

Monday Night Raw – December 7, 2015: One on the Brake And Two on the Gas

Monday Night Raw

Date: December 7, 2015

Location: North Charleston Coliseum, Charleston, South, Carolina

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

It's the go home show for TLC and the big story continues to be Roman Reigns and company vs. the League of Nations. There's still a lot of the card to be set for Sunday but as usual, you can see most of it from here. The show isn't looking bad and if they put enough violent gimmicks on the card, everything should be fine. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Sheamus vs. Reigns and last week's main event. Thankfully Reigns beating them on his own on Smackdown is omitted.

Here's the League, now with their own music. Sheamus says he can't look stupid if he's the World Champion. As for this Sunday, how can he be afraid of defending the title against Reigns if he already beat him in 5:15? The WWE has entered the International Era and Sheamus lists off the four countries represented in the League. You'll notice there are no Americans, because in 2015, America just isn't good enough anymore. Sheamus says they're the best of the best.....and we've got the Wyatts?

The fans immediately chant YES for the Wyatts. Bray says they haven't been introduced because the League of Nations just lives in Bray's world. They're here for the chaos but here are the Dudley Boyz and Tommy Dreamer to interrupt. That was close. They almost had something interesting there before we get ANOTHER ECW reunion. Bray says they're not getting the message that they're outnumbered. Actually they're multiplying because here's Rhyno to even things up. Dang I was hoping for Dudley clones. Before they can get to the ring, here are Reigns, Ambrose and the Usos to make it sixteen people at once.

Dudley Boyz/Tommy Dreamer/Rhyno vs. Roman Reigns/Dean Ambrose/Usos vs. League of Nations vs. Wyatt Family

Elimination tag with one man from each team in the ring at once. Harper is quickly sent to the floor as Del Rio takes down Ambrose. It's off to Jimmy beating on Rusev as D-Von is down in the corner and Harper tags in Bray. There are basically two matches going on at once. D-Von tags in Rhyno for some clotheslines and a suplex to Jimmy.

Strowman comes in to clean house and it's off to Dreamer, wearing some Dusty Rhodes polka dot pants. Braun is knocked to the floor, allowing Rusev to take Dreamer down. The Usos load up a double superplex on Rusev but Strowman makes it a Tower of Doom with Dreamer being taken out in the process. Rowan tags himself in and takes a quick DDT from Dreamer for the elimination as we take a break. Thank goodness they got rid of the more interesting team so quickly.

Back with Del Rio beating up Jey and Dreamer until Tommy grabs a neckbreaker on the now legal Sheamus. Bubba comes in with a Rock Bottom for two on Sheamus but all twelve come in for a huge brawl. We get down to Rhyno vs. Reigns for a showdown but Rusev and Sheamus break it up. Rusev walks into a 3D and the Dudley Boyz set for What's Up, only to have Sheamus Brogue Kick Bubba for the second elimination.

Things settle down to Sheamus vs. Ambrose but Rusev tags himself in before anything can happen. Dean goes off on Rusev with strikes (Saxton: "Ambrose is a different piece of toast), followed by the standing elbow drop for two. Back from another break with Sheamus firing off the ten forearms to Jey's chest until Reigns makes the save.

It's off to Rusev for a bearhug before Barrett misses a charge in the corner, allowing for the hot tag to Reigns. The fans are WAY behind Roman here (it's an old NWA town so faces are popular and heels are hated) as he powerbombs Del Rio and Superman Punches Barrett and Alberto. Everything breaks down with a big series of dives and Del Rio gets Reigns in the armbreaker. Jimmy comes in with a Superfly splash for the save and it's a spear to Sheamus for the pin at 21:36.

Rating: B-. Fun brawl here but the League of Nations is now 0-2 as a four

man team and the already weak looking World Champion got pinned when you have three others who could take the fall. Rusev doesn't even have a match on Sunday and he can't take a pin here? Another good idea (like having the Wyatts out there) with questionable booking (like having them go out first) bringing it back down a bit when it didn't need to.

Post break, Sheamus says that's the closest he's coming to losing the title. He's going to smash Reigns up and he'll give us a preview tonight.

Stardust is raving about Hollywood when Titus O'Neil comes in to say Stardust needs to get some. Well Eden is probably here tonight.....but Titus means some Stardust time, such as reading a good book and having a bottle of wine. Stardust goes on another rant and Titus leaves.

Dolph Ziggler vs. Kevin Owens

Non-Title and Tyler Breeze/Summer are here. Kevin trips him down to start and grabs a front facelock as Ambrose is in the back watching (while eating popcorn and drinking a soda). We hit the chinlock on Dolph until Ziggler counters into a rolling three quarter nelson for two. Ziggler dropkicks him down but gets clobbered in the face with an old Vader style forearm to the face.

They head outside with Ziggler's headbutt not having much effect. The fall away slam into the barricade give Kevin three straight near falls and it's time for some big right hands to the head. A kick to Dolph's face gets two as Dolph keeps pulling himself up. Owens sends him shoulder first into the post for a nine count on the floor. The backsplash gets two more and Dolph falls back to the floor as we take a break.

Back with Owens slapping on a chinlock until Ziggler fights up and avoids a charge to send Owens shoulder first into the post for a change. Kevin is just fine and sends Ziggler out to the floor to try another countout. Dolph starts getting up again though so Owens goes outside, only to take the running DDT on the floor. Back in and Owens throws him with a release German suplex but misses the Cannonball. The Fameasser gets two and they trade superkicks with Ziggler falling on top for another near fall. Owens is right up though and it's a Pop Up Powerbomb for the pin on Ziggler
19:07.

Rating: B-. Another good match here but it felt more long than anything else. Ziggler continues to be entertaining enough but you're not going to get anything more than the same stuff every single time he's out there. I'm really not sure why Breeze needed to be out here as he was just watching instead of actually doing anything. At least we get the TRILOGY match on Sunday because that's all anyone wants to see right?

Post match Ambrose comes out and throws his popcorn and soda in Owens' face.

The Wyatts are ready to crush the ECW guys. Strowman wants to become Dreamer's nightmare later tonight.

Miz comes in to tell Neville that his offer of mentoring was serious on Smackdown. Donny Deutsch (star of a new show on USA) comes in to offer Neville a spot on his show. He gives Neville his card and tells Miz to get back to him in a few years. Miz gives Neville his card but Neville throws it away.

Alicia Fox/Brie Bella vs. Sasha Banks/Naomi

Fox and Banks start things off with Alicia grabbing a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker. It's off to Naomi who takes one as well to send Team Bad out to the floor. Tamina trips Alicia to take over and it's a dropkick from Naomi for two. We hit the chinlock from Naomi, followed by another one from Sasha. Back up and Alicia rolls over for the hot tag to Brie. It's time for the YES Kicks before everything breaks down. Another Tamina distraction sets up the Rear View for the pin on Brie at 5:28.

Rating: D. I'm so sick of these matches. We've seen them do the same stuff every single week for months now and nothing has changed except for the numbers. Naomi is still doing the same "HAVING FUN" offense, Banks is still as good as anyone in the division and Brie still has no idea if she's a face or a heel. You would think they would learn at some point but it hasn't happened in months now.

Post match New Day comes out to give Team Bad their own unicorn horns and everyone dances. Ok then.

The New Day is still in the ring after a break to talk about giving back. They've given a donation to the League of Nations and some baby names to Kim Kardashian and Kanye West for their new son. Then they have to give two different teams a Tag Team Title shot on Sunday in a ladder match. Why do they need ladders? They're not house painters and they're not saving cats from trees. We get a quick New Day Theater with Big E. playing a tree and Kofi playing a kitten. Woods says that New Day is a group of grown men and saves Kofi from the tree, end scene.

Lucha Dragons vs. New Day

Non-title, Woods is on the floor again and the Usos are on commentary. Cara and Kofi get things going with Kofi throwing him out to the floor for a suplex from Big E. Woods lays on the floor next to Cara and plays some trombone as we take a break. Back with Big E. missing a splash into the corner before it's off to Kalisto for some rapid fire kicks and the corkscrew cross body to Kofi.

The comeback is short lived though as Kofi takes him into the corner again, only to have Kalisto come back with a sloppy headscissors. The (not) hot tag brings in Cara to really take over off a standing moonsault to Big E. Kofi is legal though and kicks Cara down, only to have the Usos get in a fight with Woods (Jey: "BEAT HIM LIKE HE STOLE SOMETHING!"). The distraction lets Cara roll Kofi up for the pin at 6:36.

Rating: C. That would be the second time in an hour and a half that a champion has been pinned to set up a title match on Sunday. I beg of you WWE, please find something new. There are other ways to set up something like this and it's getting annoying to see this happen every single time.

The Usos leave with the horns and the trombone. So now they actually did steal something. SOMEONE BEAT THOSE TWO MEN LIKE THEY DESERVE!

After a recap of the opening match, Reigns says he's fine with having a lesson from Sheamus, even though he has no idea what Sheamus could teach him.

We look back at Charlotte faking an injury to beat Becky Lynch last week.

It's time for MizTV with guests Charlotte and Ric Flair. Charlotte takes over the introduction for her father and says Miz has ten minutes of Rolex time. Ric says he's so proud and promises to be in his daughter's corner at TLC this Sunday. That brings Miz to Charlotte's new attitude, which sends her off on a mini rant about Miz being sexist. Miz shakes it off and asks about the match on Sunday, bringing up Paige costing Charlotte her friendship with Becky Lynch. He stays at it by asking about Paige saying Charlotte is only here because of her father.

Ric gets up at that but Charlotte yells about Paige, promising to destroy her on Sunday. This brings out the third guest and Paige really doesn't look too upset. Ric says this is just a ploy so Charlotte goes outside. Paige slaps him in the face and does the strut. Ric: "Get her!" Charlotte charges but Paige runs to end the segment. So...am I supposed to cheer for either of these two or is this another SHADES OF GRAY story that is in no way a method to keep the writers from having to figure out who they want to turn face?

We look at Reigns pinning Sheamus again.

Ryback vs. Rusev

Rematch from last week. Rusev chills on the floor to start and gets back in at nine. Ryback shoves him right back to the floor as Rusev is holding his back from earlier. Tired of waiting, Ryback busts out a corkscrew plancha (seriously). Ryback: "WE'RE HAVING FUN!" A quick backdrop sends Ryback over the top again and Rusev snaps the arm over the top as we take a break.

Back with Rusev still on the arm by bending it around the ropes and sending it into the post. Ryback's comeback includes some shoulders followed by a flying shoulder to really mix it up. A middle rope dropkick (better than Brie Bella's) gets two for Ryback and it's time for a chase around the ring. Ryback runs Lana over by mistake (Lana may have intentionally gotten in his way) and hurts her ankle again, freaking Rusev out. He throws Ryback in the Accolade on the floor and it's a double countout at 10:37.

Rating: C. Ryback was trying with some fresh offense out there (always

appreciated) but he's fallen back through the floor in importance again. That's what happens when you build someone up on a short term basis, have him lose his two big matches and then do nothing with him for weeks. Oddly enough it's the inactivity that hurts worse than the loss to Kalisto in the tournament.

Stardust vs. Jack Swagger

Titus is on commentary and this is joined in progress after a break with Swagger putting on the Patriot Lock. Stardust makes the rope as Del Rio and Colter come out, allowing Stardust to throw the arm into the post. Some choking on the ropes has Swagger in trouble but he comes back with clotheslines and a powerslam. The Patriot Lock makes Stardust tap at 2:40.

Post match Del Rio nails Swagger. Titus yells at Del Rio to watch out for Stardust so Alberto hits Stardust with a chair. Swagger grabs his own chair and knocks Alberto's out of his hands before sending Del Rio running off. Jack asks Zeb what he's thinking but Colter drives off.

This week's Rosebush is about Miz wanting to mentor Neville. Apparently Miz wants Neville to be recast in Dumbo. Speaking of animals, we saw the return of Rhyno this week. This followed Tommy Dreamer's, now with a golden tan. He thought he had baby oil but it was really Becky Lynch's hair dye. This is still such a waste of anything Rose could do.

In the back, Del Rio yells at Colter for causing him to trip and drop the chair. Alberto says he doesn't need Colter and threatens to use the chair on him. Colter claims that Del Rio wouldn't be champion without him and drives off. So they're split now, thank goodness.

Tommy Dreamer vs. Braun Strowman

Braun throws him around to start and drives in some shoulders to the ribs. We hit the nerve hold for a bit before the standing choke puts Dreamer away at 2:46. Total squash at a slow pace.

Here's Reigns for the big showdown with Sheamus. Reigns asks where Sheamus is before talking about climbing the ladder with his Shield

teammates over the years. He's on top of the ladder and calls Sheamus out for a beating again. Cue Sheamus to say that Sunday is going to be a sequel when he beats Reigns down just like he did at Survivor Series. Reigns is ready right now but of course Sheamus doesn't want to do it tonight.

Roman wants to know where Sheamus' potatoes are because all he sees are tater tots. That brings Sheamus charging but he stops in front of the three tables laid against the apron. Sheamus promises to build a castle from all the broken toys on Sunday. Reigns challenges to fight him again tonight but Sheamus knows all Roman wants to do is use the weapons. That's fine with Reigns ("Hold on a second tater tot") who throws out all the goodies, one at a time to drag this out far longer than it needs to be.

Sheamus still won't get in so Reigns keeps talking and it's FINALLY on after nearly ten minutes of talking. Reigns gets the better of it at first and loads up the announcers' table, only to have Sheamus take over and send him into a ladder (which Sheamus has to grab before it falls into the crowd). They fight into the crowd and then up to the entrance where all the tables and ladders are set up.

Sheamus blocks a powerbomb and hits him with a chair to take it back to ringside. Roman is thrown over the announcers' table but comes back with a spear through one of the many tables to end the show. WAY too long here for what they did but points for not having everyone else come out and letting this be about the two of them for a change.

Overall Rating: C-. This was one of the fastest shows I can remember in a long time. The first two hours felt like they took half an hour and the last third wasn't bad. Unfortunately the majority of the show was ok at best with the action being the biggest problem by far. The wrestling was just ok and a lot of the booking made my head hurt. They did a good job of setting up the pay per view but it was far from an entertaining show outside of that. Not the worst or anything, but a totally forgettable show.

Results

Roman Reigns/Dean Ambrose/Usos b. Wyatt Family, Dudley Boyz/Rhyno/Tommy Dreamer and League of Nations last eliminating the League of Nations

Kevin Owens b. Dolph Ziggler – Pop Up Powerbomb

Naomi/Sasha Banks b. Brie Bella/Alicia Fox – Rear View to Bella

Lucha Dragons b. New Day – Rollup to Kingston

Ryback vs. Rusev went to a double countout

Jack Swagger b. Stardust – Patriot Lock

Braun Strowman b. Tommy Dreamer – Standing choke

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Smackdown – December 3, 2015: Back To The Minor League

Smackdown

Date: December 3, 2015

Location: Giant Center, Hershey, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Booker T., Jerry Lawler, Rich Brennan

Things started to pick up a bit on Monday as we saw the formation of a new team in the League of Nations. This gives Reigns some more odds to overcome (again) as he gets ready for his second shot at Sheamus in a week and a half at TLC. The only match tonight is Bray Wyatt vs. Bubba Ray Dudley. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of the Sheamus vs. Reigns issues from Raw, including the formation of the League of Nations.

Reigns, the Usos and Ambrose are in the ring to start with Roman talking about being in the ring with his family. All three of these men are like brothers to him and he hugs Dean, who he's known for five years but there have been enough memories for thirty. Reigns wants to get his hands on Sheamus and the League of Nations tonight so here are Sheamus and company. The fans chant USA but Sheamus says the four of them all have Green Cards. Well Rusev doesn't but he's working on it.

Sheamus brings up Reigns' five minute title reign but it's worth it because now there's the cool Sheamus 5:15 shirt. There has been an eight man tag made for tonight and Sheamus lists off all eight men in the match to fill in even more time. This brings out New Day for some reason with Woods asking why Reigns is so serious. Big E. renames Roman the Ruiner and Kofi has a new match to announce for later tonight: New Day vs. Usos/Ambrose and if the Usos and Ambrose can't win, Reigns is going to fight the League of Nations on his own tonight.

I'm liking the League of Nations idea and it's a lot more interesting than having Reigns out there to talk about his match with Sheamus on his own. That's not Reigns' strength as he's much better with someone to bounce off of. The League offers several options for Reigns to feud with as well as making Sheamus feel like a much bigger deal instead of just that guy who won the title because of a briefcase.

Tyler Breeze vs. Neville

Dolph Ziggler is on commentary. Neville flips over Breeze for a rollup out of the corner to start and we hit an armbar. Dolph recap his history of trading wins with Breeze as Neville sends him to the floor and we take a break. Back with Neville throwing Breeze off a front facelock and

clotheslining him out to the floor for a big flip dive.

A standing shooting star press gets two for Neville back inside as the fans are trying to get into this but can't keep cheering for very long. The Supermodel kick gets two for Breeze, only to have Neville come back with one of his own. Summer offers a distraction though and the Unprettier puts Neville away at 7:56.

Rating: C. Breeze is another example of a guy who could do something if they would stop having him lose so many matches. He surprised people when he was down in NXT and could do the same thing here with pure hard work and it's something that is always going to work in WWE, assuming you don't job him out every week. Unfortunately the same could be said about Neville.

We take a quick look at Charlotte beating Becky Lynch with a handful of trunks.

Becky says she understands why Charlotte did what she did and they're still best friends. Brie Bella and Alicia Fox come in and to call her naïve until Charlotte comes in to say this is a new generation. Becky and Charlotte are still a bit tense but it seems to be ok.

Brie Bella vs. Becky Lynch

Alicia and Charlotte are here as seconds as Booker says he doesn't like the factions idea. Becky armdrags her to start and Brie fakes an ankle injury to mock Charlotte, earning her a dropkick to the face. Brie starts in with the YES Kicks as we cut to the back where Tamina is holding a pinata while Naomi swings a stick.

The BRIE MODE knee gets two and we hit a seated abdominal stretch. Becky quickly gets up and makes her comeback with a dropkick and t-bone suplex for two. The threat of the Disarm-Her sends Becky running to the ropes and into Charlotte. Now the Disarm-Her goes on but Charlotte comes in to go after Brie for the DQ at 2:54. Lawler defends Charlotte but that's totally on her. How dare she make us listen to BRRRRRRRIIIIIIEEEEE MODE all over again.

Becky is ticked post match.

Neville is in the back when Miz stops him to make fun of his ears. Social media doesn't like Neville's lack of personality so Miz offers to mentor him. Neville reminds him of Daniel Bryan and look what Miz did for him. Neville takes his card and a copy of Santa's Little Helper on DVD.

Rusev and Lana (in a dress and with her hair in a braided ponytail) call Ryback a barbarian (not the Barbarian of course). Lana's accent slipped a lot during this.

New Day vs. Dean Ambrose/Usos

If the New Day wins, Reigns is in a 4-1 handicap match tonight. Jey chops Woods down to start and it's already time for the imitation Unicorn Stampede for Xavier. Jimmy gets dragged into the corner for some New Day stomping (showing them how it's done) and Big E.'s elbow to the jaw for two. Woods' chinlock doesn't go very far as Jimmy fights up and makes a quick tag off to Dean.

Everything breaks down for a bit with Ambrose clotheslining Big E. on the floor but getting crotched on the top back inside. Woods asks what happened to Dean as we take a break. Back with the real Unicorn Stampede keeping Ambrose in trouble, meaning it's time for some tromboning and dancing. A big kick gets two for Kofi and Big E. gets the same off a belly to belly. Dean finally gets smart and low bridges Big E. to the floor but has to roll through Kofi's cross body instead of tagging.

The rebound lariat allows the tag to Jey a few seconds later and it's time for some serious house cleaning. Woods takes the pop up Samoan drop for two but Big E. catches a diving Ambrose. Big E. is nice enough to hold him there for a suicide dive from Jey in a really staged looking spot. Jimmy dives at Kofi but tweaks the knee from Raw, which gets tied in the ropes to make it even worse. Woods adds a Shining Wizard to pin Jimmy at 14:00.

Rating: C+. New Day reminds me more and more of Edge and Christian every time I watch them. They can nail the comedy but just as importantly they can have a good match when they need to. This sets up the main event and

gave us a good stretch of wrestling in the process. That's exactly what they needed it to be and everything worked well here.

The Wyatts tell the Dudleys they're here.

D-Von Dudley vs. Bray Wyatt

Again, can't they keep a match that they set up the day before this was taped? It doesn't really matter which Dudley it is but since that's the case, why bother switching it? Dreamer is here with the Dudleys. The Wyatts' entrance starts and.....R-Truth is on the stage in Wyatt gear. After a wave, here are the real Wyatts with Truth gone. I can get behind this gag.

An early Rowan distraction doesn't work and D-Von takes over with a Thesz press. Bray quickly snapmares him down and puts on a chinlock though, allowing Bubba to play cheerleader. You can say a lot of things about Bubba, but he is never one to sit around and do nothing during a match. Back up and Sister Abigail puts D-Von away at 1:55. That was quick.

Post match the Wyatts load up a table and Strowman chokes Bubba out. Dreamer takes the table bump and Harper welcomes him home. The ECW guys are all stacked up and Bray poses over them.

Roman Reigns vs. League of Nations

4-1 handicap. Still no Lana or Colter out with the League. Before the match, Reigns says the important thing is Jimmy's being ok. Renee Young comes up to say Reigns has to go out there on his own but he's ready to bring the pain. Del Rio starts for his team and gets punched into his corner. Booker: "Roman Reigns is a man alone on an island right now. Like Gilligan." Thankfully Lawler is there to correct him as Sheamus comes in and goes right after Reigns, dragging him into the wrong corner.

Reigns fights back until Barrett trips him from the floor.....which is good for an elimination. Lawler calls him Wade (probably earning himself a fine) and the League is rightfully ticked off as we go to a break. Back with Del Rio punching in the corner and Rusev getting two off a belly to back suplex. Rusev throws him to the floor for a beating from the

partners as the numbers are dominating.

Sheamus' release suplex gets two and we hit the chinlock. Roman finally gets up a boot to stop a charging Rusev and scores with a Samoan drop. The fans think this is awesome. What the heck are they watching? It's not bad but it's certainly not awesome. Roman gets up and isolates Del Rio but Rusev comes in for a distraction. The Backstabber gets two for Del Rio but Reigns nails a quick spear for the same with Sheamus making the save. The apron boot hits Rusev and a clothesline off the steps drops Sheamus. Del Rio gets thrown over the announcers' table and Reigns beats the count back in at 15:22.

Rating: C. That ending felt like something out of an old Smackdown game. That's the strategy you would use if you were in a big handicap match and you knew that you weren't going to win even in a video game because it was too ridiculous. There would have been nothing wrong with the League getting disqualified here or Reigns brawling to a double countout but there's something wrong with Reigns winning.

Ambrose and the Usos come out for the save to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. I've been enjoying this League of Nations idea, even if it's just something short term. Sheamus vs. Reigns isn't a feud that is going to work on its own so why not throw in most of the upper midcard and main event scene to mix it up and strengthen the story a lot? The rest of the show was a bunch of quick stuff but they're doing the important story right and that's what matters right now.

Results

Tyler Breeze b. Neville – Unprettier

Brie Bella b. Becky Lynch via DQ when Charlotte interfered

New Day b. Usos/Dean Ambrose – Shining Wizard to Jimmy

Bray Wyatt b. D-Von Dudley – Sister Abigail

Roman Reigns b. League of Nations via countout

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Wrestling Wars Podcast Episode 30

In which KB and NorCal talk about the builds to Takeover: London and TLC.

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Monday Night Raw – November 30, 2015: League Of Trombone

Playing Nations

Monday Night Raw

Date: November 30, 2015

Location: CONSOL Energy Arena, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

We're closing in on TLC and things aren't in the best place at the moment. Roman Reigns is challenging Sheamus but also has to deal with Rusev and King Barrett who attacked him last week. That's really all we have right now but a lot of the pay per view card will likely be set up tonight as the show is in less than two weeks. Let's get to it.

We open with confetti falling and here comes New Day to stand on a red carpet in the ring. Big E. knows we're wondering whose birthday it is and even though it's actually Naomi's birthday, this is about a NEW DAY. Instead of a birthday, tonight is a gala, a jubilee if you will. Big E. starts to sweat so Woods gives him a Terrible Towel (the symbol of the Pittsburgh Steelers) to clean up. Today marks a new champion: the shamrock shaking ginger giant Sheamus.

Here's the new champ, in a suit with his hair slicked back this week. Sheamus thanks the New Day for introducing him and then thanks the Authority for giving him this chance. Finally though, Sheamus wants to thank Roman Reigns. If Reigns had only accepted HHH's handshake, he might have this around his waist. Sheamus does a bit of dancing (Kofi: "The hips don't lie baby!") and New Day is amazed at the title changing hands after only 5:15. It's time for more posing with fireworks but here's Reigns to Superman Punch Sheamus and walk off with the title. They're already better than they were last week as this was fun.

Reigns is with Ambrose and the Usos in the back when the Authority comes in. They make him give the title back and Reigns says he's coming for the title at TLC. That's not soon enough for Sheamus though because he wants to defend the title tonight. The catch: there's a 5:15 time limit.

The announcers explain everything we just heard thirty seconds ago. WE'RE NOT THIS DUMB WWE!

Dolph Ziggler vs. Tyler Breeze

Probably time for Breeze to job again so Ziggler can get his win back. Breeze takes over to start and sends Ziggler into the corner for some shoulders to the ribs. We hit a front facelock as the announcers talk about the title match instead of anything in front of them. Ziggler fights up but goes shoulder first into the post as we take a break. Back with Ziggler fighting out of a front facelock and ducking an enziguri.

Breeze counters a hurricanrana into a powerbomb but Dolph slips out, only to nail another enziguri for two. Dolph's superkick is countered into a catapult, followed by a modified backstabber. For some reason this makes Ziggler hold his shoulder again but he's still able to counter the Unprettier into a pinfall reversal sequence for some near falls. Back up and Ziggler nails a quick superkick for the pin at 10:33.

Rating: C. Yep you knew it was coming. How did you know it was coming? You knew because this is what WWE does. Breeze got one over on Ziggler so that means it's time for Ziggler to get one over on Breeze because Breeze might get too popular (despite losing almost all of his other matches) and that must be stopped, meaning we have two guys who are hitting .500 and wonder why neither is over. Such is life around here because this company is stupid.

It's time for MizTV with guests Rusev and the returning Lana. Rusev is here first and says this isn't about the USA. The fans want Lana but Rusev says she's his wife and his alone. Rusev rants about loving her and brings out Lana, who looks exactly like she did about a year ago. Miz asks why this happened after everything they've been through but Lana says the past was forgiven when Rusev proposed. Seeing what else was out there just made their love stronger.

Lana NEVER went all the way with Dolph, drawing a YES YOU DID chant from the fans. Rusev didn't go all the way with Summer either. All he did was break her heart, just like he's going to break his opponents apart. Rusev and Lana kiss but here's Ryback for Rusev's next feud.

Ryback has no business here and no connection to anyone in the ring but Cole and company act like this is totally expected because their script

says it's supposed to happen. Apparently they had a scheduled match, but Cole only threw that in as an aside. Tell us this when Ryback's music hit so we're not trying to figure out what's going on. Anyway Ryback says we fight here so the match is on.

Ryback vs. Rusev

This is joined in progress with Rusev in control. Ryback fights back and hits a missile dropkick of all things. They fight to the floor with Lana getting knocked down, meaning Rusev stays outside for the countout at 1:45.

Rusev blames Ryback for Lana being hurt.

Ambrose has been called into HHH's office so HHH can tell him that if Reigns doesn't win in 5:15 tonight, Ambrose loses his Intercontinental Title shot as well. Reign has to learn that his actions affect his friends as well and what better way to show him?

Here are the Dudley Boyz with some tables leaned up against the ropes and covered in black sheets. The Wyatt Family has beaten them up for the last week, including chokeslamming Bubba through a table last week. So many teams have tried to put the Dudley Boyz down and the Wyatts have come very close but they're still standing and breathing. They pull the sheets off and each one has a Wyatt's name. D-Von reminds us of the three commandments: thou shall not steal, thou shall not kill and thou shall not mess with the Dudley Boyz.

They're ready to fight at anytime so here are the Wyatts so Bray can accept the challenge. He advises them to never invite the devil into your backyard because he might stay. Bubba says it looks like the Wyatts have the advantage but the Dudley Boyz have their own family. Cue Tommy Dreamer of all people and the Wyatts bail.

Wyatt Family vs. Tommy Dreamer/Dudley Boyz

Bray is the odd man out here and it's joined in progress again. D-Von is in early trouble but punches his way out and tags in Dreamer, who walks right into a swinging Boss Man Slam from Harper. Rowan puts on the head

vice but misses a splash, allowing for the cold tag to Bubba (D-Von was too busy clapping to put his hand out). Everything breaks down and the referee throws it out at 3:33.

Rating: D+. Of course it was Dreamer. It's always Tommy Dreamer. When all else fails, there is no one else on the planet that you can bring in for a hardcore match with ECW people involved than Tommy freaking Dreamer. If this is a one off thing or even a two off thing at the pay per view (which it likely is) then fine but this could have been a good introduction for someone new. Instead it's an old name for the Wyatts to beat up while giving the fans a very cheap pop.

It's time for a table but Bray gets knocked off the apron and through one instead, allowing the good guys to escape and preserve the ECW legacy for one more night.

We recap the opening segment.

Goldust vs. Alberto Del Rio

Non-title AGAIN. Before the match, Colter says the fans are too concerned with rats on Mars and Anne Hathaway being pregnant. Goldust punches Del Rio in the face before he can say anything and we start fast. A powerslam and spinebuster get two each on Del Rio but Goldust misses a charge in the corner, setting up the top rope double stomp for the pin at 2:00.

Post match Del Rio puts Goldust in the cross armbreaker until Jack Swagger makes the save.

Becky Lynch thinks she and Charlotte could have a great match, non-title of course. They WOO at each other and Ric is here too.

Usos vs. Lucha Dragons

Winners get the title shot, presumably at TLC. New Day is on commentary here as well. Kalisto takes Jimmy down for two to start before Jey comes in for a double elbow. Big E. starts with his reporter voice as the Dragons hit their monkey flip into a 450 for two. Cara speeds things up again as everything breaks down. Kalisto gets backdropped onto Jey but Jimmy takes him down with a big dive. Cue Cara for his own dive but the

New Day runs in for the no contest at 2:55.

New Day says that means no title match and it's time to dance.

Post break, Stephanie makes it a three way match at TLC, but if the Usos want in, Reigns has to win as well.

Brie Bella vs. Sasha Banks

Another Twitter induced match. Team Bad has a new thing where they put their fists together and shout UNITY in falsetto voices. Brie takes over to start but Sasha drops her in a hurry. Alicia gets sent into a superkick and Brie gets sent into the buckle for two as this is already a step off. A clothesline gets two on Brie and we hit a cross arm choke. Brie fights up for her middle rope dropkick and the YES Kicks. Not that it matters as the Bank Statement is enough to make Brie tap at 4:57.

Rating: D. I really wasn't feeling this one as Sasha seemed like she had to slow things down for the sake of letting Brie keep up with her. That's the problem with the division right now: half the matches get time but half the matches have to be slowed down and cut short because not everyone is on the same level. This didn't work for me though and they need to let Sasha get away from Tamina and Naomi already.

Ambrose and the Usos fire Reigns up. It's going to end in a brawl and we're going to get an eight man tag for the real main event aren't we?

WWE World Title: Sheamus vs. Roman Reigns

Sheamus (now in a Sheamus 5:15 shirt) is defending and this match has a 5:15 time limit with Ambrose and the Usos' title shots on the line. The champ tries to bail to start so Reigns rolls him up for some early near falls. Sheamus takes it to the floor and sends Reigns into the barricade as the clock is ticking. Back in with less than four minutes to go and we're under 4:00.

Reigns fight up and hits a boot to the face as we're under three minutes. Sheamus can't escape up the ramp and a Samoan drop gets two. They head outside again with two minutes left and Reigns is thrown over the announcers' table. Sheamus gets posted but the time is ticking away.

Roman finally gets him back in with a minute to go. The Superman Punch is loaded up but Rusev pulls him to the floor at 4:40.

Rating: D+. Yeah this was obvious. You knew they weren't going to change the title on Raw (because that might make people watch) so let's just do this and then set up the obvious eight man tag later on in the show. Sheamus vs. Reigns is fine and they're doing what they can with it but Sheamus losing again at the pay per view is going to make it even worse.

Barrett, Del Rio and Rusev huddle around Sheamus, who calls the four of them the League of Nations. Cue the Usos and Ambrose to even things up and Sheamus gets punched off the apron.

Charlotte vs. Becky Lynch

Non-title with Paige on commentary and Ric Flair in Charlotte's corner. Becky grabs the wrist to start and takes Charlotte down with a headlock takeover. Charlotte pops up and it's a standoff as Ric struts on the floor. They hit the mat for more headlocking until Charlotte chops her in the stomach. The neckbreaker sets up more chops but Becky kicks her in the chest. Paige gets annoyed at all the questions and threatens to put Byron in a submission on the table right now. Charlotte twists an ankle coming out of the corner but it's all goldbricking, allowing Charlotte to grab a rollup for the pin at 4:40.

Rating: C-. So they might be turning Charlotte heel? That's their big solution? Becky continues to lose, but they're at least offering some shades of gray here to make things a bit more interesting. Hopefully Ric is just a one off appearance here because he doesn't need to be around Charlotte, who is good enough on her own. Just don't have her talk live again.

Becky is stunned and more than a big annoyed.

The eight man tag is announced for the main event.

Post break Becky wants to know what that was but Charlotte calls it strategy. This isn't NXT anymore and everyone needs to step it up. They're still friends though. Charlotte leaves and Paige comes up to

gloat a bit, leaving Becky conflicted.

Adam Rose has a gossip segment called The Rosebush. Rose thinks Rusev wears the bra in his relationship with Lana and suggests that Zigler loves both Summer Rae and Breeze.

Titus O'Neil sings Christmas carols to Stardust and tells him to get in the Christmas spirit before shoving him down. We'll go with a holiday ok then here.

Usos/Dean Ambrose/Roman Reigns vs. League of Nations

The good guys don't get an entrance. We're not quite ready to go yet because here's the New Day to announce they're now part of the League of Nations to make this a 7-4 handicap match. Kofi and Dean get things going and it's Ambrose in early control with left hands in the corner. It's off to Jimmy vs. Woods and the Usos and Reigns start a quick Unicorn Stampede to turn the tables. The big staredown takes us to a break.

Back with Del Rio kicking Jey into the corner and tagging out to Woods. A clothesline gets two and it's off to Rusev for some stomping on the leg. The beating continues with Sheamus for the ten forearms to the chest. Reigns finally tries to make the save but Jey has to save himself with an uppercut to knock Kofi out of the air. The hot tag brings in Jimmy to clean house but Big E. clotheslines him from the apron. Jey is holding his knee on the floor as we take another break.

Back again with Jey having been taken to the back because of his knee. Jimmy is still taking a beating but he finally gets away to make the tag to Reigns as house is cleaned. Everything breaks down though and Reigns hits the apron kick to Kofi and Xavier, only to have Del Rio send him into the barricade. That means it's time for Reigns to get beaten down, including a knee drop from Sheamus for two.

Big E. puts Reigns in an abdominal stretch for some rhythmic slapping to the ribs. Reigns gets run over again and it's off to Del Rio for a chinlock to keep this slow. We see Jey on the floor, because when Cole meant he was taken out he meant he was down. Close enough I guess.

Reigns finally gets up and makes the hot tag to Ambrose to take everyone out. Dean dives off the top to take out New Day and Barrett before a suicide dive does the same to Sheamus. The Superman Punch drops Del Rio and Reigns adds a clothesline to Barrett but seemed to be holding his knee. Back in and a Brogue Kick puts Ambrose away at 25:10.

Rating: B-. This was a good brawl to end the show and make the League of Nations seem like a threat for a change. I'm not sure why New Day needed to be in there but anytime those three are on my TV I'm happier than I was otherwise. Sheamus getting the pin is a good idea, but you would think an Uso would have been a better option. Good, long match though and a much better option than just Rusev vs. Reigns from last week.

Post match Reigns comes in for the save (thankfully his leg seems fine) but gets beaten down to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. The major difference here is simple: there was a point to almost everything. Last week felt like they were just throwing out random stuff to fill in time and that's not how Raw is supposed to go. This week felt like they were building up to something instead of just wasting time until the next big show came. There are still a lot of problems with the show but it helps to have a point to stuff. Reigns vs. Sheamus is looking better, but you can see the screwjob from here.

The rest of the show was hit or miss at best, but there was enough good on here to make it work. The key thing here is it was better than last week, which really isn't a hard bar to get past. They've done a good job of setting up TLC as you can see most of the card from here and the League of Nations is a good idea but the show is still hitting its head on a low ceiling because these stories don't have a lot of room to go anywhere.

Results

Dolph Ziggler b. Tyler Breeze – Superkick

Ryback b. Rusev via countout

Dudley Boyz/Tommy Dreamer vs. Wyatt Family went to a double DQ when all

six brawled

Alberto Del Rio b. Goldust – Top rope double stomp

Usos vs. Lucha Dragons went to a no contest when New Day interfered

Sasha Banks b. Brie Bella – Bank Statement

Roman Reigns b. Sheamus via DQ when Rusev interfered

Charlotte b. Becky Lynch – Rollup

League of Nations/New Day b. Usos/Roman Reigns/Dean Ambrose – Brogue Kick to Ambrose

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Reviewing the Review – Monday Night Raw: November 23, 2015

It's been a bit since I've done one of these for Raw but the show has been so pitiful lately that I figured it was time to take another look at it. The show's ratings are pathetic and it should be interesting to look at how screwy the show has been to see why they're in such a horrible

place (even though they're making bank with the sponsors etc.). We're fresh off Survivor Series, meaning Sheamus just cashed in Money in the Bank because of reasons. Let's get to it.

The show starts and it immediately goes off a cliff. Here's the problem: Sheamus is Seth Rollins with pale skin and an annoying accent. The Authority came down to gloat, the new champion came out to say I TOLD YOU SO, the hero challenger came to the ring and issued a challenge, which was eventually accepted for the hardcore based gimmick pay per view.

In other words, it's the exact same thing that Rollins did when he set up his match with Randy Orton at Extreme Rules 2015. That's bad storytelling all around because you could call out every single thing that was going to happen in the opening twenty minutes of this show from the second that Sheamus kicked Reigns in the face the night before.

That's where Raw is having its biggest issues right now: it's so predictable. They have been using this same format for so many years and you can just swap in the characters you want. Why should I care that Sheamus is now going to be HHH and Stephanie's lapdog instead of Rollins? Now we get to see Sheamus go out and work really hard in a match so he can get the Authority's praises and go see them like a four year old that wants his dad's approval. You could see the Authority talking down to everyone again with Stephanie ripping Reigns' balls off because that's all she does these days.

Of course there will be no repercussions because the Authority is on a higher plane than everyone else so they can't be touched. HHH might do a match at Wrestlemania and put someone over (Unless they're Brock Lesnar because then the fans needed to see HHH get his precious win back. Or if they're Sting and the fans weren't absolutely certain who won the Monday Night Wars, which the match was about because Stephanie said so.) but it's happening once a year because HHH is too busy doing wacky fun stuff like dancing to make the crowd cheer or bequeathing the Pedigree to Rollins so Seth can get a rub.

The Authority taking one loss every few months doesn't change anything about them. It makes them look like they're treating a top star like a

charity case. If Rollins or Reigns beat them at Wrestlemania, it would change absolutely nothing because HHH would go into war mode for a big rematch that no one would care about because the Authority will be right back to normal with their charity of the month and doing nice things for the crowd because they're faces one week and serious businessmen the next week. As long as those two stay over though, Raw has accomplished its main goal. Until that changes, Raw isn't getting better.

As for the actual story of the night, Rusev came down and attacked Reigns to set up the main event. Yeah after all that, we get a match that has no real drama and will only end in a DQ or Reigns getting a pin. There's also nothing on the line and the new champion isn't in action. Therefore, there's no reason to watch. Reigns is part of the problem here but it's much more that it's a predictable story. The fans have learned that this kind of story isn't going anywhere until at least after TLC because we're going to have the Authority interfere and let Sheamus keep the title, setting up the Rumble. Why watch until then at the earliest?

The Dudley Boyz beat the Wyatts via DQ in a quick match. This seems to set up a feud, which makes me shake my head even more. If you were moving the Wyatts into a feud with the Dudleyz, do a Survivor Series match the night before with the Dudleyz, Bray and Strowman getting counted out or disqualified, leaving you to do the same finish that you did with Harper taking the final fall. It sets up the feud and protects Bray while still giving us the Undertaker moment. Everyone wins, but as usual we got the lamer idea because that's how WWE works.

Sasha Banks pinned Becky Lynch with a handful of trunks (which Cole was too busy schilling stuff to notice). After that WAY too long opener and all the Undertaker videos, this got four minutes. "Yeah we want you to revolutionize the division. Here's four minutes with no mic time or a character for either of you. Go rock it!"

Then the New Day came out and made fun of country music for about ten minutes. This was supposed to include an open challenge but New Day canceled it when the Lucha Dragons tried to accept. The Usos came out as well and it seemed to be setting up a three way match (possibly with a ladder and probably the Ascension) at TLC, but there was nothing tonight.

In other words, more time being wasted on something that doesn't really go anywhere.

However, there's one more major thing here: Kofi said that he hated country music and it wasn't even his character talking because he REALLY hated country music. How do you even respond to that? I understand the kayfabe is dead, but this is running out there and holding up a big sign that says "HEY! YOU DO KNOW THIS IS ALL FAKE RIGHT??? LIKE, KOFI KINGSTON IS TOTALLY A NICE GUY AND YOU DON'T NEED TO GET ANNOYED AT US OVER HIM!"

This screamed of trying to make it seem like Kofi was a jerk instead of just having him play one and letting us get immersed in it. The idea has worked for years but now we have to tinker with it for some reason because the fans are too smart. Yeah there are smarter fans, but there are also a lot of fans who either aren't smartened up (they're called kids) or a bunch of fans that like to be swept up in the whole idea (they're called the majority). Stop trying to reinvent the wheel.

Neville pinned Mark Henry in a quick match. Henry showed him respect after the match and that was that. This might be the start of a Henry retirement angle but as of now it seems like another match that didn't mean much. I like that actually as it's nice to just have a match for a change instead of having an angle and a story involved in every single thing that happens.

The Prime Time Players and Goldust beat the Ascension and Stardust. It was short and it was meaningless, but in this case it was boring. Not everything can work.

Del Rio and Colter did their weekly thing and no one cares. Like seriously, no one cares. It's the most boring thing on the show every week and I have no idea where it's supposed to go. Colter is awesome on the mic but he's got NOTHING to work with here. Oh and then Swagger came down and went after Del Rio again. This brings up another problem for WWE: they give someone a gimmick and that's what they're stuck with for good. This feud could have gone to anyone that they make into a patriot but instead we're getting Swagger, who will lose in the end because that's what Swagger does.

Charlotte and Paige had a much better rematch than the mess they had the previous night. They actually acted like they wanted to hurt each other instead of having a lame wrestling match, which made for a much better story. The ending helped as well with a double countout to likely set up a big brawl at TLC. It makes you wonder what they were thinking at the first pay per view match, but it was probably them letting them calm down after the whole Reid Flair fiasco.

Ryback beat up Heath Slater in another filler segment. Not a match of course, but a segment.

Ambrose/Ziggler beat Owens/Breeze in ANOTHER midcard tag match that barely went anywhere. This was to help set up Owens vs. Ambrose for the title, so of course Breeze had to take yet another pin. Breeze is another great example of a guy that has been crippled coming out of the gate because he's a fresh name for the bigger stars to beat and since they only know a few ways to build up a challenger (beat the champ or beat the same guy over and over), this is what we're stuck with.

Then Reigns beat Rusev via DQ in a long, dull main event with King Barrett interfering. Did this mean that Reigns was fighting more adversity? Of course not as he cleaned out Sheamus, Barrett and Rusev AFTER they beat him down. That's how the show ends: with Reigns looking like he's about to deal with even more midcard goons who aren't going to beat him before he gets to fight for the title, where I'm sure he'll get ripped off again before he wins the Rumble and likely fights Lesnar and wins the title at Wrestlemania XXXII.

In other words, we're going another few months before Reigns finally gets there. The problem is we've been doing that same story for over a year now and the fans are on the verge of giving up on him. There's a large group of fans that want to see Reigns, but so many of them are just fed up with having him lose and then deal with some midcard feud before going after the title again and then starting another midcard feud when he gets screwed over. They need to do something and do it soon because this stuff is really old.

Overall Raw was a total mess. In addition to the completely predictable

opening and main event developments, we have the huge gaping holes due to all the injuries. Since this is WWE, we certainly can't give the other Divas match more time or bring in some people from NXT for a showcase match or an angle that changes things up a bit. No instead we're getting Heath Slater and New Day making fun of country music because it makes Vince laugh.

The big idea here is that the show is stale. It's the same formula and the same ideas that we've seen forever but there's no indication that they're going to switch it up. We're at the point where Raw opening with a match is considered shaking things up. How am I supposed to get excited for a show when I have to wait twenty minutes to get to the first match because HHH needs to say "I told you so" and Stephanie needs to screech at whoever she's adding to her collection this year? How is that good television?

Apparently a lot of people don't think it is either and the ratings are showing it. Another bad show this week and something they need to fix in a hurry before it gets even worse. It's something they could fix easily too, which makes the shows that much more frustrating. Just stop doing the same stuff over and over and the show will feel better, which is half the battle already.

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Smackdown – November 26, 2015: Thanks For Something No One Will See

Smackdown

Date: November 26, 2015

Location: Bankers Life Fieldhouse, Indianapolis, Indiana

Commentators: Booker T., Rich Brennan, Jerry Lawler

First of all, Happy Thanksgiving. We're in a strange period at the moment as we're waiting on TLC and the fans don't seem to be thrilled. Sheamus is World Champion again as Roman Reigns somehow managed to get screwed out of the title again. Those five minutes he held the title were the only five minutes a true good guy had held the title since Summerslam 2014. Let's get to it.

Here's Reigns to open things up with a table, a ladder and a chair in the ring. Reigns talks about wrestling with the Usos in the house, in the yard, at the beach and all over the streets. Their favorite spot was always on the trampoline though because they would always dream of winning the World Title. That actually happened this Sunday but it was a short dream because Sheamus crushed his face with a Brogue Kick.

This brings out Sheamus, which is probably best as they're keeping Reigns' talking short. Sheamus calls Reigns a walking Adele song and says he's been in elevators longer than Reigns was champion. You can't even heat up a frozen burrito in the time Reigns held the title. The fans (or at least the ones recorded and played back here) don't like these comments so Sheamus goes on about Reigns' success this past Sunday. All Reigns had to do was shake HHH's hand on Sunday but Reigns speared the boss instead. That was all Sheamus needed to see before he came down to the ring and snatched the title away.

Reigns says come down here and see what happens in five minutes. Sheamus comes down but of course stops and laughs. He'll see Reigns in his nightmares, fella. Reigns wants a preview of TLC, where he's going to

break Sheamus' jaw with a Superman Punch. Then he'll break his back with a chair and powerbomb him through a table. When Sheamus can't get up, Reigns is going to climb up and win the title all over again. This was good and would make for an awesome midcard title feud, but Sheamus just does not fit as the World Champion after how horribly he's been booked in recent months. You can't just erase that time.

Dudley Boyz vs. Erick Rowan/Braun Strowman

Sequel to Monday where Harper and Wyatt beat the Dudleyz. D-Von hammers on Rowan to start and clotheslines him into the corner for the tag off to Bubba. Strowman is requested though and Bubba grabs a headlock. That actually works for a few seconds before Strowman throws him into the corner and blasts Bubba with a clothesline. Rowan wraps Bubba's arm around the post and we take a break.

Back with Strowman staying on the arm. A guy his size working on an armbar really doesn't look right. Rowan kicks Bubba in the face but eats a clothesline, allowing for the tag off to D-Von. Some clotheslines put Rowan down and everything breaks down. It's table time but Harper comes in with a superkick for the DQ at 9:25.

Rating: C. Totally fine but I'm over the Wyatts at this point. There's no reason to believe that this is going anywhere but at least they're fighting a team they could conceivably beat. The long term solution for the Wyatts is to have them actually win something as they don't have any real accomplishments to make you believe they could pull off something bigger.

Post match Strowman chokes D-Von out and puts him through the table.

New Day skills merchandise better than anyone since DX.

Becky Lynch vs. Paige

Becky armdrags her around to start and a dropkick puts Paige on the floor. Back in and some legdrops get two each for Becky but a quick fall away slam gives Paige control as we take a break. Back with Paige cranking on both arms before missing a big kick to the head. Becky's t-

bone suplex gets two but she can't get the Disarm-Her. Instead Paige sends her throat first into the middle rope and grabs a rollup for the pin at 9:03. It sounds a bit lame but Paige couldn't get her feet onto the ropes to cheat, which would have made it a lot better.

Rating: C-. The ending hurt it as it Becky just got pinned off a lame move but at least they were trying. Paige probably should have grabbed some trunks or something to save the scene but it's Smackdown on a holiday so they'll be lucky to only set a new record for viewership futility. Not very good, though it's nice to see Becky getting ring time for a change.

The New Day is holding a potluck dinner and Big E. is in a chef's hat. The Divas seem more interested in his tricep meat and it's time to dance while they clap THANKS TO US. Heath Slater brings in Slater Slaw but Big E. finds a Band-Aid. Adam Rose offers some rabbit stew to freak Big E. out even more. The Ascension brings desolation and destruction so they're thrown out.

There's a disagreement over who was supposed to bring the turkey but here's Gobbledy Gooker, as played by Xavier Woods. It was the Gooker's anniversary this Sunday too and it's time to dance. Lawler: "Somewhere the real Gobbledy Gooker is rolling over in his gravy." Dang it Lawler stop making me chuckle at bad jokes.

Alberto Del Rio vs. Jack Swagger

Non-title of course. Before the match, Colter talks about not knowing Swagger anymore due to Jack's blind American loyalty. Del Rio says that Swagger is going to be thankful that he can walk out of the building. Alberto kicks him into the corner to start but a double leg takedown puts Del Rio on the mat.

Never mind though as he plants Jack with a DDT and stomps away even more. Then to really mix it up, he stomps away from the middle rope. A quick powerslam gets two for Jack and they head outside for a clothesline to put Alberto in the timekeeper's area. Swagger looks at Colter so Del Rio chairs him in the back for the DQ at 3:08.

Rating: D. Dang it this is going to continue. Swagger is such a lame duck challenger and has been for years but that won't stop them from pushing him as an American. I mean, it's a really important and valuable character to have and it's not like THEY COULD GIVE IT TO SOMEONE ELSE instead right? This was story advancement and likely a way to set up a chairs match for the title at the pay per view.

Post match Jack gets the chair and chases them off.

The Usos run into the Gobbledy Gooker and Jimmy has an idea.

Lucha Dragons vs. New Day

Non-title. The Gooker is accompanying Big E. and Kofi here. Kofi and Kalisto start things off as the fans seem to be behind New Day. Cara comes in and drops Kalisto into a backsplash for two as the Dragons take over. Kofi's hurricanrana is countered into a sunset flip for two more but it's quickly off to Big E. to change momentum. The Gooker gets on the apron for some dancing (Lawler: "A turkey twerk?") and some interference by pulling Cara out to the floor as we take a break.

Back with Cara suffering the Unicorn Stampede (it's deadly you know) and the Warrior Splash for two. Another splash misses though and it's off to Kalisto to speed things up. The hurricanrana driver plants Kofi and a springboard kick to the head knocks E. to the floor. Kofi tries a rollup and puts his feet on the ropes but the Gooker shoves them away, setting up a springboard Salida Del Sol for the pin at 8:25.

Rating: C. I think you know what's coming after the match so I don't think it's a spoiler to suggest a triple threat tag match, preferably with ladders involved, at TLC. This is another match that didn't have enough time to go anywhere but it could be entertaining if they were allowed to go somewhere.

Of course the Gooker is revealed as an Uso. The other one brings out Woods in his underwear with his hands taped together. The Usos superkick and splash the helpless Woods. Dude that's evil.

Tyler Breeze is ready for his match against Dean Ug-brose and Dolph

Ziggler. They're just jealous of Breeze's style and tonight it's time to get gorgeous.

Undertaker anniversary video.

Renee Young (looking better than usual tonight) asks Dean Ambrose about his #1 contenders match for the Intercontinental Title tonight. Ambrose says the win over Owens on Sunday wasn't luck and neither was Reigns beating him because Reigns was the better man. He doesn't believe in luck though and tonight he's winning because he's the better man.

Tyler Breeze vs. Dean Ambrose vs. Dolph Ziggler

Winner gets an Intercontinental Title shot, likely at TLC. Champion Kevin Owens comes out to watch do commentary. Owens during Dolph's entrance: "Hang on. He's going to show the world." Ambrose throws his hoodie at Owens but Kevin says the joke's on Dean because now he gets a free hoodie. Breeze gets sent to the floor to start, leaving Dean to send Ziggler outside as well. Dean dives onto Breeze but gets superkicked down. Ziggler stares at Owens ("You want the hoodie?") as we take a break.

Back with Breeze shoving Ziggler off the apron before focusing on Ambrose. The rebound lariat is broken up as Ziggler superkicking Ambrose when he's bouncing off the ropes in a cool break. The Fameasser gets two on Ambrose and now the rebound lariat takes Ziggler down. Breeze throws Dean to the floor but gets taken down by Dean's top rope elbow.

All three are back up so Dean and Ziggler try cross bodies at the same time, only to crush Breeze in the middle instead. Why that puts Ziggler and Ambrose down when they just hit a regular move isn't clear. The Zig Zag gets two on Dean with Breeze making the save. There's the Beauty Shot to Ziggler but Dean hits a quick Dirty Deeds to Tyler for the pin at 10:52.

Rating: B. Since when is Ziggler not allowed to do jobs in matches like this? The entire point to having him out there should be to avoid having the newcomer take a fall, but I'm sure they have BIG plans for Dolph in the future. This was a really fun match though with some actually fresh

spots and Owens killing it on commentary. It's really cool to see the midcard title getting some focus here and they would be well served by having more #1 contenders matches.

Owens and Ambrose stare each other down to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. This was exactly what you would expect from a holiday show that no one is going to watch. Ambrose winning was the only storyline advancement, which is probably more than you would expect out of most Smackdowns. The New Day stuff was funny of course and the whole thing felt like a big, easy week, which is all it needed to be.

Results

Dudley Boyz b. Erick Rowan/Braun Strowman via DQ when Luke Harper interfered

Paige b. Becky Lynch – Rollup

Jack Swagger b. Alberto Del Rio via DQ when Del Rio used a chair

Lucha Dragons b. New Day – Springboard Salida Del Sol to Kingston

Dean Ambrose b. Tyler Breeze and Dolph Ziggler – Dirty Deeds to Ambrose

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Raw Ratings SUCK And I'm Not A Bit Surprised

<http://411mania.com/wrestling/wwe-raw-rating-tanks-to-new-low/>

This is a combination of more than one thing. First and foremost, the NFL is killing WWE. I don't think that's a bit secret at this point.

Second, the fans seem tired of the same matches over and over. Last night's main event was Rusev vs. Reigns. That was a cool showdown in the battle royal last year but now, who in the world thinks Rusev is going to beat him? It's a boring match that is just set up as part of a much longer story. In other words, don't bother watching now because it's going to be at least January before something interesting happens.

Third, the fans have gotten so used to having no one to cheer for that seeing ANOTHER heel champion is burning them out. Reigns held the title for five minutes. Unless you count Brock, who was still officially a heel, we haven't had a face champion since Summerslam 2014. That's getting into TNA territory. At some point, you have to give the people something to celebrate or they're going to give up.

Fourth, the injuries are taking a big toll. All those people being gone leaves a BIG chunk of the show needing to be filled in and it's really hurting things. Without Cena, Orton and Rollins (not to mention the part timers), there's a lot of time to be filled. Last night we had the New Day doing a (funny) segment that went nowhere and Ryback beating up Heath Slater in another "country music is stupid" segment. Couple that with a nothing Mark Henry vs. Neville match and some midcard tag matches and there was nothing interesting to watch.

Finally, Sheamus is the World Champion. Now Sheamus is a cool

guy and capable of doing some good stuff in the ring (see the Big Show matches which gave Big Show his best performances in years), but coming into the title win, he had won one singles match since September. I know WWE disagrees, but fans remember that. They see a guy who stole the title and is likely holding it for a long time. So we have a loser fighting a choker for the title while the Authority sits back and laughs. How is that supposed to be entertaining?

At the end of the day, WWE needs to freshen things up a bit. Aside from major changes like the show running long etc., they need something fresh. I don't mean giving the Authority new toys to play with. I mean a new idea. The Divas closing the show last week drew the best ratings in weeks. Now the show shouldn't be about the Divas, but the key thing is that it felt fresh. It wasn't another tag match or another two upper midcard guys fighting on Monday night Maggle.

Freshen things up, get rid of Sheamus, stop having champions lose and BUILD UP SOMETHING FOR NEXT WEEK! That still drives me nuts. Why in the world can they never have a match built up for the following week unless it's a tournament? "Next week, Dean Ambrose gets his shot at the Intercontinental Title! Ambrose beat Owens at Survivor Series and now he wants the gold! Tune in next Monday!" Maybe that can open the show instead of Stephanie strutting down to the ring and then yelling at someone for fifteen minutes. I don't know about you, but nothing gets me fired up more than TALKING!

But yeah, these numbers aren't surprising given how little effort they're putting in right now.

Reviewing the Review: Survivor Series 2015

Normally I wait a little bit before writing these things because I want to let the shows settle in a little bit. I don't want to throw up some immediate reactions and miss a few things that I would get with more time. In this case however, I haven't changed what I was thinking since the show ended. This show had a few options to get out of the dilemmas WWE are in at the moment but some of those options are pretty horrid. Let's get to it.

The pre-show did exactly what it needed to do: take a bunch of people and throw them together into a Survivor Series match to give them something to do and warm the crowd up. It was a group of midcarders with the returning Goldust getting a nice reaction. They seem to be setting up Goldust vs. Stardust, which makes little sense given how lame their first match was.

Cesaro was supposed to be here but was out due to his shoulder injury, which adds another name to the long list of injuries. Neville's team won though it might as well have been called "Team midcard good guys". There's nothing wrong with this one and it did exactly what it was supposed to do.

In the unofficial response to the ISIS threats, Lillian Garcia sang the National Anthem. It seems that the rumors of the threats were groundless but there's nothing wrong with being overly cautious. I think everyone was at least a bit worried about this but the song was a nice moment and you knew there was going to be something like this at some point. Lillian Garcia may not be the best announcer in the world and she screws up some times, but sweet goodness she can belt out that song.

First up on the actual show was Reigns vs. Del Rio in the first tournament semifinal. This was the one that people knew in the first place with Del Rio being by far and away the biggest underdog in the whole thing. Reigns winning wasn't in question, but people were hoping

that Del Rio wouldn't put the fans to sleep, which thankfully he didn't for once. The match was a pretty solid back and forth main event style match as they didn't bother with the slow start. Instead they just beat each other up for about fifteen minutes with Del Rio working the bad arm until he ate a spear. This was a nice surprise but nothing we didn't see coming.

Pretty much the same thing happened in the second match as Ambrose and Owens beat each other up for a bit before Ambrose advanced. There was a little bit more drama here but Owens was still a big underdog coming into this. Reigns vs. Del Rio was better, but that's because Reigns is better in the ring. Dean used all his signature stuff (and he has more than enough of it to get him through a long match) and set up the showdown we were waiting on in the main event.

Next up was another Survivor Series match with the wrestlers finally being announced. There weren't any surprises here but we did get to see Sheamus and Barrett being funny. I really don't get why they didn't announce the participants in advance as there was nothing out of the ordinary here and most of the people could be predicted in advance. The match itself was fine but the ending went on too long with Sheamus getting triple teamed and finally losing after New Day walked out.

That's where the show started to fall apart. They knew that Sheamus was getting the title later in the night and could have done a bunch of things to keep him from getting pinned here. Have him do the Honky Tonk Man deal from Survivor Series 1987 and walk out when he realizes he can't fight the numbers. Have him grab a chair and get disqualified. Have him win the thing. Do SOMETHING other thing have him get pinned in the middle of the ring two hours before he becomes World Champion.

WWE just does not get this concept but the fans remember it when people lose. Sheamus was the guy losing to a minor league rookie (albeit an awesome one named Finn Balor) throughout the European tour and he's won one singles match on TV since the beginning of October. Therefore, let's make him the World Champion. You had to know that Sheamus was going to get the title sooner or later so maybe they could have done SOMETHING to build him up in recent months but no, just go off that one big match he

won FIVE MONTHS AGO and assume it's going to be enough. Totally stupid idea here to end a decent match.

Charlotte defended the title against Paige and again sweet goodness they missed the point here. I know they were trying to get out from under the whole Reid Flair mess from Monday but their solution was to have a boring, run of the mill match. Instead of Charlotte trying to kill her, she started the match with a freaking waistlock. As soon as that happened, I knew they were done here. This had the potential to be a big slugfest but we had Paige working on the ribs and Charlotte just wrestling a normal match.

It's a good example of how psychology can cause problems in a match. Sometimes you need to switch from your game plan and go with something different to suit the match. Just because you can wrestle a regular match doesn't mean that's always the way to go. Charlotte should have been out for blood here and Paige should have caught her in one of her mistakes. Instead of telling a good story, the whole thing was a big mess that felt off the entire time.

Tyler Breeze beat Dolph Ziggler in a nothing match. Breeze is still new around here and needed a big win after he got pinned in his debut. Again, WWE seems like they don't get it. Have this be his debut and give him the win to establish him as a threat before having him lose a few times. Breeze feels dead in the water already but to be fair Ziggler has been the same way for years and people seem to love him.

Now we get to the first of two main events and the first of two matches where it's about to come crashing down. The Wyatt Family picked two members to be sacrificed to Undertaker and Kane after Bray stole their souls, which seemed to mean gave them a quick vacation. As expected, the Wyatts were effectively squashed at the Undertaker's 25th anniversary.

I'm fine with Undertaker winning a major match at a major milestone for him, but this was the same Wyatt problem they've had for a year and a half. There was no reason to believe that the Wyatts were going to pull off the upset and ascend up the ladder but this was really just a squash. The only good thing here was that Harper got pinned instead of Wyatt, but

it's pretty clear that the Wyatts are still dead in the water while Undertaker and Kane weren't even on Raw.

So that leaves us with Reigns vs. Ambrose for the title which didn't even break nine minutes. The show ended at about fifteen minutes before the hour (which it almost always does) and the main event gets nine minutes? I mean.....REALLY? Did they need time in case Stephanie needed to get in some more buzz words or strut down to ringside to remind us how sexy she is? Anyway, Reigns won on the second spear (a really good one too) and finally got the title.

Then HHH came out and ate a spear, allowing Sheamus to cash in Money in the Bank five minutes later. This is where the show falls apart because the booking is stupid. So the story making the rounds is that the fans were going to boo Reigns winning the title so they decided to screw him over and build up sympathy, basically taking the Daniel Bryan path.

The problem here should be obvious, but for some reason WWE doesn't get that there's a difference between an average size guy like Bryan who fights with everything he's got and a 6'4 monster with a rich family history who has been anointed as the next chosen one. The logical move here would be to turn Reigns heel and let him fight Ambrose, Cena and Lesnar in big matches but instead here's a midcard guy with one win in the last two months because HAHA MONEY IN THE BANK BABY!

That's the only justification for Sheamus winning the title: they were scared of the fans not worshiping Reigns (again because they've completely missed the idea with him) and one match back in June that gives them a way out. As usual, it seems to boil down to the simple concept of the writers not wanting to actually put in the effort to tell a good story when they can put out a single idea and just build off that for months. It hasn't worked before so they'll keep doing it forever because it's easier for them.

Overall, Survivor Series felt flat. It was a show that could have been something special or at least interesting with all of the potential plot decisions they had before them, but instead they went with the most basic, simplistic ideas they could have with the least effort possible.

That's the problem with so much of what WWE does these days: they would rather stick with the most hackneyed ideas instead of taking a chance (a logical chance) and trying something long term. Almost everything has to be wrapped up in a matter of weeks and that's not good. Mix it up a bit and go with what makes sense, not what's easiest.

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Monday Night Raw – November 23, 2015: The Real Injury Problem

Monday Night Raw

Date: November 23, 2015

Location: Bridgestone Arena, Nashville, Tennessee

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

The end of the year is almost upon us and we're in another Sheamus era. It seems that they're heading towards Roman Reigns playing Daniel Bryan this year because that's totally the same thing. There isn't much else coming out of Survivor Series but we could be in for a few very long months. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the World Title scene from last night.

Here's the Authority to open things up with Stephanie strutting down the ramp. Stephanie talks about opportunity striking very rarely and HHH brings up Reigns being stupid with his decision two weeks ago. Here's someone who seized opportunity when he had the chance: the new WWE World Champion Sheamus. The fans still say Sheamus looks stupid but there's nothing that is ruining his moment.

Last night he kicked Roman off his mountain because just as he promised, he was one Brogue Kick away. Sheamus holds up the title and asks who looks stupid now. Cue Reigns to say he wants his rematch and the fans chant YES. Stephanie is of course right there to make fun of the fans because she needs their balls for her collection.

There's no rematch tonight as Stephanie shouts at Roman to get out of her ring. Roman asks if HHH is hiding behind his wife so we get another staredown. HHH says no rematch tonight and leaves. Cue the returning Rusev to superkick Reigns down, followed by a Brogue Kick from Sheamus. Oh yeah he's the new Bryan. Well at least in WWE's minds. Everyone leaves and HHH makes Sheamus vs. Reigns in a TLC match at the pay per view. Stephanie adds Rusev vs. Reigns tonight.

Recap of Undertaker and Kane squashing the Wyatts last night.

Dudley Boyz vs. Luke Harper/Bray Wyatt

Harper chops Bubba in the corner to start as the Wyatts are looking more aggressive tonight. Bubba kicks Harper in the face and it's off to D-Von for the reverse 3D. Bray saves his buddy from the regular version and we take an early break. Back with Bray chinlocking D-Von before switching things up with a nerve hold. D-Von fights up and makes the hot tag as everything breaks down. In the melee, Harper's discus lariat puts Bubba away at 7:53.

Rating: D+. Barely enough to rate here because of the big commercial break right in the middle. It's good to see the Wyatts win again, but does anyone believe that they're going to do anything after this? They're the biggest chokers in the company and it's getting harder and harder to

buy them as contenders to anything. On the other hand, it's cool to see the Dudleys out there putting people over like they should be doing.

Post match Rowan and Strowman come in to continue the beatdown.

Video on Undertaker's career, the same from last night.

Sasha Banks vs. Becky Lynch

This starts after a commercial, the fourth in forty five minutes. Sasha takes over to start and chokes Becky on the ropes as we hear about the Irish dominance of WWE at the moment. Tamina gets in a cheap shot to give Sasha two and we hit the bow and arrow. Back up and Becky grabs a t-bone followed by the Disarm-Her but Tamina's distraction lets Naomi pull her under the ropes. A quick rollup with trunks gives Sasha the pin at 4:08.

Rating: D+. This is every problem the Divas have had in the last year: no characters, no personalities, no reason to care and no time for the match. The team thing is still annoying and it's one of the same ideas that the heels have used for the better part of ever in this company. These two can have matches but only Nikki Bella is allowed to have a personality around here.

Cole says Sasha might be in the running for #1 contender but Paige cuts him off and shows a clip of Charlotte's arm being under the rope in the Figure Eight last night. Charlotte is just a dirty cheater like her old man and Paige is going to prove it tonight.

Here's the New Day for a country music jamboree to celebrate their first anniversary as a team and to issue an open challenge. They come out on pink stick unicorns with Big E. wearing a cowboy hat. This is already funny by definition but JBL singing the Rawhide theme hurts it a bit. Big E.: "YIPPIE KAY AY MOTHER...." Kingston: "Shut your mouth!"

They can't bring themselves to say that they're in the capital of country music so they make fun of the genres tropes of losing your girlfriend, your truck breaking down and your dog running away. Big E. goes on a rant about tractor songs and says that's enough country music for a lifetime. Kofi, with a braided horn on his head, sums it up by saying this is the

truth and it's not even coming from his character: country music SUCKS.

The open challenge is on and we've got some challengers in the form of the Lucha Dragons. Actually wait as the New Day goes to leave but get cut off by the Usos. Woods: "BAD JIMMY! BAD JEY!" Big E: "SIT! STAY!" The open challenge was just a figure of speech according to Kofi but Cara says let's make it a triple threat. New Day doesn't like this spotlight stealing and says no title match because the challenge is canceled. The Dragons and the Usos attack anyway and the champions are cleared out.

Charlotte is ready to defend her title against Paige in a rematch tonight.

Mark Henry vs. Neville

Henry throws him into the corner to start and Mark gets annoyed at Neville for fighting back. A BIG throw sends Neville outside and Henry looks conflicted. Back in and Neville escapes the World's Strongest Slam before kicking Henry in the head. For some reason we cut to Miz in the back before the Red Arrow pins Henry at 2:22, even though he looked like he kicked out at two.

Henry shakes his hand post match and tells Neville he's going to be good.

Stardust is raving about Cesaro and Goldust when Titus O'Neil comes in. They talk about science and Titus barks at him. That's your random segment of the week.

Stardust/Ascension vs. Goldust/Prime Time Players

Byron on Stardust and the Ascension: "They look like they had a big gulp of evil." The Dusts start things off but it's off to Konnor before any contact, just like last night. Viktor comes in before any contact as well so Goldust armdrags him down. Darren comes in to stay on the arm before Titus suplexes him onto Viktor as normal.

A belly to belly gets two for Darren and it's off to Stardust who eats a discus forearm. Viktor comes in off a blind tag to take over and I don't remember the last time a crowd was this silent. Stardust charges into a boot in the corner and the hot tag brings in Titus. Everything breaks

down with Goldust clotheslining his brother to the floor, leaving Titus to hit the Clash on Konnor for the pin at 6:30.

Rating: D. The action wasn't that bad but there was nothing to care about here and the crowd made that clear. It picked up a bit at the end but there's only so much I can get out of watching Darren get beaten up for a few minutes. It doesn't help that neither regular team is going anywhere and Goldust vs. Stardust wasn't any good.

The winners dance after the match.

Here are Zeb Colter and Alberto Del Rio for the state of the MexAmerican union. MexAmerica was supposed to be a perfect nation but the early growing pains have been turned into fuel for all the haters on social media. Del Rio talks about everyone wanting to see something great but not being entertained enough. Therefore, the borders of MexAmerica are closed forever.

Cue Jack Swagger because he hasn't lost to anyone recently enough. How many people are there that could stand up for America or just call Colter and Del Rio out for being stupid to get a rub? No instead here's good old Jack Swagger to get built up and then lose the big match AGAIN because we haven't done that recently enough. Swagger says Colter used to stand for something but now he's just complaining all the time. Jack comes to the ring but Del Rio holds up the title and backs off. Swagger does WE THE PEOPLE as they leave.

Divas Title: Charlotte vs. Paige

Charlotte is defending after beating Paige last night. After some big match intros they fight over a lockup, already showing more intensity than they had last night. They slap each other rather hard before Charlotte throws her face first onto the mat. A Fujiwara armbar sends Paige to the ropes and she yells at the fans to blow off some steam. Some knees to the chest get two for the champ and she puts on the figure four neck lock for those flipping slams.

Paige pulls her out of the corner for a crash and puts on a chinlock. That goes as far as a chinlock is going to go so Paige puts on her own

figure four neck lock. A low superkick gets two and a suplex into the ropes gets the same. Paige gets tired of the submissions and hits Charlotte in the face a few times for two. After a leg lock from Paige, both of them score with kicks to the face as we take a break.

Back with the match turning more into a brawl until Paige kicks her down and nips back up. Charlotte puts on a rear naked choke of all things before spearing Paige out to the floor. I'm kind of digging this submission battle. At least it's better than last night. Paige throws her into the barricade but it's still a double countout at 15:02.

Rating: B-. WAY better than last night as there was some actual intensity and a much better story with Paige trying to do the submissions to match Charlotte because she wanted to prove she was better. It's amazing what you can do when you actually have personality and character instead of interchangeable people like most of the roster. This was WWE's way of saying "yeah we know last night sucked."

Paige sends her into the steps and puts on the PT0 on the table.

We recap how the main event was set up.

Here's Heath Slater with a guitar to show us how real country music goes. He can't even get a note off before Ryback interrupts. The guitar to the back has no effect and there's the Shell Shock. I'm hoping Ryback at least mentions pinning the new World Champion last night.

Dean Ambrose/Dolph Ziggler vs. Kevin Owens/Tyler Breeze

Ziggler and Ambrose start things off with Tyler grabbing a wristlock. It's quickly off to Owens vs. Ambrose but Kevin tags right back out. A quick kick to the face puts Dolph down and the heels take over. The double teaming has Dolph in trouble until he comes back with a dropkick to set up the diving tag. Dean's suicide dive drops Breeze but he walks into a superkick from Owens. Not that it matters as Dirty Deeds puts Breeze away at 5:30. Owens stood by and watched the pin.

Rating: C. This was fine though I have no idea what it accomplished. In theory Owens vs. Ambrose is set up off last night so they could have

found a way to do this without having Breeze lose. Like, Ziggler could have lost instead again, but I guess they need to make sure Tyler doesn't get too strong or whatever.

Earlier today, JBL and El Torito argues over whether to eat Tex or Mex food. Mark Henry was brought in to decide, leading to a dream sequence where Torito did JBL's entrance and it turns into a Hardee's commercial.

We look at the end of last night's show.

Rusev vs. Roman Reigns

Sheamus is in Rusev's corner. Cole says Rusev wrestles Reigns to the ground to start and probably gets yelled at as a result. Reigns pops him in the jaw and gets two off a running neckbreaker. Back up and Rusev starts kicking Reigns in the face, only to eat a big boot to send him outside. A whip sends Rusev into the barricade and we take our last break.

Back with Rusev holding a chinlock and throwing Reigns outside for a shot from Sheamus. The champ throws him back inside and Rusev starts setting up for the Accolade. That lasts all of ten seconds before it's off to a cravate instead. Sheamus trips Reigns again and finally gets ejected. The Samoan drop puts Rusev down but Reigns can't follow up.

The clotheslines in the corner stagger Rusev but he comes back with a spinwheel kick. A top rope headbutt gets two on Roman and Rusev loads up the Accolade. Reigns doesn't even bother letting it go on and comes back with a Superman Punch for two. Rusev bails to the floor before the spear can launch and superkicks Reigns to stop a charge.

Roman gets rammed into the announcers' table a few times but comes back with the knees to the face inside, followed by a Superman Punch to knock Rusev off the apron. A countout doesn't sound good for Reigns so he goes out to get Rusev, only to have King Barrett jump him for the DQ at 16:16.

Rating: C+. Good brawl and I like the ending with Reigns now having to fight the entire trio instead of just one at a time. It's a good alliance and makes all three of them look better as a unit. Unfortunately it

still feels like it should be over the Intercontinental Title but they're making do with what they can due to all of the injuries.

Barrett gets a chair but Reigns fights off Rusev, Barrett and the invading Sheamus to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. You can really see where all the injuries are starting to mount up. The problem here isn't the lack of star power but the lack of an ability to cover three hours. Rollins may have been failing near the top, but he was taking up A LOT of TV time which has to be filled. Cena, Orton and Cesaro aren't there to do it either and it's really starting to show. The stuff like Neville vs. Henry and the Ryback segment were acceptable but nothing that's going to make me want to keep watching. They need to stir things up a bit and making fun of country music because Vince finds it funny isn't going to solve that.

Results

Luke Harper/Bray Wyatt b. Dudley Boyz – Discus lariat to Bubba

Sasha Banks b. Becky Lynch – Rollup with a handful of trunks

Neville b. Mark Henry – Red Arrow

Goldust/Prime Time Players b. Stardust/Ascension – Clash of the Titus to Konnor

Paige vs. Charlotte went to a double countout

Dolph Ziggler/Dean Ambrose b. Tyler Breeze/Kevin Owens – Dirty Deeds to Breeze

Roman Reigns b. Rusev via DQ when King Barrett interfered

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Survivor Series 2015: Rise and Fall

Survivor Series 2015

Date: November 22, 2015

Location: Phillips Arena, Atlanta, Georgia

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

This is a special show for two reasons. First of all, tonight is twenty five years to the day that the Undertaker debuted. It's rare to see someone last ten years and Undertaker is still having good matches twenty five years later. That's one of those statistics that isn't going to be broken and is really remarkable when you think about it. Other than that, we have the finals of the WWE World Title tournament for the title vacated after Seth Rollins' knee injury. Let's get to it.

Pre-Show: Team Miz vs. Team Neville

Miz, Bo Dallas, Stardust, Ascension

Neville, Dudley Boyz, Titus O'Neil, Goldust

Survivor Series match and you have to believe they're doing another one on the show because there are only six other matches. This is Goldust's return after a long absence due to a shoulder injury. Goldust and Stardust start and a few right hands send Stardust over for a tag to Viktor...who is put out off a Goldust powerslam at 30 seconds. That sounds like an injury elimination.

Off to Konnor vs. Titus with O'Neil chopping away in the corner and slamming Konnor down. What's Up sends Konnor to the floor and the Dudleyz deposit his partners next to him, setting up Neville's big dive. Back from a break with Bubba Rock Bottoming Konnor for the elimination at 5:34.

Stardust comes in to take D-Von into the corner as we hear about the Gobbledy Gooker debuting 25 years ago today. Off to Miz who keeps up the beating, only to walk into a spinebuster. Neville comes in to clean house with his variety of kicks and a snap German suplex. A surprise Bodog and the Skull Crushing Finale take Neville out at 8:52, only to have Goldust roll Miz up for the pin at 9:03.

We're down to Dallas/Stardust vs. Titus/Goldust/Bubba/D-Von. Back from another break with Dallas putting Goldust in a chinlock and Stardust telling the fans that there will NOT be any tables. It's off to Stardust for a chinlock of his own, followed by another from Dallas. Goldust finally fights up and hits a clothesline, allowing for the hot tag to Titus. Everything breaks down and it's a quick Clash of the Titans to put Dallas away at 17:13. Stardust tries to walk away but walks into 3D for the final pin at 18:03.

Rating: C-. Totally fine way to kill the pre-show time and give the fans something to watch. Goldust returning is cool and it seems to set up the idea for the show. The wrestling wasn't anything great but for a match thrown together, it's hard to really complain about the quality. Good enough here.

We open with Lillian Garcia singing the National Anthem as the middle finger to the ISIS threats.

The opening video focuses on both major stories with Undertaker's anniversary and match with the Wyatts, followed by a tournament recap. There's a great line of history being written by the survivors.

WWE World Title Tournament Semifinals: Alberto Del Rio vs. Roman Reigns

Non-title of course and the fans boo Reigns out of the building as soon as his music hits. They slug it out to start with Del Rio scoring with

some kicks in the corner. Outside now with Reigns going into the barricade before Del Rio starts in on the arm, which Cesaro worked over Monday. A tilt-a-whirl slam gets a quick two for Roman as he's hearing the dueling chants.

The bad arm goes into the steps as we see HHH watching in the back. A top rope shot to the head gets two for Alberto and we hit the chinlock. They're moving here. The bad shoulder is sent into the post but Reigns pops right back up and nails a quick apron boot. The arm is hanging though as Reigns fires off the corner clotheslines. A Superman Punch is countered into the Backstabber for two.

The low superkick (hey he still uses that) is countered into a Samoan drop for the same. Roman tries to go aerial with a superplex but gets caught in the double stomp position (one of the only realistic ways for that to be set up). Of course it misses here though and Reigns nails the Superman Punch. Del Rio takes a long time getting up after landing on his knee but it's all goldbricking with the spear charging into a superkick for a really close two.

For the first time since he's been back, Del Rio tries the armbreaker but gets rolled up for another near fall. The armbreaker goes on a few seconds later and the announcers are freaking out. I have no idea why as it's not the arm Del Rio had been working on. Reigns makes the rope and Alberto goes up for no apparent reason, only to miss some nondescript move, allowing Reigns to spear him down for the pin at 14:22.

Rating: B. Well duh. This was the biggest layup all night long but at least we had a hot match instead of the boring stuff Del Rio has been doing. It's amazing what happens when he actually tries the logical moves instead of whatever co-operative nonsense he has to do to get the double stomps. Reigns' arm could come into play later too.

Reigns wishes Ambrose luck and says they'll fight next. Owens comes in and lists off Reigns being close before but always missing in the end. Tonight Owens is adding his name to the list of people who stop Reigns at the last second. Reigns still picks Dean. I know it's not likely, but they've got me thinking it could be Owens.

WWE World Title Tournament Semifinals: Dean Ambrose vs. Kevin Owens

Non-title again. Dean starts with some headlocks and armdrags (straight out of an old Aiden English song) but Owens crotches him on top. The Cannonball is only good for one but the backsplash gets two. We hit the chinlock (Owens: "CHINLOCK CITY BABY!") and HHH is shown watching again. Dean suplexes him down and they slowly get up with Owens getting the better of it.

A moonsault (you don't see him try that one too often) misses Ambrose and the top rope elbow gets two more. They fight over a superplex with Dean running the corner to try it again, only to get caught in the swinging fisherman's superplex (I love that move) for the nearest fall so far. The rebound lariat staggers Owens but he sends Dean outside for a drop onto the table. Back in and two straight superkicks knock Dean even sillier but he counters the Pop Up Powerbomb and grabs Dirty Deeds for the spot in the finals at 11:20.

Rating: B-. Owens continues to look like a star but that's the second champion to lose in a row because they didn't think this thing through that well. Either that or they don't think anything of the title. Either way, this was the good brawl you would expect from these two with the guys beating each other up for as long as they were allowed, which is the best thing you can ask for. Neither match was great but they were a really good way to spend forty five minutes.

We look back at Undertaker's debut and the length of his career, mainly comprised of clips of Legends With JBL.

Team Ryback vs. Team New Day

Ryback, Lucha Dragons, Usos

New Day, King Barrett, Sheamus

The hometown boy Xavier Woods has a new haircut (like a pompadour) and Big E. wants us all to cheer for it. New Day rips on the Dragons for being small, the Usos for being injured and Ryback for being bald. Sheamus wants to get jiggy on these posers and you can feel the air go

out of the place in a funny bit. Kofi: "I think what he meant to say was NEW DAY ROCKS!"

Woods and Jimmy get things going with the hair being completely off limits. Jimmy of course drags him across the ring by the hair and it's off to Jey for some chops. Cara comes in to chop Kofi as we hear about the mini Kings back in 1994. Sheamus misses a charge and falls to the floor with his partners joining him. Everyone not named Ryback dives at the same time, leaving Ryback to dive onto all nine of them. Back in and Barrett crotches Jey on top to give Sheamus two.

The Unicorn Stampede means it's time for some tromboning to start a dance party. Kofi puts on a chinlock but an enziguri allows the tag off to Jimmy. Woods gets thrown into the corner so Barrett comes in and slugs Jimmy in the face. Jimmy superkicks him right back and a swanton from Cara gets rid of Barrett at 7:46. It's off to Kalisto for the monkey flip splash to Kofi for two before Jimmy comes back in pretty soon after tagging out. That would be too soon as Kofi grabs a backbreaker and Woods adds a top rope knee for the pin at 9:24.

Big E. spears Cara through the ropes but comes up holding his arm, leaving Sheamus to Brogue Kick him for the pin at 10:46. Sheamus and Big E. argue over the blind tag so Sheamus lets him come back in, only to have Ryback run him over. Jey adds a Superfly Splash to get rid of Big E. at 11:38. So we're down to Jey/Ryback/Kalisto vs. Woods/Kingston/Sheamus. Kofi and Woods walk out with Big E. at 12:30 so it's 3-1. Sheamus starts pounding on Kalisto until it's off to Jey for a high cross body.

The Irish Curse gets two and puts Jimmy in trouble but again Sheamus lets him tag. Ryback comes in with the clotheslines and a spinebuster but a tilt-a-whirl slam stops the Meat Hook. The numbers are really getting on Sheamus' nerves though and it's a blind tag to bring in Kalisto for a top rope hurricanrana. Sheamus blocks it but Jey tags himself in and superkicks Sheamus, allowing Kalisto to hurricanrana Sheamus into Ryback (who tagged himself in as well) for the Shell Shock at 17:34.

Rating: C. Again this was fine with ten guys barely affiliated having a match for the sake of filling in a spot on the card. New Day walking out

was the right call as you don't want three champions losing in three matches. This was basically a bonus and another good match as we're waiting on the big stuff.

We recap Paige vs. Charlotte without a single reference to the big issues on Monday. Basically it's back to being fallout from PCB splitting, which isn't great but it's much more in WWE's wheelhouse.

Divas Title: Paige vs. Charlotte

Charlotte is defending and starts this big rivalry match with a waistlock. Paige takes over with some brawling before taking it outside. The champion is sent ribs first into the announcers' table, setting up an abdominal stretch back inside. Given that an abdominal stretch hasn't won a match since about 1972, Charlotte quickly escapes and kicks Paige in the face. There's the Figure Four (not eight) until Paige makes the rope.

Charlotte takes it outside again and drops Paige face first onto the apron. Back in and we get a figure four neck lock with some rolls to slam Paige into the mat. Charlotte tries to go too fast though and charges into the post. For some reason that means it's time for Paige to work on the ribs with a bodyscissors.

That doesn't last either and it's time to slug it out, followed by Charlotte scoring with the spear. The unnamed Natural Selection sends Paige to the floor but she pops right back up. They get on the barricade for no apparent reason, allowing Charlotte to hit another big spear. Back in and the Figure Eight makes Paige tap at 14:20.

Rating: C-. The story killed this one as I'm really not sure what they were going for. I mean, I get that Paige was trying to get in her head but they don't just insult Ric instead? It wasn't bad or anything but some of the psychology was off and took away some of my interest. Watchable but not much more.

Reigns and Ambrose are ready to fight like brothers.

Tyler Breeze vs. Dolph Ziggler

This is trying to salvage something from the Rusev/Ziggler/Lana story.

Breeze takes him down to start and lays over the top like he should be doing. A headlock puts Tyler down as well and now it's time for Ziggler to have a rest on top too. They head outside with Breeze hiding behind Summer, allowing him to send Ziggler into the steps. Back in and Ziggler gets caught in a half crab but it's quickly off to the ropes.

Ziggler makes his comeback with the normal stuff, including a neckbreaker and the big elbow for two. A nice pinfall reversal sequence gives us a bunch of two counts before Dolph just slams him face first into the mat. Breeze bails to avoid the superkick (like any model would do) and kicks him in the knee, setting up the Unprettier to give Tyler the clean pin at 6:45.

Rating: C-. Ziggler jobbing isn't a story again but at least Breeze won clean in his big match debut (yeah the tournament wasn't really a big match as everyone knew what was going to happen there). I don't think Breeze is ever going to be more than a jobber to the stars but at least he had a good debut.

We recap the Wyatts vs. the Brothers of Destruction. Bray targeted Undertaker at the end of Hell in Cell before kidnapping Undertaker and Kane. He stole their souls (whatever that means), setting up this regular tag instead of what could have been a cool elimination tag).

Bray Wyatt/Luke Harper vs. Undertaker/Kane

Undertaker gets the big entrance for his anniversary, though I'm sure more is coming. Rowan gets chokeslammed before the bell, leaving Harper as the official partner, which hadn't been announced yet. Kane works on Harper to start before it's off to Undertaker to really wake the crowd up. Harper has to get out of the Tombstone and it's off to Bray who eats the jumping clothesline.

That's it for Bray so Harper takes Old School as the fans tell Undertaker that he still has it. The apron legdrop has Harper in more trouble and Kane goes after Bray, only to have Strowman throw him over the announcers' table. That's not a DQ though and the Wyatts take over on Kane. The running cross body takes Kane down but Bray takes too much time mocking Undertaker and gets slammed down for his efforts. It's already

hot tag time (seven minutes in) for Undertaker and house is cleaned again.

Bray and Luke clothesline him to the floor though, only to have Strowman take the double chokeslam through the table. Back in and Sister Abigail out of nowhere gets two on Undertaker and Luke clotheslines Kane. No cover of course as Bray is busy doing the Spider Walk. The Brothers do the stereo sit up and it's a double chokeslam to the Wyatts. Harper takes the Tombstone for the pin at 10:21.

Rating: D+. At least it wasn't Bray. This was a post show dark match aired on pay per view and that's not what they needed to go with here. I get the idea of the big moment for Undertaker but he's had big moments at the last few pay per views now. Harper getting pinned makes sense and it's not the worst loss in the world, but Undertaker needs to put Bray over soon.

Nothing special for Undertaker after the match as he and Kane just do their signature pose.

WWE World Title: Roman Reigns vs. Dean Ambrose

Ambrose has already lost his shirt and they go at it right after the big match intros. A clothesline puts Reigns on the floor and Dean follows with the suicide dive. Back in and Dean hammers away until Reigns powerbombs him out of the corner ala Undertaker. Reigns gets two more off a sitout powerbomb but Dean runs him over. The top rope elbow is blocked with a Superman Punch though and both guys are down.

Neither finisher can hit (way too early) but the rebound lariat is countered into a spear for two (shows what I know). There was almost zero hit on that near fall. A second spear hits post and Dirty Deeds gets two on a much hotter cover. Both guys sit up so they slug it out from the mat. Back up and the spear out of nowhere gives Reigns the title at 8:39.

Rating: D. Wait what? Like seriously, what? It's 10:38 and the main event just ended in less than nine minutes. The fans didn't react and there's no reason to care with a win that fast. Reigns getting the belt is a good idea but that's really the best way they can do it? That really doesn't

work and I'm guessing they're using the time for an Undertaker celebration but this was a bad, bad move.

Dean hugs his friend and leaves as confetti falls. Cue a smiling and applauding HHH to offer a handshake but Reigns spears him instead. Sheamus comes in for a Brogue Kick and here we go.

WWE World Title: Roman Reigns vs. Sheamus

The Brogue Kick only gets two but a second gives Sheamus the title at 39 seconds. So was Ambrose off checking the Bengals score?

HHH and Sheamus leave together to end the show, but we cut back to the arena as Reigns gets up....and leaves to add nothing else.

Overall Rating: C-. The wrestling was mostly good but I only started getting excited in the last five minutes because it was a title change. Reigns can rise up again and win the title later, but sweet goodness that match was nothing to see and Reigns is just dying to turn heel. Sheamus is clearly just a placeholder champion and that's fine, but it was a pretty lackluster ending. The opening two matches are both good though and it was certainly a big ending so I'll call the show passable but a letdown given what else they could have done.

Results

Roman Reigns b. Alberto Del Rio – Spear

Dean Ambrose b. Kevin Owens – Dirty Deeds

Team Ryback b. Team New Day – Shell Shock to Sheamus

Charlotte b. Paige – Figure Eight

Tyler Breeze b. Dolph Ziggler – Unprettier

Undertaker/Kane b. Bray Wyatt/Luke Harper – Tombstone to Harper

Roman Reigns b. Dean Ambrose – Spear

Sheamus b. Roman Reigns – Brogue Kick

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