

# Smackdown – March 14, 2014: When Being Big Isn't Enough

## Smackdown

Date: March 14, 2014

Location: Verizon Arena, Little Rock, Arkansas

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

The major matches are now set for Wrestlemania and all we have left is to fill in the roster for the battle royal and get the midcard taken care of. Aside from all of the big stuff from Raw, the other top story we might get some more on tonight is Shield having some issues with Kane, which might lead to Kane embracing his hate and dropping the corporate character. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

We look back at Occupy Raw.

Here's HHH sans Stephanie to open things up. He's greeted by a YES chant and HHH says that must feel good. Monday was one of the greatest nights of their lives and it must have been one of Daniel Bryan's best nights ever as well. That was their moment in the sun though and Daniel Bryan isn't here tonight. He'll be dealt with on Raw and everything will be ended at Wrestlemania, but tonight he has to deal with the fans.

The people chant NO which tells HHH that they would have jumped in the ring and participated had they been at Raw. However, they traded in all of their happy tomorrows for the end of the YES Movement. HHH has protected Daniel Bryan over the last few months by keeping him away from the deep end of the roster so the people could have hope.

That's what the YES Movement represents: hope for the people and all of

their miserable lives. The fans chant for Bryan, who HHH says is just like each and every one of the people here: good, but just not good enough to succeed. At Wrestlemania he'll crush those hopes and dreams because there will be no triple threat and more happily ever after. However let's get to business tonight, so get out here Damien Sandow. HHH cuts him off before the apology can get started. Sandow gets a match against an opponent picked by Vickie Guerrero.

#### Damien Sandow vs. Seth Rollins

This is joined in progress after a break with Seth in full control. Sandow gets in a few shots and Rollins heads outside for a second. Back in and Seth does his backflip in the corner into the downward spiral into the middle buckle. A running forearm in the corner sets up a dropkick but Sandow gets outside to avoid the top rope Black Out. Shield distracts him so Seth can hit a suicide dive, followed by the Black Out for the pin at 2:27. The announcers spent the match arguing about this being a conspiracy.

Ambrose sends Sandow into the ring again for the first Triple Bomb in months.

We look back at Hogan announcing the battle royal.

#### Fandango vs. Big E.

Non-title. Before the match Fandango enters the battle royal. Fandango takes over to start but Big E. fights up and hits the belly to belly. The Warrior Splash connects and Big E. runs Fandango over, takes down the strap and Big Endings his way to a win at 1:37. Total squash.

We take a quick look at Heyman and Undertaker's segment on Raw.

Bad News Barrett says the Streak will end and children will cry.

Therefore, parents won't get any sleep and fall asleep at a meeting and get fired.

### Real Americans vs. Cody Rhodes/Goldust

We recap the Americans' problems from Monday with Cesaro crushing Jack's hand. Goldust and Swagger get things going with Goldust scoring off a shoulder and the uppercut. Off to Cody to crank on the arm but Jack drives him into the corner for some shoulders to the ribs. Cody escapes a belly to back suplex and drops to the mat for an uppercut to the face. A springboard dropkick knocks Swagger off the apron and a backdrop puts Cesaro outside but he catches Cody's plancha in mid air.

Rhodes is gutwrenched onto the floor and we take a break. Back with Cody firing off some right hands and backdropping Swagger to the floor. Cesaro blocks the tag with the Swing (JBL: "He's swinging him so much his daddy's polka dots are dizzy!") but Swagger's Vader Bomb hits boots.

Cesaro breaks up another tag attempt but the Real Americans argue over a tag. It's Cesaro staying in with a vertical suplex right in front of Jack. Swagger tags himself in as Zeb is losing his mind. Jack realizes what's about to happen and knocks Goldust off the apron, only to get caught in a backslide to give Cody the pin at 7:48.

**Rating:** C-. That loss is all on Swagger and Cesaro shouldn't get much of the blame. Seriously, how do you lose to a backslide of all things? The lack of a hot tag was a change of pace from the usual formula and it's kind of nice to see. The pin was a surprise as I'm so used to waiting on the big hot sequence and it was nice to not know what was coming.

The Real Americans destroy Cody post match until the Usos make the save.

We recap Bray vs. Cena from Raw and Wyatt accepting the challenge.

### Bray Wyatt vs. Kofi Kingston

Bray's eyes bug out at the bell and Kofi gets in a right hand, making Wyatt smile. He sits in the corner and shouts at Kingston before grabbing him by the leg and shoving him down. Kofi grabs Bray's leg and spin kicks Wyatt out to the floor. Back in and Kofi hammers away but Wyatt shoves him down with ease. Kofi comes back with a springboard shot to the head but Bray just throws him over the ropes and out to the floor. A backsplash gets two on Kingston and Bray just runs him over with a clothesline. Sister Abigail is good for the pin at 3:54.

**Rating:** D+. The match wasn't much to see but Bray's eyes and power stuff looked good. There's something so off about him that it's hard not to watch him every time he's out there. Kofi is a good sacrificial lamb for Bray or anyone for that matter as he's going to be the same guy no matter what happens to him.

Kane tells Shield to be at ringside for the main event but they say they don't listen to him. They'll be out there because it's best for business.

### Nikki Bella vs. Tamina Snuka

AJ sits in on commentary as Tamina takes Nikki down by the hair. Nikki is sent to the floor and holds her knee, prompting some amusing fake concern from the champ. Back in and Nikki gets slammed down but still avoids the Superfly Splash. AJ tries to figure out who the #1 contender is as Tamina kicks Nikki's head off for two. Tamina gets bored with Nikki and throws Brie into the barricade for fun. It doesn't pay off though as Nikki hits the Rack for the pin at 3:13.

**Rating:** D. Divas, regular match, Nikki's turn for a push. Next.

### Dolph Ziggler vs. Alberto Del Rio

Del Rio is in the battle royal as well, saying it's the only thing he has left to win. Ziggler quickly knocks Alberto outside before tossing him right back in for the ten elbows. Del Rio avoids a charge in the corner and double stomps him to the mat and we go to a break. Back with Ziggler (Dolph Showoff according to Cole) hammering away in the corner and getting two off a neckbreaker.

Alberto catches a charging Ziggler in a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker but the low superkick misses, setting up the jumping DDT from Ziggler. Now the low superkick connects for a close two but Ziggler countered the armbreaker. Ziggler ducks the running enziguri in the corner and hits the Fameasser for an even closer two. Dolph goes up but gets crotched and caught in the reverse superplex for two. The armbreaker is countered again but this time into the Zig Zag to give Dolph the pin at 6:03 shown of 9:33.

**Rating:** B-. This was pretty much just the ending sequence to a main event match after cutting off all the buildup. I could get used to this idea in matches that don't mean anything such as this. Del Rio and Ziggler are another of those combinations where they're fought so many times that I just don't care to see them ever again. This was entertaining though.

Dolph enters the battle royal and says it will be his Wrestlemania moment.

The next inductee into the Hall of Fame is Carlos Colon.

WWE Network tutorial.

It's Wyatts time. Luke says everything has been forgotten and the lie has become the truth. Bray says he never sleeps but is always dreaming, and lately his dreams have been of John Cena. They'll be sharing a war in New Orleans but off in the distance there's a woman's voice. Bray can't understand it but the closer he gets the clearer it becomes. The voice is saying she loves him and how proud she is of Bray. Now he sees Cena for

what he'll become. Eventually he'll be a lonely old man full of regret. Cena shouldn't worry about a thing because he'll make it quick. Follow the buzzards.

### Kane vs. Big Show

Shield is nowhere in sight. Kane whips Show across the ring but Show does the same to him as Shield comes to ringside. A headbutt drops Kane and a chop sends him to the floor, right in front of the Shield. Back in and Kane avoids a knee drop and gets two off a low dropkick. We hit a leg lock on the bigger monster but Big Show counters out with pure leg strength.

Back up and Kane gets two off a running DDT but Show breaks the chokeslam attempt. Show runs him over with a spear but rolls to the floor to glare at Shield. He goes up but gets chokeslammed off the top for two. Shield gets on the apron and Kane orders them to attack but Shield bails and Kane walks into a bad looking chokeslam (thankfully the camera hid it) for the pin at 5:30.

**Rating:** D. These guys just are not fun to watch. WWE has this theory that you can put these two against each other and it's going to be entertaining because they're both big and strong. They've fought several dozen times over the years and I don't remember any of them being anything better than watchable.

Reigns spears Kane to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C. There were some decent matches tonight but a lot of them were just quick ones that didn't really add anything. It was nice to see some stuff actually happen here, such as the battle royal growing and the Hall of Fame announcement, but there still wasn't much of interest to this show. You have to expect that once Wrestlemania is made though.

Sheamus vs. Heath Slater was taped but not aired. That appears to be a thing they're doing on Smackdown anymore. The spoilers indicate it's presented as part of the taping and not a dark match. Sheamus won via Brogue Kick in about five minutes.

### Results

Seth Rollins b. Damien Sandow – Black Out

Big E. b. Fandango – Big Ending

Cody Rhodes/Goldust b. Real Americans – Backslide to Swagger

Bray Wyatt b. Kofi Kingston – Sister Abigail

Nikki Bella b. Tamina Snuka – Rack

Dolph Ziggler b. Alberto Del Rio – Zig Zag

Big Show b. Kane – Chokeslam

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# **Monday Night Raw – March 3, 2014: Not In Our House**

**Monday Night Raw**

Date: March 3, 2014

Location: Allstate Arena, Chicago, Illinois

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Jerry Lawler

This is one of those shows I've been wanting to see for what feels like months. We're in one of the holy lands of smart fans and there's a possibility that they'll try to hijack the show with CM Punk chants. We'll also get more build to Wrestlemania, including a match between Daniel Bryan and Batista. Let's get to it.

First thing up: CM Punk's music but Paul Heyman coming out instead. Nice little tease there. Heyman holds the mic out to the crowd as a HUGE CM Punk chant starts up. Heyman: "I believe he deserves louder than that." He sits down in the middle of the ring and says he's here to tell the story of a Paul Heyman guy who was never truly wanted in WWE. This was a Paul Heyman guy that was too small to main event Wrestlemania with too many tattoos who would rebel against the first family.

He's here tonight to tell you about a guy born in, raised in and still living in Chicago. His name is Paul Heyman and this is his pipe bomb about CM Punk.....who is not here this evening. After pausing for another CM Punk chant, Heyman says no one is more upset than him about CM Punk not performing in this ring tonight. So what happened? Why won't anyone talk about why CM Punk isn't here tonight? There's someone to blame for why Punk doesn't get to perform around here. That finger of blame is being pointed at every single fan here tonight.

This is why Heyman finds it easier to lie all the time. He managed Punk to a 434 day WWE Title reign and then the fans took him away with promises of love and affirmation. But all that did was take Punk away from everybody, including the fans themselves. Heyman also blames the Undertaker because Punk couldn't stop the Streak last year and now Paul wants revenge. He wants to see Streak taken away from the Undertaker, but how do you kill someone who is already dead? There is only one man that can conquer the Streak: the beast incarnate, Brock Lesnar.

A ticked off Lesnar comes out and we see a clip from the end of last week's show with Undertaker stabbing Brock with a pen to sign the contract for Wrestlemania XXX. Brock says Undertaker is scared to death



of him and last week proved it. Many people have tried to conquer the streak but many men have failed to do so, including Chicago's own CM Punk.

The Streak will be conquered by Brock Lesnar and Lesnar is ready to leave, but here's Mark Henry for a staredown. Brock says bring it on and charges right into a right hand. Mark gets thrown into the steps and Lesnar looks livid. He blasts Henry in the face with the steps with one of the hardest shots I've seen in years. An F5 through the table knocks Henry even more out cold and the fans chant for Punk.

#### Tag Titles: New Age Outlaws vs. Usos

The Outlaws are defending but Road Dogg doesn't think the fans here are worthy of hearing his catchphrases. It only took them two months to remember they're heels. Jey hammers on Roadie to start but gets whipped hard into the corner. Uso comes out holding his knee so Dogg kicks him to the floor for a breather. Billy throws him back inside and hammers away before it's back to Dogg. Jey's leg seems to be holding up well enough and Dogg even works it over a bit. Roadie throws him to the floor as we take a break.

Back with Jey fighting out of a chinlock but getting slammed down for two. Dogg comes back in and takes a spin kick to the face (the knee seems fine). The hot tag brings in Jimmy to face Billy. Dogg gets knocked off the apron and a Samoan drop puts Gunn down. There's a Bubba Bomb to Billy and the running Umaga attack in the corner to Roadie.

A reverse Whisper in the Wind hits Gunn and there's a superkick to knock Dogg to the floor. Gunn rolls up Jimmy for two and the tilt-a-whirl slam gets the same. The Fameasser just misses and the Usos do the plancha with the flying tag, setting up the superkick and Superfly Splash to FINALLY give the Usos the Tag Titles at 9:27.

**Rating:** C+. It's about three years overdue but this was the best way to do it. I have no problem with the Outlaws keeping the title for just a few weeks as they put the young guys over 100% clean before Wrestlemania. Good little match and they made it feel like it meant something, which is rare for these titles.

The Divas watch a clip from Need For Speed and pine for Aaron Paul. Apparently Dolph Ziggler is riding here with Paul tonight. Aksana wants to ride with him too because she likes fast cars.

### Big E. vs. Cesaro

Non-title again. Cesaro quickly catches Big E. in a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker and the fans are completely behind him. Big E. sends him into the corner and snaps off a great belly to belly suplex, only to be sent to the floor before the Warrior Splash can hit. Big E. drops Swagger with a right hand but walks back inside for the Swing. Not that it matters as Swagger runs in for the DQ at 1:24.

Cesaro takes the Big Ending post match.

### Shield vs. Wyatt Family

The fans think this is awesome while Bray is still in the chair. He stands up and whips off the hat but Ambrose and Rollins dive through the ropes to take out the Family. Reigns runs over Bray and sends him to the floor as the bell ring. Harper puts Rollins on the top rope but Seth backflips off and lands on his feet, runs into the ring and flip dives onto Harper and dives back inside to flip dive onto Rowan. Rollins goes back up but Bray throws Ambrose into the ropes to knock Seth to the floor in a nasty fall.

Back from a break with Rollins in a chinlock before being run over with a shoulder block. Ambrose goes to yell at Bray and Reigns goes to get him, leaving no one for a free Rollins to tag. Seth hits a quick Downward Spiral to send Rowan into the middle buckle and makes a tag to Dean as things speed up. He runs over Erick and hammers away before going after the leg.

Dean slaps on a Figure Four but Harper breaks it up with a double stomp. Reigns comes in as Dean brawls with Wyatt. The fans are WAY into Wyatt here as he hammers on Ambrose's head and shouts a lot. Ambrose is caught in the cultish corner as the fans think this is awesome. Another Punk chant stars up while Harper stands on Dean's chest. Back to Rowan for the fist vice but Dean is still able to taunt the Wyatts. He pulls Erick's

beard to break it up but walks into a sidewalk slam for two. The fans chant for Reigns as Ambrose takes Harper's head off with a clothesline.

Bray comes in and knocks Roman off the apron, leaving only Rollins to take the tag from Ambrose.....but he drops to the floor. Seth walks away and Roman tries to play peacekeeper. Rollins shouts that Reigns wasn't there for him when he needed a tag so the other two can figure it out. Wyatt runs over Ambrose but Roman makes the save. Reigns goes nuts with Superman Punches and Ambrose is back in as well.

Reigns hits a running boot from the floor to the apron as Ambrose hammers on Wyatt. Reigns spears Rowan over the announce table and Harper hits a suicide dive to send Reigns over the table. Dean goes after Luke but Bray posts him. Rollins is still on the ramp as a THIS IS AWESOME chant starts up. Sister Abigail is enough to end Ambrose at 13:55.

**Rating:** B+. This wasn't the match from Elimination Chamber but it didn't need to be. We already got the showdown and tonight was all about the story. There's more to come from this story as Rollins looked conflicted about his decision, meaning there's going to be something special at Wrestlemania. Again, I'm loving this time in WWE and this is going to make Wrestlemania even better.

Batista thinks the YES Movement is one of the stupidest things he's ever seen. These fans are turning someone like Daniel Bryan into a superhero but he could never be like Batista. No one may like it, but they have to deal with it. That's a great heel catchphrase.

The Usos will defend against the Outlaws tomorrow night on the live Main Event special.

#### Santino Marella/Emma vs. Fandango/Summer Rae

We open with COMEDY as Santino keeps high fiveing Emma which means they have to switch. Fandango jumps Santino to start and gets two off a spinwheel kick. Santino comes back with a jawbreaker and it's off to the girls for some Emma dancing. The Dilemma (Tarantula) sets up the Emma Sandwich (running cross body to a seated Summer) and the Emma Lock gets the win at 3:24.

**Rating:** D+. Believe it or not the fans actually didn't hate this. Emma is the kind of girl that is going to get over due to being rather cute and fun when given the chance, which she's finally getting. It helps that she can go in the ring and some of those submission holds proved it. Nice showing here but I'm tired of this same match in various forms week after week.

Stephanie loves showing her daughters great moments in McMahon history on the WWE Network. This is treated like a sweet moment.

### Sheamus vs. Christian

Christian stalls before the bell and then slaps Sheamus in the face. The chase is on and Christian is sent into the barricade. Back in and a knee drop gets two on the Canadian but he sends Sheamus into the corner for some choking. Christian slaps him in the face again and gets an Irish Curse for his efforts. Sheamus misses a charge to the floor but just steps out of the way of a plancha. Christian escapes a powerslam and hides behind the announcers as we go to a break.

Back with Christian missing something off the middle rope but still being able to shove Sheamus off the top and out to the floor in a BIG crash. Christian throws him over the barricade and talks trash before taking Sheamus back inside. Sheamus says bring it on so Christian suplexes him down but misses a top rope splash. The rolling fireman's carry sets up the ten forearms but Christian fights out. Christian goes up top but gets caught in mid air and now the ten forearms connect.

A running knee on the apron sets up a running knee in the ring for two for Sheamus. The Irishman is holding his shoulder and arm so Christian takes him down and gets two off the frog splash. Back to the CM Punk chant as White Noise gets a VERY close two. Christian throws him to the apron but Sheamus hits a quick Brogue Kick anyway and comes back inside for the pin at 14:00.

**Rating:** B-. Definitely the best match in their series as they treated it more like a fight than a match. The crowd of course didn't care and called the match awful because they're petulant children that only care what they want and have no problem messing with three million fans at

home because it's what they want to do.

Back from a break and Christian jumps Sheamus in the back and hits the injured arm with I believe a light.

### Bella Twins vs. Aksana/Alicia Fox

Brie runs over Aksana to start but it's quickly off to Alicia to ram Brie's head into the mat. The heels work on Brie for a bit as this is already going nowhere. Fox slams Brie out of the corner but gets slammed down for two. Nikki finally comes in off the tag and shouts COME ON a lot. Everything breaks down and the Rack is good for the pin on Alicia at 4:17.

**Rating:** D-. Next.

Preview for a new USA show called Sirens.

Here's Daniel Bryan with something to say but he has to wait for the crowd to calm down. He says the fans have a voice and he's not leaving this ring until one of two things happen. The fans chant for Punk but Bryan says he isn't leaving until Batista comes down to fight him or HHH accepts his challenge for Wrestlemania. Here are Stephanie and HHH to answer, drawing an even louder CM Punk chant. Thankfully HHH acts like a heel this time and soaks the whole thing in.

Bryan ignores Stephanie and lays out his evidence of HHH holding him back for the last six months. Daniel is stronger than ever and wants to settle the score at Wrestlemania. HHH says that's not going to happen and asks why Daniel's generation can't accept it inadequacy. He dubs this the Excuses Era because no one in this era can just admit that they're not good enough. They blame everyone else and make excuses about being held down and buried.

The reality is that anyone who has ever failed in WWE is because they weren't good enough. Bryan is nothing more than a B+ player and there's nothing wrong with that. However, it's not enough to make HHH lace up his boots at Wrestlemania. Bryan says the fans chant because they see through HHH's lies and there go the people again. HHH claims to be doing this for

the WWE Universe but he just isn't listening to what they want.

They want to see someone like him succeed and the only way he can do that is by beating HHH at Wrestlemania. Stephanie says they won't listen to this sea of inadequacy because they'll turn on you at the drop of a hat. The only people that won't turn on him are her and HHH because they know what he means for the business. Stephanie gives the whole "my family made all this" speech, so Bryan asks to fight her at Wrestlemania while HHH wears Stephanie's skirt.

HHH thinks she would beat Bryan up too, but Bryan vs. HHH just isn't happening. He goes into his most condescending voice and says Wrestlemania is the showcase of the immortals. As much as Bryan hates it, he just doesn't measure up and needs to get out of HHH's ring. Bryan says this is the fans' ring but HHH says Bryan and all of the fans belong to him, so get out. Daniel says make him so Stephanie calls out Kane. The FLYING GOAT lays out Kane but the referees pull Daniel off of him.

We look back at Lesnar destroying Henry.

The expert panel recaps the night.

#### Alberto Del Rio vs. Dolph Ziggler

Ziggler comes in via a Shelby Mustang driven by Aaron Paul from Need For Speed. Paul is a shorter guy but has a ton of energy which is all you can ask for from these guys. He jumps in on commentary as the fans chant for Ziggler. Del Rio takes him down and does Ziggler's hair flip pose as the announcers talk about video games.

The tilt-a-whirl backbreaker gets two for Del Rio but the low superkick misses. Ziggler gets two of his own with the running DDT but Del Rio slams him down again. Paul gets up on the announce table and the Zig Zag is good for the pin at 2:43. This is par for the course on the guest star segments anymore and that's fine.

Paul Bearer is announced for the Hall of Fame. Nothing wrong with that.

#### Big E. vs. Jack Swagger

Cesaro runs in for the DQ at 4 seconds and Neutralizes Big E.

The Real Americans argue post match and Cesaro loads Jack up in the Swing but Colter calls him off. The fans chant for Cesaro to do it and he lets Swagger go. Colter says help your brother up and Cesaro does so, albeit roughly. Zeb makes them hug it out and they reluctantly obey.

Daniel Bryan vs. Kane is made for tomorrow night's live Main Event.

Here's a limping Cena (after the Wyatts' intro started by mistake) who can't even do his signature entrance. The fans chant for Punk and Cena thanks him for the usual Chicago welcome. Cena can't wrestle tonight, drawing a HUGE YES chant. He'll take that as their version of get well soon. John is out here to feel that energy from the crowd because he's had some great moments in this arena, such as getting his face kicked in by Brock Lesnar and having a very special match with somebody at Money in the Bank.

Cena says he's heard about this whole hijacking thing and it's clear that the people want change. He can respect that, but success has to be earned and change comes through him. That brings him to Bray Wyatt, who isn't in the driver's seat after last week. Cena started his career in this arena and he's still standing tall right here.

The Wyatts appear on screen and Bray asks if Cena can feel these people. Cena reminds him of a great throughbred racehorse that has been winning his entire career, but then he starts to slow down. That horse is now in the back of the barn waiting to be put down. How long does Cena think he can fend the Wyatts off? Bray is the reaper and he is going to put Cena down because he knows Cena's greatest fear. The loneliest man on earth is the man who sits on the top of his empty castle. Follow the buzzards.

Orton wishes Batista luck out there tonight.

Alexander Rusev speaks Bulgarian on the stage.

We look back at Hogan returning last week and see him on the Today Show. Hogan has a Wrestlemania announcement for next week.

Batista vs. Daniel Bryan

Orton comes out to watch. The bell rings at 11:02 so this probably doesn't last long. Cole incorrectly says this is a first time ever match on Raw as these two fought once back in 2010. The fans immediately chant B00-TISTA as he runs Bryan over with a shoulder. Daniel goes after the leg though and Batista is in trouble. A dropkick to the knee puts Batista down again and Bryan follows up with a half crab. Batista kicks him off and knocks his head off with a clothesline. The fans think Batista can't wrestle as he throws Bryan to the floor...and we take another break.

Back with Bryan backflipping over Batista and hitting the running dropkicks in the corner. Batista rolls to the floor to avoid the third so it's the FLYING GOAT. The YES Kicks get two but here comes the Authority for a distraction. The fans chant for Punk as Batista sends Bryan into the steps. Daniel is thrown into Randy Orton and Batista looked annoyed. Daniel is thrown back inside and gets an overrated chant plus a high kick from Daniel Bryan. Not that it matters as Orton comes in to attack Bryan for the DQ at 10:10.

**Rating:** C. Not a bad match here but they were just waiting for the screwy ending to close things out. I was thinking they would have Bryan get the pin here to change things up even more but this keeps the triple threat hopes looking solid. At the same time it keeps the Bryan vs. HHH hopes looking solid so I'm still not sure where they're going. That's still an awesome feeling.

Post match Orton loads up the RKO on Batista but gets shoved into the running knee. Bryan goes after the Authority but gets speared down by Batista. HHH gets in the ring and yells at Bryan but Daniel kicks him from the mat. A Batista Bomb lays out Bryan and HHH adds in a Pedigree, leaving the Authority standing tall to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B+. This was the WWE fighting back against the fans and showing the product is what really matters. The fans chanted all night and at the end of the day it came off as desperate pleas for attention instead of something witty or funny. The Punk chants just got annoying by about 9:30 and I don't think anyone was paying attention to them.

The show itself was very solid with Wrestlemania being shored up and a



title change that needed to happen finally taking place. Brock looks like a killer heading into Wrestlemania and there are still doors open for major matches on the card. WWE is at it's full power here and it's a very exciting time. Bryan and Punk are still wild cards and there's the announcement next week that might be something interesting. Good show this week and things are really picking up.

### Results

Usos b. New Age Outlaws – Superfly Splash to Gunn

Big E. b. Cesaro via DQ when Jack Swagger interfered

Wyatt Family b. Shield – Sister Abigail to Ambrose

Santino Marella/Emma b. Summer Rae/Fandango

Bella Twins b. Alicia Fox/Aksana – Rack to Fox

Dolph Ziggler b. Alberto Del Rio – Zig Zag

Big E. b. Jack Swagger via DQ when Cesaro interfered

Daniel Bryan b. Batista via DQ when Randy Orton interfered

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# **Smackdown – February 28,**

# 2014: Take One Of These Heel Turns And Call Me In The Morning

## Smackdown

Date: February 28, 2014

Location: BMO Harris Bradley Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

There are no major stops left before we get to Wrestlemania and things are rounding into focus. The only big question at this point is the World Title situation, as Batista vs. Orton seems to be the end game but for the life of me I can't imagine that actually happening. Batista is scheduled for a big interview tonight which might answer a few questions. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's Batista for his big speech. He loves this business but didn't come back to please the fans. He's back to be WWE World Heavyweight Champion and the people can deal with it. Batista can destroy anyone put in front of him and he's the best representative of the WWE, including Hulk Hogan or the Rock. What happened to this business? Where's the attitude anymore?

The people are chanting the names of 195lbs wannabes but they'll never be him, so deal with it. He takes his shirt off to show how much he looks like a superstar and promises to destroy all of our heroes on the way to the main event of Wrestlemania. Total heel promo here, which should help with the reactions a bit.

Batista's music plays but here's Dolph Ziggler for an interruptions. Dolph says you don't tell the people who to get behind because they'll make up their own minds. Batista is a dinosaur and eventually they go extinct. If Batista is looking for the real men, there's one standing right in front of him that wants a match tonight. Batista says it's on so

Dolph dropkicks his hat off and runs.

### Big E./Mark Henry vs. Real Americans

Swagger takes Big E. into the corner to start but walks into an overhead belly to belly. Henry comes in and shoves Jack around before slamming him down with ease. Back to Big E. as this is one sided so far. Swagger gets slammed around a bit more before it's off to Cesaro who sends Big E. into the buckle to take over. Cesaro actually does his apron suplex to Big E. in an amazing power display, but Swagger makes a blind tag in the process so Cesaro can't cover.

The Vader Bomb gets two for Jack but Big E. throws Cesaro away with ease and tags Mark back in. Henry powerslams Swagger down but Cesaro breaks up the World's Strongest Slam with a boot to the face. Big E. and Cesaro fight to the floor and Jack takes out Henry's leg, setting up the Patriot Lock but Cesaro tags himself in. The Neutralizer is good for the pin at 5:30.

**Rating:** C-. This was more of an angle than a match which is fine for the most part. Hopefully Cesaro comes out of this as the face as he's much easier to cheer than Swagger. Thankfully Big E. didn't take the loss here and didn't look bad at all. It looks like Cesaro vs. Swagger at Wrestlemania, which is kind of a waste of the new star too.

Del Rio comes in to see Vickie about a rubber match with Batista, but since Batista is busy, Alberto is taking the night off. Oh and he thinks Vickie's hair is nice. Thankfully Sheamus is standing off camera and comes in to say he'll take a fight with Del Rio, which Vickie approves.

### Sheamus vs. Alberto Del Rio

Sheamus shoves Del Rio around to start and sends him outside. Cole: "I've got to be honest." JBL: "Why wouldn't you be?" Sheamus hits a shoulder off the apron and sends Del Rio into the steps. Back in and Del Rio counters the ten forearms before kicking him off the apron. Cue Christian towards the ring as we take a break.

Back with Del Rio clotheslining Sheamus down and Christian on commentary.

Del Rio goes to the corner but gets taken down in an electric chair drop. The Brogue Kick misses and a Backstabber gets two for Alberto. Christian doesn't believe that Sheamus kicked him by mistake a few weeks back and he won't forget it. Alberto misses a shot and gets caught by the forearms but comes back with a superkick. The low superkick connects for two but Del Rio misses the enziguri in the corner. Sheamus hooks up the Cloverleaf but Christian comes in for the DQ at 9:10.

**Rating:** C. Better match than I was expecting here but it's still an uninteresting pairing because there's no doubt as to who is going to win EVERY SINGLE MATCH. Christian vs. Sheamus is the same thing, which makes me wonder why it's so hard to book Sheamus. Have him fight guys that can give him a battle and let him lose once in awhile.

Christian runs off, Del Rio gets kicked in the face and Christian runs back in for a Killswitch to Sheamus.

We look at Bryan challenging HHH on Raw.

We look back at Hogan returning on Monday.

Alexander Rusev comes out and stands on a pedastal for his promo this week.

We look at Shield having problems on Monday with Ambrose cositing Reigns a match. The two of them get in an argument in the back but Rollins plays peacemaker.

### Batista vs. Dolph Ziggler

Dolph sends Batista to the floor to start and the stalling begins. Back in and Batista easily powers Ziggler into the corner and throws him around. Ziggler can sell being overpowered like few others. Batista takes him into the corner for the shoulders but misses a big one and hits the post. Dolph jumps over him and hammers away but has to escape the Batista Bomb. Batista's knee gets kicked out and a Fameasser gets two but both guys are down. Ziggler gets caught in a pair of spinebusters and there's a third for good measure. Batista does the thumbs down and it's the Batista Bomb for the pin at 6:26. Nearly a squash.

**Rating:** D+. Not a great match but it's FAR better for Batista than what he's been doing lately. Dolph is a good meal for Batista and the tweak in his character could help Big Dave a lot. I'm not sure how they're going to do heel vs. heel unless Orton makes a very surprising turn, but there's still a door for a third man.

We look at the Wyatts injuring Cena on Monday.

Here are the Wyatts with something to say. Bray talks about everything we do in life being based on lies. Men go to work to buy those sports cars to impress men. Then women put on a mask every morning because the world tells them to. Then we see lies on billboards in the form of a man with a plastic smile. He's the Superman and tells you everything you need to hear.

Bray sings part of What A Wonderful World before promising to spend the remainder of his days slaying the mighty dragon of John Cena with the sword of his tongue. Follow the Buzzards, but here's Shield for a staredown. Before anything happens, HHH comes out and makes Shield vs. Wyatts II for Monday. Bray taunts Shield by saying they heard their daddy. Reigns gets in the ring and the staredown is on but Rollins and Ambrose dive on the Family. Bray is left alone against all three of them but calmly walks out.

Video on Cameron from Total Divas.

Divas Title: Cameron vs. AJ Lee

The champion takes Cameron down with ease to start but Cameron screams a lot and gets two off a bulldog. Tamina shoves AJ out of the way of a charge in the corner and gets ejected, allowing Cameron to get two off a cross body. AJ comes right back with some kicks to the chest and the Black Widow is good to retain the title at 2:00.

We look at Brock and Undertaker on Monday.

The expert panel talks about what we just saw.

Kane/New Age Outlaws vs. Daniel Bryan/Usos

Bryan and Gunn get us going with the fans chanting for the Goat Face. It's quickly off to Jey vs. Kane with the Uso being taken into the corner for a corporate beating. Roadie comes in for some shaky punches but Jey takes him into the good corner for a tag off to his brother. A double elbow sends Road Dogg to the floor and us to a commercial.

Back with Gunn hitting a tilt-a-whirl slam on Jimmy and bringing in Kane for a kick to the chest. The big side slam gets two more and we hit the chinlock. Kane wisely takes out both of Jimmy's partners and a boot to the face drops Jimmy. It's back to Road Dogg who walks into a kick to the face to put both guys down. There's the hot tag to Bryan who cleans house and hits his signature stuff on Gunn as everything breaks down. The Usos send Dogg and Kane to the floor for nice planchas but Billy hits the Fameasser on Daniel for two. Bryan backflips out of a suplex and it's the running knee for the pin at 11:38.

**Rating:** C. This was fine and gets the point across with Bryan getting the pin over one of Bryan's buddies. The interesting question is what Bryan does at Wrestlemania though as a match vs. HHH makes sense but there's going to be a near riot if he's not in the world title match. There's time to switch things around but I'm not sure where they go.

**Overall Rating:** C+. We're firmly in that period where it's all about hyping up Wrestlemania and there's nothing wrong with that. I like the look of the card more and more every week as the title match looks to be more in flux. Vince waited sixteen years to let a heel walk out of Wrestlemania with the title so I can't imagine he'll go heel vs. heel for the belt without a big face being added to things.

That being said, who can they add? Bryan vs. HHH looks to be set in wet cement, so they can either make a last second change to that or throw in a returning Punk. Bryan makes the most sense but Punk in the title match would calm some fans down. The fact that it's hard to tell at this point makes this an even more exciting time and it's going to be a fun month heading to New Orleans.

## Results

Real Americans b. Big E./Mark Henry – Neutralizer to Henry

Sheamus b. Alberto Del Rio via DQ when Christian interfered

Batista b. Dolph Ziggler – Batista Bomb

AJ Lee b. Cameron – Black Widow

Daniel Bryan/Usos b. Kane/New Age Outlaws – Running knee to Gunn

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# Smackdown – January 24, 2014: The Show They've Needed For Weeks

## Smackdown

Date: January 24, 2014

Location: Van Andel Arena, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Commentators: John Bradshaw Layfield, Josh Matthews

It's the go home show for the Rumble and not a lot changed this past week on Raw. Batista is back and apparently people are still interested in him, meaning I can't imagine anyone else taking the Rumble at this point. Since it's Friday, I'm guessing we'll be getting a big tag match to close out the week. Let's get to it.

We open with an in memory of George Scott graphic. Always nice to see.

Opening sequence actually opens us up.

The main event tonight is a ten man tag with the Usos/Rhodes Brothers/Langston vs. Shield/New Age Outlaws.

The Real Americans are in the ring to start with Colter ranting about Big Show attacking him. Unfortunately his voice is better now and not as awesome as it was last week. We get a clip from two weeks ago of Big Show knocking Colter out cold which set up tonight's tag match with Show/Mysterio vs. the Real Americans. Colter doesn't think Mysterio is his real name either. Speaking of names, Colter comes up with various names for Big Show/Mysterio: the Border Jumping Buddies, Tacos Supremos Hold the Salsa and El Gordito and the Jumping Bean.

#### Real Americans vs. Big Show/Rey Mysterio

Swagger charges at Big Show to start and is easily thrown down. Some forearm to the back send Jack running to the corner for a tag off to Cesaro who is thrown around as well. Show puts his foot on Cesaro's face and lifts him up by the arm for a kind of reverse curb stomp. Cesaro is tossed out to the floor and Mysterio takes him down with a seated senton off the apron. A kick to the face drops Swagger and we take a break. Back with Cesaro holding a chinlock on Mysterio until Rey fights up and gets two off a rollup.

Antonio doesn't like being covered so he Swings Mysterio around for a few seconds. Off to Swagger who counters catches a middle rope hurricanrana in midair, only to be sent face first into the middle buckle. Cesaro comes back in but the Real Americans get caught in a double DDT, allowing for the hot tag to Big Show. The monster hiptosses both Americans with ONE ARM. That's very cool looking, even if both of them helped with the throw. A 619 sets up the WMD and the splash off Big Show's shoulders for the pin on Cesaro at 8:52.

**Rating:** C-. The match was formula stuff but it made Big Show look good



going into the showdown on Sunday. Mysterio was just kind of there but it's good to see him in the ring instead of on the injured list all the time. He's nowhere near what he used to be but at his age and with his knees held together with glue, it's about as good as you can expect.

Heyman comes out post match and tells Big Show to enjoy his health while he can, because there will be nothing to celebrate on Sunday. Big Show did throw Lesnar around on Monday, but it's only made Brock want to hurt Big Show even more. Lesnar will be WWE Champion after dealing with the giant.

### The Miz vs. Brodus Clay

Before the match, Wade Barrett's podium rises up and he informs us that while the ten man tag will be awesome tonight, this is going to be one of the worst matches in WWE history. He starts the MIZ IS AWFUL chant and bangs his gavel in place of the five clap sequence. That's really not something you should say on your programming, even for a Miz match. Miz jumps Barrett while the crowd takes up the chant. Barrett keeps taking jabs at the match, calling it one of the worst things he's ever seen and thinking the crowd wants milk and cookies. He asks Clay to dance and the distraction lets Miz hits a DDT for the pin at 1:22.

Miz goes up to the podium but Barrett laughs down at him.

Rumble By The Numbers promo.

### AJ Lee vs. Cameron

Non-title. AJ quickly takes her down but charges into a boot in the corner. Cameron stops to dance a bit before dropping a leg for two. A baseball slide puts Naomi down but she walks into a Shining Wizard for the pin at 1:32.

Post match Tamina goes after Cameron but Naomi makes the save and lays AJ out with a Bubba Bomb.

Raw ReBounce shows Batista returning and laying out Alberto.

Shield says twenty seven other men are going to enter the Royal Rumble as hungry dogs. Those other people can pretend they're going to have a chance but it's just wishful thinking. All of the other men are casualties and Reigns says he'll win.

### Ryback/Curtis Axel vs. Los Matadores

JBL thinks El Torito is a descendant of Mr. Ed. Ryback slams Diego down for an early two before Axel comes in to ram Diego into the corner. A nice running dropkick keeps Diego in trouble, causing Josh to say Torito has a look of concern on his face. JBL: "HE'S A BULL!" Back to Ryback who toys with Diego even more before jumping off the middle rope into a pair of boots. Axel can't break up the hot tag attempt and Fernando comes in to clean house. A double arm DDT gets two on Axel but Ryback makes the save and throws Diego to the floor. Fernando throws Ryback out, only to get rolled up by Axel for the pin at 3:20.

**Rating:** C-. I believe that's Los Matadores' first loss, but thankfully they stayed undefeated for so long because they haven't been on TV all that much. They're just not an interesting team at all and I can't picture them lasting much longer without being relegated to Superstars. It's nice to see Axel get a pin as well.

Post match Torito IMMEDIATELY sends Axel to the floor and dives on him Ryback so the fans won't have their spirits crushed or something.

Here's Punk to address Kane making him #1 in the Rumble. We get a clip of Punk calling Kane a suck up last week, earning himself a chokeslam as well as a clip from Raw of Kane apologizing and getting knocked to the

floor. Punk talks about the Authority's lapdog making him the #1 entrant in the Rumble to stack the deck against him. That's what he expected from HHH and Stephanie but it just motivates him to become WWE Champion again.

He's done a lot in the WWE but the one glaring omission is winning the Rumble. Now that he's #1 it might be the toughest match he's ever competed in, but that's what you have to expect if you call yourself the best in the world. On Sunday he's going to punch the lion in the face and do everything he can to be the last man standing.

This brings out Kane who says that Punk has a .000000186 chance of winning, or one in five hundred million. Maybe his odds are a little better because he's best in the world though. Punk says never tell him the odds and that it's sad to see what has happened to the Devil's Favorite Demon. Is he the Authority's Favorite Statistician now? Punk isn't worried because the #1 entrant has won before and he's been the best since day one.

We recap Bryan vs. Wyatt who have a match on Sunday. I'm actually looking forward to that showdown.

### Wyatt Family vs. Prime Time Players

Harper pounds on Young in the corner to start before kicking his head off with a big boot. Off to Rowan who takes off the mask to reveal that hideous face of his. Harper loads up a whip to send Rowan into the corner but instead Rowan whips Harper into the other corner to take out Titus. The discus lariat ends Young at 1:05 in a total squash.

Darren gets Sister Abigail post match and Bray says he'll change the world. You can hear some Bo Dallas in his voice as he speaks, only to have Daniel Bryan cut him off. Bryan says listen to these people because they don't fear fate, the reapers or burning with the saints. On Sunday, Daniel will no longer be trapped in Bray's madness, but Bray will be trapped in Daniel's prison. He'll find out who the real monster is as the

fans chant YES.

### Fandango vs. Kofi Kingston

During the entrances we get an inset interview from Kofi who says that he's done some amazing things to stay in the Rumble, but this Sunday he's going to perform his greatest feat of all: win the Royal Rumble and go on to headline Wrestlemania. Simple, to the point, ties into his character's history. I'd love these sort of promos to be more common.

A shoulder block puts Kofi down and Fandango gyrates a bit. Back up and Kofi throws him over the top and out to the corner (nice touch) and we get an Emma sighting. Fandango rams him into the apron to take over and something resembling a Pele gets two on Kofi back inside. Kingston pops back up and sends Fandango into the ropes for Trouble in Paradise and the pin at 2:57. Just a match.

Rumble By The Numbers Part II.

Long recap of Cena vs. Orton.

### New Age Outlaws/Shield vs. Usos/Cody Rhodes/Goldust/Big E. Langston

Jimmy and Rollins get things going with Seth stomping him down in the corner. They run the ropes a few times until Jimmy stops to dance and grab an arm. Ambrose comes in and has his arm worked on for a few minutes before a right hand gets two. Langston gets the tag and charges into Ambrose's ribs in the corner before hitting a series of backbreakers to keep Dean in trouble. Dean gets a boot up in the corner and tags in Reigns for a big running clothesline.

Big E. gets triple teamed for a bit but just powers Shield off and makes the tag to Cody. Things speed up a bit with a springboard missile dropkick and the Disaster Kick but Gunn comes in for a shot from behind

to take over. We take a break and come back with Cody sunset flipping Rollins for two before Seth takes him down again. Gunn gets the tag and drops a knee for two. The heels continue their tagging with Reigns hammering on his back and holding him in place with a cravate.

Dean comes back in with a spinning belly to back suplex for two but Cody fights out of a belly to back superplex and hits the moonsault press on the now legal Reigns. Goldust gets the hot tag to clean house and even hits a top rope hurricanrana to blow everyone's minds. A powerslam gets two on Road Dogg and here's Langston for the Big Ending on Rollins but Roman makes the save with a spear.

Jey superkicks Reigns down and Jimmy adds the Superfly Splash but throws Dean to the floor instead of covering. The Usos load up the stereo dives but Billy cuts off Jimmy and takes him down with the Fameasser. Cody comes back in for the Disaster Kick but Roadie takes him down with the pumphandle slam, only to have Goldust grab a rollup but Shield makes a save as the match is thrown out at 13:20.

**Rating:** B-. This was an old formula tag match but the very hot finish helped it out a lot. I'm a sucker for the parade of finishers to set up the ending and when you have ten guys it's quite a long parade. The DQ ending is a smart move here as you don't want anyone doing a job going into the Rumble or a title match.

Everybody gets in and we get the traditional huge brawl with everyone else announced for the Rumble (other than Batista of course) coming to join in the fight. CM Punk comes out to a BIG pop to get in on the brawl as the show goes off the air.

**Overall Rating:** B. This is the show they've been needing to have since the beginning of the year. Tonight was about the Rumble match itself with people wanting to go to Wrestlemania, which is the whole point of the show this Sunday. The other matches got some nice build as well and for once I'm excited for the entire show. Tonight wasn't supposed to be about

good matches or the in ring action and it wasn't the focus. Good episode tonight which did its job.

### Results

Big Show/Rey Mysterio b. Real Americans – Splash to Cesaro

The Miz b. Wade Barrett – DDT

AJ Lee b. Cameron – Shining Wizard

Curtis Axel/Ryback b. Los Matadores – Rollup to Fernando

Wyatt Family b. Prime Time Players – Discus lariat to Young

Kofi Kingston b. Fandango – Trouble in Paradise

Usos/Big E. Langston/Cody Rhodes/Goldust b. Shield/New Age Outlaws via DQ when all three members of Shield came into the ring

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# **Smackdown – January 17, 2014: Punk's Career Suicide**

### **Smackdown**

Date: January 17, 2014

Location: DCU Center, Worcester, Massachusetts

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, The Miz

The main story coming off Raw is of course Daniel Bryan turning on the Wyatts to a huge reaction. I thought Bryan was going to leave them eventually though this was faster than I was expecting. Other than that, the road to the Rumble started to pick up on Monday as people names were added to the match to make it give it far more star power than it had before. Tonight we should get a few more names added to the match as the show is in nine days. Let's get to it.

### New Age Outlaws vs. Cody Rhodes/Goldust

Non-title. Cole recaps the turn on Raw and says he doesn't get the surprise at the Outlaws' treachery. For once, he's absolutely right. Roadie does the intro and the PG issues get a bit muddled. Why can't Road Dogg swear on the way to the ring but can when he's introducing Billy? Goldust and Road Dogg get things going with Roadie suckering Goldust in for some shaky punches. Goldust takes him into the corner for some right hands of his own followed by a back elbow to the jaw.

Billy comes in but is backdropped out to the floor, allowing for a tag off to Cody. Why Goldust is exhausted already is beyond me as he was barely touched. He powerslams Roadie down and tags in his brother to a nice pop. Cody cleans house on Gunn but has to deal with Road Dogg as well. A double springboard missile dropkick puts the Outlaws down for two as everything breaks down.

Goldust and Roadie go to the floor as Cody avoids the Fameasser but has Cross Rhodes countered as well. Billy gets two off a tilt-a-whirl slam but still can't hit the Fameasser. There's the Disaster Kick...and Vickie Guerrero interrupts. She reminds us that the Royal Rumble is every man for himself, including brother vs. brother. The distraction lets Billy roll up Cody for the pin at 4:43.

**Rating:** C-. Goldust's cardiovascular issues aside, this wasn't bad until the stupid ending. It's bad enough that I have to put up with the stupid corporate stuff on Impact but now I have to put up with it on Smackdown

as well. I'd love to sit down with the creative team and show them some old matches so they can see other ways heels can cheat to win a match. What do I have to do to get a cover with feet on the ropes around here?

CM Punk says he's going to call out all three members of the Shield. Literally that's that entire interview.

Here's Paul Heyman to brag about how amazing Lesnar is, focusing on destroying Mark Henry. After that though, Lesnar was attacked by Big Show who implied he could take Brock out. Heyman admits that Big Show is intimidating but he'll fall to Lesnar at the Royal Rumble.

Heyman talks about going through wars with Lesnar at his side, meaning he has to fear no evil. Big Show may hurt Zeb Colter, but he won't hurt Heyman to get to Brock, including on Raw when Lesnar appears live. Big Show comes out and Heyman is in the crowd before Big Show is all the way in the ring. Big Show shows us a clip from Raw where Show threw Lesnar around, followed by Big Show promising to knock Lesnar out.

### Alberto Del Rio vs. Rey Mysterio

Before the match Rey talks about Del Rio being afraid of Batista, sending Del Rio into a frenzy to start. He wraps Rey's arm around the rope but gets sent outside for Rey's sliding splash under the bottom rope. Back in and Del Rio crotches Rey down to tie him up in the Tree of Woe for a kick to the ribs as we take a break. Back with Rey hitting a top rope seated senton, only to run into a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker for two.

JBL talks about George Washington for some reason as Rey rolls through a sunset flip and kicks Del Rio in the head for two. The corner enziguri brings Rey down from the top again but Del Rio can't pin him. Rey comes back with a tornado DDT for two of his own but Del Rio hits the Codebreaker on the arm. The armbreaker is countered into the 619 but the top rope splash hits knees. Del Rio loads up the low superkicks but Rey counters into a rollup for the pin at 8:25.



**Rating:** C+. This took time to get going but the last few minutes were good back and forth stuff. It was a nice change of pace for Del Rio to not be on the arm the entire way through, even though he stayed on the arm as is his custom. This was way better than their basic match on Raw, which is nice as they have chemistry together.

Post match Del Rio jumps Mysterio and puts him in the cross armbreaker.

### Naomi vs. Tamina Snuka

Fallout from Tamina hitting AJ with the Rear View on Monday. Emma is in the audience doing her dance again. Miz reads a statement from Maryse congratulating AJ on breaking her record for longest reigning Divas Champion. Naomi jumps Tamina to start but is easily knocked down and backdropped for two. We hit the chinlock for a bit before Naomi comes back with some kicks to the ribs and a modified bulldog. A Bubba Bomb puts Tamina down but the referee is looking at Cameron and AJ. Tamina uses the distraction to kick Tamina in the head and hit a split legged moonsault for the pin at 2:35.

Video on Mae Young. These are always saddening yet cool at the same time. If there has ever been a woman more willing to do anything to entertain a crowd, I'd love to see her.

Video of Bryan turning on Bray Wyatt Monday to a huge reaction.

Here's Bray without his hat in person with something to say. I love that you can't see Harper and Rowan until the lights come on even though they're right next to Bray. He talks about wanting to be powerful like his father as a child. Bray did his best to appease him and be just like him but it was never good enough. His father was never there for him and never entrusted Bray with his kingdom.

Instead he cast Bray out amidst the sheep, forcing him to walk the earth

alone. But then Sister Abigail saved him by singing the sweetest songs Bray had ever heard. Bray became obsessed with her beauty and power, but Abigail told him that Bray would be betrayed again on his path to righteousness.

Monday was the moment that Abigail was talking about, when Bray knew he had to sacrifice himself to be resurrected into the creature he was born to be. You can't hurt him because he's already dead and he does not bleed like we do. Daniel Bryan was given a chance to walk with the reapers but now he will be forced to walk with the saints. More creepy stuff here as Bray's backstory is slowly filled in.

Punk is going to call out the New Age Outlaws in addition to the Shield. If that's career suicide, consider it a gift to the Authority.

### Big E. Langston vs. Fandango

Non-title as well. Langston hits a quick backbreaker to start and Fandango bails to the floor. Back in and the dancer pounds away with right hands but Langston runs him over with a shoulder block. Fandango avoids a charge in the corner and kicks Big E. to the outside before pulling Langston's shoulder into the post. Langston is thrown back inside and we hit the armbar for a few moments as the match slows down. Big E. easily powers Fandango to the floor as JBL and Miz argue over who was a bigger star. Fandango is suplexed down, setting up the Warrior Splash, the running Vader Attack and the Big Ending for the win at 4:16.

**Rating:** D+. Pretty boring match here but Big E. getting clean wins on TV is the right idea for him. Fandango got in some offense here instead of just being the sandwich that Langston had for supper tonight. He's not going to be a big deal for a long time but it's better than getting squashed.

Shield thinks it's the other 27 people in the Rumble that need to be worried instead of the three of them. Ambrose says he wouldn't throw

Rollins out but Rollins says Dean couldn't do it anyway. Rollins would throw Ambrose out, leading to an argument between the two. Reigns cuts them off and says he'll throw both of them out and go to Wrestlemania, but they'll still be a united Shield.

Ultimate Warrior Hall of Fame video.

Video on the WWE Network.

We look back at Kofi shocking Orton on Monday, leading to Orton attacking Cena's dad. HHH has promised to deal with Orton internally.

### Real Americans vs. Usos

Colter is in a wheelchair to sell the attack on Monday. Cesaro and Swagger do the hand over the heart but Zeb rolls down the ramp without them holding him in place. Before the match, Colter, with his voice muffled by the neck brace, says he wants Lesnar to destroy Big Show at the Rumble before asking the fans to say WE THE PEOPLE. Jimmy has bad ribs and Jey has a bad shoulder due to the cage match on Monday.

Swagger throws Jey around to start and the injuries take their toll immediately. Off to Cesaro for some shoulders to the ribs before Swagger comes back in with knees to the midsection as well. Jack launches Cesaro into a splash in the corner and Antonio follows up with rights and lefts to the ribs as we take a break. Back with Jimmy in the Cesaro Swing which still gets a nice reaction, months after it was at its peak. Jimmy fights off the dizziness and kicks the Real Americans in the face and stomach, finally allowing the hot tag to Jey. The running Umaga attack gets two on Jack and a Samoan drop gets the same.

Cesaro is knocked to the floor but Jey gets caught in the Patriot Lock. Jimmy superkicks Swagger for the save before chasing Antonio to the floor. Cesaro hides behind Colter's wheelchair before missing a charge

into the barricade. Jimmy shoves the wheelchair into Cesaro for a big crash as Jey hits an electric chair drop on Swagger. Jey drops the Superfly Splash for the pin at 9:16.

**Rating:** C. The idea was fine here with the Real Americans working on the injuries but we've seen these teams fight so many times now that it's hard to care anymore. Colter is so good on the mic but he needs someone better than these two losers to get anywhere. Swagger is in such desperate need of repackaging it's unreal.

Here's Punk for the big call out to end the show. Punk says he's out here because he's not a coward like the Authority. He doesn't need an army of people to fight his battles for him, but maybe he's insane. Yeah he might get slaughtered by Shield and the Outlaws so why not also call out the In Laws, the Ultimate Warrior, the Dingo Warrior and the Road Warriors?

The thing is, people listen to him when he talks and that's real power. Punk talks about HHH abusing his power to satisfy his own agenda while hiding behind his wife. Shield's music cuts Punk off before he can get too far into that though, which is a nice touch if it was intentional. The Outlaws come out before Shield can get to the ring and Punk is surrounded.

Punk holds up the microphone as his weapon but Kane's pyro goes off and he orders everyone to stand down. He gets in the ring and says the Authority doesn't want it this way. Punk's anger is displaced and his paranoia is getting the better of him. The Authority wants Punk to main event Wrestlemania, which is why they entered him in the Rumble.

In fact, Kane's new top directive is to treat Punk with the respect that he deserves. Punk looks confused as Kane leaves so he asks if he has Kane's word. Kane nods but Punk doesn't buy it because Kane is a seven foot suck up. Kane says get him before catching a distracted Punk in a chokeslam to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C-. This is another show that didn't need to exist. The wrestling wasn't bad, the promos weren't bad and the ending advanced very little, but the show isn't actively bad. That's the best way to describe Smackdown as a whole: not much happens, but it's better than having your face carved up with a branding iron. In a way though that's the worst kind of show as it's not bad enough to make fun of but it's not good enough to be worth seeing either. In a word, Smackdown exists and that's all there is to say about it.

### Results

New Age Outlaws b. Cody Rhodes/Goldust – Rollup to Rhodes

Rey Mysterio b. Alberto Del Rio – Rollup

Naomi b. Tamina Snuka – Split legged moonsault

Big E. Langston b. Fandango – Big Ending

Usos b. Real Americans – Superfly Splash to Swagger

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## **2013 Awards: Worst PPV**

This one really wasn't that hard. It's Battleground and I really didn't have to put a lot of thought into it. The show just didn't need to happen and felt like a cash grab. The

Rhodes Brothers vs. Shield was a very good match, but other than that there's nothing of value on the show. Some of the matches were ok, but there's no reason for them to be on a full priced PPV. The main event made things even worse with the Bryan vs. Orton feud being dragged out for the sake of being dragged out. On top of that the midcard stuff sucked. I mean, is there ANY reason to have the Real Americans vs. Khali/Santino go seven minutes? Just an unnecessary show and not a good one either.

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## **TLC 2013 Preview**

We're getting closer to the Road to Wrestlemania, which means I need to start packing for the biggest show of the year. The major story for the show is the world title unification which has been thrown together in less than three weeks for reasons that aren't quite clear. Let's get to it. We'll start with the pre-show as always. In case you missed the throwaway line on Raw, the match is Ziggler vs. Fandango in a match of who has fallen further since the summer. I'll take Ziggler to win in a match that will likely make people cancel their PPV orders instead of buying the show.

As for matches people might actually care about, I'm going with Orton to get both titles. The seeds for a Cena heel turn are so obvious that they feel like they're fakes and the Authority will screw him over. These two in a TLC match should be a great brawl but everyone is waiting for the big story stuff at the end of the match. Orton wins in an entertaining match.

I'll take Bryan over the Wyatts due to Bray sitting at ringside and Bryan somehow hitting the knee on Rowan for a fast pin. The key to the Wyatts has always been in their talking so even losing here isn't the worst result in the world. Bray will probably sit on the floor for most of the match anyway.

Shield over Punk as CM fights off Ambrose and Rollins but gets speared down for the pin. Ambrose of course takes the credit, furthering the split.

Langston keeps the Intercontinental Title in the obvious result of the night.

Natalya has to win the title eventually right? AJ has held the thing for months now and since it's WWE, having a challenger lose most of the early title shots to win in the end is the norm, even though they look worthless leading up to the match. Total Divas has wrapped up too, so I have no idea why they'd change the title now, making it all the more likely.

In the bonus match I'll take Mysterio and Big Show to win the tag titles. Why? Because the tag division is getting really good so the solution is to put the belts on a thrown together team with I believe one match together at all.

If Miz vs. Kofi is added as it should be, I'll take Miz with another freaking rollup.

Overall TLC is a one match show but it's one heck of a match. The idea of unifying the titles is something that needed to happen a long time ago and thankfully will get rid of a lot of the annoying problems WWE has, such as four people having 50 title reigns between the two of them in less than twelve years. It's far more about the big story to end the show and get us rolling down the road to Wrestlemania, The show should be entertaining enough, though adding in a ladder, chairs or tables match might have helped a bit. Still though, it should be fun.

Thoughts/predictions?

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# Smackdown – December 6, 2013: All Hail The New Buzzword

## Smackdown

Date: December 6, 2013

Location: BOK Center, Tulsa, Oklahoma

Commentators: John Bradshaw Layfield, Michael Cole

We're closing in on TLC and a lot more of the card has been set in stone. The main stories coming out of Raw are the two handicap matches for TLC with Punk taking on the Shield and Bryan facing the Wyatts. Tonight it's Punk against a member of Shield to be announced tonight. Other than that we're likely to get talking from Orton and/or Cena. Let's get to it.

Theme song.

Here's Orton to open the show. He talks about becoming the champion of champions at TLC (still sounds better than Unified Champion) and shows us a clip from the end of Raw where Cena put him through a table. Even though Orton has about five injuries as a result, he'll still prove his greatness at TLC. He may not be the most likeable of characters but he's never liked any of us or John Cena. Orton does however revere Stephanie and HHH because they know what's best for business. Maybe he's taken some things they've done for him for granted so Orton would like to apologize.

Before he can get all the way through though, here's Daniel Bryan to point his fingers in the air a lot. Bryan says Orton needs to apologize for being a champion. In all of their title matches, Orton never once legitimately beat him. Just because Bryan has been targeted by the Wyatts, he hasn't forgotten about Orton or what Orton did to him. Daniel says that after TLC, he's going to be first in line for a title shot at

the new champion. Tonight though he's looking at the face of the WWE and feels like putting a knee on that face. Orton says no but Bryan appeals to the crowd for a YES chant. Randy just stands there.

### Big E. Langston vs. Fandango

Non-title and Sandow is on commentary. Langston's music seems to have been remixed. The champion throws Fandango around with ease and drives his shoulder into Fandango's ribs. Fandango is sent to the floor but Langston takes too much time going after him and gets clotheslined down. Back in and Fandango puts on a front facelock but shoves Fandango off like he's a cruiserweight. Some clotheslines set up the Warrior splash but Fandango comes back with a kick to the head and a knee to the jaw for two. Langston shrugs it off and hits the Big Ending for the pin at 2:35.

Post match Sandow gets in the ring to point at Langston's belt. Dang they're warming up for the Wrestlemania Point early this year.

We get the opening of Smackdown from WWE 2K14 via Youtube. Riveting stuff of course.

### Cody Rhodes/Goldust vs. Ryback/Curtis Axel

Non-title. This is fallout from Main Event where Goldust had Ryback beaten but Curtis came in for the DQ. Cody starts with Ryback as JBL tries some portmanteaus of Ryback and Axel's names. Goldust quickly comes in and gets caught in a gorilla press for two. Ryback hits a middle rope splash and Axel drops a middle rope elbow for two as the announcers talk about Superstar of the Year. The former Heyman Guys take turns on Goldust until it's off to Axel for a chinlock.

Back up and Axel misses a dropkick and walks into a powerslam to give Goldie a breather. The not hot tag brings in Cody with a missile dropkick and the sunset flip out of the corner for two. Cody's moonsault press

gets two and everything breaks down. Goldust knocks Ryback to the floor and Cody lays him out with a Disaster Kick off the announcers' table. Rhodes heads back inside and is immediately rolled up by Axel for the pin at 4:24.

**Rating:** D+. This didn't have time to go anywhere, but are we really jobbing one of the hottest acts in the company to Axel and Ryback? I was hoping this whole "champions lose to set up a title match" bit was taking a hiatus but apparently WWE was just luring me into a false sense of security.

Orton vs. Bryan is official for later.

Bad News Barrett tells us that we're all sheep who will follow each other to the slaughter.

#### Alberto Del Rio vs. Kofi Kingston

Del Rio jumps Kingston on the floor before the bell and sends him into the barricade. Kofi gets put in the armbreaker for some screaming as referees try to pull Del Rio off. No match, but haven't we seen Del Rio destroy Kofi after a loss before?

We recap Punk's issues with Shield leading up to the handicap match at TLC.

Shield promises to hurt Punk tonight but they're going to leave him healthy enough to make it to TLC. It's going to be Ambrose facing Punk tonight.

#### Dean Ambrose vs. CM Punk

Non-title because the US Title is nothing but a trophy again. Rollins and Reigns stay in the crowd to keep it one on one. Punk has bad ribs coming

into this. Cole: "Punk didn't tape his ribs. Why put a target on his back?" Punk grabs a headlock to start but misses the high kick as Ambrose hangs onto the rope. Dean charges into a big boot of all things from Punk, setting up four straight legdrops for two for Punk.

Dean comes back with a knee to the ribs to take over and Cole completely ignores it to read more nominees. We hit the chinlock for a bit but Punk fights out and forearm Ambrose in the head. The GTS is countered with another shot to the ribs but Ambrose bails to the floor as we take a break.

Back with Dean stomping on the bad ribs like the smart heel that he is. Dean keeps taunting Punk as he peppers him with right hands before hooking a crossface chicken wing. Punk is down so Ambrose goes up, only to miss a top rope elbow drop. The springboard clothesline gets two for Punk and the running knee in the corner gets the same. Ambrose counters the swinging neckbreaker into a backslide which sets up a Fujiwara Armbar to stay on the arm.

Dean lets it go for some reason but counters another GTS attempt into a sleeper. Punk rolls through that into the Anaconda Vice but Dean quickly makes a rope. The Macho Elbow is broken up with a superplex for two and Dean goes back to the armbar. Punk gets into the ropes as well and finally scores with the high kick for two. The GTS, Bulldog Driver and another GTS are all countered and Punk is sent shoulder first into the post, giving Ambrose a rollup (with a handful of trunks) for two more. Not that it matters as another high kick sets up the GTS for the pin at 13:00.

**Rating:** B-. Good match, annoying booking. There are three Shield members to pick from. One is a champion, one is the golden boy and the other is Seth Rollins. Why in the world wasn't this Rollins doing a job for Punk? The match would have been entertaining and you keep the title looking strong at the same time. It's really not that complicated of an idea but WWE continues to mess it up. The match was what you would expect from

Punk vs. Ambrose for 13 minutes, but why did Ambrose go after the arm so much when Punk had bad ribs coming in?

Renee Young (looking stunning in a red dress) is with Rey Mysterio in the back. She asks Rey which world title means more. Before Rey can answer, the Real Americans (now in matching jackets with Cesaro's saying Toni and Swagger's saying Big Hoss) come up and asks to see Rey's papers.

Colter wants to know what's up with Mysterio's mask, if that's even his real name. Rey says he was born and raised in San Diego, California but is Mexican in his heart. Colter thinks Rey's title reigns should be stricken from the record books but Rey thinks the Real Americans should be stricken from the building. Zeb throws out a challenge for a tag match with Rey getting a partner. Rey says si.

#### Natalya vs. Tamina Snuka

AJ is on commentary and talks about how she was the most interesting Diva in the match just by skipping around in a circle. Tamina gets caught by a quick clothesline for two but she easily shoves Natalya to the floor. Nattie gets rammed ribs first into the apron a few times before Tamina takes it back inside to crank on Natalya's arms.

Cole spends the match trying to make AJ into a heel by asking why she thinks she's above the title which just isn't working. Natalya gets two off a low dropkick but Tamina kicks out of the Sharpshooter. A Samoan drop puts Natalya down but she misses the Superfly Splash, giving Natalya the pin at 2:59.

Post match Natalya yells at AJ to no effect.

The Funkadactyls sell stuff and annoy me by existing.

#### Real Americans vs. Rey Mysterio/???

The mystery partner is Big Show, who apparently is just going to forget about the whole Authority ruining his life thing. Big Show chops Swagger in the corner and headbutts him down to start. Off to Rey for a top rope hurricanrana but Swager counters the sitout bulldog into a wheelbarrow slam in a nice move. Cesaro gets in a neck snap across the top rope as Cole brings up Cesaro making Titus sick last week.

Mysterio fights out of the corner but Jack sends him out to the floor. Back in and the Real Americans take turns pounding on Rey until the sitout bulldog takes Swagger down. Double tags bring in Cesaro and Big Show so the giant can clean house. A spear gets two on Cesaro as Swagger makes the save, only to have Rey hit a quick 619 to Jack. Big Show chokeslams Cesaro, setting up a Rey splash from Big Show's shoulders for the pin at 4:20.

**Rating:** D+. Just a match here with a very short version of the tag team formula. Big Show being in the midcard again is a better fit for him, but I really hope this doesn't lead to a big man/little man tag team. The Real Americans continue to go from hot to cold like no one else on the roster.

We get a video package of various champions over the years, talking about what being champion meant to them. It's mainly a collection of promos from their careers with a few guys sitting down to talk about what the win means. Cool stuff.

HHH's sitdown interview talks about how great the unification match will be and guarantees that the King of Kings will crown the Champion of Champions.

Bad News Barrett has some good news for us. There will be a Champion of Champions after TLC, but that man will have a target on his chest. He'll be the hunted, making him the envy of the locker room, meaning he's doomed.

## Daniel Bryan vs. Randy Orton

Non-title of course. They fight into the corner to start with neither being able to get an advantage. Orton takes over with some right hands but Bryan fights out of the corner with punches of his own. Daniel goes after the arm as the announcers discuss Bryan joining the Wyatts. Orton comes back with the backbreaker for two and a clothesline puts Bryan down. Bryan scores with a dropkick to send Orton to the floor but Orton moves before the FLYING GOAT can launch.

We take a break and come back with Orton getting two off something we didn't see before putting on a chinlock. Bryan fights out and moonsaults over Randy to set up the running clothesline. A pair of running dropkicks in the corner set up some kicks to Orton's chest and a top rope hurricanrana gets two for Bryan. Daniel sends him to the floor and now the FLYING GOAT connects.

Back in and the missile dropkick drops Randy again and there are the YES kicks. The big one misses as is the new custom and Orton gets two off a powerslam. Orton connects with the Elevated DDT but Bryan counters the RKO into a backslide for two. Now the big kick lays out Orton and the Swan Dive....doesn't launch because we've got Wyatts. The distraction lets Orton hit the RKO for the pin at 8:44 shown of 12:14.

**Rating:** C+. Bryan continues his roll but it's clear his time on top is over. The ending keeps the Bryan vs. Wyatts feud going but doesn't do much for Daniel himself. It does however give Bryan some more momentum going into the PPV which is a good idea, but unfortunately it's at Bryan's expense.

Post match Bray pops up on screen and says tick tock over and over. He doesn't mean to keep haunting Bryan, but how many times does Bryan have to cross a burning bridge to know he doesn't have to fight this battle alone? Bryan knows what they are, but at TLC he'll learn what he himself is. Bray laughs to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C. They're doing a decent job of building up to TLC but not everything was clicking tonight. Bad News Barrett is going to bomb and it's going to bomb badly. There's just nothing there at the moment and the insults are as easy as you can think of. On the other hand, the handicap matches are going to be solid with Bryan vs. Wyatts getting more interesting every show. The world title match is looking more and more like a screwy finish every week, but at least we have a new buzz phrase with Champion of Champions.

## Results

Big E. Langston b. Fandango – Big Ending

Curtis Axel/Ryback b. Cody Rhodes/Goldust – Rollup to Rhodes

CM Punk b. Dean Ambrose – GTS

Natalya b. Tamina Snuka – Pin after a missed Superfly Splash

Big Show/Rey Mysterio b. Real Americans – Splash to Swagger

Randy Orton b. Daniel Bryan – RKO

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# Survivor Series 2013 Preview

It's the fourth biggest show of the year and there's actually a card for it now! As usual we'll start on the pre-show. I see absolutely no reason for Miz to lose here. He's coming off a heel turn and he's against the jobber to end all jobbers in Kofi, so we'll take what should be obvious here and say Miz wins.

Continuing the trend of easy picks, Big Show loses to Orton. It's obvious they're setting up HHH vs. Big Show at TLC because if there's one thing this company needs, it's more Big Show. Orton will be in trouble but come back somehow and cheat to win. I could see a scenario where Big Show wins and HHH goes to take the title from him but I don't think they'll go there.

Cena over Del Rio of course, which will likely set up a third match between them at TLC. Why WWE thinks anyone wants to see that is beyond me, but they make some very strange decisions in the main event scene at times.

Langston retains the title in the rematch. I don't think this really needs an explanation.

I'm going to go with what seems like the logical move and say Punk and Bryan beat the Wyatts. The money to this feud is in Bray vs. the stars and it wouldn't make sense having the Family get the win. That being said, I wouldn't be complaining if they did because those two could easily be a nice fixture in the tag division. Punk and Bryan win but it's

a struggle.

Total Divas win because WWE thinks that's what the people want to see. Then again I've said that for months now and haven't been right yet.

That leaves us with the traditional Survivor Series match which is a hard one to pick. I'm going to go with the good guys here in a tossup. The problem here is Roman Reigns, who just does not lose in WWE. Unless he gets DQ'd or counted out, I can't imagine him being eliminated. On the other hand, I just can't see the Real Americans and Shield winning overall. I'll take the tag champions, Usos and Rey but I wouldn't be surprised if I'm wrong.

Overall the show looks better than it did a week ago but it doesn't come off as important. Usually, and as is the case here, a show is only as good as its top match. Big Show vs. Orton is one of the weakest main events I can remember in a long time and that's a bad sign for the rest of the show. Survivor Series can work as a major show but WWE seems inept at making it one. The show should be decent but it's not going to wow anyone.

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## **Monday Night Raw – November**

# 11, 2013: Handicapped By Too Much Authority

## Monday Night Raw

Date: November 11, 2013

Location: Phones4u Arena, Manchester, England

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, John Bradshaw Layfield

It's a rare taped show tonight as the company is over in England. The main story coming in is Big Show being the new guy to stand up to the regime, having forced his way back into a job. Kane has also joined the bad guys and is now the director of operations, a position which hasn't exactly been defined yet. Let's get to it.

We open with a video honoring American's military veterans narrated by John Cena. Classy as always.

We recap the angle at the end of last week's show with Big Show getting his job back as well as a title shot at Survivor Series. The video also includes the handicap match and Big Show being put through a table.

The Authority (the official name for HHH and Stephanie) isn't here tonight so it's not clear who is in charge.

Here's Orton to open the show. He thinks he's going to win at Survivor Series and says that since the Authority isn't here, he's in charge tonight. This brings out Brad Maddox to say he's the GM and therefore in charge, but here's Kane before he can make his first match. Kane says that he's in charge in the absence of the Authority.

Maddox says he's actually in charge, so the opening match is Randy Orton vs. Cody Rhodes. Kane says no, because it's Orton vs. Goldust. Maddox says not so fast and Orton says pick an opponent because he can't fight them both.. Here's Vickie to suck up to the Authority a bit before saying she's confident in Orton's authority. The crowd shouts her down so much that you can barely hear her, but she makes Orton vs. Goldust and Rhodes in a handicap match.

## Goldust/Cody Rhodes vs. Randy Orton

Goldust gets things going and quickly hiptosses and armdrags Orton down for two. Off to Cody to stay on the arm as the fans are all behind the Golden One. The release gordbuster gets two and it's back to Goldust who is stomped down in the corner. The fans chant Randy's Boring before starting what I believe was a JBL chant. Now it's a Jerry chant. Orton runs into a boot in the corner but kicks Goldust off the middle rope as we take a break.

Back with Goldust fighting out of a chinlock and catching Orton in a powerslam. A double clothesline puts both guys down and there's the hot tag to Cody who comes in with a missile dropkick. A spinning sunset flip out of the corner gets two for Rhodes and the moonsault press gets the same. Everything breaks down and Cody fights out of the RK0 before a double clothesline puts Orton on the floor. Orton takes the countout at 8:50.

**Rating:** C-. This was ok but the ending was obvious. I'm glad they didn't have either side do the job as it would mess up too much momentum that has been built over the last few months. It's interesting to see Vickie act like something resembling a face, but she's not exactly the right choice for it.

Post match here's Big Show (said to not be here in a story that lasted 20 minutes) to destroy Orton and chokeslam him through the announce table.

Big Show left during a break to go get a pint.

## Los Matadores/Santino Marella vs. Union Jacks

The Union Jacks are 3MB (no masks or anything) in British flag attire. Santino has bull horns on his head. Slater and Diego get us going but Mahal makes a blind tag and gets two off a knee to the head. A 3MB triple team takes Diego down and it's McIntyre with a stomp to the head.

Santino tags himself in and pounds away on Mahal but his headbutt hits knees. Torito distracts Slater and chases him around, allowing Santino to gore Slater from behind. McIntyre finally catches the bull but Los

Matadores dive through the ropes for the save. Torito goes up top and dives onto Slater, allowing Santino to hit the Cobra (with horns) on Mahal for the pin at 2:55.

Brad Maddox apologizes to Orton when Vickie comes up to apologize as well. Orton doesn't want to hear it but Kane comes in and tells Orton to quit mouthing off. Randy sends them all off because his shoulder is messed up.

#### Damien Sandow vs. Kofi Kingston

Damien is still very aggressive and pounds Kingston down to start. He puts on a chinlock before dropping a knee for two. The Wind-Up Elbow gets two more but Kofi avoids a legdrop. Kofi fights back with some right hands and a kick to the head but gets knocked off the top and walks into You're Welcome for the pin at 3:50.

**Rating:** D+. This was just an extended squash but that's what Kofi is good for. He's probably never going to get past this level but he's capable of putting on a good match with just about anyone and can make anybody look better. Sandow being aggressive is a decent idea and having a new finisher is the best thing that could happen to him.

#### Intercontinental Title: Curtis Axel vs. Dolph Ziggler

Cole goes into his Hall of Fame stat sheet as Axel grabs a headlock to start. An elbow to the jaw puts Ziggler into the corner and Axel stomps him down. They trade dropkicks for two each and Ziggler swivels his hips a bit. Ziggler takes him down again and drops the ten elbows for two. Curtis sends him to the floor and slaps him around back inside but Ziggler scores with a jumping DDT to put both guys down.

Ziggler avoids a charge and sends Axel shoulder first into the post before another elbow gets two. Axel comes back with a nice catapult into the buckle for two but Ziggler hits a Fameasser for the same. A Saito Suplex gets two for the champion but he takes too much time going up, allowing Ziggler to hit a middle rope X Factor for two. The Zig Zag is countered into a kind of release flapjack, allowing Axel to hit the neckbreaker into a faceplant for the pin at 9:09.

**Rating:** C+. This was MUCH better than I was expecting here with both guys hitting a lot of big spots for some nice near falls. Axel is a guy who can have good matches but he's such damaged goods at this point that it's almost impossible to take him seriously. Zigler is clearly not going back to the main event scene anytime soon so having him do stuff like this is the right call.

Kane demands respect from Brad Maddox so Brad makes the Real Americans vs. John Cena in another handicap match. Kane one ups him by making Shield vs. Daniel Bryan and CM Punk. No handshake is given.

Zack Ryder is the WWE merchandise schiller of the night.

#### Tamina Snuka vs. Nikki Bella

Nikki gets thrown around as the announcers plug Total Divas. Tamina bends Nikki over her knee in the most awkward backbreaker you'll see in a long time. We get more choking and chinlockery before Nikki makes a comeback with a backdrop from her knees and a headscissors where Tamina flipped over when Nikki wasn't touching her. AJ gets in a cheap shot to put Nikki down, allowing Tamina to hit the Superfly Splash for the pin at 4:18.

**Rating:** D-. This division sucks but Nikki looks great so it's not a failure. That is all.

Brie cleans house post match.

WWE 2K14 stuff.

Shield comes in to see Orton, who yells at them for not saving him from Big Show. They say it's none of his business where they were during Big Show's attack because they don't work for anyone.

#### Fandango vs. Tyson Kidd

This is set up from a clip of a Total Divas episode that hasn't aired yet. Fandango is in Union Jack tights for no apparent reason. Feeling out process to start until Fandango throws Kidd out of the corner and out to the floor. Back in and Kidd hurricanranas Fandango into the middle buckle. A springboard dropkick sends Fandango to the floor and a bad

looking hurricanrana off the apron takes him down again. Back in and a springboard sunset flip is countered into a Fandango rollup for the pin at 2:59.

### John Cena vs. Real Americans

Colter runs down England to start, saying that there are some bad people over here, ranging from monarchs to soccer hooligans to, dare he say it, Mr. Bean fans. Swagger goes after the bad arm to start as Cena's underwear is sticking out. Here's Del Rio with the Mexican flag as Cesaro throws Cena to the floor. Back from a break with Del Rio on commentary and Cesaro bringing in Swagger for a chinlock.

The running Vader Bomb hits Cena's knees and John shoulder blocks both guys down, only to run into a European uppercut from Cesaro. The Swing is countered into an STF attempt but Antonio makes the tag off to Swagger. Jack can't get the Patriot Lock but Cesaro goes up top, only to have his cross body rolled into an AA attempt. Swagger makes the save with a chop block to the leg but Cena backdrops out of a Neutralizer attempt.

Cena hits his finishing sequence on Swagger but the AA is countered into the Patriot Lock. John rolls out and hits the AA but Cesaro breaks up the pin at two. A powerbomb gets two on Cesaro but he comes back with Swiss Death for the same result. Cesaro loads up what looked to be a top rope huricnrana but Cena shoves him into a tag to Swagger. Jack's running suplex is countered into a top rope cross body from Cena and the STF makes Jack tap at 12:56.

**Rating:** B-. This was good but was there ever any doubt as to how this was going to end? That's one of the big problems with matches like this and how far down the Americans have been pushed: no one believed the team had a chance and even though there were some good spots, the ending was never in doubt.

Post match Del Rio goes after Cena and puts him in the armbreaker with a chair around the arm. Big E. Langston makes the save and gets a nice chant from the audience.

Del Rio complains to the bosses about Langston and a match is made for

later tonight.

### R-Truth vs. Ryback

Truth does an unfunny rap about Ryback on the way to the ring, talking about how Ryback is a bully with bad breath. Truth grabs a headlock to start and kicks Ryback in the face, only to be driven into a few corners. Ryback keeps pounding away with his power stuff, but the Meathook misses, allowing Truth to grab a quick rollup for the pin at 4:00.

**Rating:** D. And yet they wonder why Ryback isn't over. He jobs to Punk over and over again, gets a win last week where he gets to show off, and now loses to R-Truth. The match was junk though with no one caring and mostly dominance until the quick ending. I'm assuming Ryback eventually gets his win back though, meaning we'll be right back where we started.

### Big E. Langston vs. Alberto Del Rio

Langston pounds on Alberto but Del Rio comes back with some shots to the head and a chinlock. The fans sound like they're at a funeral for this match. Langston fights out with suplex and the Warrior Splash as the Wave has begun in the crowd. Del Rio hits the enziguri in the corner but Langston runs him over with ease. The Big Ending is countered into the armbreaker for the submission at 4:04.

**Rating:** D. GAH WHY DO THEY KEEP DOING THIS NONSENSE??? They want to push Langston as a big deal so their solution is to put him in match after match that he isn't allowed to win because it would hurt the other guy. SO STOP PUTTING HIM IN MATCHES AGAINST THAT KIND OF COMPETITION ALREADY!!! Why is that so freaking complicated???

Veterans video again.

Axel is with a very damaged Heyman in the ring. Paul is in a neck brace, a cast on his leg and his arm is in a sling while sitting in a wheelchair. He blames Ryback for this beating because Ryback messed up by not being there to save him. Ryback bit off more than he could chew and Punk used the chance to destroy Heyman. However, the real blame is on every fan in the audience for cheering Punk on as he climbed the Cell.



Tonight though, Heyman is here to have every member of the audience as a witness to this statement. He'll be back with a vengeance and hang over CM Punk like the sword of Damocles. Heyman talks about driving the sword into Punk when Punk's music hits. Heyman: "OH NO!" Punk charges to the ring and beats up Axel, laying him out with the GTS. CM stares at Heyman and pulls a kendo stick out from under the ring. Heyman is spun around in the chair and then dumped onto the mat so Punk can destroy him with the stick even more. Heyman is also in a back brace to complete the list of injuries.

### CM Punk/Daniel Bryan vs. Shield

Punk clotheslines Ambrose down to start before bringing Bryan in for a double suplex for two. Rollins comes in and is almost immediately caught in the surfboard. Punk gets the tag and kicks Seth in the chest for two but the GTS is escaped. Off to Reigns for a staredown but Bryan comes in for some stereo kicks to the legs. Reigns shrugs them off and clotheslines both guys down before taking Bryan into the Shield corner.

Rollins comes in but gets caught in a release German suplex and a top rope hurricanrana gets two. A kick to the head puts Bryan down again and we take our last break. Back with Ambrose working on Bryan in the corner before handing it over to Reigns for a headbutt. Back to Rollins as the slow attack but fast tags continue. A slam puts Bryan down and we hit the chinlock. Bryan fights up and sends Rollins into Reigns, allowing for the hot tag off to Punk.

Everything breaks down and the Macho Elbow gets two on Ambrose. Bryan's top rope knee takes down Rollins and the FLYING GOAT drops Ambrose. Reigns takes out Bryan but Punk hits a suicide dive to take out Roman. Punk and Ambrose trade some insanely fast counters until Punk hooks the Anaconda Vice. Ambrose is about to tap when we've got Wyatts. We'll say the match was thrown out at about 13:00.

**Rating:** C+. This took awhile to get going but the last few minutes were hot. Not a great match or anything though as the fans were entirely burnt out by the end. Also it didn't help that everyone was waiting on the big appearance by the Wyatts but at least they waited until the last possible

second.

Punk and Bryan wisely bail to the floor, leaving Shield to argue with the freaky dudes. Bray and Reigns get in an argument on the floor before fighting into the ring. Both teams get in a huge brawl but Bray eventually separates them, saying Punk and Bryan are the common enemies. Punk and Bryan get in the ring for a brawl and get beaten down until the Usos, Goldust and Cody make the save to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** D+. This really didn't do it for me. The constant handicap matches got old in a hurry and the show felt like it didn't matter at all for the most part. I'm not sure where they're going with the Shield due to their actions with Orton but turning all three at them at once isn't the best idea. Nothing at all on here felt important though and that can make for a very long three hours.

### Results

Cody Rhodes/Goldust b. Randy Orton via countout

Santino Marella/Los Matadores b. Union Jacks – Cobra to Mahal

Damien Sandow b. Kofi Kingston – You're Welcome

Curtis Axel b. Dolph Ziggler – Neckbreaker into a faceplant

Tamina Snuka b. Nikki Bella – Superfly Splash

Fandango b. Tyson Kidd – Countered sunset flip

John Cena b. Real Americans – STF to Swagger

R-Truth b. Ryback – Rollup

Alberto Del Rio b. Big E. Langston – Cross armbreaker

Daniel Bryan/CM Punk vs. Shield went to a no contest

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