. He can fix that at Survivor Series.

Owens and Jericho go to Braun's dressing room to try and get him on their side. Strowman didn't answer their knock so Jericho loads up the List but Kevin talks him down. Braun says he's on his own team so Jericho puts him on the List.

Emmalina video.

Survivor Series Qualifying Match: Shining Stars vs. Golden Truth

Truth hiptosses Epico to start and drops a dancing leg. Primo comes in to take over with some choking, followed by a double dropkick for two. A few kicks puts Primo down and the hot (work with me here) tag brings in Goldust to beat up the cousins. Goldust gets in a spinebuster on Epico but Primo grabs a rollup with his feet on the ropes for the pin at 5:18.

Rating: D-. So now we have one jobber team instead of the other on the Survivor Series team. This show has been HORRIBLE so far and this is the latest match that is just killing any energy the crowd might have been able to have. Like really, who cares which of these teams is going to the

pay per view so American Alpha can suplex them in half?

Time for big talking segment #3 with Michael Cole EXPLAINING SURVIVOR SERIES before bringing out Charlotte, the captain of the women's team. After a quick speech about how Raw is going to win, here's Nia Jax, who Charlotte cuts off to talk about how Bayley is the weak link. Nia doesn't want to listen to Charlotte so here's Alicia Fox, who talks about the name of the game being survival.

Next up is Bayley, who keeps getting cut off by the fans singing songs. Charlotte tries to introduce the last woman but the Bayley songs cut her off again. After a lot of praise, here's Dana Brooke but Sasha Banks comes out before much else can be said. Sasha thinks they can't win without her and bickering ensues until Charlotte hides behind Nia, which doesn't really go along with Nia's reaction to Charlotte about five minutes earlier.

Nia Jax/Charlotte/Dana Brooke vs. Bayley/Alicia Fox/Sasha Banks

Stephanie made this during the break and thankfully Cole just tells us this instead of needing to see it happening. That's all I ask. Bayley and Nia start things off with the small one being run off, meaning Alicia tries her luck. A triple baseball slide has almost no effect on Nia and it's Banks having to avoid a charge in the corner but Nia runs her over.

Back from a break with Sasha being put in a variety of chinlocks. A rollup finally gets two on Charlotte and the kickout sends Sasha into the corner for the tag to Bayley. The series of elbows has Charlotte in trouble and everything breaks down. Nia runs everyone over and throws Alicia into the wrong corner by the head. Charlotte accidentally kicks Nia in the head though and it's a Bayley to Belly for the pin on the champ at 11:45.

Rating: C. So is Sasha on the team or is it Dana? I'm assuming Banks but it's really not clear. Either way, this was by far and away the best thing on the show so far but that's not really saying much. Bayley pinning Charlotte finally sets us up with a new challenger as they're getting close to running Charlotte vs. Sasha into the ground.

Seth implies he gets a future World Title match in exchange for being on the team. Cue Strowman to say he never liked Rollins and might break him in half tonight.

Rusev vs. Sami Zayn

The winner gets the shot at Ziggler at Survivor Series. Rusev takes him into the corner to start but gets dropkicked out to the floor for a breather. Back with Rusev in control via a chinlock as you might expect. Sami tries to fight up but gets knocked right back down by the power game. For some reason Rusev tries to go up but eats the Helluva Kick from the top to give Sami the pin at 8:40.

Rating: D+. Not much to see here but Sami getting the title shot is a nice surprise. That's going to be the fun wrestling match at the show and if Sami just happens to get his first title on the WWE roster, so be it. Rusev losing again here isn't a good sign for him though and he needs to turn it around soon.

Braun Strowman vs. Seth Rollins vs. Roman Reigns vs. Kevin Owens vs. Chris Jericho

Stephanie: "Now you all are going into the biggest match of your lives and it's so important for Raw to win. NOW GO OUT THERE AND BEAT THE HECK OUT OF EACH OTHER FOR MY AMUSEMENT!!!" Non-title, nothing on the line and Reigns comes out last. Rollins, Owens and Jericho go outside so we get Reigns staring at Strowman for a long time. Strowman is knocked to the floor where Rollins beats on him with a kendo stick. Now it's a table but Strowman makes a quick save to take us to a break.

Back with Strowman giving Reigns the reverse chokeslam and kicking Jericho out of the air. Owens tries to talk his way out of trouble before punching Strowman in the face, earning himself a clothesline. Everyone goes after Strowman and an enziguri from Rollins into the Superman Punch is finally enough to send him outside. The Sling Blade drops Owens and it's time for the Shield showdown.

That goes nowhere as Strowman has to be dealt with again, only to have the Canadians break up the TripleBomb through the table. Strowman is put

on the table and it's Jericho being powerbombed through Braun through the table. Back in and Rollins kicks Owens in the head for two, followed by the Pedigree for the same with Jericho making the save. That earns Chris a Pedigree but Owens makes a save. Reigns Superman Punches Owens....right into the pin on Jericho at 14:58.

Rating: C+. This was fine, although I'm really not sure what this changes. The World Champion winning a match has become a big surprise because he loses way too often anymore. At least the right guy won and this isn't being used to set up the new challenge. I'm still not sure why Stephanie would want to make that match but who am I to question her?

Overall Rating: D. The last hour was a big help to keep this from being one of the worst shows of all time. Those first two hours were nothing short of a disaster though as there was nothing interesting and it was clear that WWE wasn't putting in the slightest bit of effort. I have little patience when WWE just presents a show and expects us to care because it's called Monday Night Raw.

At some point you have to put in the effort to make a show work and that's not what we got here. I don't care about cruiserweight tags and the Shining Stars vs. Golden Truth, no matter how much WWE hypes them up. Really bad show, but it could have been so much worse without the women and Sami's match.

Results

Rich Swann/Sin Cara b. Brian Kendrick/Noam Dar – Rolling cradle to Kendrick

Anderson and Gallows b. New Day – Magic Killer to Big E.

Shining Stars b. Golden Truth – Rollup with feet on the ropes

Bayley/Sasha Banks/Alicia Fox b. Charlotte/Nia Jax/Dana Brooke – Bayley to Belly to Charlotte

Sami Zayn b. Rusev – Helluva Kick

Kevin Owens b. Roman Reigns, Seth Rollins, Chris Jericho and Braun

Strowman – Owens fell on Jericho

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>

KB's Review: Out Of Many, One

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-out-of-many-one/>

Taking a look at what Sunday's main event meant and some of the matches it replaced.

Monday Night Raw – June 3, 2002 (2016 Redo): Gross Jokes and No Punching

Monday Night Raw

Date: June 3, 2002

Location: American Airlines Arena, Dallas, Texas

Attendance: 7,800

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

We're at an interesting place here as it seems that we're gearing up for Steve Austin/Rob Van Dam vs. Eddie Guerrero/Chris Benoit though Benoit isn't quite ready to get back in the ring after his neck injury. Unfortunately the NWO is still running around and that's not good for anyone, especially the people actually on the team. Let's get to it.

Ric Flair, Arn Anderson, Benoit and Eddie are in the back with the boss saying he's got a lot to announce in the ring. If Austin shows up, Anderson is assigned with telling Austin to find him in the ring. Austin doesn't seem like the kind of guy who is going to show up and go to the boss' office but whatever. About fifteen cops follow Flair, Benoit and Eddie to the ring.

Opening sequence.

Here are Flair and the talented young'uns for the long opening chat. After a quick look back at Austin getting beaten down, Benoit gives the obvious explanation: Austin put him out for a year and it's revenge time. That's one of the few logical things I've heard on this show lately and it's such a relief. Eddie says his title was stolen from him last week and it made him feel like less of a Latino man.

Then he gave Austin a frog splash and the blood started flowing again. Flair: "You are so cool." As for tonight, Austin isn't wrestling because he's benched. That brings us Austin on the screen with an unconscious Arn Anderson. Austin (with bulging veins like I've never seen him have) wants Benoit or Eddie tonight but Flair says neither is available.

That's fine with Austin because he can just fight Flair one on one. If Austin wins, he's off the bench but if he loses, he's back on the bench. So what does Flair have to gain here? The match is made anyway but Flair says it's going to be a pure wrestling match. Austin is cool with that but has a question: what is a Nature Boy? Actually never mind as Austin has to stomp Anderson down some more and relieve himself on Arn's shirt. If this is the best they can come up with for Austin, he might as well

just walk now.

Hardcore Title: Bradshaw vs. Steven Richards

Richards is defending, neither gets an entrance and Jackie is guest referee because we're in Texas and that's going to make the fans care. Bradshaw kicks him in the face and hits a pumphandle slam before hog tying Steven. Now it's time for a saddle and a big pair of horns because IT'S TEXAS YA'LL! Some trashcan lid shots get Steven out of trouble (apparently Bradshaw sucks at knots) but the Clothesline gives Bradshaw the title. Spike Dudley tried to win the title in there too but it really didn't seem important enough to mention at the time.

Justin Credible and Crash fail at title defenses. Bradshaw winning the title might have meant something if Big Show hadn't recently pinned him in a nothing match.

Kevin Nash gives the NWO a speech when Goldust comes in, dressed as Coach (meaning in a collared Raw shirt). He wants on the team so Nash says the winner of X-Pac and Goldust can be on the team.

King of the Ring Qualifying Match: Goldust vs. X-Pac

The X-PAC SUCKS chants are out in full force early on tonight and Goldust makes the fans happy with a quick stomping. He rakes the face but X-Pac's spinwheel kick drops him. The Bronco Buster misses and Goldust hammers in some right hands to the head. Instead Goldust hits his own Bronco Buster, which would have been a much bigger deal about six years earlier. A second attempt is countered with a low blow (not a DQ due to storyline necessity) and the X-Factor sends X-Pac on in the tournament.

Rating: D. So we'll ignore the X-PAC SUCKS chants and keep the NWO going because that's what the fans want to see. In theory this is setting up Goldust and Booker teaming up to fight the power, though that's assuming you consider the NWO any kind of power in the first place. The team is at least stable (for the moment) but more than one interesting member might help them out a bit.

Video on last week's ladder match.

Rob Van Dam (who is actually shorter than Coach) thinks this will be his summer. Paul Heyman and Brock Lesnar come up to laugh at Rob, who will be Lesnar's latest victim in their tag match tonight. Lesnar going after the Intercontinental Title would be a good upgrade for him, though the booking might be a bit tricky.

Jeff Hardy plays guitar and is all depressed when Matt Hardy comes up. Matt: "What are you doing?" Jeff: "Just playing the guitar." Jeff wants more out of life and seems bored. The extreme is gone and they're hypocrites. Maybe he should take a bunch of stuff and screw up a pay per view main event. Or buy a compound and take over a bad wrestling show where he can box a kangaroo.

Flair wants more stipulations in the contract for the match with Austin (There was a contract?). Like, if he beats Austin, Steve becomes Austin's personal assistant. That's not all though: if Austin throws a single punch, he's disqualified. Austin comes in and signs without reading it. That's really, really stupid and not something Austin would do.

Women's Title: Trish Stratus vs. Terri

Trish is defending and this is a lingerie match so Lawler can freak out even more. Trish...I think misses an elbow to start and Terri isn't sure what to do so she just steps to the side. A high crossbody (actually not horrible) gets two on the champ as Lawler is basically begging for clothing to come off. Trish loads up a powerbomb and we get all the required camera shots until Trish FINALLY hits the bulldog to retain. This was actually worse than you would expect as it's clear that Terri has even less business being in a ring than most of the horrible non-wrestlers.

Post match Molly Holly comes out with brass knuckles and is nice enough to wait until Trish is ready to put up the belt like a shield. A shot to the head lays Molly out and Trish takes off her underwear to reveal a thong. What exactly that does for Trish isn't clear but this division wasn't exactly about common sense.

Arn is furious, as he should be. Benoit comes in and toilet cleaning jokes are made.

Bubba Ray Dudley/Rob Van Dam vs. Eddie Guerrero/Brock Lesnar

Eddie starts but changes places with Brock without a tag. That means a double stomping for Bubba, who walks into something like an AA. We officially start with Eddie pounding Bubba down in the corner, who comes back with that good looking side slam for two. Lesnar comes in and it's still so strange to see him in the midcard like this. Like he'd ever associate with anyone at this level today.

A DDT gets two on Brock so it's back to Rob, who is promptly powerslammed for two. Van Dam spin kicks Eddie down and it's back to Bubba for a big backdrop. Everything breaks down and Brock gets thrown with a release German suplex to scare the heck out of Heyman in a bit that shouldn't be as funny as it is.

It's too early for a table as Brock decks Bubba, setting up Eddie for a slingshot hilo into a seated Blockbuster (that's a new one). The Bubba Bomb drops Lesnar though and it's a double tag to Eddie vs. Rob with the big monkey flip sending Eddie flying. Everything breaks down (again) again and Brock misses a charge into the corner but Heyman breaks up the Five Star. Eddie comes in off the top with the frog splash for the pin.

Rating: C. This was messy as it felt like it was about three minutes too long and was spot after spot with no time to breathe. Lesnar was clearly in over his head here too as he wasn't sure where to go after he finished whatever he was doing at the time. He's young though and matches against anyone with experience will help him more than anything. Cut this down a bit and give us a little more down time and it's a better match.

Booker thinks he would be a better king than William Regal because his side won the Revolutionary War. If anyone can explain to me why Booker is stuck in a midcard heel stable without some form of "well it was all we could think of", you're smarter than I am.

We look at the Tough Enough II finale. This would be the one where there were two female winners despite almost no mention of the "one man, one woman winner" from the first season. It says a lot when the host seemed confused by the result too, though the finalists seemed to know as the second female winner was looking anxious at the reveal.

King of the Ring Qualifying Match: Booker T. vs. William Regal

Non-title. Regal takes him to the mat as you would expect, followed by a shoulder block for two. The knee trembler gets the same but Booker chops him back and gets two off the ax kick. Regal goes outside and grabs a chair and the European Title. The referee gets rid of the first but Booker uses the belt for the easy pin.

Rating: C-. Two talented hands having a match for the sake of having a match, meaning no one cared. The European Title means nothing and the NWO is just there so why should anyone care about either of these two advancing to the final eight that they only have a prayer of winning?

Booker does a Spinarooni.

Tommy Dreamer gets sick in a bucket at the thought of having to face Undertaker.

WWE World Title: Undertaker vs. Tommy Dreamer

Undertaker is defending and Dreamer brings the bucket with him because we need this gag to continue. Dreamer gets sick again so Undertaker freaks out, allowing Tommy to get in some shots to the head. A powerslam on the floor makes Dreamer sick again and this is hard to watch. Undertaker elbows him in the face a few times and a chokeslam sets up the dragon sleeper to retain.

Post match Undertaker pours the bucket on Dreamer but here's Jeff Hardy to dropkick Undertaker into the contents. I can't stand this kind of stuff and it was one of the worst things Raw has done in awhile.

Back from a break and Undertaker beats up Matt to send a message to Jeff.

Here's Kevin Nash for the big announcement: there's a new member of the NWO and it's....Shawn Michaels, giving us five members with three active wrestlers. Shawn doesn't talk or anything but the fans go nuts for his appearance.

Debra reads the contract and finds out that Flair is Austin's assistant if Austin wins.

Steve Austin vs. Ric Flair

Punches are illegal and the loser has to be the winner's personal assistant. They go to the mat to start and Austin can handle himself just fine down there, as is almost always the case. Back up and WOO is met with a middle finger. A half crab has Flair in trouble as I begin to question the logic of making your most popular wrestler work a style completely against his normal pace. It's working well enough here but how bad could this be with someone other than Austin?

They chop it out and Austin chokes off the Thesz press for a change of pace. Here's Chris Benoit and of course there's no one to count a cover off the Stunner. Since this referee is especially stupid, Eddie runs in for a low blow and frog splash. Back from a break with Austin being sent out to the floor where he backdrops Flair again.

As Austin throws more chops, JR thinks Flair told Benoit and Guerrero to come in. Ric sneaks in a right hand and Austin sells it like he's been shot. It's time to go after the knee with the Figure Four going on in a hurry. Austin turns it over for the break and Flair gets slammed off the top. Some chops and pokes to the eye don't matter much as Austin Stuns him for the fast pin.

Rating: B. Sometimes you just need two talented guys to go out and have a good match. This was a flashback for Austin as wrestled a technical style for years so it's hardly like asking him to do something he's never heard of before. Thankfully they didn't go overboard with teasing right hands and Austin threw the chops like he was supposed to. Benoit and Eddie didn't play too big of a roll either and Austin gets to one up the boss one more time.

Another Stunner and beer drinking end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. There's been a better effort made to push the strong main events lately and that's almost always going to help bail out a lackluster show. Austin is starting to get some steam back but this personal assistant thing is going to get old in a hurry. Benoit and Eddie waiting in the wings is a great thing though and Austin should be able to have great matches with both of them at the drop of a hat. Actually I

know he could with Eddie as I saw them fight at a house show a few days after this. Anyway, better show here but the midcard is still really needing some work.

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>