

# Update on Reigns

According to WWE.com, Reigns will be out four to six weeks, likely closer to six. The hernia has been fixed and it should be just recovery now.

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## Roman Reigns Undergoes Surgery, Likely Out Of Night of Champions

According to WWE.com. It's due to something called an incarcerated hernia. No word on how long he'll be out.

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## Smackdown – September 19, 2014: Wake Me Up When September Ends

### Smackdown

Date: September 19, 2014

Location: Mississippi Coast Coliseum, Biloxi, Mississippi

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tom Phillips, John Bradshaw Layfield

It's the go home show for Night of Champions and since this is Friday, we're not likely to see Cena or Lesnar, meaning nothing important is going to happen tonight. WWE has done a very bad job building up

everything other than the main event for Sunday and it really shows when Cena and Lesnar aren't on the show. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Reigns vs. Rusev. Just get to the DQ now.

### Jimmy Uso vs. Stardust

The brothers that look different say they're coming for the titles. Jimmy and Stardust fight up against the ropes to start until a neckbreaker puts Jimmy down. Uso tries three superkicks and connects with the final one for the pin at 2:00.

Goldust gets kicked as well.

### Sheamus/Dolph Ziggler vs. Miz/Cesaro

Haven't we seen this one a few times now? Cesaro tries to ride Ziggler on the mat but the champion gets away. A slam takes Ziggler down again and Cesaro cranks on a headlock. Back up and Cesaro counters a sunset flip and lifts Dolph all the way into a gorilla press. It's an awesome power display but Ziggler slips down the back and nails a dropkick. Off to Miz for a kick to the face for two and some posing. He avoids the Fameasser and hooks the Reality Check for two.

We come back from a break with Miz getting two off a top rope ax handle and putting on a chinlock. Dolph counters with a jawbreaker but Cesaro blocks a tag attempt. That earns him the swinging DDT and the hot tag brings in Sheamus. Miz gets caught in the fifteen forearms to the chest and the rolling fireman's carry gets two. The Irish Curse gets the same and Ziggler backdrops Cesaro to the floor, possibly injuring the big man's knee. The stunt doubles get into it and Ziggler superkicks Miz into the Brogue Kick for the pin at 11:43.

**Rating:** C. This wasn't bad but did anyone buy Miz having a chance to pin Sheamus? He has the character down but he needs something different in the ring. I still think a switch to tights would help him a lot, though that doesn't seem to be a possibility. Also let him get some wins with the Finale to build the move back up a bit.

## Adam Rose vs. Heath Slater

Slater decks him with a right hand and Rose is in early trouble. He gets a boot up to stop a charging Heath in the corner and a high cross body gets two. Slater stomps him down in the corner again but misses a knee drop. Rose comes back with some forearms and a spinebuster but Titus trips him up. This brings in the Bunny who dives on Titus, setting up the Party Foul for the pin at 2:55.

We recap Henry and Rusev from Raw. This eats up over a minute.

Lana and Rusev are in the back and Lana speaks Russian about Henry and Reigns. Rusev does the same and that's about it.

## Los Matadores/Big Show vs. Wyatt Family

I could have sworn this was originally going to be the Usos. Big Show does Torito's entrance in a funny bit. This is joined in progress with Fernando doing OLE to Rowan. Thankfully Erick picks him up for a fall away slam into the Wyatt corner. Off to Bray for the backplash before Harper comes in and gets caught in a sunset flip. His response is to hit Fernando really hard in the face, though Fernando is able to get over to the corner for a tag to Big Show.

Rowan comes in as well and takes out Show's leg, allowing Wyatt to hammer on a downed giant. Harper Gator Rolls Big Show and drops him with a dropkick. The Family starts some fast tagging but Show rolls to the floor and headbutts Wyatt. Bray stops a tag attempt though and Harper hooks a chinlock. That's fine with Big Show who lifts Luke up and slams him down for a break.

Show misses a Vader Bomb elbow and it's back to Bray for a chinlock of his own. Wyatt is slammed down just like Luke was and the hot tag finally brings in Diego. Everything breaks down and the Wyatts destroy Los Matadores with ease. Diego dives out to nail Harper but Sister Abigail takes him out for the pin at 8:10 shown.

**Rating:** D+. The stuff with Big Show in there was good enough, but at some point you have to get the tag off to a Matadore and there's no way around

that. I'm glad to see Bray get a win again but he needs to get back to his over the top stuff and a big win over a top guy. He can go in the ring but that Cena feud ripped his legs off.

We look at Reigns vs. Rollins from Monday.

Reigns is ready for tonight and Sunday because the Punch is ready.

### Paige vs. Nikki Bella

Non-title and AJ comes out to do commentary. Nikki shoves her down to start and nails a middle rope spinning kick to the head for two. Paige gets knocked to the floor but she knocks Nikki off the apron just as quickly. Back in and Paige kicks her in the ribs but gets caught with some dropkicks. Not that they matter as the Paige Turner is enough to pin Bella at 2:57.

Post match Paige and AJ do their usual with AJ holding the title. Nikki lays them both out and holds up the belt, despite getting pinned about a minute earlier.

### Bo Dallas vs. Jack Swagger

Rematch from Raw where Jack made Dallas tap. Jack takes him into the corner to start but Bo slaps him in the face. A chase goes badly for Bo with Swagger clotheslining him hard. Dallas is sent hard into the table but grabs a neckbreaker to take over back inside. Swagger comes right back with a suplex and Vader Bomb but Bo runs to the floor again. Another chase results in Swagger's throat being snapped across the top rope, setting up the Bodog for the pin at 2:48. Another short match in a series of them tonight.

Bo says the usual post match and says Jack will wind up being like Zeb Colter if he keeps up. Colter stole three packs of sugar and is a TERRIBLE TIPPER! Jack wouldn't want to be someone like that would he? Swagger chases him off.

Long package on Cena vs. Lesnar with clips from the brawl on Monday spliced together with the sitdown interviews from Lesnar and Heyman.

This week's sitdown interview was with Lesnar, who called himself a prize fighter. In this fight, John Cena is going to get another beating.

Henry feels good about his rally on Monday but admits he lost to a Russian in 1992. Another Russian defeated him in 1996 even though he was injured. This Sunday, he will crush Rusev.

### Roman Reigns vs. Rusev

They lock up to start and fall out to the floor before heading right back inside. Reigns nails a big running elbow to the face but gets caught with a kick to his own face. Rusev puts on a quickly broken bearhug before dropping Roman with a spinwheel kick. We take a break and come back with Reigns caught in a reverse bearhug. Reigns fights up and hits a running clothesline to put both guys down.

Rusev charges into a Samoan drop and Reigns hammers away. The Apron Kick looks to set up the spear but Rollins comes out for a distraction. Rusev kicks Roman in the jaw and starts working on the back. The Accolade is countered with something like Cena's ProtoBomb but with Reigns driving Rusev down (he basically throws him into the air and clotheslines Rusev's stomach) but Rollins comes in off the top with the briefcase, accidentally hitting Rusev for the DQ at 9:27.

**Rating:** C-. The problem here was the same one that so many of these matches have: we were just waiting on the run-in for the DQ because neither of these guys were going to lose this match clean. Rusev getting the win is an interesting choice but it's not like it really matters one way or another.

Reigns and Rollins brawl into the crowd and here's Henry for the brawl. The American flag comes down and Henry slams Rusev to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** D+. Another week, another basic Smackdown. The wrestling was fine but most of it was too short to rate. It really didn't do much as far as making me want to see Night of Champions, but the show has pretty much been dead in the water for the last two weeks. This show just came and went without anything to see, which makes for an uninteresting show to sit through. It did go by really fast though which always helps.

## Results

Jimmy Uso b. Stardust – Superkick

Sheamus/Dolph Ziggler b. Miz/Cesaro – Brogue Kick to Miz

Adam Rose b. Heath Slater – Party Foul

Wyatt Family b. Los Matadores/Big Show – Sister Abigail to Diego

Paige b. Nikki Bella – Paige Turner

Bo Dallas b. Jack Swagger – Bodog

Rusev b. Roman Reigna via DQ when Seth Rollins interfered

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# **Reviewing the Review – Monday Night Raw: September 15, 2014**

This week's episode of Raw was the final push to the Night of Champions PPV, meaning the whole show was really about one thing because that's all this pay per view is going to be about. The interesting thing about this show was the structure which we'll focus on as a whole later on. Let's get to it.

We opened with the big story of the week as Heyman came to the ring but Cena showed up, ready to fight Brock Lesnar. This led to Cena promising to back up his threat from last week, giving Heyman "until halftime" to produce Lesnar. Later in the show, Cena would lock Heyman in a room with Great Khali standing guard.

This was the interesting structure that I was talking about: when Cena said halftime, he meant halftime of the Monday Night Football game. Eventually, right around halftime of the game, Cena brought Heyman out and threatened to beat the tar out of him unless Lesnar showed up. Heyman bought time by saying that he had wanted Cena to be violent and aggressive, which could make him a Paul Heyman Guy. He begged Cena to embrace the hate one time and finally got Cena to shove him by talking about Cena's mom.

Lesnar came out immediately and circled the ring before actually getting in and suplexing Cena out to the floor. John got back in and had a fight with Lesnar, actually getting the better of him on the floor. This was intense, violent and exactly what the match on Sunday needed. It made me believe that Cena could win the match, even though I don't think there's a real chance of him getting the belt back, at least not yet.

Putting this on during halftime of the football game was the right idea, as WWE could have Hulk Hoga vs. Undertaker vs. Cena vs. Austin vs. Rock in a first blood Hell in a Cell Iron Man match and not beat Monday Night Football. Why would WWE try to win a fight where they have no chance? Instead they made sure to get the biggest audience possible which was a good idea in theory, even though it doesn't seem to have played out that well in the numbers. That being said, I like that they're actually trying something different instead of doing the same stupid stuff over and over again.

We'll jump back to the stuff in between the opening and the showdown. The first match saw Jericho beat Kane in a nothing match after sending him face first into an exposed turnbuckle. Kane is worthless at this point and I have no interest in seeing him do anything on TV anymore. MAYBE have him talk but leave the wrestling to people that can still move. Jericho wasn't much better either and thankfully he's wrapping up his run

this Sunday.

Roman Reigns promises to end Rollins tonight.

Jack Swagger made Bo Dallas tap out. Nothing to see here but you would think this might have been the pre-show match on Sunday.

Paige and Nikki Bella beat Brie Bella and AJ with Nikki destroying Brie for most of the match. This was just a way for the sisters to argue post match and Paige and AJ to do their "mind games", whatever they're supposed to be.

Bray did his stuff about Big Show before Show beat him by DQ. Wyatt got to show off a bit but Harper ran in for the save. This was another waste of Bray but at least it wasn't a clean pin. I have a bad feeling we're setting up yet another Big Show push that no one wants to see and a match that he has no chance of winning. I mean, Lesnar beat him in just over two minutes at the Royal Rumble. How can WWE believe that's something worth headlining another show?

Sheamus and the Usos beat Cesaro and the Dusts in your standard "take two feuds and call me in the morning" match. There isn't much to talk about with this one but it wasn't bad.

Orton promises to give Jericho the beating of his life on Sunday. That would be the third or fourth time he's done so.

Naomi beat Cameron after Cameron tried to cover Naomi when her face was on the mat. I really hope it's character schtick but I have a bad feeling it isn't. Just let Naomi be the athletic freak of the division like she should be instead of making her do this Total Divas nonsense.

Dolph Ziggler and R-Truth beat the Miz and Damien Sandow in the same match they had on Smackdown, minus most of the comedy and with Miz taking the fall instead of Sandow.

Rollins pretended to be a neanderthal like Reigns.

Reigns then beat Rollins in a good match that is going to happen again on Sunday. Why that's the case is beyond me but WWE hasn't made a ton of

sense in a few weeks now.

The big closing segment was Mark Henry rallying America before his match with Rusev on Sunday. Again I'm assuming this is their way of giving up the night to the NFL, but they could have had Reigns vs. Rollins close the show instead of this. The viewership plummeted for this segment and I can't imagine anyone was surprised.

Raw this week had the same problems it's had for a long time now: there's clearly no effort other than with Cena vs. Lesnar. Not that that wrestlers aren't trying, but they're being given nothing to work with. Everything feels meaningless coming into Sunday outside of the main event and that's not good. This is the annual fall lull and it really doesn't make me care about the product. There's a house show this weekend five minutes from my house and a main event of Cena vs. Kane isn't enough to make me go. The show was watchable but nothing I'm going to remember by Friday.

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# Monday Night Raw – September 15, 2014: The New Battle Plan

**Monday Night Raw**

Date: September 15, 2014

Location: Cajundome, Lafayette, Louisiana

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Jerry Lawler

It's the go home show for Night of Champions and the World Champion is in the building. Last week a fired up John Cena called out Lesnar to appear here tonight, threatening Paul Heyman with violence if Brock didn't show up. It should be interesting to see Cena get his hands on Lesnar to put a seed of doubt in Brock for Sunday. Let's get to it.

We open with Heyman in the ring for his weekly address. He talks about Cena coming to the ring (complete with singing Cena's music) and waving to the fans before Brock comes out to kill. Cena cuts Paul off before he can get much further and has the black shorts on so you know he's serious. John asks where Brock is and Heyman starts panicking. If Brock isn't here then Heyman is taking Lesnar's beating.

Heyman gets some cheap pops from the crowd and talks a lot, seemingly stalling for time. He points to the entrance and Cena is ready but Heyman starts laughing. Brock flies on a private plane because he doesn't like anyone and the plane is delayed. He'll be here tonight but not until later. Heyman thinks Cena knew Brock was late though because he knows what's coming when Lesnar arrives.

Paul applauds Cena for being a hero and tries to leave but John grabs him by the neck. Cena doesn't buy what Heyman said and give Heyman until the show is half done to produce Lesnar. Heyman goes to leave but Cena cuts him off because he doesn't trust Paul. He's guaranteed these people a fight and grabs Heyman in a headlock to drag him to the back.

We look back at the Authority beating down Reigns to end last week's show.

After a break we see Cena taking Heyman into his dressing room and having Great Khali guard the door.

### Kane vs. Chris Jericho

Jericho quickly low bridges Kane to the floor and nails a big dive. Kane pops up and uppercuts Jericho down before sending him into the steps. Back in and Jericho gets two off an enziguri and slaps on a cravate.

That's fine with Kane who sends him out to the floor and we take a break. Back with Jericho hitting a middle rope missile dropkick but not being able to follow up. Kane knocks him right back down and puts on another chinlock. The sideslam gets two on Jericho but he dropkicks Kane out of midair on the clothesline attempt.

There's a top rope ax handle to put the big man in trouble. Jericho hammers away in the corner and gets two off a high cross body. A turnbuckle pad was pulled off somewhere in there. The Walls are easily countered but Jericho bulldogs him down. Kane blocks the Lionsault with a chokeslam attempt but Jericho sends him face first into the exposed buckle for the pin at 13:20.

**Rating:** D+. Kane is just slow at this point and it's getting to be a major problem. He isn't terrible yet but that seems to be the way its trending. There's only so much you can do when age catches up with you and unfortunately Kane's in ring abilities aren't going to be enough to make up for the change.

Heyman tries to call Lesnar.

We look back at Rusev attacking Henry on Smackdown. Some Olympians wish Henry luck in rallying America tonight.

Roman Reigns looks at Rollins turning on him a few months back and says this ends tonight.

### Jack Swagger vs. Bo Dallas

Jack drives him into the corner to start but Bo fights back with right hands. Dallas takes him down and puts on a chinlock as the fans aren't sure what they want to chant. Jack fights up and is put right back in the chinlock. Another attempt at a comeback with a belly to back suplex works but Bo gets two more off a neckbreaker. Dallas misses a middle rope knee drop and Jack makes his real comeback with shoulders in the corner. The Vader Bomb doesn't get to launch as Dallas rolls to the apron and snaps Jack's neck across the top rope. Jack rolls through a sunset flip and puts on the Patriot Lock for the submission at 6:00.

**Rating:** C-. This was an interesting match and I'm surprised Swagger won clean. Bo tapping out is a questionable choice but his gimmick should be fine as he just has to ignore what happened and keep coming back with the same stuff over and over again. It looks like his major push is over though.

The announcers hype up the Network's schedule for the week.

We look back at the Springer segment from last week.

### Nikki Bella/Paige vs. Brie Bella/AJ Lee

Brie's new music starts off with the words Brie Mode. So she's going to be drunk and dance a lot? Nikki starts with her sister but tags out before there's any contact like a heel should. Paige drives knees into Brie's ribs to take over and mocks AJ for not being able to make a tag. Brie gets in a quick rollup for two so Paige headbutts her down. A jawbreaker almost allows the hot tag but Nikki takes AJ down. The Rampaige pins Brie at 2:58.

Post match Nikki lays her sister out while the other girls have a skip off.

We look at Big Show stopping Bray Wyatt from making it to the ring on Smackdown.

Bray talks about David slaying Goliath but the giant still lives today in the form of misery and sorrow. Bray has been left with the burden of having to fix everything. He'll fix the Big Show. Follow the Buzzards.

Heyman tries to leave because he can't get cell reception. Khali takes the phone and breaks it before throwing Heyman back inside. He picks up the phone and tries to call someone to no avail. This was a waste of time.

### Bray Wyatt vs. Big Show

Wyatt hammers away to start but Show shoves him into the corner. The chop is loaded up but Bray shoves him off, only to make Show chop him even harder. Bray hits some corner splashes and stops himself before charging

into Show's boot. A kind of jawbreaker to the ankle and a clothesline have Big Show in trouble. Bray DDTs him for two and we hit the chinlock to slow things down. Show suplexes him way out and nails some clotheslines but Bray hits his cross body for two. Rowan gets on the apron but Bray is whipped into his minion. Big Show nails the Final Cut on Bray but Harper runs in for the DQ at 4:49.

**Rating:** D+. That could have been far worse. Bray losing by DQ is far better than him losing via pinfall for the sake of the annual "build up Big Show for a match he has no chance of winning" title shot and there was a legitimate chance he could have kicked out anyway. In theory this could be a match on Sunday as I don't think either guy has anything to do at the moment.

Show chokeslams Harper and Rowan post match, making Bray laugh.

#### Cesaro/Goldust/Stardust vs. Usos/Sheamus

That's quite the odd heel partnership. Sheamus and Goldust get things going with the threat of a Brogue Kick sending Goldust out to the floor. Stardust goes to check on him and meows for....luck I guess? Back in and Jey comes off the top to go after the arm but Goldust drives him into the corner for a tag to Stardust. Cesaro grabs Jey from the apron for ten forearms to the chest.

Jey shrugs it off and tags in Jimmy to clean house with a Samoan drop to Goldust. Off to Stardust with a shot to the head for two before throwing Jimmy to the floor. Back from a break with Cesaro dancing a jig and getting two off a double stomp to Jimmy. A gutwrench suplex puts Jimmy down and it's off to Stardust for some shots in the corner. Back to Cesaro who poses a lot and puts on a front facelock.

Jimmy powers out and makes the hot tag to Sheamus who immediately cleans house. Cesaro gets caught in a series of forearms to the chest but Stardust makes the save with a rollup. Sheamus knocks both of them to the floor and hits the battering ram off the top. Back in and Sheamus Brogue Kicks Stardust but walks into the Neutralizer. Jimmy makes a last second save and superkicks Cesaro down, setting up the Superfly Splash from Jey for the pin at 13:10.

**Rating:** C. Nice six man here and there's nothing wrong with putting two feuds together into a single match. I'm not wild on Cesaro taking a fall but they back themselves into a corner with the booking here. There wasn't a good way to end the match with a pin but at least the action before the pin was good.

We look at Ambrose being put out of action last month.

Orton says he had to attack Jericho last week because Jericho said Orton has been handed everything in WWE. This Sunday, Jericho gets the beating of his life.

Cena thanks Khali and drags Heyman to the ring. He says produce the beast or be ready to lose your teeth. Heyman starts talking and says this is the beast that he's been trying to drag out of Cena but he knows Cena won't be ready on Sunday. Paul has been trying to get Cena to become the beast that can stop the beast of Brock but Cena just can't do it because of his inner code. Heyman says Cena can't be a bully because Cena can't even punch him in the face when Heyman deserves it. That means Cena will never be champion again because he can't beat Brock Lesnar.

John takes the mic from him and says if there was a human being that deserves to have his face rearranged, it's Heyman. Paul says do it and become a Paul Heyman Guy but Cena still won't do it. Cena is about to leave but Paul plays his ace and says Cena's mother raised a son with some testicular fortitude. That's enough for Cena as he shoves Heyman to the floor....and here's Brock.

Cena is all fired up and wants a piece but Lesnar calmly walks around the ring. He takes the belt off but just puts it over his shoulder. They start walking off but Brock hands the title to Heyman. Cena says let's go and Brock walks to the ring and gets on the apron. He actually gets in and the fight is on. Brock puts Cena down with a release German suplex and kicks him to the floor with ease. John gets up and knocks Brock to the floor. Brock is sent into the apron and barricade before they fight on the ground. Lesnar covers up until security drags them apart. The champion leaves and might have a busted up nose.

Cameron vs. Naomi

This is based on something that happened on Total Divas last night, which still happened at least two months ago as Daniel Bryan's neck surgery was announced on the same episode. Naomi gets tired of waiting on Cameron to look in her mirror and goes after her, only to be sent to the floor when trying her stupid hip shake headscissors. Cameron gets two (after trying to cover Naomi with her face down) off a snap suplex before cranking on Naomi's arms. Back up and Naomi grabs a sunset flip before putting on a freaky looking leg choke for the submission at 4:32.

**Rating:** D. The bad is almost all on Naomi here as she can't even cover someone right. Do you have any idea how hard it is to not be able to cover someone the right way? Kamala used to do that with the gimmick of being a savage that didn't know what he was doing. The problem is Cameron is supposed to be a competent wrestler and looks that dumb in the process.

Yeah it might be character, but when her development is on Total Divas and consists of dancing, looking at a camera and talking about "chingle chingle" (the scene where Bryan tries to have a conversation with her is hysterical), it's hard to buy it as being put on. Naomi was trying here and has something with that choke though.

#### Dolph Ziggler/R-Ziggler vs. Miz/Damien Mizdow

They did this on Smackdown already as R-Truth is playing Dolph's stunt double, down to the same gear and moveset. The joke though is no one can tell them apart (JBL: "Like the Beverly Brothers!" Old school fans will get why that's funny) and the announcers play it seriously. Ziggler works on Sandow to start before it's off to Truth for stereo elbows.

Truth gets taken down by Miz and it's off to Mizdow as the announcers can't tell them apart either. Truth finally escapes Miz and makes the diving tag to Ziggler. Miz gets two off a quick rollup but gets caught in the Fameasser for two. Everything breaks down and Miz hits his partner, allowing Dolph to hit the Zig Zag for the pin at 5:08. Oddly enough Lawler was cheering for Miz and Mizdow.

**Rating:** D. This is another reason why I regret watching Smackdown. Not only did they do this EXACT SAME JOKE over there, but the idea was

fresher and better because it was the first time. It also helped that Sandow took the pin instead of Miz, meaning it didn't affect the title match on Sunday. I'm hoping Miz wins the title as I'm liking this Hollywood star character.

Rollins won't take anything away from Reigns but Roman is nothing without him. He calls Reigns a neanderthal and imitates Roman walking on his knuckles like a gorilla. Reigns is part gorilla, part Samoan and part rhinoceros. A rhinoceros is one of the most powerful animals in the world but they're not that smart. Tonight Rollins is going to show Reigns why he led the Shield.

### Roman Reigns vs. Seth Rollins

Don't these two already have a match at Night of Champions? Seth speeds things up to start and snaps Roman's throat across the top rope. A hard clothesline sends Rollins running to the floor but Roman catches him trying to come back in and sends him face first onto the concrete. Back in and another shot puts Rollins on the floor as Reigns is dominating. Rollins is thrown over the announcers' table and we take a break. Back with Reigns missing the Apron Kick and getting caught by a suicide dive into the barricade.

Reigns quickly fights back and nails him in the face before hitting the Apron Kick. The Superman Punch looks to set up the spear but Seth leapfrogs him and nails a low superkick for two. Back up and Seth tries what looks like a Pedigree off the top but gets countered into a slow motion backdrop, only to have Rollins catch him in an impressive running buckle bomb across the ring for two more. Reigns gets back up, ducks a charge and hits the spear for the pin at 11:23.

**Rating:** B-. The match was good but why in the world do you have this match in full with a clean ending before they have the same match six days later? That's some very odd booking and a sign that they don't have enough people to fill in a three hour show every week. This is even worse when you consider how many people they have on the roster but how few they put any effort into.

We recap Cena vs. Lesnar as 11pm passes.

It's time for Henry to rally America before his match on Sunday. He talks about having a second chance to represent the United States after he was injured at the Olympics. For all the fans waving the American flag, he can't let you down. Henry says Lana couldn't make all her statements without living in America, so here are Lana and Rusev to cut him off. Lana says American intelligence is dropping faster than President Obama's approval ratings.

She brings up Henry competing in the 1992 Olympic Games but Russia actually won that year. We get a picture of that year's winner and Lana goes on about how Henry fakes his injury in 1996 to avoid being defeated again. Henry tries the Pledge of Allegiance but Rusev comes in for the brawl. Rusev kicks him down but Henry powers out of the Accolade and chokebombs the Russian. Old Glory is waved to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. Very strange choices in the last twenty minutes aside, this was an interesting episode. It seemed like they were trying to book around Monday Night Football as Cena kept using the word halftime when talking about Heyman. I wasn't looking at the clock, but I would bet that the segment took place during halftime of the football game. If that's true, it's one of the smartest things WWE has done in a long time.

WWE cannot contend with the NFL, so don't try to. Don't put some big moment at the beginning of the show, because fans are going to pick the football every time due to lesser interest, the ton of recaps and the bunch of other shows you can see the segment on again during the week. By putting it on when there's no choice to be made, you ensure the far bigger audience is available. That's actually thinking for a change instead of just ramming your head into a wall and being surprised when the wall doesn't move.

The ending segment was a very odd choice, but I'd assume it's the same mentality: why try to fight the NFL with a big segment when it's going to be wasted? As I'm writing this, the game is a tie in the fourth quarter so it looks like WWE is playing it smart. The show was good overall and I'm liking some of the stuff I'm seeing anymore. I'm still leaning towards Lesnar on Sunday, but there's actual doubt there now and that was the goal of this show. Good stuff tonight with a lot of the dumb being

cut out and replaced with entertainment.

## Results

Chris Jericho b. Kane – Rollup

Jack Swagger b. Bo Dallas – Patriot Lock

Nikki Bella/Paige b. Brie Bella/AJ Lee – Rampaige to Brie

Big Show b. Bray Wyatt via DQ when Luke Harper interfered

Sheamus/Usos b. Stardust/Goldust/Cesaro – Superfly Splash to Cesaro

Naomi b. Cameron – Leg choke

Roman Reigns b. Seth Rollins – Spear

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# **Smackdown – September 12, 2014: Time For A Tag Match Playa**

## **Smackdown**

Date: September 12, 2014

Location: Mohegan Sun Arena, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Tom Phillips

We're coming off a good Raw for the first time in far too long and the main story is Reigns getting taken out to end the show. It looks like we're heading for Reigns vs. Rollins and Jericho vs. Orton, though they would likely be better off with just having a tag match instead. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the end of Raw and Reigns taking a Curb Stomp onto a chair.

### Usos/Big Show/Mark Henry vs. Wyatt Family/Goldust/Stardust

This is just Harper and Rowan and not a handicap match if that isn't clear. Jimmy chops on Goldust in the corner to start before doing the same to Stardust. Jey comes in to choke on the ropes a bit and start in on the arm. Back to Jimmy to face Harper with Luke missing a clothesline and getting dropkicked down. Mark gets the tag for a splash in the corner but Luke clotheslines him down for two. Bray comes down to ringside but Big Show stands in his way as we take a break.

Back with Jimmy superkicking Harper and nailing him with an enziguri. Bray is nowhere in sight. Luke backdrops him to the apron and Jimmy slips off, injuring his own knee. Stardust likes what he sees and sends Jimmy into the announcers' table before handing it off to Goldust. A clothesline to the back of the head gets two and it's back to Harper with a dropkick for two. Rowan comes in for a knee drop to give us a complete set of heels not going after the injured limb.

Not that it matters though as Jimmy is able to Samoan drop Rowan on the bad knee. Goldust comes in and gets superkicked, allowing for the hot tag to Big Show for some house cleaning. Stardust takes the worst of it but the Dusts are actually able to suplex Big Show down. The Wyatts take Henry to the floor, allowing Jimmy to dive onto everyone. The Disaster Kick staggers Show but he comes back with the KO Punch and a Superfly Splash from Jey pins Stardust at 11:04.

**Rating:** C-. What was the point in having Jimmy hurt his knee if they were just going to forget about it thirty seconds later? At least have someone

kick the leg a few times after it. That being said, I'd definitely prefer not to have two members of a team both having leg injuries as the injured limb is being overused as it is. The match wasn't bad but just kind of there.

We recap Heyman and Cena from Raw.

Kane praises Reigns and Rollins for their actions on Raw. Rollins says he knew he could get inside Reigns' head and promises to take him out tonight. It's Reigns/Jericho vs. Orton/Rollins later.

### Bo Dallas vs. Justin Gabriel

Colter and Swagger are at ringside. After the bell, Dallas says most of the fans are destined to be failures for their entire lives, but they could be just like him if they just Believe! Dallas calls himself America's Sweetheart and asks everyone to put their hand over their heart, but Zeb interrupts. He says if Dallas is America's Sweetheart, then he's "Arianna freaking Grande. And I don't even know who that is!"

After a minute and a half of talking, Gabriel starts firing off kicks and rolls Dallas up for two. A hard whip sends Gabriel into the buckle and we hit the chinlock. Gabriel comes back with a springboard cross body and an STO but the moonsault misses, setting up the Bodog for the pin at 4:10.

**Rating:** D+. It's almost not fair to rate this as they only fought for about two minutes after all the talking. The match was every Bo Dallas match you've seen yet but that's fine in this case as he finally has something to do. I'm glad he didn't get the "Vince is bored with you" treatment that so many others have suffered through as Dallas has potential to be a good pest.

Dallas runs from Swagger post match.

### Paige vs. Summer Rae

Non-title. AJ is on commentary of course. Summer stomps away in the corner to start and puts on a full nelson leg lock. Paige fights out with a headbutt and some clotheslines followed by a series of knees to the ribs. A Black Widow makes Summer tap at 1:46.

AJ comes in and lays out Summer with the Paige Turner before skipping away. Paige freaks out again.

It's time for some good old fashioned arm wrestling between Rusev and Mark Henry. Before the match, Lana offers Henry a chance to get out of the match by forfeiting. She brings up Henry leaving the Olympics with an injury but Henry will have none of it. He never thought he would have the chance to represent his country again and there's the USA chant. Henry easily wins in a few seconds. Rusev wants a rematch left handed and Lana throws powder in Henry's face so Rusev can beat him down.

Jericho talks about losing the cage match on his own terms. He can live with that, but he can't live with Orton attacking him to make a statement. Jericho calls himself the Snake Shredder and the Copperhead Crusher and promises to take care of Orton. We get a hiss to cap things off.

#### Miz/Damien Mizdow vs. Dolph Ziggler/R-Truth

Ziggler says Truth (R-Ziggler) is his stunt double tonight and we get Truth in Dolph attire, complete with the hip swivel on the stage. JBL and Cole are nice enough to play up the joke. Mizdow vs. Ziggler to start but it's quickly off to Truth for Dolph's big elbow and two. Off to a front facelock from Ziggler before the good guys try to do a twin switch in a funny bit. A pair of hiptosses and clotheslines put Miz and Mizdow on the floor as we take a break.

Back with Ziggler crawling over to tag in Truth who is still wrestling like Dolph. Mizdow takes a right hand for his boss, allowing Miz to kick Truth in the face. The Reality Check gets two for Miz but Truth escapes the same thing from Mizdow. Back to Miz who walks into a DDT, allowing for the hot tag to Dolph. Everything breaks down and the good guys use each others' signature moves, capped off by Truth hitting a Zig Zag on Mizdow to give Dolph the pin at 11:04.

**Rating:** C+. The wrestling wasn't great but this was at least a funny idea and the announcers played up the joke really well. Dolph did say that this was one night only, which is for the best as it would get old fast. For a one off joke though, it advances the story and keeps us from having

Miz vs. Ziggler one on one again.

We look at the Bellas and Springer segment from Raw.

Nikki talks about how she's been the victim for years when AJ comes in and says Nikki got into the title match by being Stephanie's lap dog. Paige comes in and says she'll beat AJ one last time so they can be best friends. Nikki thinks this could be easy.

### Chris Jericho/Roman Reigns vs. Seth Rollins/Randy Orton

The brawl quickly heads to the floor and Reigns wants to get his hands on Orton. Reigns gets sent face first into the announcers' table though and we take a break. Back with Orton hitting a running clothesline in the corner and putting on the chinlock. Roman fights up and slams Orton down to make the tag off to Jericho.

Chris cleans house and sends Rollins into the buckle before putting on the Walls. He has to let go to take care of Orton but comes right back with a bulldog. Orton breaks up the Lionsault though and the Authority takes over again. Randy hammers away and gets two off the powerslam. Rollins comes back in and gets backdropped to the floor, only to circle around and break up the tag to Reigns.

Jericho fights up and dropkicks Randy, allowing the hot tag to Roman. The big man cleans house and sends Rollins to the floor before tagging in Jericho for a high cross body on Orton. The former Shield members head into the crowd as Orton loads up the Elevated DDT, only to have Jericho counter into a rollup for the pin at 12:09.

**Rating:** C-. This was short, energetic and set up the matches at Night of Champions. It's fine to have Jericho win here as losing to a former World Champion on a quick rollup is hardly going to crush Orton. Reigns and Rollins weren't really a factor in this but their story is already set up.

**Overall Rating:** C. Tonight was a by the book episode of Smackdown: advance everything but the main event, have some tag matches and recap stuff from Raw. It's just a supplement to Raw but I'll take that over a

lot of boring episodes that we so often get. There's nothing to see here but it could have been far worse.

### Results

Usos/Big Show/Mark Henry b. Wyatt Family/Goldust/Stardust – Superfly Splash to Stardust

Bo Dallas b. Justin Gabriel – Bodog

Paige b. Summer Rae – Black Widow

Dolph Ziggler/R-Truth b. Damien Mizdow/Miz – Ziggler pinned Mizdow after a Zig Zag from R-Truth

Chris Jericho/Randy Orton b. Seth Rollins/Randy Orton – Rollup to Orton

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## **Reviewing the Review – Monday Night Raw: September 8, 2014**

This was a special episode billed as the season premiere. For those of you new to wrestling, that would be WWE code for “AHHH!!! MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL IS BACK AND OUR SHOW SUCKS!!!” WWE had a few weapons to fight the NFL, including Jericho vs. Wyatt in a cage, Orton vs. Reigns II and Jerry Springer, because Vince continues to be out of touch with reality. Let's get to it.

We opened with a very good cage match between Wyatt and Jericho with Jericho hitting a huge dive off the top of the cage (and possibly breaking his toe in the process) for the big spot. He also tweaked his knee in the process though, allowing Bray to pound on it enough to escape. This was a better match than I was expecting and seems to completely write off the feud. Bray got to look evil and won almost entirely clean, save for the Family blocking Jericho from climbing down

at one point. Bray needs to move up a notch with his next feud and a midcard title might be just the ticket.

Orton asked for and received permission to do something evil tonight. This would wind up being attacking Jericho in the trainer's room, likely setting up a placeholder match for both guys at Night of Champions.

Time for the WWE's favorite comic idea: fake pictures of a wrestler. This is their jab at the massive celebrity photo leak ordeal from a few weeks ago, because nothing makes me want to cheer someone more than mocking crime. The idea was Ziggler had photos of Miz, including Miz in a facial mask and getting his chest shaved. After Miz and Sandow came out for a brawl, Ziggler showed us the last one: Sandow spray tanning a less than clothed Miz. The segment probably made Vince laugh but I just don't get it. They're not offensively bad or anything but the joke doesn't get more than the occasional chuckle from me.

Paige and AJ Lee beat Natalya/Rosa Mendes in the first Total Divas commercial of the week. The idea here is neither team could get along, but at the end of the day Rosa just isn't very good and it caught up with her team. Apparently Natalya has taken Rosa under her wing, even though this story should have taken place about four months ago under the Total Divas timeline and we're just now hearing about it. AJ and Paige both kissed the title belt post match.

Next up was the big segment of the week with Cena talking about how awesome he was before Heyman interrupted and tried to turn John to the dark side, saying it was the only way Cena could beat Lesnar. Paul explained that if Cena finally told the fans to shut up when they were booing him and saying CENA SUCKS that he would be able to take Lesnar out and get his title back. Cena teased it for a bit before going off on Heyman, talking about how he would never give up on what he believed in. He capped it off by telling Heyman to have Lesnar come here next week for a fight, or Cena will beat on Heyman instead.

This was a fifteen or twenty minute back and forth segment between two guys that are born to talk on a mic. The whole thing worked perfectly and Cena finally going toe to toe with Lesnar again next week is going to

rock. They've done a good job of making me want to see Cena try his luck against Lesnar again, but the interesting part is going to be Cena dealing with better than his best not being good enough to stop Lesnar. They were getting close to this with Bray at Wrestlemania but it didn't really go anywhere. This has potential though as Cena tries to define his legacy before he finally rides off.

Cesaro cost Sheamus a match against Rollins. There isn't much to see here and the match wasn't all that good. Cesaro beat Sheamus up post match to cap things off. It's nothing new but this is one of the better builds they've had to a midcard title match in a long time. Unfortunately they've run this match so many times before that I don't have much of an interest in this showdown. It's the danger of running the same matches over and over again on TV.

Lana and Rusev did their thing. Nothing to see here, save for Lana of course.

Now we got to one of my favorite parts of the show: an NXT showcase match with Adrian Neville and Sami Zayn beating Tyler Breeze and Tyson Kidd. The interesting thing here was the commentary, as the announcers spent the entire five minute match hyping up the Takeover special and treating this like the only thing that mattered in the world. I know they can't do that all the time but it was very nice for a change. Neville blew the crowd up with the Red Arrow for the pin on Breeze.

The stupid segment of the night was the Jerry Springer summit with the Bellas. This was basically a way to show clips from Total Divas and have the Bellas' parents and brother talk about how horrible this fight was. The girls fought and Springer got taken down in the brawl. Here's the good part though: this was the ONLY Bellas segment of the night and it made all the difference in the world. If they have to do this stupid story then so be it, but don't make me sit through five segments a week. I can live with something like this where they're out there like ten minutes total.

The Dusts beat Los Matadores in a nothing match but the Usos took them out post match.

Adam Rose beat Titus O'Neil. The story here was the Bunny, who superkicked Slater and hit a Superfly Splash after the match. I could go for an unmasking story.

Orton and Reigns had a good twenty minute match until Kane and Rollins came in for the DQ. There isn't much to say about the match as a lot of it was the same as Summerslam, meaning it was good stuff. I like the booking though as there's no need to have Orton lose clean twice in a row and Reigns already has the big win over Randy so there's no need to do it again.

Post match Rollins and Kane had the cage lowered (with Rollins nearly getting stabbed by one of the poles in a genuinely scary moment) and Reigns, after fighting back for a bit, taking the Curb Stomp on a chair to end the show. This is the kind of adversity Reigns needs to face on his rise. It's ok to have him get beaten down as long as he comes back and wins the big match in the end.

Raw this week was WAY easier to sit through as they kept the Bellas stuff contained to a single segment. That's been the biggest complaint in the last few weeks and the show was much better once that was solved. The show wasn't the best in the world, but after things have been this boring for so long, I'll gladly take an ok show.

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And check out my Amazon author page with wrestling books for under \$4 at:

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

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# Monday Night Raw – September 8, 2014: Two Bellas, A Bunny And A Springer Walk Into A Season Premiere

## Monday Night Raw

Date: September 8, 2014

Location: Baltimore Arena, Baltimore, Maryland

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Jerry Lawler

It's the season premiere (code for a gimmick name to try and fight off Monday Night Football) and the show is actually kind of stacked. We have Jericho vs. Wyatt inside a cage and Orton vs. Reigns II, but there's something else with an even bigger hype: Jerry Springer's intervention with the Bellas, because WWE thinks it's 1998. Let's get to it.

The cage is lowered to open the show.

We get a Season Premiere video with the focus on Jerry Springer and then the two big matches.

### Chris Jericho vs. Bray Wyatt

In a cage and you win by pinfall, submission or escape. Bray says the town's name again. Jericho hammers him down to start and catapults Bray throat before getting two off an enziguri. They slug it out in the corner but Bray pulls Jericho off the top to prevent an escape. A top rope shot to the head puts Bray down but Bray pops up and send shim into the cage. Bray splashes him against the cage and we take a break.

Back with Bray running Jericho over for two. He tries to climb but gets taken down in an electric chair drop. They slug it out with Jericho getting the better of it and taking Wyatt down with a bulldog. The

Lionsault looks to set up the Walls but Bray kicks him off. Jericho sends him into the cage and dropkicks Wyatt's head into the steel. Bray stops another escape attempt and they slug it out on the top rope until Wyatt superplexes him down.

Both guys are on the mat but Bray Spiders up and crawls for the door, only to get caught by the legs. Bray kicks him away again and hits a release Rock Bottom for two. He tries a catapult into the cage but Jericho catches himself on the ropes and tries to climb. Bray catches him again and hammers away on the top rope before nailing a top rope hurricanrana.

Jericho goes to the top of the cage but the Wyatts get in his way. Instead he goes back up and dives onto Bray but comes up holding his knee. Chris takes his knee brace and pad down but can barely get over to the door. Bray tries a charge but Jericho low bridges him into the steel. He's still able to stop Jericho with shots to (the wrong) knee. They're on top of each other half out of the cage and elbowing each other in the head. Bray finally starts hitting the correct knee and crawls over Jericho to escape at 17:00.

**Rating:** B. I was digging this one and it was almost all Bray's work winning it. The Wyatts stopping the win was fine and Jericho caused the knee injury himself. The ending worked quite well and made sense so the whole thing was on. I'm assuming the knee injury writes Jericho off TV and onto his concert tour.

Bray slams the cage door onto Jericho's knee to further the damage. He crushes it against the steps and takes him back inside for Sister Abigail.

Rollins and Kane are very excited about what they just saw when HHH and Orton come in. HHH wants to do something special tonight so Orton offers to do something to Orton that makes what happened to Ambrose look like a day at Sunday School. HHH gives him permission to do something.

Here's Dolph Ziggler with something to say. Cole confirms Miz vs. Ziggler for Night of Champions. Ziggler talks about how big of a week it was in Hollywood last week with the release of all the personal photos. This

gives us one of WWE's favorite comic tropes: wacky wrestling photos!.

We get stuff like Miz wearing a facial mask and shaving his chest (JBL: "So who was taking the pictures?") but Miz and Sandow interrupt. Miz rants about the invasion of privacy, with Sandow mimicking his hand gestures almost perfectly. They threaten to go after Ziggler so Dolph says she might as well show the last photo: Sandow tanning a less than clothed Miz. Sandow comes in and gets dropkicked and Zig Zagged while Miz walks away.

### Paige/AJ Lee vs. Natalya/Rosa Mendes

Natalya takes Paige down to the mat to start and the Total Divas hit a double suplex on the Canadian. The idea here is that Natalya is mentoring Rosa, which I'm sure you know about after watching Total Divas last night. Pay no attention to the fact that the story would have started just after Wrestlemania but we're just hearing about it now. Paige comes back on Rosa because she's Rosa but misses a legdrop. Rosa won't tag so Paige drives knees into her ribs. AJ grabs Paige's hair for a tag and puts on the Black Widow to make Rosa tap at 2:36.

Post match the winners take turns kissing the Divas Title until AJ skips off.

We look back at the cage match and its aftermath.

Jericho is getting his knee looked at when Orton attacks him. "It's the season premiere!"

Here's Heyman for his weekly speech. He talks about walking through the valley of the Cenation, but he fears no thuganomics because he's the advocate for Brock Lesnar. Heyman goes into his usual about Cena so here's John to respond. The pose he makes on the stage with his hands on his hips really does make him look like a superhero.

Cena says that if Heyman wants to say something to his face, he's right here. Heyman wants to give Cena some inside information: how to beat Brock Lesnar at Night of Champions. Cena says he knows how to do that already and it's because of three simple words. Lesnar beat the

Undertaker at Wrestlemania and we haven't heard from him in six months. Then Lesnar beat Cena at Summerslam but Cena was ready to fight again. His three words are never give up and he hands Heyman a towel saying just that.

Heyman laughs and asks the fans if Cena just can't help doing himself. He throws the towel down and says that's Cena's biggest problem: he lives to be John Cena. John is the kid that waits to come to the live events and chant LET'S GO CENA. But when Lesnar steps into the ring, he doesn't hear anyone but the referee, Heyman, and his latest victim.

Paul has a gift for Cena tonight and tells him how to survive Lesnar: give in. Listen to those fans that chant CENA SUCKS and there's no reason to fight anymore. Doesn't Cena want to give in to that hatred when a fat unemployed man tells Cena that he sucks? Just one time doesn't he want to tell them to shut up. Heyman offers to help Cena tell them to shut up and wants him to bust a rap on the fans.

Heyman demonstrates with some yo yo yoing and gets down on his knees to beg Cena to do it one time. He doesn't need to sell his soul to the devil. All Cena has to do is forget this hustle loyalty and respect idea and then he can be the one that beat the 1 in 21-1. Or he can just be one of many victims that fell at Lesnar's hands. Heyman gets in Cena's face and says he believes in him, but Lesnar says Cena just doesn't have it in him.

Cena actually goes to the ropes like Heyman wanted him to but comes back in. The dueling chants begin but Cena tells Heyman to shut up. Cena talks about how he's not going to drop down to Heyman's level to pop the fans in the second row and give them a reason to have a good laugh and then run back to the internet to tell Cena how much he sucks. Heyman lives in a world of "eat sleep conquer repeat" and he'd stab Lesnar in the back to get a chance to get himself forward.

Cena admits that Heyman is intelligence but he has no idea what it's like to live a life with meaning. John's world is "Eat, sleep, be John Cena, repeat" because that's what he was born to be. He doesn't want to change even if he could and loves to be the guy that makes that kid right there

do his homework early so he can come here and cheer.

Cena does like being the guy the fathers come up to and say they don't like him but thanks for doing right by his kid. He likes being the guy that a Make-A-Wish kid wants to spend the day with. He likes being the guy that gets to meet Purple Heart recipients on some Friday night who tell him that Cena inspires him and hands Cena the Purple Heart.

Now Heyman wants Cena to throw all that away to win one match. Paul backs off but Cena says this is what Heyman must love. This is the chance to get all that rage and hatred out of John Cena. John isn't going to beat up Heyman here because it's not worth it, but he'll give Heyman one week to produce Lesnar for a fight. But if Lesnar wants another week off and let Heyman do his business for him then Cena is going to fight Heyman himself. Awesome exchange between two masters here.

#### Sheamus vs. Seth Rollins

Non-title. Sheamus elbows Rollins out to the floor where Rollins picks up the briefcase and lays it in the corner. Back in and a knee lift and suplex get two for Sheamus. The rolling fireman's carry sets up a clothesline to put Rollins on the floor but here's Cesaro for a distraction as we take a break.

Back with Rollins holding a chinlock before Sheamus fights up with elbows to the ribs. He tries the top rope shoulder but only hits mat, allowing Rollins to put the hold back on. This time Sheamus fights to his feet and drops Rollins onto his back for another escape. A tilt-a-whirl powerslam gets two for Sheamus but Cesaro picks up the US Title for another distraction. Seth grabs a rollup for two and walks into another powerslam. Now Cesaro gets up on the apron, allowing Rollins to drive him into the buckle. The Curb Stomp gets the pin on Sheamus at 10:00.

**Rating:** C-. The Curb Stomp didn't look good at the end but at least the win wasn't clean. Sheamus vs. Cesaro is actually getting a build this time instead of just throwing it out there for a match. The problem is we've seen it so many times that it's harder to care again. At least they're getting a big stage for it.

Post match Cesaro does Sheamus' pose and Neutralizes him.

We recap Henry and Rusev from last week.

Here are Lana and Rusev to make fun of the national anthem before having the Russian version played.

Video on NXT Takeover II.

### Sami Zayn/Adrian Neville vs. Tyson Kidd/Tyler Breeze

Well this is a surprise. Sami snaps off some armdrags on Breeze to start before spinning him into an armbar. It's off to Kidd for a chinlock before Breeze comes in with a series of forearms. A neckbreaker gets two on Sami and it's back to Tyson for another chinlock. Sami jawbreaks his way to freedom and spins over for a hot tag to Neville.

The fans don't seem to care that much but Neville's rapid fire kicks wake them up a bit. A standing shooting star gets two and Kidd is sent to the floor for a big dive from Sami. Neville flips forward twice in a row and kicks Breeze in the head, setting up the Red Arrow for the pin on Breeze at 4:23.

**Rating:** C. Just a showcase match here to get people to watch on Thursday. No one really knew who these people were but the fans waking up for the offense from Neville is a good sign. I got to see Sami at a live event a few years back and he did the exact same thing. That's the sign of talent and it was on display here.

Here's Stephanie to talk about her history in this arena. She even fought her father in this building about ten years ago, but they've since made up. Now it's time to bring the Bellas back together and there's one man that could do just that. The fans chant for Jerry and here's Springer himself. Springer recaps the Bella drama and brings out both girls for the big talk.

Brie blames Nikki for all the problems and uses the "died in the womb line" again, drawing the same dead silence it got the first time. Nikki talks about how tired she is of being a second class sister and brags about her show having such good ratings. Brie talks about how this

started at Summerslam but Springer shows us a montage of them having very stupid arguments over petty things on Total Divas.

Nikki blames Brie for their dad leaving and we get quick videos from the parents saying they never knew Nikki was this unhappy. Brie tries to bring this back to wrestling stuff but drags it down again by saying she has their brother JJ in their corner. JJ is here of course (billed as JJ Garcia after Jerry called him JJ Bella) and has to come out to the Total Divas song. JJ tells Nikki to stop acting like a victim and the brawl is on. Nikki accidentally slaps JJ so Brie spears her down. The Bellas, Springer and Stephanie get in a big pileup as this just keeps going. Referees break it up and Springer is taken out on a stretcher.

#### Goldust/Stardust vs. Los Matadores

Stardust takes Primo into the corner to start but the masked man knocks him outside. The Dusts tease taking a walk and get caught with a big double dive. Back inside and Goldust throws Diego into the corner before tagging in Stardust for Dark Matter and the pin at 2:10.

The Usos jump the Dusts on the stage, sending the golden ones running.

We get a tribute to Joan Rivers.

#### Adam Rose vs. Titus O'Neil

The guys slug it out in the ring as the camera stays on the bunny. Titus throws Rose down but goes after the Bunny who wants to fight. Slater misses a dive and gets superkicked by the Bunny, allowing Rose to hit the Party Foul for the pin at 1:20.

The Bunny hits a Superfly Splash for good measure. Cole and JBL are STUNNED.

Roman Reigns has the antidote for the Viper and holds up his fist.

Video on Lesnar's dominance of Cena.

Lesnar will be on Raw next week.

#### Randy Orton vs. Roman Reigns

This actually gets big match intros. Reigns punches him to the floor to start but Randy sends him face first into the steps for two. A quick suplex gets the same for Roman and he runs Orton over with a clothesline. Orton bails back to the floor and we take a break. Back with Orton holding Reigns in a chinlock before taking it outside again. Reigns fights back and rams him back first into the apron and barricade.

They head to the apron with Randy sending him into the buckle and nailing a superplex for two. Back with Reigns fighting out of a chinlock and nailing a Samoan drop for two. He hits the ropes but charges into a powerslam to give Orton a near fall of his own. The Elevated DDT is countered into the Apron Boot and the jumping clothesline gets two. Orton comes back with the backbreaker for the same but charges into a boot.

Reigns dives into another powerslam for another two and the second attempt at the Elevated DDT connects. The RKO is countered though and Roman nails a Superman Punch out of nowhere. Reigns can't cover though so Orton calls out Kane and Rollins who bring security with them for the DQ at 20:24.

**Rating:** B. Nice long main event here and I kind of like the non-finish for a change. Reigns has already beaten Orton clean so there's no need to see him do it again. The opposite is true for Orton as he has no need to lose twice in a row to Reigns. Also this helps to set up Rollins vs. Reigns at Night of Champions, though I'm not sure what Orton does at the show.

The guards are actually tech guys who lower the cage and lock it into place. Reigns fights back though and cleans house, leaving him alone with Orton and a chair. Rollins pulls a Jericho and dives off the top of the cage to take out Reigns but he might have hit the chair as well. Kane gets back in and sends Roman into the cage a few times before planting him with a chokeslam. Orton gets the chair and destroys Reigns while shouting that it isn't Roman's day. Rollins puts Reigns' head on the chair and says that he made Roman. A Curb Stomp onto the chair ends the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. The show wasn't great but this was a HUGE improvement

over last week's mess. First and foremost, they kept the Bellas to ONE segment instead of the five or so from last week. The Springer stuff was a waste of time but at least it was short. The main event felt big and the NXT guys were a nice treat. You couple that with a good cage match and the show was much easier to sit through. It wasn't a great show or anything and cutting out an hour would have helped, but it's good enough.

### Results

Bray Wyatt b. Chris Jericho – Wyatt escaped the cage

Paige/AJ Lee b. Natalya/Rosa Mendes – Black Widow to Mendes

Seth Rollins b. Sheamus – Curb Stomp

Sami Zayn/Adrian Neville b. Tyler Breeze/Tyson Kidd – Red Arrow to Breeze

Goldust/Stardust b. Los Matadores – Dark Matter to Diego

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Adam Rose b. Titus O'Neil – Party Foul

Roman Reigns b. Randy Orton via DQ when Kane and Seth Rollins interfered

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# Smackdown – September 5,

# 2014: Holla Holla Holla!

## Smackdown

Date: September 5, 2014

Location: Pinnacle Bank Arena, Lincoln, Nebraska

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

I really hope this show is better than Raw as I can't imagine things getting much worse. This week's episode of Raw was one of the least interesting and flat out horrible shows that I can remember in a very long time. To make things even worse, tonight we have Paige vs. Brie Bella as the story that swallowed the WWE is moving to Fridays. Let's get to it.

Here's Cena to get things going. He immediately gets a cheap pop by talking about wearing red at the University of Nebraska. In less than three weeks, we're done with lawsuits and what's best for business because he's going to fight Brock Lesnar for the WWE World Heavyweight Championship. He isn't going to come out here and just do the Queen's wave because it's what the company thinks he should do.

At Night of Champions, he's going to fight because that's what he does. The day he comes down here not wanting to be champion again is the day he walks out the door. The fans actually start a loud CENA chant (complete with shots of the crowd to show it's legitimate) for the first time in longer than I can remember. He knows this is going to be a fight but he's going to take Lesnar on and fight. Then he'll tell the Authority to line them up so he can knock them down and you can still get the WWE Network for \$9.99.

Cena is on a roll here but Kane and Rollins come down to interrupt. They accuse Cena of having a mid career crisis but John isn't going to take advise from a demon brother of a dead guy who is now the spokesman for Men's Warehouse. Kane threatens to put Cena in a match but this brings out Roman Reigns. Roman says he's going to finish his business with Randy Orton on Monday and would love to start tonight, but Orton isn't here. Therefore he can focus on Kane and Rollins, so let's get started right

now.

Cena is ready to go but Kane and Rollins say not so fast. Rollins says the Authority is one step ahead of them and we've got Wyatts. This brings out Jericho, Big Show and Mark Henry. We're still not done yet though as HHH comes out, says "let me tell you something playa" (seriously) and makes a ten man tag. "Now how about that playa?" And, complete with a leg in the air and a one armed raising the roof, "HOLLA!" AND TEDDY LONG'S MUSIC PLAYS!!! This was a very solid opening segment with Cena nailing the promo and HHH cracking me up.

### Cesaro vs. Dolph Ziggler

Non-title and Sheamus is on commentary. Cesaro takes him down and grabs a quick chinlock, only to get caught by a neckbeaker. Ziggler's jumping elbow gets two but he walks into a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker to put Dolph down. A European uppercut drops Ziggler again but Cesaro goes outside to jaw with Sheamus before covering. He cranks on a cravate for a bit before a gorilla press gutbuster gets two more.

We take a break and come back with Ziggler nailing a jawbreaker to escape another cravate. Ziggler loads up the splash in the corner but dives into another uppercut for another two. Dolph spins around Cesaro's shoulders and grabs a sleeper. That goes nowhere so Ziggler counters Swiss Death with the jumping DDT for a near fall of his own. Cesaro gets back up and tries the Neutralizer but gets rolled up for the pin at 6:51 shown of 10:21.

**Rating:** C-. The match was the decent action you would expect from these two, but the booking continues to make my head hurt. You either job a champion or you job a guy that is getting a title shot in a few weeks. Why WWE felt the need to book this is beyond me, but the fact that they see nothing wrong with pushing the Bellas this much and jobbing Cesaro clean before he gets a title shot should tell you everything you need to know.

Cesaro pounds on Ziggler post match but Sheamus makes the save. They yell at each other until Sheamus throws the belt at Cesaro and lays him out with a Brogue Kick.

Stardust talks about needing what they have and about one of the Usos being hurt. He keeps turning around and changes his tone every time. Apparently they have a title shot at Night of Champions.

### Jimmy Uso vs. Heath Slater

Jey is on a crutch. Jimmy misses a quick superkick attempt and gets caught in a neckbreaker for two. Slater stomps away and hooks a chinlock before sending Jimmy into the corner. Uso fights out and nails a Whisper in the Wind for two. He has to kick Titus down though and walks into a side kick for two. Cole: "The Gator is down!" JBL: "Call Skinner!" Back up and the superkick knocks Slater out of the air and the Superfly Splash is good for the pin at 2:59.

We look back at the Divas segment from Raw.

Stephanie announces Nikki vs. AJ vs. Paige for the title at Night of Champions.

Nikki thanks Stephanie for her announcement and says she's finally learning what it means to have a real sister. She talks about being treated horribly by her sister all her life.

Here are Lana and Rusev to respond to Mark Henry. Lana says we're in America's heartland but that's an oxymoron because America has no heart. If it had one though, it would be made in China. America used to be great but is soon to be nothing, just like Mark Henry. This brings out Mark who says he challenged Rusev, but that isn't the question. The question is whether Rusev is going to accept the challenge or hide behind the woman that looks like an escort. Lana accepts the challenge on Rusev's behalf and Henry promises to give him a red white and blue whipping.

Jerry Springer will be having an intervention with the Bellas on Raw. Oh dear.

### Paige vs. Brie Bella

Non-title, AJ is on commentary and Nikki is at ringside. Brie has her own music now and it's the generic pop rock song you would expect it to be. Brie takes her to the mat to start and we're quickly in the catfight.

Paige gets taken down out of a lockup but pulls Brie out to the floor. Back in and Paige crawls onto Brie as AJ makes some comments about missing her baby. Brie comes back with clotheslines and a running knee to the chest. The fans chant YES but AJ and Nikki are in a fight on the floor. Brie hits a missile dropkick as AJ beats up Nikki, sending Brie outside for a save. She heads back in for the Rampaige and the pin at 4:27.

**Rating:** D+. The catfighting makes me think the Bella showdown is going to be an even bigger disaster than I thought. Brie can be passable in the ring but Nikki has never proven herself capable of having more than a bad match. This was nothing special and was more about the drama than the wrestling, which is better in a way but still bad.

Harper says Wyatt is a serpent and the rat can't run fast enough. Bray tells Jericho that he has to pay for his sins on Monday. Rowan adds in a RUN.

#### Bo Dallas vs. Zack Ryder

Ryder dropkicks him at the bell and nails a faceplant, only to have Bo pop up for the Bodog and the pin at 43 seconds.

Post match Bo says everyone must be living in Nebraska because of some horrible choices in their lives. If Jack Swagger can turn their lives around, so can everyone else. He's about to start his own WE THE PEOPLE when Swagger hits the ring and beats him up.

We see the Rollins/Ambrose/Reigns stuff again.

#### Roman Reigns/John Cena/Chris Jericho/Big Show/Mark Henry vs. Wyatt Family/Kane/Seth Rollins

We get a LOUD Y2J chant as Big Show starts with Rollins. The giant hits his loud chop in the corner and brings in Henry for a splash. Big Show loads up a gorilla press but Rollins escapes and tags in Wyatt. Bray is quickly thrown around so it's off to Rowan for the big man showdown. Show busts out a sunset flip for two followed by a hard shoulder block. He rips open Erick's coveralls for a chop before it's back to Henry for

another splash.

Jericho comes in to a big pop and nails Erick with a dropkick to the side of Rowan's head. We take a break and come back with Kane dropkicking Big Show's knee out. Off to Wyatt for some stomping before Harper slaps on a chinlock. Big Show fights up but gets dropkicked down for two, with the kickout sending Harper out to the floor. Seth comes in to work on the leg before quickly tagging in Wyatt. A DDT gets two and it's already back to Harper for a headlock.

Big Show suplexes him down and finally makes the tag off to Reigns to clean house. A Samoan drop to puts Harper down but they head to the floor where the numbers game results in Reigns being sent into the barricade. We take another break and come back with Rowan holding Reigns in the skull crusher. Reigns is sent to the floor and Rollins whips him into the barricade while talking trash. Back in for another chinlock but Reigns powers up, only to get kicked in the head.

Harper comes in again as Cena is pacing around on the floor playing cheerleader. Reigns suplexes Luke down but charges into a big boot for two. It's back to Kane who walks into a running clothesline and the hot tag brings in Jericho. A top rope shot to the head puts Kane down and the Lionsault connects, only to have Kane pop up and grab him for a chokeslam. Jericho counters with an enziguri but can't get the Walls.

Bray comes in for a save and it's quickly back to Harper as we take an almost unheard of third break. Back with Rollins working over Jericho with some right hands. Jericho backdrops Rollins to the floor but Seth dives back in to pull Jericho away from the tag. Bray headbutts him a few times and puts on another chinlock.

The running cross body gets two but Bray is down as well. Wyatt spiders up but Jericho elbows out of a Rock Bottom. A dropkick puts Bray down and we FINALLY get the tag to Cena. Everything breaks down and the parade of secondary finishers begins. With everyone else down, Cena puts Rollins in the STF but the Wyatts all come in for the DQ at 17:49 shown of 28:19.

**Rating:** C+. The match was decent but it felt long more than anything else. They're doing a good job of making Cena look explosive but I still

think they're keeping the title on Lesnar at the PPV. It doesn't make sense to have Brock dominate that much at Summerslam and then have Cena win just because he's fighting harder. The match was good enough and was a decent enough use of half an hour.

The good guys all hit their finishers with Cena planting Rollins with an AA to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C. The show was nothing great but man alive does that one less hour make a difference. It doesn't drag things down and makes the show much easier to sit through. That and a lack of recaps really helps things along. The main event was decent enough but it took away a lot of matches that could have filled out the card. At least the ten man match was a fourth of the show so everything else wasn't left hanging. It says a lot when a totally average show is miles ahead of Raw. Granted HHH's Teddy Long stuff was hilarious.

### Results

Dolph Ziggler b. Cesaro – Rollup

Jimmy Uso b. Heath Slater – Superfly Splash

Paige b. Brie Bella – Rampaige

Bo Dallas b. Zack Ryder – Bodog

John Cena/Big Show/Roman Reigns/Mark Henry/Chris Jericho b. Seth Rollins/Kane/Wyatt Family via DQ when the Wyatt Family attacked Cena at the same time

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# Reviewing the Review – Monday Night Raw: September 1, 2014

Raw was a holiday show this week and it was a mess like it almost always is. However this week went further into the drek than it's gone in a long time. I'm sure you've heard all of the problems already but I don't think I accurately described how horrible it really was. Let's get to it.

We started with the traditional long interview with a backdrop of the Highlight Reel. Jericho's guest was supposed to be Randy Orton but he got every male member of the Authority instead. HHH talked about how he was considering changing Brock's opponent for Night of Champions. Everyone suggested they should get the shot in Cena's place.

This of course drew out Cena to say he's going to be ready and he actually threatened a lawsuit if HHH changed things. We can file this in the category of STUPID IDEAS THAT WWE USES EVERY FREAKING MONTH AND FOR THE LOVE OF ALL THINGS GOOD AND HOLY CUT IT OUT ALREADY! Anyway, Cena talks about how he'll be COO and will fire HHH if he changes the match. HHH laughs this off and says he knows Cena has changed. Orton took the mic and insulted Reigns, which of course brought him down. The obvious six man was made as a way for HHH to determine who wants it the most.

We got a good midcard tag match with the champions Dolph Ziggler/Sheamus vs. their respective challengers in The Miz/Cesaro. The wrestling wasn't bad but the ending was creative. Miz (who had a makeup lady and director's chair) tagged in his stunt double Damien Mizdow to take the Zig Zag with him. Ziggler got caught up in the heat of the moment and

got caught by the Skull Crushing Finale for the pin.

There's an actual story here and it's getting interesting for the most part. That's a rare thing for the midcard scene and it's very refreshing. Miz continues to nail this character. He won't be World Champion but it's a great midcard character for him to rebuild his career. I've always been a fan of the guy and it's good to see him getting another chance like this.

Now we get to the part of the show that everyone hated. Well one of them at least. We got the first of the Growing Up Bella segments, which consisted of Nikki telling stories about how horrible Brie was growing up. These ranged from Brie stealing her prom date, costing Nikki her driver's license and wrecking their car to Nikki taking Brie's high school exams for her.

These were treated like the most dramatic moments in history and as you would expect, Nikki Bella ruined any drama they could have had. This is the problem with the whole Bella storys (among other things): the Bellas can't act and the stories are so over the top that they can't be taken seriously. I have no idea why I'm supposed to care about whatever nonsense they had like fifteen years ago or however long it was. I understand that this is to make people watch Total Divas, but for the love of all things good and holy, if this is what is popular on reality TV, I shudder at the future of the human race.

In case you didn't get it the first time, we had a horrible eight Divas tag to promote the show even more. It lasted a minute and ended in a big brawl. Again, I understand that it's cross promotion, but this is making the whole division look like an even bigger joke than it ever has, and that's covering a lot of ground.

Mark Henry and Big Show beat the Wyatts via DQ when Rusev interfered. This is the third time these teams have fought in a few weeks and these matches are getting weaker every time.

It's not that they're bad, but they've pretty much done everything they could to each other at this point so why would I want to see them fight even more?

Michael Sam was invited to Raw next week. Even though he hadn't accepted yet and there was a very solid chance he could get signed to an NFL practice squad, WWE put him on a graphic saying next week. This screams of desperation and a way to make people care about them when Monday Night Football debuts next week. Instead of having good action, they're resorting to gimmicks because they've wasted so much stuff over the last few months.

Oh and Sam signed with the Dallas Cowboys so he's not going to be on Raw, making the whole thing a waste of time.

Recap of last week with Cena, Lesnar and Heyman's promos.

Heyman talked about how hard Cena is working but insists it won't matter. Short and sweet here.

Jack Swagger beat Curtis Axel in a short match with the Patriot Lock. After the match, Bo Dallas had three people talk about how Swagger ruined their lives by losing to Rusev. This was a hilarious bit and makes me like Dallas even more. Just like the tag match earlier, it's nice to see the midcard getting some attention. Above all else though, they're actually using some fresh stories instead of the same nonsense over and over.

Adam Rose beat Titus O'Neil in a nothing match that was more focused on Heath Slater vs. the bunny. Again, instead of doing something interesting or important, this is what we get on Raw.

Rusev squashed Ryder and got chased off by Mark Henry. More filler but at least it helped build a story and made sense given what happened earlier.

Stephanie brought out Nikki Bella and gave her a Divas Title shot. Brie came out and they did their usual schtick with Nikki ranting about Bryan leaving Brie one day and Nikki will be the Bella everyone is talking about. AJ Lee came out and talked about how she's the #1 contender and how she's getting the shot. Paige came out and said she's the Divas Champion but Nikki and Brie took over the segment again with Nikki shouting that she'll forgive Brie if she quits again and doesn't come back. Brie shoved Nikki down and left, AJ picked up the title but handed it back to Stephanie, and Paige just kind of looked around.

Somehow that segment took the better part of fifteen minutes. Again, this is designed to make people care about Total Divas and give the show drama, but now it's looking like it's taking over the Divas Title as well. Everything Paige and AJ have done is being sacrificed for the sake of giving the producers of the most overly scripted reality show I've ever seen extra drama. We now get to listen to the Bellas talk about betrayal and all their drama and dear goodness is it going to be bad.

At the end of the day, the biggest problem is this leads to Nikki vs. Brie, likely in a major match. If I stretch, I might be able to think of three Bella matches that are worth watching. They're just not good workers but it's going to be a big focus of the shows going forward because we need more drama for Total Divas. The match is going to be a disaster because it's going to be treated like the most important thing ever and the overacting is going to cripple it. It's not exactly Once In A Lifetime or the Mega Powers Exploding and the build is horrible. But hey, the ratings for Total Divas might be up because there's a huge crossover there right?

Jericho vs. Wyatt in a cage next week so Bray talked about a rat running from a snake.

Goldust beat Jimmy Uso in another nothing match. Goldust crushed Jey's already injured knee after the match to cement

the heel turn.

Big Show told Henry he'd have his back against Rusev but Henry wants to do it himself. This seems to set up Show's latest heel turn.

The six man main event was fine and built on the story of Cena finally getting in and cleaning house. However, after he got the tag and destroyed everyone, Cena tagged out to Reigns for the spear and the pin. There really wasn't much great here but the match was long and the first good wrestling we had all night.

Raw this week was a borderline disaster and a lot of it was due to the Bellas. I've said it a few dozen times now, but the Bellas are not good actresses and the story isn't working. It's just so overdone and overexposed and the rest of the company is suffering as a result. This is the same problem that TNA often has: if you don't like this story, don't bother watching the show because it's what you're getting. Raw was basically three stories: Cena vs. Authority, Henry vs. Rusev and the Bellas with the other stuff just being there to fill in time. That doesn't make a good three hour show and it's really causing a lot of problems week to week.

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