

Smackdown – August 30, 2016: How To Waste A Big Moment

Smackdown

Date: August 30, 2016

Location: American Airlines Center, Dallas, Texas

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, John Bradshaw Layfield, David Otunga

Much like last night, this show has a lot of potential to be something big but instead of one big match, this show is built around a few individual issues. First and foremost, we'll see the fallout from Miz's awesome shoot promo on Daniel Bryan, which some people didn't expect to see referenced on TV. There's also more of the Tag Team Title tournament and Dean Ambrose vs. Baron Corbin. Let's get to it.

We open with the full Miz vs. Daniel Bryan interview from last week's Talking Smack with Bryan calling Miz soft but Miz saying his style means he doesn't get injured and leave for six months to a year at a time. Bryan walked off and Miz went on a tirade about how the Intercontinental Title is the most important one on Smackdown because he's the one out there every night. This was GREAT and more emotion than Miz has ever shown, which makes me think his days as champion are numbered.

Shane tells Bryan that he can't do that to the talent and Bryan agrees. However, Bryan finds this ironic coming from the person having issues with Brock Lesnar.

Opening sequence.

Here's a ticked off Miz with something to say. Miz doesn't want to hear any booing because it's taken 148 days (the length of his title reign) to get the fans' attention. He's bringing prestige back to this title but people think he's soft. Yeah he wrestles a different style but it's because he's smart enough to see the big picture.

What the fans don't understand is what goes on backstage. Who do you think they call when they need someone to do a red carpet premiere or a

commercial or main event Wrestlemania and then dress up as a chicken? Miz didn't spend the first twelve years of his career wrestling in front of 50 people and people booing him for that makes them cowards. Cue Dolph Ziggler and I'm done. This was getting really interesting and it's about Dolph "RESPECT ME WHEN I'M SERIOUS AND THEN LOSE EVERY BIG MATCH OVER AND OVER AGAIN" Ziggler all over again.

Dolph says no one is going to buy what Miz says because he's never proven a thing. If Miz wants to show how tough he is, fight right now with no referees or titles on the line. Just the two of them right now. As expected, Miz teases fighting but walks off. Ziggler says Bryan was right and calls him a soft, safe coward but that's not enough to get him to fight either.

I actually felt the air go out of me when Ziggler came out. This story had the potential to actually be something fresh but instead it's the same old Ziggler that we've seen for months and have no reason to believe it's going to be anything different this time around. Ziggler is just a played out character and I wanted something fresh this time from Miz. Instead it's another Battle of Cleveland because that's what WWE thinks new and different means.

Tag Team Title Tournament First Round: Hype Bros vs. Vaudevillains

The villains takes over to start and send Ryder outside for a neckbreaker on the floor. The double teaming only lasts for a few moments before the tag brings in Rawley for his splashes. A running fist in the corner sets up the Hype Ryder to pin English at 2:53. This was exactly the kind of energetic match these two needed, even though they're likely losing in the next round.

To my shock, JBL seems to love the Hype Ryders. You would expect him to hate a team like this.

Post match the Hype Bros say they're hyped enough to win the titles.

We finally see the tournament brackets and the Usos vs. American Alpha is actually a semifinal match. That makes things a lot more interesting.

AJ Styles runs into Apollo Crews and introduces himself as the face who runs this place.

Here's AJ Styles for a chat. AJ, in the Cena headband, says he's already beaten up John Cena and now he's going to win the World Title. This brings out Apollo Crews to say Daniel Bryan has granted him a match against AJ right now. I love the fact that they just got to the point here. It was clear we were getting this match the second they ran into each other so there's no reason to waste time setting it up.

AJ Styles vs. Apollo Crews

Crews leapfrogs AJ to start and sends it outside but Crews stops to brag about a right hand. Back with AJ holding a chinlock because that's how you come back from breaks in WWE. Crews sends him into the corner and backdrops AJ outside for a moonsault from the apron. Back in and AJ's high cross body is countered into a Samoan drop (that's kind of insane) for another near fall. Not that it matters as AJ stuns him across the ropes and the Phenomenal Forearm puts Crews away at 8:15.

Rating: C+. Crews is still fun to watch but he loses a lot more often than not and really doesn't have a character to speak of. Really all I know about him is that he's an athletic freak and that's not exactly enough to carry you far. It only worked so well for Shelton Benjamin and Crews isn't that far along yet.

Earlier this week, Renee Young went to Heath Slater's trailer and met his wife for some redneck humor. As Rhino eats cheese whiz and crackers, Slater calls not being drafted an oversight. More redneck jokes ensue and Slater talks about how he's earned a contract several times now. When they win the titles, it's time to upgrade to a double wide. There's talk of the kids (outside picking up bottles and cans) but a car screeching sends the Slaters outside. Rhino just keeps calmly eating crackers. I get what they were going for here but this just isn't my kind of humor.

Here's Bray Wyatt with a message for Randy Orton. Bray isn't scared of snakes or monsters because he doesn't see Orton as anything more than a man. If Orton really hears voices, Bray hopes they're telling him to run but here's Randy in person. Randy says that a bunch of staples in his

head aren't going to change anything because being damaged is what he does. Bray calls himself the new predator and promises to cut the serpent's head off at Backlash. Orton talks about Bray seeing the scars on his body but needing to worry about the scars inside. He agrees to the match and goes inside but Bray vanishes.

Natalya/Alexa Bliss vs. Becky Lynch/Naomi

Nikki Bella is on commentary to do a commercial for Total Bellas. Naomi hurricanranas Natalya to the floor and we take an early break. Back with Naomi in trouble until a jawbreaker allows the tag off to Becky. House is cleaned and everything breaks down as Carmella comes out to brawl with Nikki. In the melee, Bliss rolls Becky up and grabs the trunks for the pin at 7:21.

Rating: D+. This division really needs some promo time. I know all of their basic characters (or what they have for characters) but I really don't know much about most of them. Almost all of them need a chance to give us a reason to care, even if it's just a quick promo during their entrances.

Video on the Headbangers. For the life of me I don't get why they were picked to come back. It's like when Greg Valentine would show up on Nitro for a one off match.

Video on Curt Hawkins.

Tag Team Title Tournament First Round: Headbangers vs. Rhino/Heath Slater

Mosh and Thrasher look exactly the same as they did in 1999. Slater gets beaten down to start and the springboard clothesline puts him on the floor. Some stomping sets up a chinlock as Otunga calls the Headbangers the last two Marilyn Manson fans. The Stage Dive (powerbomb/guillotine legdrop combo) gets two as Rhino makes the save. Rhino (with what looks like some blood on the left side of his face) drags Slater over for the tag and the Gore ends Mosh at 2:53. It might be time for Thrasher to go back to training wrestlers like he did with Big Show.

A guy in a suit named Derrick Milliman has been granted a match tonight

and issues an open challenge. Kane comes out for a chokeslam and leaves. Were they just running short on time or something? As Kane leaves, Baron Corbin comes out for the main event. Maybe that's what they're trying to set up?

Baron Corbin vs. Dean Ambrose

Non-title and AJ is on commentary. Ambrose knocks Baron to the floor to start and hits a running clothesline from the apron. Back in and Dean's bulldog is broken up and Baron pounds away with right hands. We come back from a break with Corbin holding a chinlock and getting two off a choke legsweep. Dean fights up and gets two off his clothesline before hitting the suicide dive on the floor. Back in and the Deep Six plants Dean but AJ gets in Baron's face and tells him to stay on it. Dean knocks Baron into Styles so AJ kicks Baron in the face for the DQ at 12:12.

Rating: C. Odd ending aside, this was a nice showcase for Corbin and it's a good sign to not have him get pinned here. It would be nice if they gave Corbin something to do other than torture Kalisto (Did that go anywhere yet?). It's not like they're overflowing with options at the moment and building up a big man isn't going to hurt anything.

Post match the main eventers fight until Dean hits Corbin with Dirty Deeds. AJ gets crotched and Dean seems to sympathize before bouncing the ropes up and down. Dean takes his belt and leaves AJ sitting on the top rope to end the show. I really don't like having AJ look silly like that, especially after he did something good earlier tonight.

Overall Rating: B-. This felt like an older episode of Smackdown but thankfully it was one where they actually got some stuff done. Nothing major was set up (save for making Bray vs. Orton official) but they did a good job of advancing a few angles and building towards the matches later on. That's the kind of show they needed with less than two weeks before Backlash, but I'm still not sold on this being a full on three hour pay per view.

Results

Hype Bros b. Vaudevillains – Hype Ryder to English

AJ Styles b. Apollo Crews – Phenomenal Forearm

Alexa Bliss/Natalya b. Naomi/Becky Lynch – Rollup with a handful of trunks

Rhino/Heath Slater b. Headbangers – Gore to Mosh

Baron Corbin b. Dean Ambrose via DQ when AJ Styles interfered

Smackdown – August 16, 2016: What Does That Make Dean?

Smackdown

Date: August 16, 2016

Location: Frank Erwin Center, Austin, Texas

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, David Otunga, John Bradshaw Layfield

It's the final show before Summerslam and it's time to see what the blue show has to offer. Odds are we'll be seeing a big build towards AJ Styles vs. John Cena II to go along with Smackdown World Champion Dean Ambrose and Dolph Ziggler as guests on MizTV. We'll also have another chance to see Eva Marie's in ring debut. Let's get to it.

Randy Orton signs his contract vs. Brock Lesnar but warns the bosses that the match might be short because it only takes one RKO. Heath Slater brings in a fruit basket but Bryan sees the card: "To Bob, my condolences." Slater can't believe that he's not being offered a contract so Orton eats an apple and says he has an idea. A secret alliance with Carlito?

Opening sequence.

We open with MizTV but Dean cuts off Miz's intro. Ziggler cuts off Dean's opening statement though and they go nose to nose. Miz talks about how

this is a huge fight for the title at Summerslam and even he thought Ziggler was a write off. He was a flop like WWE's version of the Ghostbuster's reboot. Again, I'd like to point out: a two time World Champion and a four time Intercontinental Champion should never be considered a flop. All Dolph cares about is winning the title on Sunday.

Miz gets cut off again as Ziggler says all he wants to do is kick Ambrose's head off (of his face that is but I think I get what Dolph meant). Ziggler wants to hear Dean say he was the final push Dolph needed to get over the top. That earns a chuckle from Dean, who says the title isn't the goal. Winning the belt is just the start because that's the day the pressure really starts. Everyone knows Dolph can't handle pressure which is why he's never grabbed the ball and scored a touchdown. HE'S A TWO TIME WORLD CHAMPION AND HE WON IT THE SAME WAY DEAN DID!

Ziggler gets serious and says Dean is going to have to give everything he has but it's not going to be enough to put Dolph away. As Dean is reaching down deep and looking for one last move BAM! Dolph lays him out with a superkick in mid sentence and says this Sunday, Dean will realize that he's that good. Ziggler's stuff was much better but this idea that Ziggler has never won the big one is ridiculous, especially coming from Ambrose. Or are they just burying the legacy of the World Heavyweight Championship and saying it doesn't mean a thing anymore?

During the break, Miz insulted Apollo Crews by calling him Apollo Creed, only to have Crews come out and beat Miz down. I had almost forgotten about that match so it's nice to get a quick something.

American Alpha/Usos/Hype Bros vs. Ascension/Vaudevillains/Breezango

Viktor and Gable start things off but Mojo tags himself in for a three point tackle. Konnor saves his partner from the Hype Rider and everything breaks down to take us to a break. Back with Ryder and Konnor reaching for tags as it's off to Jimmy vs. English. Jordan starts throwing suplexes and it's time for the parade of finishers, including a ridiculous four superkicks. Jimmy dives on most of his opponents, leaving English to take Grand Amplitude for the pin at 6:50.

Rating: D+. Well that accomplished a grand total of nothing. Wow the Usos

can throw superkicks and hit dives and American Alpha is awesome. I feel so much more confident about this new division than I did coming in when I thought the division had no depth and was basically American Alpha and a bunch of nothing teams. That's really not enough to warrant a title but I'm sure WWE would disagree.

Naomi vs. Eva Marie

Naomi's full outfit now lights up, including her hair, and she has a backpack full of glow in the dark material to throw to the crowd. It's certainly eye catching if nothing else. And Eva isn't here due to traffic issues so no match again. This is becoming the highlight of the show.

AJ Styles can't wait to see Alberto Del Rio beat up John Cena tonight but Del Rio tells him to stop living in the past.

Curt Hawkins is coming. Uh...yay.

Heath Slater vs. Randy Orton

So I guess just facing Lesnar last night doesn't count for some reason. Slater can barely walk so Orton easily takes over by hitting him in almost every body part. Orton keeps hammering away in the corner...and that's a DQ at 1:00.

Orton destroys him post match and doesn't seem to notice that he lost. The elevated DDT onto the floor sets up some German suplexes and Brock's pose. An RKO leaves Slater out cold.

The Wyatts are here.

The bosses give Slater a contract so Heath brags about how he showed no mercy. Bryan thinks that's a great name for a pay per view but Slater thinks Bryan is Mick Foley and a bigger star than Roman Reigns. Oh and Shane is Stephanie. That's enough for the boss and Shane takes the contract away but Slater keeps reading the bed he's laying on. No signing.

Erick Rowan vs. Dean Ambrose

Non-title and the Wyatts came out during the break. Of note: Bray and Randy had a staredown as Orton was leaving. Dean tries Dirty Deeds thirty seconds in but settles with a dropkick to send Rowan outside for a suicide dive. Back in and Rowan takes over with a powerslam before sending Dean into the steps. Rowan slowly stomps and pounds in the corner, only to have Dean suplex him back down.

Mauro: "WWE Champion Dean Ambrose willing to put it all on the line!" Other than the title in this match that is. Erick kicks him in the face as JBL talks about opponents not expecting Dean to drop an elbow while they're standing up. You don't expect him to do something he does in almost every match? Speaking of which, Dean hits Dirty Deeds for the pin at 4:58.

Rating: D+. That's the match you would expect from these two as Erick showed off his power but Dean did his normal stuff while JBL said stuff that doesn't make sense. I like the idea of having Dean fight midcarders though as it allows him to look good and the person he beats doesn't look bad because they lost to the champ. Everything works fine.

Post match Bray looks at Rowan's mask and walks away. Good.

Becky Lynch/Carmella vs. Alexa Bliss/Natalya

Carmella and Natalya start things off with a headscissors sending Natalya flying. We hear about Daniel Bryan making a new Women's Title despite there being a total of five female wrestlers on the roster (I'm waiting on Eva to actually wrestle to count her and get it all the way up to six.). Natalya takes Carmella down and the heels take over until a diving tag brings in Becky. Everything breaks down and Natalya collides with Becky...as Eva Marie comes out to her full entrance. This brings out Naomi for a chase to distract Natalya, setting up the Disarm-Her for the tap out at 4:15.

Rating: D. I probably shouldn't have rated it due to how long the match spent on Eva's entrance but it lets me talk about how stupid it is to have a title for this division. The entire division was involved in one match and you have a total of one former title holder in the whole thing. Becky has never won anything, Carmella and Alexa are rookies, Natalya is

the same thing she was the day she debuted, Naomi is flashy but nothing great in the ring and Eva is a comedy act.

That gives you Becky, Natalya and Naomi to do the lifting until Bayley can come and make it four women of worth in the division, at least until Alexa and Carmella are more ready. Remember when all the women were in the ring the night after Wrestlemania and it looked like something might come of it? Yeah forget all that because having enough for one great division means it's time to split it into two weak divisions.

Baron Corbin attacks Kalisto again. What did Kalisto do to deserve this kind of demotion?

Long video on Orton vs. Lesnar, which we saw a few weeks ago.

Alberto Del Rio vs. John Cena

AJ is on commentary. Feeling out process to start until a hiptoss sends Del Rio outside and he takes a breather in the crowd. Back from an early break with Del Rio hitting a shot off the top but missing a charge to crash out onto the floor. Del Rio kicks him in the face (kind of) and avoids a charge to send Cena into the buckle.

AJ and Otunga keep arguing over respect with Styles calling him a rookie. Since this is a Del Rio match and you can guess what he's doing, I have the chance to flash back to Otunga being Styles' replacement at an autograph booth at this year's Axxess. I've never seen a line clear out so fast in my life. Alberto hits a DDT for two and we take another break.

Back with Del Rio diving into a dropkick as Cena starts his comeback. The Backstabber cuts him off and gives Alberto two, followed by the corner enziguri for the same. Cena reverses the cross armbreaker into the STF but Del Rio is too close to the ropes. The low superkick sets up the cross armbreaker but Cena escapes with a powerbomb. A quick AA gives Cena the pin at 16:56.

Rating: C+. Really if you've seen these two fight once, you've seen almost every one of their matches. Del Rio isn't going to beat Cena in a regular match (certainly not at this point in his career) and it gets a

little more boring every time these two fight. Del Rio is just so dull like this and it's so boring watching him clearly not care.

AJ runs in for a Phenomenal Forearm. Styles says he's tired of hearing that the future goes through Cena and he's going to be the new face that runs this place. He goes to leave but comes back for more, allowing Cena to hit the AA. Cena isn't done though and hits a big AA through the table to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. This show had some moments but it never took off and a lot of that is due to a lack of a really compelling feud. AJ vs. Cena feels like the World Title feud while Ambrose and Ziggler are continuing to fight over who is the best wrestler from Ohio. I still can't buy into the idea that Ziggler has never won a big match when he did the exact same thing Ambrose did. If so, what does that make Dean? Throw in the tag and women's divisions that can fit into a single match and it's hard to find a reason to get excited about this show.

Results

American Alpha/Usos/Hype Bros b. Ascension/Vaudevillains/Breezango – Grand Amplitude to English

Heath Slater b. Randy Orton via DQ when Orton kept attacking in the corner

Dean Ambrose b. Erick Rowan – Dirty Deeds

Carmella/Becky Lynch b. Natalya/Alexa Bliss – Disarm-Her to Natalya

John Cena b. Alberto Del Rio – Attitude Adjustment

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Smackdown – August 9, 2016: False Hope

Smackdown

Date: August 9, 2016

Location: Rabobank Arena, Bakersfield, California

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, John Bradshaw Layfield, David Otunga

Summerslam is coming up but tonight is going to be another light show as a bunch of the roster is off on a tour of Australia. Tonight is again going to be focused on Dean Ambrose vs. Dolph Ziggler and their upcoming WWE World Title match, though there's the chance that the Wyatts will be involved as well. Let's get to it.

Randy Orton is ready to kill Brock Lesnar's legend because all it takes is one RKO to get to Viperville. Alberto Del Rio comes up and says that sounds like Disneyland so Orton offers to give him a VIP tour.

Opening sequence.

Here are Bray Wyatt and Erick Rowan to open the show. Last week Bray did NOT fall to Dolph Ziggler because he was a victim. Ziggler was desperate and in that desperation came a ram into the turnbuckle because it was the only way. You can't defeat Bray Wyatt because he is everywhere. There is no red or blue because this is him against the world.

Cue Dean Ambrose to say this is a new era because Bray is talking about how he's a victim. That sounds like a baby instead of an eater of worlds. Bray invites him into the ring but Dean is smarter than that. This brings out Ziggler who charges into the ring on his own with Dean coming in a few seconds later. Rowan is sent outside but Dolph superkicks Dean by

accident, only to eat Sister Abigail.

Post break, Ambrose yells at Zigler until the bosses come up and make the tag match. As usual I can only wonder why we need both Bryan and Shane for this segment. One of them accomplishes the same as two but we get both of them anyway.

American Alpha vs. Mike Vega/Mikey O'Shea

Before the match, Ascension, the Vaudevillains and the Hype Bros come out to watch. Alpha starts on Vega's leg, followed by the double dropkick and the Grand Amplitude for the pin at 1:11.

All four teams brawl post match with Alpha cleaning house. As they brawl, the announcers talk about the upcoming Smackdown Tag Team Titles.

Miz and Maryse are at Renee Young's interview desk and nearly crawl over her as she sends us to a video package on Miz's #1 contender Apollo Crews. Back with Miz and Maryse laying on the table with Miz calling his wife a modern day Aphrodite. That's enough for Renee as she throws it back to the arena.

Becky Lynch vs. Eva Marie

Eva gets her big over the top entrance and breaks her top on the way off the turnbuckle so again no match.

Post match Becky vents some frustration and issues an open challenge.

Becky Lynch vs. Alexa Bliss

Joined in progress with Bliss in control for a bit until Becky makes a comeback with a clothesline and the Bexploder. Now here's Eva Marie with the big voiceover doing the full entrance again, allowing Bliss to hit a choke shove and Twisted Bliss for the pin at 2:32. Bliss was fine here but I'm not wild on the Divas being more sexualized again. They did just fine and got better than ever without it but now we seem to be seeing it again.

Post match Eva calls this a shame but she'll make her debut next week.

Randy Orton vs. Alberto Del Rio

The fans chant RK0 to start and Orton takes over with some right hands in the corner. Del Rio comes back with a knee to the ribs and then stands there for a second, allowing Orton to snap him back first across the ropes. Back from a break with Orton going shoulder first into the steps and Del Rio working on an armbar.

Alberto gets the armbreaker across the top rope for a few seconds but gets crotched on top for taking too long. That means the superplex but Orton has to escape an armbreaker attempt. The elevated DDT doesn't set up the RK0 as Orton takes it outside and loads up the announcers' table instead. That takes too long as well though and Del Rio hits him in the arm with a chair for the DQ at 12:20.

Rating: C-. Would anyone notice if Del Rio was traded for a red wagon and a box of Ding Dongs? His entire character can be summed up as "Mexican heel who attacks arms" and that's not enough to carry my interest. I'm also not sure why they didn't have Orton get the clean pin here as it's not like Del Rio needs protecting. Then again they'll probably have a rematch next week because it would be asking a lot to have them come up with a new idea so soon.

Post match Orton hits the RK0 to prevent another chair shot.

Heath Slater asks Rhyno to lay down for him. Rhyno says no because he needs to impress his constituents in his Michigan State Senate district (where he really is up for election). Slater suddenly can't remember how many kids he has so Rhyno says no.

Miz arrived earlier today and met Scooby-Doo, demanding that all of his new DVDs are immediately recalled. Scooby shoves him in a van and steals Miz's car.

Heath Slater vs. Rhyno

Rhyno beats him up to start and shrugs off everything Slater can throw at him. A belly to belly gets two on Heath but he avoids a charge to send Rhyno into the buckle. That's only good for two though as Slater is

caught with his feet on the ropes, setting up the Gore to give Rhyno the pin at 3:03.

Rating: D. This was all it needed to be though I'm hoping Slater gets to keep going with this run he's on as it's quite entertaining. Rhyno is fine in the role as well as he can go out there, hit people really hard and then get pinned while keeping most of his credibility. He's a fine role player and that's all it needs to be.

We go to the Wyatts with Rowan talking about wolves being led by a sheep. Bray says Rowan has always been a good soldier (Good?) but tonight he wants Erick to be ready to give his life for the cause.

After a break the bosses are considering giving Heath a job for his fighting spirit until Slater comes in to yell at them for embarrassing him in front of his seven kids. Heath says Smackdown doesn't deserve him and storms off. They change their mind on the contract.

Carmella vs. Natalya

Natalya jumps her during the entrance and sends her throat first into the ropes. A stomping in the corner makes the orange Carmella scream and we're off to a bow and arrow. It's off to the abdominal stretch with Natalya lifting Carmella's leg to make it even worse. Nattie By Nature connects but Carmella kicks off the Sharpshooter and puts on her headscissors crossface for the tap at 4:12.

Rating: D+. Not much to this one but it's a good way to introduce Carmella. Unfortunately I really don't think she's ready for the main roster in ring level. Keeping it short here like they did with Bliss earlier makes sense though as they both need ring time. I'm still amazed that they think they have enough talent for a division when you have to count Eva and Maryse as members of the roster though. Maybe in a few months when Carmella and Alexa have developed but this is too soon.

Long video on AJ Styles vs. John Cena.

Baron Corbin attacks Kalisto for costing him the triple threat last week.

Erick Rowan/Bray Wyatt vs. Dolph Ziggler/Dean Ambrose

The Wyatts run the good guys over to start and Rowan hits a clothesline to send Dolph outside as we take a break less than ninety seconds in. Back with Dean getting the hot tag to clean house, only to spend too much time on the floor with Rowan so Bray can take him down with a big clothesline. Bray sends Dean outside again for the release Rock Bottom on the apron, only to have to escape Dirty Deeds.

Instead Dean hits a swinging neckbreaker and makes the real hot tag to Zigler. Everything breaks down and Rowan's spinning kick to the face gets two on Dolph. The Zig Zag gets the same with Bray making the save but Dean breaks up Sister Abigail. Dean's suicide dive gets tangled up in the ropes and he crashes down to the floor, leaving Rowan to eat the superkick for the pin at 10:40.

Rating: C+. It was false hope at best to imagine Bray being added to the title match and I'm ok with that. Zigler vs. Ambrose will be a fine match. Not thrilling mind you but definitely entertaining enough for a middle of the shot spot. Rowan taking the fall here was the only way to go as Bray can come back later, hopefully against the winner of the title match and no one is any worse off.

Dean gives him Dirty Deeds as a receipt for earlier in the night. A BIG YES chant ends the show.

Overall Rating: C. This was a bit better than last night's show but a lot of the improvement is due to the show being an hour shorter. It's so much better to have this show wrap up at ten instead of eleven as the show doesn't drain you nearly as much. That being said, it was still little more than a bunch of short matches with so many people off on the overseas tour. The show was completely in the middle though as an easy two hour sit but nothing that you needed to see. Things should pick up with the full roster back next week though.

Results

American Alpha b. Mike Vega/Mikey O'Shea – Grand Amplitude to Vega

Alexa Bliss b. Becky Lynch – Twisted Bliss

Randy Orton b. Alberto Del Rio via DQ when Del Rio used a chair

Rhyno b. Heath Slater – Gore

Carmella b. Natalya – Headscissors Crossface

Dean Ambrose/Dolph Ziggler b. Erick Rowan/Bray Wyatt – Superkick to Rowan

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Smackdown – August 2, 2016: Double The Problem And It Might Go Away

Smackdown

Date: August 2, 2016

Location: Bridgestone Arena, Nashville, Tennessee

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, John Bradshaw Layfield, David Otunga

Last week's show wasn't the greatest in the world and the reception has been mixed at best. That doesn't mean the show is in trouble by any means though as Raw started off great and wasn't exactly as strong last night. If nothing else we get American Alpha tonight. Let's get to it.

We open with Shane McMahon and Daniel Bryan watching the end of Raw last night with Randy Orton. Shane isn't happy because he thinks Orton has jeopardized everything but it was pretty awesome. There's a bunch of security standing by but Orton doesn't think they're necessary. The bosses walk away and run into Miz and Maryse with the former saying he's their Jason Bourne. Bryan announces a triple threat match between Baron Corbin, Apollo Creed (yes Creed) and Kalisto with the winner getting the shot at Summerslam. They keep walking and run into Dean Ambrose who says nothing of note.

Opening sequence.

Here's Ambrose to say he loves being the captain of the blue brand and he's here to stay. That brings us to Summerslam so Dean would like Dolph Ziggler to come out here right now. Ziggler started here as a male cheerleader and knows what it means to work hard to get to the top. Dean doesn't want to hear it though because people told him that he wasn't championship material and you can't pay attention to all that negativity. You can't be worried about what fans chant and what people say on the internet and stealing the show all night long.

All that matters is that Ziggler is facing him for the title at Summerslam. Ziggler goes into a story about going to his first WWE live event when he was five and then being a star at Kent State University as a walk-on. He's spent seven years being told he's too good and then not good enough and he's going to walk into Summerslam to take the title like he deserves to.

Dean leaves and there go the lights with Bray Wyatt appearing to lay out Ziggler with Sister Abigail. Bray calls him worthless and wants a match with Ziggler tonight for the #1 contendership. Putting Wyatt in the spot would make sense but I have a bad feeling that they're going with this as a way to put Ziggler over because the last six to eight years haven't accomplished that yet but having Wyatt lose would be the ticket.

Post break Ziggler tells the bosses that he wants the match.

Kalisto vs. Apollo Crews vs. Baron Corbin

Winner gets the Intercontinental Title shot at Summerslam with Miz on commentary. Everyone also now has a little tail of the tape during their entrance to make things feel a little more professional. Corbin gets double teamed to the floor to start but he's able to low bridge Crews to the floor, only to have Kalisto take Baron out with a suicide dive as we go to an early break.

Back with Corbin in control with Kalisto sends him outside. A Samoan drop gets two for Crews but Corbin comes back in with Deep Six for two of his own. Another hurricanrana attempt is countered but Corbin gets dropkicked to the floor, leaving Crews to pin Kalisto for the title shot 6:45.

Rating: C. This was barely long enough to rate with the commercial but Crews was the only option. They're not going to go heel vs. heel for the title and Kalisto is a lost cause so Crews had to get the win. It's nice that they're actually doing something with him for a change though and maybe it can actually mean they're serious about these random callups.

Post match Corbin goes after Kalisto with Crews making the save, only to eat a Skull Crushing Finale.

Becky Lynch vs. Eva Marie

Eva gets her big over the top entrance, which seems to be her new standard. Actually hang on a second as Eva is claiming a leg injury before the bell. We get a trainer brought in and there's no match. This comes off as the latest answer to "we can't have Eva wrestle live."

We go to Renee Young for an interview with Carmella but Natalya cuts them off. They get catty with each other (because that's what WWE women do) and a match is teased for later.

American Alpha vs. Vaudevillains

Gable quickly takes Gotch down to start before it's off to Jordan. That doesn't go as well so it's right back to Gable for a top rope double clothesline. A double dropkick sends the Vaudevillains to the floor and Alpha does their sliding pose. Chad gets beaten down for a few seconds before the hot tag brings in Jordan to clean house. The dropkicks and

suplexes set up Grand Amplitude to end English at 3:28.

Rating: C+. This was exactly what the debut needed to be as they kept it short but got in everything they needed to hit. These guys really are like a modern day Steiner Brothers and the high flying makes it even more entertaining. I still don't know why they're doing new Smackdown Tag Team Titles though when of the seven or so teams they have, two of them are jobbers and another is Breezango. Anyway though, Alpha looked great here.

Video on John Cena hosting the Teen Choice Awards.

Here's AJ Styles with a message for Cena but he's cut off in a hurry by Cena himself. AJ thinks he could beat Cena up but he's done that time after time and Cena just keeps sticking around. Styles doesn't like Cena making these kids delusional and taking the kids with them. You don't get dessert before dinner, you don't stay up late with school the next day and you don't get a trophy for participation. You're rewarded for winning like AJ did when he beat John Cena last time.

Cena does his standard "they make up their own minds about me" but AJ cuts him off again to rant about his win again. Styles wants to know why Cena is still here with all that stuff he has going on outside of WWE. As usual, it's because Cena loves this place. He loves doing the ESPYs and the Teen Choice Awards because people always ask him when he's leaving WWE. That gives him another chance to say the WWE is his home and he's never leaving.

Tomorrow when AJ is kicking it on his day off, Cena will be in New York on the Late Show representing WWE. All AJ has to do is be a great wrestler who can get up and leave when he needs to. There is no other place for Cena so what the heck is AJ doing here? AJ mockingly applauds him and issues the challenge for Summerslam, which Cena immediately accepts. Cena was great as usual but I'm really not sure what AJ's issue was here and that's not good.

Randy Orton vs. Fandango

Security is around ringside. The fans already want an RKO but get Orton working on the leg but walking into a dropkick instead. We're already in

a chinlock as JBL incorrectly says Orton's father was in the main event of the first Wrestlemania (being in the corner for doesn't mean being in the match). Breeze tries to come in and eats a powerslam, leaving Fandango to take the elevated DDT. There's the RK0 but cue Brock to come in for the F5 and the DQ at 3:05.

Rating: D. Normally I wouldn't rate this when the last fifteen seconds of the match were Brock coming out to watch and the F5 but it's not like it matters that much. Thank goodness they can use a team like Breezango as cannon fodder like this. But hey, we should totally buy them as title contenders soon after this.

During the break, Lesnar was forced to leave the arena.

Heath Slater comes in to see Daniel Bryan and asks for a contract. Bryan gives Slater a match next week and if he wins, he gets a job. Slater thinks he's facing Jumping Marty Lunde (Arn Anderson's real name) but gets Gored by Rhyno instead.

Ambrose says nothing surprises him.

Carmella vs. Natalya

And again no match with Natalya jumping Carmella from behind and putting on a Sharpshooter.

The bosses try to talk Ziggler out of the match and he says screw them.

Bray Wyatt vs. Dolph Ziggler

Ziggler hits a dropkick and Fameasser for two less than ten seconds in. The threat of a superkick sends Bray outside and he's hobbling on his previously injured leg. Back from a break with Bray hitting a superplex and putting on a cravate. Bray's leg seems fine as Ziggler comes back with clotheslines and a neckbreaker. The superkick is blocked though and Bray gets two off the backsplash.

Bray goes to pull off the turnbuckle pad but gets caught with a Zig Zag for a close two. Even Dean is stunned off the kickout. Sister Abigail is countered into a rollup for two but the release Rock Bottom gets two on

Dolph. Back up and Bray is sent face first into the exposed buckle (as usual, right in front of the referee because they're worthless in WWE), followed by a superkick for the title shot at 11:34.

Rating: B. The false finishes were really good here but that lack of a DQ makes the match look so faked. At least try to make it clear that the referee isn't looking or something because it makes them look incompetent. Speaking of incompetent, we're really sticking with Ziggler vs. Ambrose at Summerslam? That's what they're going with? I mean, I know it's not a popular move and the match won't be that great but that's what we're getting because WWE decided it.

Post match Erick Rowan comes out to beat down Ziggler. Ambrose's save attempt doesn't work and it's Sister Abigail on Dolph to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. I liked it better than last week but it's really clear that adding more titles would be a horrible decision right now as the depth just isn't there. The depth was barely there for one set of titles so the solution is clearly to double everything. That ending gives me hope that we won't be seeing just Ambrose vs. Ziggler at Summerslam. The worst part is the match will be at least decent but there's just no WOW factor to it and that's a really bad thing for Smackdown's future.

Results

Apollo Crews b. Kalisto and Baron Corbin – Rollup to Kalisto

American Alpha b. Vaudevillains – Grand Amplitude to English

Randy Orton b. Fandango via DQ when Brock Lesnar interfered

Dolph Ziggler b. Bray Wyatt – Superkick

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New Column: Reviewing the Reviews

Bringing this one out of mothballs, much like Ziggler as a credible main eventer.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-reviewing-the-review/>

Smackdown – July 26, 2016: The Big Problem

Smackdown

Date: July 26, 2016

Location: First Niagara Center, Buffalo, New York

Commentators: David Otunga, Mauro Ranallo, John Bradshaw Layfield

We're into the new era of Smackdown now and it should be interesting to see where they go now that they're all on their own. Given who they have on the roster, there's a chance we'll have to get some new titles or at the very least some new stars to challenge for the titles that already exist. Let's get to it.

Daniel Bryan and Shane McMahon are in the back and say this new era is

all about us as they walk into the arena.

Just like Raw, there's a new intro accompanied by new music.

The roster is around the ring with the bosses inside. Shane talks about how we have the only WWE Champion here so it's time to find a new #1 contender. Dean Ambrose comes out to say he's ready for a new challenge and has Smackdown Live fever. Tonight there's going to be a Six Pack Challenge for the right to face Ambrose at Summerslam. Included in that match will be:

John Cena

Bray Wyatt

Dolph Ziggler

AJ Styles

Baron Corbin

That leaves one spot open so let's have a battle royal right now for that final position.

Battle Royal

Kane, Tyler Breeze, Fandango, Apollo Crews, Konnor, Viktor, Simon Gotch, Aiden English, Kalisto, Zack Ryder, Jey Uso, Jimmy Uso, Erick Rowan, Alberto Del Rio, Mojo Rawley

The camera has a slightly different camera angle, starting from over the cover and down a bit lower instead of the stationary shot. Kane throws out Gotch and clotheslines Ascension out to start clearing out the ring early on. Breezango gets together to eliminate Jey Uso and we take a break.

Back with Rowan and English having been eliminated, leaving us Breeze, Fandango, Kane, Del Rio, Crews, Kalisto and Ryder. I didn't bother listing Rawley as he was eliminated a few seconds after we came back. A double clothesline gets rid of Del Rio and Kane throws out Breezango to get us down to four. Everyone starts taking shots at Kane but Crews seems

to injure his knee on a standing shooting star.

All four are down for a bit until thankfully Crews gets up fine. A clothesline sends Ryder to the apron and Kalisto hits Salida Del Sol on Crews. Ryder goes up for the Elbro but slips off, only to have Kane do the dramatic sit up. Kane dumps Kalisto with ease and Ryder follows him out, leaving Kane and Crews. Apollo backflips out of a chokeslam and low bridges Kane out for the win at 12:45.

Rating: C. The ending really does this match a lot of good and teasing Kane winning made it even better. Above all else though they kept this moving very quickly and didn't overstay the welcome as so many battle royals do. Crews isn't likely going to win the Six Pack Challenge but it's a nice win to get him noticed.

Crews says he won't celebrate until he wins the main event.

Shelton Benjamin is coming back.

Dolph Ziggler is ready to break through the glass ceiling. You can't be a multiple time World Champion and still complain about the glass ceiling.

Natalya vs. Becky Lynch

Battleground rematch because those are still a thing in the new era. Becky takes her to the mat for a bit but gets run over by a shoulder. Natalya flips to her feet and slams Becky off the top as we take an early break. Back with Becky jawbreaking her way out of a chinlock and getting two off a guillotine legdrop. The Disarm-Her is broken up and Nattie By Nature gets two. The slow motion Sharpshooter that is only designed to be countered is countered into the Disarm-Her to make Natalya tap at 10:21.

Rating: C-. I don't know any other way to put this but Natalya is really dull. She wrestles the exact same match as a heel that she wrestled as a face and there's really no motivation for her other than something that happened a few weeks ago and now she's a villain basically in name only. It doesn't help that these two don't have the best chemistry, especially when they're the best in the Smackdown division.

Post match Becky says you can call her Becky Balboa (No.) but is

interrupted by Alexa Bliss who says this is what the new era looks like. This is followed by the returning Naomi, Carmella (almost no reaction) and Eva Marie, who comes out with a voiceover like a movie trailer, listing off every possible positive attribute about herself. It's really corny but I actually liked it, even though Eva didn't say anything.

Baron Corbin says he'll win.

It's time for MizTV with special guest....The Miz. He brags about how awesome he is (well duh) until Randy Orton interrupts. Orton thought Miz was talking about him with all those accolades and agrees that Miz is awesome. Miz brings up the upcoming Brock match and Orton is ready to take Lesnar to Suplex City because he'll be taking Brock to Viperville. Orton suggests a match against Miz tonight and he'll even make it non-title so Maryse accepts for her husband.

Randy Orton vs. The Miz

Non-title. They're quickly on the floor with Miz stomping Orton down, throwing him back inside, and then whipping him into the steps. Back in and the RKO knocks Miz silly for no cover. Instead Orton stares at the entrance and slowly gets up before slapping the ropes a bit. Miz has been down for about two minutes before getting up to take a second RKO for the pin at 4:53.

Rating: F. Oh screw you WWE. Smackdown has almost nothing and you have Miz lose to one move with almost half the match spent on him standing up after the RKO. You know who would have been perfect for this spot? Kane. He's established, he's tough, he loses NOTHING by taking the loss and it makes Orton look like he can beat a monster. This was stupid and one of the things that ticks me off more than any other nonsense WWE pulls.

Video on American Alpha. They're here next week. Well I mean they were here earlier but we don't have time for the hottest tag team act in a long time. I mean, aside from New Day of course.

A jobber is in the ring for a match when Heath Slater comes in and knocks him out. Slater isn't happy that he wasn't drafted to either show and wants to be in the main event. He starts a SIGN HEATH SLATER chant and

the fans actually go along with it. Cue Shane McMahon to say Slater needs to send in his resume. Slater says his resume would say he was the brains behind the Nexus, the Corre (there's a name I never thought I'd hear again) and the Social Outcasts. As Slater rants, Rhyno of all people sneaks up behind him for a Gore.

AJ thinks Smackdown is against him because he's too good. Why else wouldn't the Club have been drafted together and why else would he have to fight five guys at once?

Bray Wyatt says it all revolves around him and tonight he'll have the whole world in his hands.

John Cena vs. AJ Styles vs. Apollo Crews vs. Bray Wyatt vs. Baron Corbin vs. Dolph Ziggler

One fall to a finish, no tags and the winner gets a shot at Ambrose at Summerslam. We take an early break and come back with Bray and AJ double teaming Crews with the other three down on the floor. That lasts about as long as you would expect it to as Bray takes AJ's head off with a clothesline, only to be dropkicked down by Ziggler. AJ adds a springboard 450 with Cena diving back in for the save. Crews comes back in with rolling German suplexes on AJ, only to walk into an STO of all things from Corbin. Baron throws on a chinlock, which really shouldn't be seen in a six way match.

We go to another break and come back with stereo Towers of Doom (because that's how wrestling works) and Corbin getting two off Deep Six to Crews. Apollo's toss powerbomb gets two with Bray pulling the referee out. The Zig Zag should finish Bray but there's no referee. Cena finally remembers he's in this match and AA's Ziggler and AJ with the latter getting two.

Crews and Wyatt take AA's as well but Corbin takes a bit more to get up and elbows his way out. And scratch that as the second attempt works, only to have AJ springboard in with the forearm. Styles turns right into a superkick though and Ziggler gets the very surprising pin at 16:12.

Rating: C+. ZIGGLER??? Of all the people you have here you pick ZIGGLER??? I mean I know this lets you have Styles vs. Cena and....well

that's about it actually. Yeah Smackdown needs new stars but the best they can do is having Dolph Ziggler's main event push brought out of mothballs? I don't hate it but I'm going to need to see a lot more of this before I accept Ziggler as a top challenger.

Shane, Bryan and Ambrose come out and say nothing to fill in the last four minutes of the show.

Overall Rating: C. This show's main issue is it followed last night's great Raw. It's certainly not a bad show and they did some good things (Crews getting a push, setting up the title match, the women showing up) but on the other hand you have Orton's completely needless destruction of Miz, Heath Slater and Rhyno instead of American Alpha (which at least gives you something to look forward to next week so it's not all bad. This show set left a lot to be desired but it's certainly not terrible. The problem is Smackdown didn't look great in the first place and now those suspicions are even more confirmed.

Results

Apollo Crews won a battle royal last eliminating Kane

Becky Lynch b. Natalya – Disarm-Her

Randy Orton b. The Miz – RKO

Dolph Ziggler b. AJ Styles, Apollo Crews, John Cena, Bray Wyatt and Baron Corbin – Superkick to Styles

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Monday Night Raw – July 18, 2016: The Lame Duck Go Home Game Changing Show (Updated)

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 18, 2016

Location: Dunkin' Donuts Center, Providence, Rhode Island

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, John Bradshaw Layfield

This is a unique show as it's kind of a big night but also kind of a lame duck show while also being the go home show for a pay per view. The Draft is tomorrow night but there's also a World Title match as champion Dean Ambrose defends against Seth Rollins. The show is also going to open with the announcement of the new General Managers for both shows. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here are Shane and Stephanie to open things up. They have their standard bickering that makes award show presenters seem like Bogart and Bergman before arguing over testicles vs. lady balls. Stephanie's big announcement: there's going to be a new Cruiserweight division on Raw. Shane mentions his General Manager and the YES chants begin. That's cut off just as quickly though as Stephanie Raw's General Manager: Mick Foley. I wouldn't have bet on that one but I'd be shocked if he's still around by TLC.

After Stephanie awkwardly dances to his music. Foley compares the feeling here to the Attitude Era because IT'S THE GREATEST THING EVER and feels like the MONDAY NIGHT WARS ALL OVER AGAIN BABY! Stephanie calling him made the little embers turned into a fire. He's ready to bring Raw to new heights and all that jazz.

Shane brings out his own General Manager with the worst kept secret in wrestling this year: Daniel Bryan. Daniel won't shake Stephanie's hand before he talks about how much he missed the people. Naturally Stephanie cuts him off to suggest he pander to the fans. See she doesn't get it because they've never cheered for her. Stephanie: "They did once!"

Bryan talks about how he heard Shane's ideas for a show where wrestlers are put first and he wanted to come back. When he beat HHH at Wrestlemania XXX (Stephanie: "Technicality.") and won the WWE World Title, he and the fans did that together. Stephanie gets in her B+ jokes and Shane says Stephanie can only stay relevant by marrying a WWE superstar. One last YES chant takes us out.

Chris Jericho/Kevin Owens vs. Sami Zayn/Cesaro

Cesaro gutwrenches Jericho to start before it's off to Sami so things can speed up a bit. An Owens distraction lets Jericho get in a shot though and we take a break. Back with Jericho still in control over Sami and sending him out to the floor. Sami gets in a few shots of his own though and the hot tag brings in Cesaro.

That means it's time for the uppercut train and the springboard spinning uppercut for two on Jericho. Owens and Sami come in off the double tags but Jericho breaks up the Helluva Kick. Cesaro's high cross body gets two on Chris and the Swing makes it even worse. Everything breaks down and Sami tornado DDTs Owens before small packaging Jericho for the pin at 12:02.

Rating: C. In case you didn't get enough of these guys during the Money in the Bank build. I love Sami getting a pin here though it should be interesting to see what happens with all four of these guys tomorrow night. Jericho and Cesaro not having matches on Sunday doesn't say much for either of them but that's their norm all around.

Golden Truth, Titus O'Neil and Jack Swagger try to get on Daniel Bryan's good side until Stephanie interrupts. They insult each other (with jabs about Daniel and Brie planting peaches) for a bit until Daniel says she ruined Raw.

Alberto Del Rio vs. Darren Young

Miz is on commentary. Del Rio sends him into the corner to start and works on the arm as Miz gets in his second plug for Bob Backlund's book. Young comes back with a backdrop and atomic drop as we flash back to the 70s. A Miz distraction earns himself a forearm to the face, allowing Darren to roll up Del Rio (with a Backlund style bridge) for the pin at 2:33.

It's time for a twelve man tag but Cena comes out first and says it's an interesting time in WWE with Battleground being the icing on the cake. The Club is going to try to beat up Cena on Sunday but he has the Certified G's. Enzo says the term "don't take this the wrong way" has a 0% success rate so don't take this the wrong way but the Club is like a bunch of herbs.

Without ugliness in the world there can be no beauty so thanks for your sacrifice Gallows. AJ has a haircut like a soccer mom and Anderson is as generic as Times New Roman. Cena thinks Enzo is just a catchphrase machine but Cass says that's what he does. That's what makes them the best trio in the world like Nirvana, Destiny's Child or the Wu Tang Clan.

Enzo: "How you doin?" Cena: "I don't know how I'm doing!" He thinks they need to get serious but the Club cuts off the S-A-W-F-T line. AJ accuses them of meeting a few weeks ago over a bowl of candy at catering and thinks they can beat up everyone on the team tonight. Cue New Day to talk about going to the Wyatts' compound but AJ makes fun of Woods for being scared.

That goes nowhere so New Day explains How You Doin to Cena. Naturally this turns into a Pokemon Go reference with Woods listing off the ones he's captured but Cena cuts him off, only to be cut off with a NEW DAY ROCKS chant. This brings out the Wyatts as it turns out we actually have a match to get to.

John Cena/Enzo Amore/Big Cass/New Day vs. The Club/Wyatt Family

This is joined in progress after a break with Gallows coming in to shoulder Cena down. That brings in Big E. for a power showdown, only to

have a little gyrating first. Now we get Strowman coming in to run Big E. over but Enzo tags himself in. Woods plays some trombone and Enzo bounces off Strowman so it's time for Cass to try his luck. A shove to Cena triggers a huge brawl until it's back to Strowman and Cass with the big boot staggering Braun. Kofi tries to dive in but gets slammed down by Braun as we take a break.

While we're on commercial, it deserves to be pointed out how good of a job they've done with Cass. Him staring down Strowman felt more like a big deal than anytime Lesnar did it and I actually bought Cass as a threat to hurt him. That's very impressive and a great sign for him to come.

Back with Bray charging into Kofi's pendulum kick and a diving tag to bring in Cena. The finishing sequence is initiated but Bray brings the spider walk out of mothballs to shut him down. Rowan grabs a chinlock and the heels start taking turns on Cena. Gallows misses a splash and we take another break.

We come back again with Bray missing his backplash to Cena, allowing the hot tag to Cass. Everything breaks down again and New Day cleans house on the Wyatts. Woods hits a big flip dive to take them all out but Gallows breaks up Bada Book Shakalacka. New Day and the Wyatts fight up the ramp, leaving Enzo to clothesline Cena by mistake. The Styles Clash ends Amore at 18:58.

Rating: B+. This is even more impressive when you consider how many people had to be incorporated here. The ending really pushes the idea that Cena/Enzo/Cass don't know each other well enough to fight off a well oiled machine like the Club which is a really logical point to make. New Day vs. Wyatts could be a lot of fun and this was a nice preview. Really good stuff here with the pre-match promo being just as great.

Earlier today, Seth Rollins was in the empty arena (well save for the cameramen) to talk about how they came through so many stands to fight. He was the brilliant mind and kept Ambrose around to take the beatings and Reigns around to dish them out. After Sunday, Reigns will never be the same again. Ambrose on the other hand is a coward who is running out

of places to hide. This Sunday, Rollins will prove he was always the man.

We recap the opening segment.

Shane comes up to Foley in the back and suggests that Stephanie just hired him because he'll connect with the fans while being manipulated. Foley appreciates the caring but thinks Stephanie has fire and drive. This would be another beloved face trying to put Stephanie over.

Baron Corbin vs. Sin Cara

This is Cara's first match after the Lucha Dragons officially split. Corbin sends him into the corner to start but gets kicked away. A springboard elbow to the jaw staggers him but End of Days gives Baron the pin at 1:15.

Kalisto comes out for the post match save but gets beaten down as well.

Charlotte/Dana Brooke vs. Becky Lynch/Sasha Banks

Dana gets taken into the corner to start and it's time for Becky's early armbar. The spinning legdrop gets two on Dana but here's Natalya to attack Lynch for the DQ at 2:22.

Sasha gets beaten down post match.

Rusev/Sheamus vs. Dolph Ziggler/Zack Ryder

Sheamus headlocks Ryder down to start and cuts off his comeback by hitting him in the face a few times. Rusev sends him into the barricade and it's back to Sheamus for the slow beating. Sheamus won't tag for some reason though and we hit the chinlock. Ryder dropkicks him down and makes the hot tag off to Ziggler as everything breaks down. Rusev kicks Ziggler in the back and it's the Accolade for the submission at 3:45.

Rating: D+. Just a quick way to show off the idea that Rusev is awesome because we didn't know that yet. Ryder needed a win here after that mess last week against Sheamus. Ryder is going to get destroyed on Sunday and I'm not sure where things go after that. Sheamus on the other hand continues to float, just like Ziggler. And no WWE, that's not a hint

about a bonus match for Sunday.

Video on Randy Orton.

Video on Cena hosting the ESPYs.

Daniel suggests a peace treaty with Mick Foley because they're so much alike. Foley has no issue with Bryan but the battle is on.

Raw World Title: Dean Ambrose vs. Seth Rollins

Rollins is challenging and all the bosses are at ringside. Dean headlocks him to start and Seth bails out to the floor. The champ sends him into the barricade and we take a break. Back with Seth in control and putting on a chinlock. A hard right hand gives Seth some near falls before both try cross bodies at the same time. Dean fights up first and hammers on Seth a bit, including a forearm to put him on the floor.

There's a big suicide dive but Rollins powerbombs him into the barricade. Back in and a frog splash gets two as we take another break. Back with Seth still in control and hitting his springboard knee to the head. Another frog splash misses though and Dean has an opening. It sounds like the fans are cheering for Rollins here.

Dirty Deeds gets two with Rollins putting his foot on the ropes. Seth rolls outside but comes right back in and counters the top rope clothesline into the Pedigree for two. With nothing else working, Seth loads up a superplex but Dean ties up the legs and it's a double pin at 24:18.

Rating: B+. More really good stuff from these two but the ending comes off as a cheap way to have Sunday's title match be for the vacant title. You knew they weren't sticking with Ambrose on top for long because he's not the "star" kind of guy and that's the excuse they're sticking with. I mean, Rollins may be a ratings disaster but he's a STAR ratings disaster. Really good match here though and a big feeling title match.

Stephanie (of course) declares Rollins the new champion and Shane doesn't say anything to close the show. You know you'll see more of this on Sunday.

Overall Rating: A-. Like I said at the beginning, this was a very odd show without anything actually mattering until the ending but even that was odd. I'm sure there's going to be an update tomorrow night but this comes off as a way to either set up a new World Title or to just give the belt back to Reigns like nothing ever happened. There are two great wrestling matches on here though and they were more than enough to make this show awesome, questionable ending aside.

So apparently after the show went off the air, a bonus clip aired on the Network where Ambrose was declared champion because it was a screwy finish. You know, because THREE HOURS AND EIGHT MINUTES isn't enough content.

Results

Sami Zayn/Cesaro b. Kevin Owens/Chris Jericho – Small package to Jericho

Darren Young b. Alberto Del Rio – Rollup

Wyatt Family/The Club b. Enzo Amore/Big Cass/John Cena/New Day – Styles Clash to Amore

Baron Corbin b. Sin Cara – End of Days

Sasha Banks/Becky Lynch b. Charlotte/Dana Brooke via DQ when Natalya interfered

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Smackdown – July 7, 2016: Pre-Draft Momentum

Smackdown

Date: July 7, 2016

Location: Huntington Center, Toledo, Ohio

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, Jerry Lawler, Byron Saxton

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

The Club is conferencing.

Chris Jericho is trying to find his blue scarf.

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

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

Opening sequence.

Here's Dean Ambrose to say he wants to try his hand as a ring announcer because he could be a taller Howard Finkel.

Jey Uso vs. Seth Rollins

Seth is apparently from a place where he didn't get enough hugs as a child. That's sad. Jey takes over with an early armbar as the fans (or at least the canned versions) are behind the Samoan. Seth gets two off a

backbreaker as Dean plugs his new t-shirt and the Seth Rollins ice cream bars but apparently they don't taste very good. A high crossbody gets two on Rollins and there's a suicide dive to take Rollins out again. Dean says that's five minutes (not quite) and asks Seth if it's time to go to a commercial.

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

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

Dean: "The winner of the match, the human equivalent of a root canal."
Seth bails at the threat of a fight so Ambrose can't raise his hand.
Dean: "I'll just raise this instead." And he holds up the title.

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

Zack Ryder vs. Sheamus

Ryder has a new rock version of his music and it's actually working for me. Sheamus pounds him down with forearms and clotheslines to start, followed by the forearms to the chest. A slam onto the apron makes things even worse but Ryder kicks him in the face and comes back with more forearms. That just earns him an Irish Curse before Sheamus loads up a superplex. Ryder knocks him off and drops the Elbro for the completely clean pin at 2:43. I know Sheamus isn't what he used to be but this is a big drop off. At least Ryder is getting a push though and that's a good thing.

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

Baron Corbin video.

Rusev accepts the challenge.

Becky Lynch vs. Natalya

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

We recap the Wyatt Family and New Day from Monday.

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

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

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

AJ Styles vs. Enzo Amore

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

Rating: C-. This was fine despite the ending not being the biggest

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

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

The Miz vs. Kalisto

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

Rating: D+. So much for the Kalisto experiment as he's gone from defending the US Title at Wrestlemania to losing a match started over potato salad. He's just the latest victim of the writers throwing a toy out of the crib and it's still pretty sad to see. They had something there but so much for that because it's time to go with....well nothing actually.

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

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

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

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

Sami Zayn vs. Chris Jericho

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

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

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

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

Jericho lays Sami out and Owens comes in for a Pop Up Powerbomb to leave

Sami laying as the show ends.

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

Results

Seth Rollins b. Jey Uso – Pedigree

Zack Ryder b. Sheamus – Elbro

AJ Styles b. Enzo Amore – Styles Clash

Miz b. Kalisto – Skull Crushing Finale

Sami Zayn b. Chris Jericho – Rollup

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Smackdown – June 16, 2016: Happy Birthday Mom

Smackdown

Date: June 16, 2016

Location: Mississippi Coast Coliseum, Biloxi, Mississippi

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, Jerry Lawler, Byron Saxton

It's the final show before Money in the Bank so just set up the big six man main event already. This week's Raw had some strong story building moments for the coming pay per view but the go home Smackdowns can be all over the place quality wise. Hopefully they don't just bore us with nothing matches that don't fire up the fans for Sunday. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

We open with Chris Jericho in the ring for the Highlight Reel. Jericho says quiet about seventeen times and unveils the new Jeritron 6500 and the new \$2000 carpet. He promises to win Money in the Bank because he created it ("You're welcome."). Tonight his guest is Dean Ambrose, even though Jericho hates him. Dean comes out with a cup of coffee but first we have to look at the clip of the Ambrose Asylum on Monday. Jericho isn't cool with the coffee because this carpet is made of Serengeti yak hair. Dean's coffee is like the Gift of Jericho man. He's just drinking it in.

Jericho says Dean won't be Shawn Michaels tonight and shove his head through the screen so Dean's Jeritron privileges are revoked. Actually everyone has so raise the screen. Chris brings up the thumbtacks and says the holes don't combine to equal the hole left in Dean's spirit by never being World Heavyweight Champion. Dean isn't winning the briefcase or the title on Sunday but here's Kevin Owens to interrupt. That case is HIS and he might cash in at any time.

Cue Del Rio to speak Spanish and say no one understands how this works except for him but here's Cesaro to interrupt as well. Nothing is said before Sami cuts them off and announces tonight's six man, triggering an

argument with Cesaro over the interruption. Jericho calls them stupid idiots and says they'll win tonight so Dean pours the coffee on the carpet to start the brawl.

Kofi Kingston vs. Aiden English vs. Luke Gallows vs. Big Cass

Enzo's entrance is cut off by New Day and that's not cool. I guess New Day are haters now? Other than Kofi riding in on Big E.'s shoulders, there's no special entrance from New Day. Enzo and Woods are sitting in on commentary. Gallows powerbombs Kofi to start but Cass clotheslines Luke down and knocks Aiden outside as well. The Club gets Cass to the floor and sends him into the barricade as the guest commentators both get up and we take a break.

Back with Aiden and Gallows taking turns beating on Kofi before naturally fighting over who gets the pin. Cass breaks up what looks like a Doomsday Device with big boots and clotheslines all around. Gotch tries to interfere but Gallows pulls Cass to the floor. Kingston dives off the top to take out Gallows and Cass, followed by Big E. running over Gotch. Back inside it's Kofi hitting Trouble in Paradise for the pin on English at 7:44.

Rating: C. This didn't have time to go anywhere and Kofi winning isn't exactly a great sign for New Day's reign going forward. The Club winning the titles makes the most sense which is probably why the Vaudevillains will win the titles. I'm really hoping they don't split up New Day or Enzo/Cass in the Draft but leave it to WWE to go with the worst possible choices.

Natalya and Becky Lynch are ready for their tag match on Sunday and insist that the truth is out there: Charlotte can't win a match on her own. Dana and Charlotte come in so bickering can ensue.

Baron Corbin vs. Zack Ryder

Dolph Ziggler is on commentary. Corbin chokes to start but goes outside to yell at Ziggler, allowing Ryder to get in a dropkick off the apron. The Broski Boot gets two (on Baron if that wasn't clear) but End of Days wraps Ryder up at 1:46.

Corbin walks away from a fight with Ziggler post match.

Rusev vs. Kalisto

Non-title and Lana does Rusev's intro. They show Rusev beating Titus O'Neal down on Raw to basically guarantee the post match shenanigans. Kalisto gets jumped during the entrances and put in the Accolade. No match.

Sin Cara tries to make a save and gets the same treatment. Titus runs in for the save and cleans house.

Recap of the Styles vs. Cena contract signing.

AJ Styles says he'll prove he can win on his own this Sunday. New Day comes in to laugh at AJ's lack of style and a match is set up between Woods vs. Styles.

Xavier Woods vs. AJ Styles

No seconds at ringside. Feeling out process to start with AJ sending Woods off the ropes and saying Xavier can't see him. AJ cranks on a wristlock and says he does this better than Cena. Woods comes back with a strike to the forehead, only to have AJ chop block him down. AJ takes his time to let the referee check on Woods, who catches AJ with a jumping knee to the head. The Pele drops Woods for two though and it's off to the chinlock.

Woods finally gets up and grabs an O'Connor Roll for two, only to get caught in a backbreaker. We take a break and come back with Xavier punching his way out of a superplex and getting two off a high cross body. A reverse suplex drops Styles and a discus forearm puts him on the floor. Woods follows him out with a big flip dive before walking across the top rope for a LONG elbow drop and a near fall. AJ escapes a superplex and scores with the Phenomenal Forearm setting up the Calf Crusher (Styles: "THIS IS WHAT I'M GOING TO DO TO JOHN CENA!") for the tap out at 12:21.

Rating: B-. Woods can go when he wants to but most of the time he's just there for comic relief. Granted it might have helped that the match was

against AJ Styles and Woods only had to do the basics to get through this one. The ending made perfect sense as they set up the injury at the beginning and then paid it off at the end. Why is that so complicated?

Post match AJ says that's just a taste of what Cena is getting when his time is up.

This week's lesson with Bob Backlund is about Darren Young reading more. Bob says they're like dumbbells for the brain but Backlund doesn't like the idea of Darren taking advice from anyone, including Backlund himself. That's because Backlund doesn't give advice. Instead he gives orders, like 100 high knees right now.

Natalya vs. Charlotte

Non-title with Becky and Dana at ringside. Charlotte takes it to the mat with a headlock which is countered into a headscissors. The hold is quickly broken but Natalya breaks up the strut. Charlotte gets caught in a surfboard but it's too early for the Sharpshooter. Natalya will have none of this waiting on the floor and takes Charlotte out with a baseball slide. Dana offers a distraction though, allowing Charlotte to kick Natalya in the face to take over. The advantage doesn't last long though as Natalya throws her over with a German suplex for two.

Nattie By Nature gets two as the announcers talk about video games. Lawler: "The only video game you should be talking about is WWE2K16." That's some veteran shilling. Charlotte goes up for the moonsault but gets caught in a sitout powerbomb for two, only to have Dana hold up the title as a distraction. Becky and Dana slug it out and Charlotte chop blocks Natalya, setting up the Figure Eight for the submission at 5:48.

Rating: C+. I'm not sure how this is supposed to help set up Sunday but I'm not really sure why these women are still fighting. You would think Natalya losing like five matches to Charlotte would be enough to end the feud but let's just keep it going anyway. It's not like there's anyone else around to challenge for the title. One last note: I'd like to point out that the loss to Paige on Monday seems to mean absolutely nothing, barring a surprise Paige title shot coming up after Money in the Bank.

Long video on Roman vs. Rollins.

Dean Ambrose/Sami Zayn/Cesaro vs. Alberto Del Rio/Chris Jericho/Kevin Owens

It's a big brawl to start until Del Rio and Cesaro are left alone in the ring. Alberto misses the corner enziguri but still lands on Cesaro's back. That means it's time for the uppercut train (and Mauro's uppercut party line) before Del Rio avoids the Codebreaker to the arm. Cesaro can't hook the Swing though and has to settle for a flip dive off the apron. The running European uppercut sends Jericho into the timekeeper's area.

Del Rio gets one as well and Cesaro stays on him with a high cross body for two. Cesaro Swings all three heels with Jericho getting the last one and a Sharpshooter to go with it. Jericho taps but isn't legal, allowing Del Rio to superkick Cesaro down for two as we take a break. Back with Jericho posing over a fallen Cesaro before handing it off to Owens for a stomping in the corner. Del Rio tags himself in to hammer Cesaro even more, only to get dropkicked off the top and out to the floor.

The hot tag brings in Sami to take on Jericho as everything breaks down. Sami's high cross body gets two but Owens gets in a cheap shot to let Jericho take over. That means a long and obvious spot call in the corner until Sami gets in a clothesline to set up the hot tag to Dean. Everything breaks down again and Dean sends Del Rio to the floor for the suicide dive.

The standing elbow misses though and Alberto gets two off a Backstabber. Dirty Deeds is broken up and it's Cesaro cleaning house with uppercuts, including one to Ambrose. Del Rio tags out to Owens, earning himself a superkick. Jericho gets one from Owens as well, setting up Dirty Deeds for the pin on Kevin at 13:50.

Rating: C+. This was exactly what I was expecting but that's to be expected when you do the same building process year after year. It's a fine Smackdown main event with enough good action and a grand total of almost no storyline advancement. In other words: a big part of why no one watches Smackdown at the moment.

Overall Rating: C. You can feel the show being stuck in a holding pattern until we get to the Brand Split and Smackdown possibly starts meaning anything again. This didn't do anything to make me want to see Sunday's show but Raw already took care of most of that. The show wasn't bad or anything but it was so horribly average with nothing memorable whatsoever. If this doesn't change after the split, this show is in major trouble.

Results

Kofi Kingston b. Big Cass, Aiden English and Luke Gallows – Trouble in Paradise to English

Baron Corbin b. Zack Ryder – End of Days

AJ Styles b. Xavier Woods – Calf Crusher

Charlotte b. Natalya – Figure Eight

Dean Ambrose/Cesaro/Sami Zayn b. Chris Jericho/Kevin Owens/Alberto Del Rio – Dirty Deeds to Owens

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Smackdown – June 9, 2016: Keeping The Standard

Smackdown

Date: June 9, 2016

Location: Intrust Bank Arena, Wichita, Kansas

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Mauro Ranallo, Byron Saxton

We're pretty much at business as usual here as Money in the Bank is a week from Sunday and most of the big stories are starting to round into form. AJ Styles is going after John Cena, the Tag Team Titles are in a big mess of a match and we'll see yet another combination of the six Money in the Bank participants tonight because just having them be announced over time isn't an option for whatever reason. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's the Club to get things going. AJ talks about how this Money in the Bank may be the best ever with the Club winning the Tag Team Titles and AJ himself taking care of John Cena. For ten years it's been the John Cena Era and the New Era can't really get started until he takes Cena out. When he came to WWE in the first place, he made it clear that the Club was a package deal. The Club has transcended countries, continents and companies. As for Cena, you can't beat him.

Cue Enzo and Big Cass with the latter reminding AJ that there are two other teams going after the Tag Team Titles. The Mr. Clean Dream Team isn't taking those belts but Karl says they've been traveling the world for ten years while Enzo was managing a Hooters. Enzo basically says "Well yeah. What's wrong with that?" before saying the Club has wrestled everywhere but Antarctica.

Enzo would love to walk a mile in Karl's shoes because then he'd be a mile away from him. The last time Enzo and Cass had a big match, Enzo fell asleep on the job. Enzo thinks that makes them a couple of haters so in Vegas, money will talk and money will walk. That makes Anderson and Gallows S-A-W-F-T.

Enzo Amore/Big Cass vs. Karl Anderson/Luke Gallows

New Day is on commentary with Woods eating Booty0's and Big E. holding a broom. Anderson runs Cass over a few times to start before it's off to Gallows for a big boot. For some reason this makes New Day talk about pasta. The Enzo beating continues as Kofi puts Byron on grape duty, meaning he has to feed Kofi grapes on demand. Anderson throws him down to stop a tag attempt, making Kofi think Enzo should switch to Alfredo instead of the marinara.

Big E. does his nerdy commentator voice as Enzo Stuns Anderson over the top rope. A diving tag attempt is stopped by a running boot to the head as the Vaudevillains come out to watch. Back from a break with Gallows suplexing Enzo for two as the fans chant for Cass. Amore punches away but is shoved away, only to get caught by the jumping DDT. Now it's the hot tag to Cass as house is quickly cleaned. A very big boot puts Gallows on the floor as New Day gets up to cut off the Vaudevillains. They all get in the ring and that's a no contest at 10:54.

Rating: C. Cass continues to look like the biggest star out of all these guys and that big boot was awesome. I really can't imagine the New Day keeps the titles after Money in the Bank and the Club would be the logical way to go with the belts. Enzo and Cass are hot right now though and you would have to expect Cass to get a big singles push soon.

Enzo and Cass clear the ring post match.

We recap Dean Ambrose vs. Chris Jericho, who will be facing each other tonight, focusing on the battle over the talk shows.

Muhammad Ali tribute.

The announcers talk about the Money in the Bank card.

Lana and Rusev aren't worried about Titus O'Neil because Rusev is the real greatest of all time instead of Muhammad Ali. Titus comes in and says he'll take the title at Money in the Bank by floating like a butterfly and stinging like a bee.

Cesaro/Sami Zayn vs. Alberto Del Rio/Kevin Owens

Sami and Owens start things off with Zayn spinning him around and sending him into the corner for a tag off to Del Rio. That's fine with Alberto who kicks Sami's leg out but lets the tag bring in Cesaro. Alberto takes over and asks Owens for a tag but Kevin says Del Rio is doing fine by himself and walks out. Sami chases him up the ramp so we're down to a singles match.

A shot to the back puts Del Rio on the floor and it's time for a break. Back with Del Rio getting two off a Backstabber. We hit the chinlock but Cesaro is up in less than five seconds. Well he's certainly not lazy at least. Cesaro muscles him up into a suplex as Sami and Kevin fight back down the aisle. Del Rio isn't cool with Owens walking out on him and now it's Alberto walking out. Owens won't let that happen so Sami dives over the top to take him out, leaving Cesaro to suplex Del Rio on the floor.

Back in and Del Rio starts in on the arm but can't get the armbreaker. Everything breaks down and Swiss Death drops Del Rio again. Owens and Zayn are sent outside again, leaving Del Rio to take the Swing. Owens breaks up the Sharpshooter and crotches Cesaro on top, setting up the top rope double stomp from Del Rio, only to have Owens throw his partner out and steal the pin at 13:29.

Rating: C+. I'm normally not a fan of the way the build towards Money in the Bank goes but this was kind of a creative way to do more than just another tag match. I'm sure we'll see something else like that next week because there's almost no way around seeing those matches over and over but at least this was something fresher. The wrestling is all fine and having only six people keeps the match from being such a mess but a change to the build could be an improvement.

We look at Jericho destroying Mitch.

Dana Brooke vs. Becky Lynch

Natalya and Charlotte are at ringside. Dana immediately bails to the ropes but Becky snaps off some armdrags to send her outside. Back in and Lynch misses a charge, allowing Charlotte to get in a forearm like a good heel should. Becky comes back with a kick to the ribs but she has to go after Charlotte, triggering a brawl between Charlotte and Natalya on the

floor. That earns them both an ejection, leaving Becky to make Dana tap with the Disarm-Her at 3:04.

Rating: C-. You know, I wouldn't be opposed to them actually announcing the women's match for the pay per view. I'm assuming it's going to be a fatal fourway or a non-title tag match (which actually fits for a change) but anything is better than another Natalya title shot. Whatever gets us past this and on to Sasha FINALLY getting her title shot would be a good idea though.

Bob Backlund asks to see Darren Young's victory celebration. Young starts doing the Millions of Dollars dance but Bob tells him to bring it back down to earth. Backlund tells him to save money, which Darren interprets as not going to the movies and no popcorn. Darren asks how Bob saves so much money, which apparently is all about wearing only one set of clothes. Young agrees to cut down on the shopping. Backlund: "How do you feel about a bow tie?"

Baron Corbin vs. Kalisto

Dolph Ziggler is on commentary because this thing just won't die. Kalisto is still listed as one half of the Lucha Dragons despite them almost never teaming together anymore. Some quick kicks put Corbin on the floor to start but he shrugs off even more kicks and tosses Kalisto onto the barricade to take over.

We get the staredown with Ziggler, who says he'd love to take off his jeggings and get right in there. Back in and we hit the chinlock on Kalisto for a bit before he comes back with the corkscrew cross body. The headscissors driver gets two but Corbin just blasts him in the back of the head. End of Days puts Kalisto away at 3:45.

Rating: C. You can definitely add Kalisto to the long list of people who started fast until the company got bored with him and threw him to the side for their new favorite toy. The match was your normal boring stuff as Ziggler vs. Corbin is a feud that needed to wrap up two months ago but for some reason the thing just keeps going.

We look at Ambrose ripping up Jericho's jacket. This feud really isn't

big enough to warrant this kind of attention.

Another chat about AJ Styles vs. John Cena with Lawler telling a story about having to face the top ten contenders in order to get a shot at NWA World Champion Jack Brisco. Why can't we hear those stories more often?

Sheamus brags about the success of Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and Zack Ryder/Golden Truth aren't all that impressed. Apollo Crews (Remember him?) comes in and Sheamus suggests that Crews get him a latte. Sheamus gets knocked through some well placed boxes.

Chris Jericho vs. Dean Ambrose

Ranallo says this is the first time these two have ever fought on Smackdown. Why is that supposed to be something interesting or appealing? I've never gotten that concept. Jericho shouts about the thumb tacks Dean put into his back and the chase is on outside. Back in and Dean strikes away, only to get clotheslined down. That means it's time to yell about the tacks even more but a clothesline puts Jericho outside for the suicide shove.

Dean loads up the announcers' table for Dirty Deeds but gets catapulted onto the floor for a big crash as we take a break. Back with Jericho suplexing him for an arrogant two, followed by the chinlock. Dean's comeback is stopped with a clothesline and it's time to choke on the ropes. Another comeback attempt works a bit better as Dean scores with a clothesline and elbows but Dirty Deeds is countered into a failed Walls attempt.

Jericho dives into a forearm to the jaw for two but comes back with a middle rope enziguri (looked like a missed dropkick) for two of his own. Dean breaks up a superplex attempt and grabs la majistral for two more before both guys collide to put them down. The Codebreaker and Dirty Deeds are broken up but Dean has to stop himself from running into the referee, allowing Jericho to grab a one legged Codebreaker for the pin at 13:46.

Rating: B-. Well so much for Dean's hot streak. The match was fine but that cage match destroyed a lot of my interest in this feud. Jericho only

has so much interest these days and it makes sense to have him win a match here or there since he has almost no chance of winning the ladder match. Then again that's what people were saying before he fought AJ at Wrestlemania.

Post match Jericho grabs a ladder but gets sent face first into it for his efforts. The standing elbow drop from the ladder crushes Jericho to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. Totally run of the mill Smackdown here as it was missing most of what I liked about the show last week. Most of the Money in the Bank card (which is looking stacked) is set so this was a bunch of supplemental material. To be fair though, we're five weeks away from the end of Smackdown before it gets turned into something new, which hopefully turns the thing around for a change.

Results

Enzo Amore/Big Cass vs. Luke Gallows/Karl Anderson went to a no contest when New Day and the Vaudevillains interfered

Kevin Owens/Alberto Del Rio b. Sami Zayn/Cesaro – Top rope double stomp to Cesaro

Becky Lynch b. Dana Brooke – Disarm-Her

Baron Corbin b. Kalisto – End of Days

Chris Jericho b. Dean Ambrose – Codebreaker

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