

Roadblock End Of The Line: Who Would Have Bet On That?

Roadblock: End of the Line

Date: December 18, 2016

Location: PPG Paints Arena, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, Corey Graves

We'll wrap up the pay per view calendar with this show, our third pay per view in about a month. This isn't the hottest card in the world with a fairly lame main event of United States Champion Roman Reigns challenging Kevin Owens for the Universal Title. There's also an Iron Man match as Sasha Banks defends the Women's Title against Charlotte. Let's get to it.

Pre-Show: Rusev vs. Big Cass

This is over Big Cass defending Enzo Amore, who tried to sleep with Rusev's life. Before the match, Enzo says something about Lana owing him money and Rusev playing Jumanji in the hotel room. Enzo puts on a red nose and Cass lists off the eight reindeer. Cass kicks Rusev in the face and we take a break less than thirty seconds in.

Back with Cass hammering away and dropping the Empire Elbow for no cover. They head outside Rusev taking him out into the crowd, leaving Enzo to go after Lana. Rusev defends his wife while Cass checks on Enzo, leaving Rusev to beat the count at 4:33. Not enough for a rating but this was rematch bait.

The opening video has a police chase theme with the idea being that everything ends at the end of the line.

Tag Team Titles: New Day vs. Cesaro/Sheamus

New Day is defending. Big E. is confused about what the show is called because he thinks it's a rather different, very un-PG kind of blocking. I'll let you figure out what the joke there is. Woods suggests that the challengers should be called Swing Low Irish Chariot. Cesaro dropkicks Kofi at the bell for two and it's already time for the uppercut train. It's too early for the Swing so Sheamus clotheslines Kofi instead.

The slingshot shoulder gets two on Kingston and Swiss Death is good

for the same. This has been completely one sided so far. Kofi breaks up the ten forearms and brings in Big E. for the spear off the apron. The Warrior Splash gets two on Sheamus and everything breaks down. Sheamus kicks Cesaro by mistake and Woods kicks Cesaro by design, setting up the Big Ending for a very close two.

The Midnight Hour is broken up and Big E. gets the Brogue Kick. Cesaro Swings Kofi into the Sharpshooter for the submission...but Woods has the referee. Cesaro lifts Kofi up into a suplex and rolls into the Neutralizer for two with Big E. making the save this time. That was some scary power, as is always the case with Cesaro.

Woods sacrifices himself to take the Brogue Kick and the SOS gets two on Sheamus. Cesaro comes in without a tag (though Sheamus was right next to him), meaning Kofi kicks Cesaro for no count. Instead Sheamus sneaks in and rolls Kofi up for the pin and the titles at 10:00.

Rating: B-. The ending was really good but I have no interest in Sheamus and Cesaro holding the belts. It's more than fine to take them off New Day now but you really couldn't do this at the Rumble against Enzo and Cass or ANYONE that might draw some interest? People didn't care about Cesaro and Sheamus at first and I doubt they will now, but this was going to happen no matter what.

New Day gets the big show of respect and we get the battle for the spotlight from the new champs.

Kevin Owens doesn't care about New Day because that will never happen to him. After insulting the interviewer, Owens flags down Chris Jericho and gives him a present. Jericho isn't impressed with his holiday scarf.

Sami Zayn vs. Braun Strowman

Ten minute time limit as Raw GM Mick Foley is scared for Sami's health. The ring announcer says Sami must last ten minutes though, which makes things a bit unclear. So can Sami not even go for wins? Sami dodges for the first thirty seconds and Braun no sells a chop. Braun gets his hands on Sami for a big toss and kicks him in the ribs for good measure.

We're down to eight minutes as Sami knocks Braun over the top, only to have Strowman come back in and hammer away with ease. The referee starts to check on Sami with about six minutes to go but Zayn wants

to keep going. Braun lets Sami stumble around as we get down to five minutes. Some very hard clotheslines take us to four minutes and here's Foley with a white towel.

Sami is thrown down at Mick's feet and Braun goes outside to talk trash. Zayn grabs the towel and throws it into the crowd with two minutes left. Strowman promises to finish this himself but misses a charge into the post. Another missed charge sends Braun through the barricade but Strowman beats the count with 47 seconds left. A third missed charge hits the post and Sami gets two off a high crossbody. Sami is knocked to the floor but comes back in for the Helluva Kick as time ends at 10:00 (really 10:12).

Rating: D+. Corey sums it up perfectly: Sami didn't win anything here. He just didn't get killed. This really belonged as an angle on Raw to set up the pay per view match instead of being the match itself. Sami hitting his finisher (which didn't knock Braun down) to end the match was a nice touch but I really have no idea where this goes outside of Braun beating Sami in another match.

Package on the UK tournament.

We recap Chris Jericho vs. Seth Rollins. Jericho lost to Rollins several times but then started costing Rollins matches against Owens. This earned Jericho a Pedigree on top of a car and that means a match.

Seth Rollins vs. Chris Jericho

Jericho headlocks him to start and does the Gift of Jericho pose. Chris stops him with a raised boot and the missile dropkick gets two. A rake of the eyes slows Rollins down (he even makes like he can't see for a bit, which you almost never see anymore) but he's easily able to catapult Jericho into the buckle.

Jericho gets in a clothesline and we hit the ASK HIM chinlock. Back up and Rollins fires off some right hands followed by the Slingblade. A Blockbuster gets two and Jericho gets shoved out to the floor. Rollins' springboard knee is countered into the Walls which last about as long as you would expect them to. Now the Lionsault is good for two and Seth's Falcon's Arrow gets the same.

Rollins tries the Pedigree but Jericho powers out and gets in a hurricanrana, which transitions into the Walls. Seth counters that with a small package for two, followed by the frog splash. Cue Owens

for a distraction, just as Jericho grabs a small package. The Pedigree is countered again but Jericho stops to yell at Owens, allowing Seth to get in the jumping knee. Rollins gets the Pedigree for the pin at 17:12.

Rating: B+. I really liked this one as Jericho's roll continues. You can almost pencil in Jericho vs. Owens for the Rumble and that story is going to write itself very well. Rollins getting the pin makes sense and maybe we can FINALLY do the blowoff between him and HHH so Rollins can move on with his career.

Pre-show recap. Cass vs. Rusev II is set for tomorrow night.

Cruiserweight Title: Brian Kendrick vs. TJ Perkins vs. Rich Swann

Swann is defending and Austin Aries is sitting in on commentary. One heck of a forearm puts Kendrick on the floor, leaving Perkins to take the champ down. Swann hurricanranas both guys down at the same time (Aries: "I've done it before.") but gets caught in the Captain's Hook.

Perkins makes the save with the kneebar but Swann makes a save of his own. Cole: "Who is the favorite now?" Aries: "I would be if I was in there." Kendrick gets tossed and Perkins slaps on another kneebar, sending Swann to the ropes. That's not a break in a triple threat but Perkins lets go anyway. Back up and Swann kicks Perkins in the head to retain at 5:59.

Rating: D+. Can we please, please, PLEASE get Aries anything he wants? He was by far and away the most interesting thing about this match as he just commands respect and I completely buy him as the greatest cruiserweight of all time. I mean, I know he's not but he gives you the belief that he is and that's what matters.

Post match Neville makes his return to celebrate with Swann before turning heel (!) and destroying all three. Fans: "THANK YOU NEVILLE!" I can totally go for this, though the idea that Neville weighs under 205lbs is downright laughable.

Owens goes to Jericho's locker room but Chris won't let him in. Kevin tells him to put his name on the list but Jericho still doesn't open the door. That hurts Owens' feelings and he walks away.

Recap of Sasha Banks vs. Charlotte. They've traded the title for months and this is the final match.

Women's Title: Charlotte vs. Sasha Banks

Banks is defending and this is a thirty minute iron man match, though JoJo says the winner is the woman with the most pinfalls. I'm going to assume that's an error because nothing like that was ever mentioned before. Feeling out process to start and they hit the mat for the first two minutes. Banks headlocks her down and things stay slow to start. Some chops have Charlotte in more trouble but it's too early for the Banks Statement.

Another attempt fails just as much so Banks opts for a dropkick instead. Banks: "Your daddy loves me more!" Sasha wraps her up in something like a rear naked choke but Charlotte drops her back onto the mat for two. Charlotte heads outside and takes the double knees as we hit eight minutes in. A cross arm choke has Charlotte in more trouble but she doesn't tap out as we get to ten minutes.

Sasha throws her outside for a suicide crossbody, only to be tripped face first into the steps in a bad looking crash. We're twelve minutes in now as the referee slows things down a bit to check on Sasha. Three straight knees get two on the champ but another one misses to give Sasha a breather. Charlotte does the figure four headscissors and we're at the halfway mark.

Something like a neckbreaker onto the knee gets two on Sasha and Charlotte seems to be getting frustrated. Natural Selection connects for two but Banks can't get the Bank Statement. Instead Charlotte is put on top, only to come back with a super Natural Selection for the first fall with 10:45 to go.

Charlotte talks a lot of trash but can't get another fall as we hit nine minutes left. Banks goes to the air and spins into a rollup for the tie with 8:43 to go. That means Charlotte needs to get aggressive, only to have Sasha grab the Bank Statement for the tap out with six minutes left. Charlotte gets smart by draping the knee over the middle rope and crashing down onto it as the clock keeps ticking.

Some cannonballs down onto the knee set up a leglock as we've got three minutes left. A not great Figure Four goes on with two minutes left and Sasha is in big trouble. The hold is turned over a few times until Sasha gets caught in the middle of the ring. We're down to thirty seconds left and Banks screams a lot. Charlotte FINALLY turns it into the Figure Eight and Banks taps with two seconds left, meaning it's a draw at 30:00.

This is the END OF THE LINE though so let's do sudden death. Charlotte gets in a shot at the bad leg before the bell rings and a small package gets two for the champ seconds into the extra period. The Bank Statement goes on but Charlotte grabs the bad leg to break the hold. It's turned into a Figure Four and Sasha (with a bloody mouth) taps to the Figure Eight at 2:58 of overtime.

Rating: B. Well that happened. I'm completely out of things to talk about with these two trading the title because WWE has no concept of how to wrap up a feud in an appropriate manner. Charlotte winning is fine, though the question now is who challenges her next. I know the obvious answer is Bayley, but do you trust them to do something that logical?

We recap Owens vs. Reigns. Roman beat him a few weeks ago to earn another shot here tonight but the big story is about the drama between Jericho and Owens.

Universal Title: Kevin Owens vs. Roman Reigns

Owens is defending and I'll only refer to him as champion for the sake of simplicity. Kevin quickly bails to the floor but gets punched in the mouth for his efforts. Something like a spinebuster gets two for Reigns but the threat of a jumping clothesline sends Owens outside. The champ takes over on the floor and hits the backsplash off the steps, followed by the chinlock back inside.

Owens wants to know why Reigns didn't put his title on the line but suspects it's a lack of testicular fortitude. A standing flip legdrop of all things gets two on Roman and it's back to the chinlock. Reigns finally powers out and drives Owens into the corner, only to have the champ throw him down with a German suplex. The Superman Punch is countered into a DDT for two more.

Reigns no sells the Cannonball and hits the Superman Punch for two of his own and both guys are down. Owens goes up top and gets Superman Punched again but still manages to grab the swinging superplex. A Swanton Bomb hits Roman's raised knees and it's spear time. It might be the big scream before the spear but somehow Owens knows to bail to the floor. Reigns gets suckered in and a splash off the apron onto the announcers' table doesn't break the table.

The second attempt works though and Reigns' ribs are hurt again. Reigns dives in at nine so Owens bolts to the top for another frog splash and the accompanying near fall. Roman's sitout powerbomb and

Owens' Pop Up Powerbomb get two each and the champ doesn't know what to do. He goes outside for the title belt, earning himself a spear as he comes back inside. Cue Jericho, who looks back and forth at both guy. A Codebreaker to Owens draws the DQ at 23:33.

Rating: B. Good, though the waiting for Jericho took a little away from it. Unfortunately this shows the problem with Reigns being US Champion coming into this match: what good does it do to tie the title up in this match with no challenger for the title in sight? Yeah Owens vs. Jericho will be fine but sweet goodness enough with the champion vs. champion nonsense.

Jericho raises Owens' hand because IT WAS A SWERVE to end the show. Uh, couldn't he just tap Reigns and get the same result? Rollins comes out and helps with the beatdown, including a DoubleBomb to put Jericho through the table. Owens goes through the announcers' table to end the show to almost no reaction.

Overall Rating: B+. I liked this a lot more than I thought I would but it's a great example of a show I'm never going to watch again. Other than Charlotte getting the title back like we've seen before, nothing was really interesting here, though I can always go for a night of good wrestling. That being said, they really, REALLY need something fresh in the main event scene on Raw because "oh wait they're still best friends who get beaten up by the Shield guys" was tired a month ago.

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Best of 2016: Worst Major Show of the Year

Let's move on to the far more entertaining part of these things: the bad side. There's less to cover here but we're going to start with one of the big ones: the Worst Major Show of the Year. WWE is notorious for being able to put on some horrible shows and today we're going to look at what their absolute worst of the year really was. I know some of these might not be the worst shows but they're the worst options available. These are in no particular order, as usual.

1. Tables Ladders and Chairs

We'll start with one of the last major shows of the year as we look at "Smackdown Live's" last offering. This is always an odd show because it's almost all about the gimmicks and the violence. The problem with that is it forces a lot of matches into gimmicks that really don't need to exist in the first place. For instance, was there any reason for Kalisto vs. Baron Corbin to be a chairs match other than the show required that one exist?

It also didn't help that most of the matches were just ok at best. The main event (AJ Styles vs. Dean Ambrose in the show's namesake match for the Smackdown World Title) was by far the best thing about the show but it really wasn't strong enough to make up for a rather lackluster show. That tends to be the case with this show almost every year and that's not a good thing.

"Tables Ladders and Chairs 2016" was a watchable enough show but that doesn't mean it's a show that needs to exist. I've never been a fan of having these shows because the calendar says so and it's rarely proven to work. On top of that, the use of these gimmick matches on a single show weakens those gimmicks later on in the year. We can't have a TLC match when the show calls for it other than there's one at the end of the year just because it's December. That doesn't make sense and it almost never works.

2. Payback

I went back and forth on this one for a long time but the more I thought about it, the more I thought of the annoying decisions and

how many of them I have to sit through today. This was the show where we had a Natalya vs. Charlotte match end in a Montreal Screwjob reference for the sake of keeping the title on a Flair. I mean, ignore the fact that IT WAS NINETEEN YEARS AGO and add in the fact that it was for another Charlotte vs. Natalya match when the fans were begging for Sasha Banks.

Other than that we had what should have been the layup of the summer with Cesaro winning the Intercontinental Title from Miz. The champ tapped but AGAIN WWE found a way to avoid giving Cesaro a big win for the sake of....well to be fair Miz keeping the title wasn't the worst thing in the world but it really should have been Cesaro getting the title for a change.

Now, that being said, there were two Match of the Year candidates on the show and that should have been enough to make the show great. However, those two big issues are just enough to pull it down to the lower levels of the shows this year. It might not be the worst but those two decisions were so annoying that they took so much of my enjoyment away from the rest of the show.

3. Fastlane

Now we're getting somewhere. Fastlane wasn't anything interesting in 2015 and that's the case again with "Fastlane 2016". They might as well just call the show "Filler 2016" or "Annual Car Themed Show" and it would be just about the same. Most of the wrestling went nowhere and the main event only confirmed the obvious "Wrestlemania XXXII" main event that we all knew was coming.

If the triple threat between Roman Reigns, Dean Ambrose and Brock Lesnar wasn't clear enough, we also had a live interview with Edge and Christian talking to New Day (which was nowhere near as funny as you might expect) and Curtis Axel vs. R-Truth on a pay per view. Is that really the best you can do on a three hour pay per view? A lot of the wrestling was tolerable but really, this just didn't need to exist.

That sums up "Fastlane 2016" as perfectly as anything else could: the show didn't need to exist. Stephanie basically made the main event on a whim and that made it illogical to go along with the fact that it wasn't really interesting. The show was watchable but pay per views really should be more than just filler, which is all "Fastlane 2016" really was.

4. Roadblock: End of the Line

This is a show that really isn't going to age well and I'm not really surprised. Overall, this show really didn't need to exist and I think everyone knew it. The biggest problem here, as is the case so often on "Monday Night Raw", is the lack of interest in the main event. The wrestling itself was fine with Kevin Owens defending against Reigns being fine but absolutely nothing interesting whatsoever.

The problem really boils down to the fact that nothing feels special. It's not a show that I'm ever going to want to watch again and that's rarely a good sign. I spent most of the show waiting on it to end and only enjoyed parts of it because some of the wrestling was good. This really is a case where the individual parts don't add up to the whole score which doesn't fill you with hope.

Finally, there's the name. Was there really no other name available than Roadblock, which already took place back in February? Come up with any generic name (Vengeance, No Way Out, Over the Limit etc) and forget this whole obsession with car names. They hammer the idea in well enough and then have such a boring build that the show is only good in spite of its card. That's really not too good.

5. Backlash

"Smackdown Live" started having its own pay per view as well and for the most part the show was spent crowning new champions. The entire roster was basically brand new and starting from scratch, meaning they had almost nothing going on coming in. Ambrose was the Smackdown World Champion but wound up losing the belt to Styles in the only really good match of the night.

Aside from that, the Usos wrestled twice, Kane defeated Bray Wyatt and Dolph Ziggler managed to lose another match, which was apparently even more important than his World Title shot back at "Summerslam 2016". You really could have accomplished most of these things on a few major episodes of "Smackdown Live" instead of doing all of it on one pay per view, but they didn't have much else to use to fill in a pay per view.

You could probably attribute a lot of the issues on the show to not having enough time to really establish things before getting to a pay per view. Then again, that's how so much works in WWE: it doesn't matter what's going on in the stories because it's all about

getting things going as quickly as possible. If that means the pay per view doesn't need to exist and suffers as a result, so be it.

6. Wrestlemania XXXII

Oh boy we had to get to this one eventually. Where do I even start with this one? Ah well how about with the run time? If you take away the two hour pre-show, this was still a nearly five hour wrestling show and that's WAY too long. This problem came from the simple fact of having too much crammed onto the show. Be it Rock taking nine minutes to get to the ring, Undertaker vs. Shane McMahon taking half an hour (not even counting entrances and post match stuff) or the main event going twenty seven minutes in front of a worn out crowd, this was too long of a show.

The build wasn't great either and a lot of that is due to injuries. It's fairly clear that the big Undertaker match was supposed to be against Cena but, due to the injuries up and down the card, the best we could get was McMahon. Now, in theory, that match probably shouldn't have gone half an hour but then McMahon doesn't get to do his big dive off the cage and that just wouldn't be any fun.

The show is much more disappointing than bad but that's still covering quite a bit of ground. The biggest show of the year shouldn't feel like a never ending night of boredom with matches seemingly ending with a main goal of making the audience wonder what the WWE is thinking. That was the case with Styles vs. Jericho (which I've lightened up on) and New Day vs. League of Nations, which really isn't how things should be going. It's not a good show and that's much more due to being boring than bad, which is often even worse.

7. Survivor Series

This is another case of the main event being all that people are going to remember and in this situation, I'm not sure if that's a good thing or not. I've thought about Goldberg vs. Lesnar a lot now and I'm really not sure what it really means. I don't know if I should be mad about it or not but I know it made an impact. Unfortunately, when the main thing people remember about your show is a match lasting ninety seconds, there's a lot left to be desired.

The other problem is how unbalanced this show really felt. You had the men's Survivor Series match lasting nearly an hour while the tag team and women's versions felt like they were rushed out there

because we needed to fill in time elsewhere. The big match is still good but it took up so much time from everything else and that's not a good thing.

Overall, this show is all over the place and unfortunately that doesn't pan out all that well. It's definitely one of the weaker shows of the year and when your show is approaching five hours counting the pre-show (those things are way too pesky) with ninety seconds basically defining the entire thing, there's almost no way for it to really work. The show is a pretty big mess with an infamous main event which overshadows all the good, leaving it pretty low on the WWE charts.

8. Bound For Glory

It just wouldn't be right if I didn't put a TNA show on here and while it's still a stretch to call anything TNA does major, this is about as good as it's going to get. The problem here isn't so much that anything is bad but much more along the lines of it's just kind of there. You know, much like almost everything else TNA does.

As is far too often the case in TNA, Bound For Glory just kind of came and went without anything of note going on. I had to look back at the review to remember anything about it, including the main event. That's a really bad sign for TNA when the show was just a few months ago. The Great War was good enough and a big spectacle but that doesn't mean the match was, you know, good.

I'm really not sure what else there is to say about this show. Like, what else even happened here? The World Title didn't change hands in a mostly Impact level main event. The X-Division Title match was good but, again, really nothing worth checking out. Like I said, for the biggest show of the year, that's really not a good sign.

It's not a good sign that I had to keep dropping nominees from the list because they really weren't all that bad. Really, there are only a few options to really pick from here and there's only one major option: "Wrestlemania XXXII". The show is a glorified disaster with barely any standout matches and a horrible aftertaste in many of the fans' mouths. When fans are leaving the show early to watch the ending of the show on the WWE Network, it's clear that you're doing something very wrong.

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