

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 MexAmerica 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 stills 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 Titus 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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Survivor Series 2015 Preview

For some reason Survivor Series continues to be the show that sees a lot of big stories like this year's World Title tournament. Either it's Sting/Rock/Kurt Angle/Shield debuting or a World Title tournament but

this show is always getting something huge. Unfortunately the rest of the show is really not clicking but I've been surprised before. Let's get to it.

We'll get the most obvious match out of the way first: Reigns beats Del Rio and he does it going away. Reigns is the heavy favorite to win the whole thing and they're not about to have Del Rio be the one to mess that up in the semifinals. I know Vince loves the guy no matter how boring he is (and he is indeed quite boring as I'm sure you've learned in recent weeks) but Del Rio just isn't winning here.

As for the other semifinal, as much as I'd love it to be Owens, people have been saying it's a Reigns vs. Ambrose final since the beginning of this tournament (which to be fair was less than two weeks ago) and I can't see any reason to change that pick now. Ambrose wins, likely setting up an Intercontinental Title match down the line (assuming no one does a big turn at the end) because of course you can pin a champion and not worry about it. Owens is awesome, but the better story here is to have Ambrose go forward to fight his brother. An upset (as in the champion winning) is possible but I'll go with Ambrose.

For the final.....yeah I think Reigns goes heel and wins the whole thing. At the end of the day, the guy is the most natural heel they've had in a long time (just imagine that smirk he does as a heel move) and it would be a great moment to see Dean's reaction. Above all else though, who is Reigns supposed to fight if he wins the title as a face? People he's already beaten when the title wasn't on the line? Kane? See what I mean here? Heel Ambrose winning is always a chance but I really can't imagine it happening. No cash-in either because they haven't dragged that out long enough yet.

I'll take Breeze over Ziggler, even though it's not going to mean much either way. This really isn't much of a feud as the whole Summer angle has been forgotten by this point. It's still not a good story but there's no reason for Ziggler to win here. The guy is a jobber to the stars at this point so just let Breeze get a big win before he becomes a jobber to the stars as well.

Charlotte retains over Paige because it's her big redemption story. The whole Reid Flair story (In case you didn't know what Charlotte and Paige were talking about on Monday, which I think is the case for the masses. I still don't get why they didn't talk about Ric instead.) is a big mess and it's so stupid that WWE is basically dumping the whole thing on Charlotte. For some reason I don't believe that it was Charlotte pushing for the idea the whole way. It was cool to see something serious in there but it really didn't work the way they wanted it to. Either way, the winner should be keeping the title warm for Sasha anyway.

That leaves us with the most frustrating match on the show in the Brothers of Destruction vs. the Wyatts. Which Wyatts? Well that's not important enough to mention. In other words, they're making no secret of the fact that this is ALL about Undertaker and Kane. The whole focal point of the build has been on the Undertaker 25th Anniversary (at least WWE has learned how to count since Wrestlemania XXV) and there's little doubt that Undertaker goes over here.

My biggest issue with this match is wasted potential. As soon as they started going after Undertaker and Kane, it turned into a question of who joins them against the four Wyatts. They even had the Wyatts in a Survivor Series match a few weeks ago on Smackdown. That had a lot of potential for a big, wild brawl with people just laying into each other and maybe Undertaker being left alone for Bray to get the pin.

Instead though, let's just have the Brothers reunite one more time with no real explained story (other than the soul stealing and then apparently letting Undertaker and Kane go) and the Wyatts all getting beaten down over in England. It seems like it's Strowman/Bray for the Wyatts....and I'm going to pick them. I know I said there's little doubt that Undertaker goes over, but I think Bray actually pulls it off, likely beating Kane in the process and setting up a showdown at TLC. That's how I would do it at least, which is why it isn't likely happening. That's my big surprise pick this time, even though I know it's not happening.

There's also a traditional Survivor Series match with participants to be named. I'll say it's the Usos/Lucha Dragons/Ryback beating New Day/Ascension in a match that could be a lot more entertaining with

better participants.

Overall I'm very very cautiously optimistic for this one but I won't be surprised if the show winds up being a disaster. The tournament has the potential to set up a lot of good things going forward (heel Roman vs. Ambrose, then Cena then Brock anyone?) and they could FINALLY pull the trigger on Wyatt (they won't) to make this something entertaining. Of course there's always the chance that they'll do the stupidest things possible (Ambrose heel turn, Reigns wins clean or Sheamus cashes in and wins) but it's the holiday season so I'll go with some good old false hope.

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Smackdown – November 19, 2015: They're Getting Better At This

Smackdown

Date: November 19, 2015

Location: Thompson-Boling Arena, Knoxville, Tennessee

Commentators: Booker T., Jerry Lawler, Rich Brennan

It's the final show before Survivor Series and the big draw tonight is the four semifinalists in the WWE World Title tournament appearing on MizTV. For some reason I have a feeling this winds up in a tag match, even though the heels should walk out on it immediately to prevent too much damage before this Sunday. Let's get to it.

In Memory of Nick Bockwinkel. It's nice of them to put that up at first instead of right before the last half hour like on Friday.

The announcers preview the semifinals and the tag match is indeed happening. It might have been a bit more interesting if they didn't go with the obvious pairings.

It's time for MizTV to open things up with the title in the ring. Miz sums up the tournament but Owens interrupts him. Miz isn't pleased but this is now the Kevin Owens Show. Owens promises to win the title and have two belts (of course he doesn't say belts because that word might make the fans (dang it I can't say that either) think this is fake or something) at once.

Del Rio and Colter interrupt to call Miz a hater who wants a gotcha question. Oh yeah you can tell it's political season because Vince has a character out there to reference whatever is going on in politics at the moment. Miz says this isn't how that's going to go but Colter compares this to Blue's Clues. Owens is not better because he must have ice skated across Lake Michigan one night. Del Rio offers Owens the job of cleaning the pools in MexAmerica but Kevin's big comeback is saying no one missed Del Rio while he was gone.

Now it's Ambrose interfering and telling Miz to sit down. Dean gets right to the point by getting in Del Rio's face and saying take your best shot but here's Reigns to interrupt Miz as well. Miz tries to calm things down but here's R-Truth for no logical reason. After asking what's up, Truth says he's been the underdog his whole life but he's always been a survivor.

At Survivor Series he's going to survive again and become the new WWE World Heavyweight Champion. Miz: "You're not in the tournament." Truth: "What did you say?" Miz: "It's been going on for two weeks and you're not

in it." Truth: "They told me....well ain't that something. University of Tennessee, this one's on me." He wishes Reigns and Ambrose and leaves. Miz yells about how this whole thing has been going wrong and wants to really preview the tournament. Roman says Miz is the director and needs to say action. Miz: "ACTION!" Dean knocks him out with one punch and we're done. This was hilarious.

Post break Miz is still in the ring and says his match should be canceled. Here's what he gets instead.

The Miz vs. Cesaro

Miz gets in some left hands to start but Cesaro headscissors him into the Crossface for the submission in 48 seconds.

Cesaro goes to leave but gets cut off by Stardust and the Ascension. It's still not time for this....whatever it is (I think you need to actually have a match to call it a feud) to go anywhere though as Stardust lets Cesaro pass.

Neville/Dudley Boyz vs. Stardust/Ascension

Viktor and Neville start as the announcers immediately want tables. It's quickly off to Stardust for some right hands in the corner but Neville does all of his flips until Konnor opens the ropes to send him crashing to the floor. Neville can barely get up so Stardust sends him face first into the announcers' table. Thankfully we don't take a break two minutes in and get to stick around for Konnor kicking Neville in the face.

Now we get the break and come back with Viktor putting Neville in a chinlock. Stardust stomps him down as Booker calls this the learning tree. A Tree of Woe doesn't work on Neville as he's still able to kick Stardust in the face, allowing the hot tag to Bubba. Viktor takes the Rock Bottom and Stardust gets the Flip Flop and Fly (Bubba: "THIS IS FOR THE AMERICAN DREAM!"). What's Up keeps Konnor down and it's table time because the Dudleyz have no regard for law and order. Stardust kicks Bubba down but Neville kicks him in the head. 3D puts Viktor away at 9:24.

Rating: C-. Quick six man here and it's good to see Neville winning but it's not a good sign that I could have penciled in Viktor taking the fall to the 3D as soon as the participants were announced. That's what they did on Monday so it was time for the same result just three days later. WWE is nothing if not predictable and that's not a good thing most of the time.

Video on the Wyatts vs. the Brothers of Destruction.

Tyler Breeze vs. Zack Ryder

Before the match Breeze rips on Ryder's fashion sense ("That's 1980s NEVER!") before going on about Summer wanting an upgrade over Ziggler (so those two were together?). The world wanted one too and they got perfection. Summer says this Sunday, Ziggler will come up short all over again. Of course this brings out Ziggler to take over Summer and Tyler's VIP area, freaking Summer out. Ryder can't get anywhere working on the arm and a quick Unprettier puts him away at 1:15

Ziggler charges in and superkicks Tyler's head off post match.

Here are the druids in sheep masks followed by the Wyatts. Bray wants it to be known that he is an honest man. The Brothers of Destruction are not whole because a piece of them still lives in Bray. They will fail this Sunday but the question is how. Will they fall at the hands of Erick Rowan? A man tossed aside like a piece of unwanted garbage (isn't that redundant?).

Maybe it's Luke Harper, a man with a moral code which allows him to create destruction. Or could it be the black sheep himself? Strowman promises to shatter Kane and Undertaker's bones and bring the apocalypse. Undertaker appears on screen and says Bray thinks he has all the cards but it's really a dead man's hand. Kane burns a sheep mask before Undertaker promises that the Wyatts will rest in peace. I know they won't, but please let the Wyatts win. Please?

Long clip of Charlotte and Paige's exchange on Monday.

Brie Bella vs. Charlotte

Non-title. Charlotte goes for the leg to start but gets caught in a headlock takeover. Back up and Charlotte's figure four neck roll knocks Brie silly, setting up a rollup for two. Brie comes back with her running knee and a dropkick for two of her own. The YES Kicks have Charlotte in trouble but a double clothesline puts them both down. Charlotte makes her comeback with a WOO and a big boot for two more. The spear and Figure Eight take care of Brie at 4:36.

Rating: C-. This was better than I was expecting as they had Brie present a much better threat than she normally does. Charlotte should retain the title on Sunday but they're better off keeping away from the Reid Flair stuff, which is a big ordeal now, meaning WWE's "any news is good news" theory gets thrown out again.

Paige says she isn't responsible for Monday.

Kalisto vs. Big E.

Before the match, New Day wants to know why Kalisto was in the tournament but not any of them. Ryback couldn't even hold their unicorn horn. Kalisto, Big E.'s opponent tonight, is a luchador in an ugly mask. Kalisto handsprings around to start and scores with a few kicks to the head. The hurricanrana driver is followed by a dive to take out Woods and Kingston but Big E. runs him over. A Warrior Splash puts Kalisto away in 1:19.

New Day stays on Kalisto post match and takes out Sin Cara as well until Ryback makes the save.

Clip from Paige and Miz's Santa's Little Helper.

Ziggler vs. Breeze is official for Sunday.

Reigns and Ambrose say they're on the same page tonight but they'll fight on Sunday if they have to. Both guys are cool with doing what they have to do and they'll jump off that bridge together. You can almost see the swerve from here.

Kevin Owens/Alberto Del Rio vs. Roman Reigns/Dean Ambrose

Ambrose and Owens start things off and it's Reigns quickly coming in to clear the ring as we take an early break. Back with Reigns shoving Alberto out of the corner and making the tag off to Ambrose for a running forearm. Del Rio gets in a kick to the head and sends Ambrose into the steps as we're now into the tag team formula. Back to Owens for a chinlock and some corner choking.

Owens calls Brennan an idiot and tells Del Rio to come in and go nuts. The running enziguri knocks Dean even sillier and we really mix things up with an Alberto chinlock. A Backstabber gets two but Dean blocks the superkick (Which put John Cena out. I didn't know if you remembered because Del Rio and Colter don't feel it's important enough to mention.) and makes the hot tag to Reigns. A bunch of kicks to the face and the corner clotheslines until Alberto makes a save. Everything breaks down and Ambrose knocks Del Rio over the announcers' table. Del Rio takes a Superman Punch and it's a double countout at 11:55.

Rating: C. This was the best option they had and I'm glad they went with this instead of having one of the four get pinned. Let them beat each other down post match but don't beat someone going into a major match on Sunday. This wasn't the best match in the world but it's just a preview for Sunday anyway.

Post match Reigns and Ambrose clean house to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. I liked this more than I thought I would as it felt like a proper go home show for a change. Most of the show is set save for a Survivor Series match and what I would assume is the Lucha Dragons/Ryback vs. the New Day. This wasn't the strongest show on its own, but it got me more interested in Sunday which was all it needed to do.

Results

Cesaro b. The Miz – Crossface

Neville/Dudley Boyz b. Stardust/Ascension – 3D to Viktor

Tyler Breeze b. Zack Ryder – Unprettier

Charlotte b. Brie Bella – Figure Eight

Big E. b. Kalisto – Warrior Splash

Dean Ambrose/Roman Reigns vs. Alberto Del Rio/Kevin Owens went to a double countout

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Monday Night Raw – November 16, 2015: How Low Can You Go?

Monday Night Raw

Date: November 16, 2015

Location: Bon Secours Wellness Arena, Greenville, South Carolina

Commentators: John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton, Michael Cole

It's all about the tournament again tonight with the four quarterfinals leading in to Sunday's Survivor Series. We might also get some more about the Authority recruiting Reigns to the dark side. Other than that we should find out some more of the card as very few of the matches have been announced yet. Let's get to it.

The roster stands on the stage in a moment of silence for the victims of

the terrorist attacks in Paris. Nothing wrong with that.

Opening sequence.

Recap of the tournament and the quarterfinal matches.

We've got druids to open things up, followed by the Brothers of Destruction. Undertaker talks about how no one can take away their souls (Yeah what was up with that? Did the Wyatts take their souls or whatever and then just let them go?). Kane has a place prepared for the Wyatts to suffer in the fire. Undertaker says Bray can select the two members for the sacrifice because they will never rest in peace.

Cue the Wyatts so Bray can talk about twenty five years being long enough. He is the one to take down the brothers and the creatures of the night are his. The lights go out again but the Wyatts are still there. The druids are now in sheep masks and charge the ring, only to be easily beaten down. Undertaker waves the Wyatts down but Bray stops them. This would work so much better if I thought the Wyatts had any chance.

WWE World Title Tournament Quarterfinals: Neville vs. Kevin Owens

Non-title. Neville works on the arm to start but gets caught in a headlock. Back up and the threat of the Red Arrow sends Owens running so Neville drops him with a top rope moonsault. Back from a break with Owens running Neville over and slapping on a chinlock. Neville tries to speed things up and flips to the apron (this guy's balance is insane), only to eat a superkick (that's one) for a nine count. Owens gets two more off a gutbuster but misses a charge in the corner and gets caught in a snap German suplex.

The middle rope Phoenix splash (You should not be able to do that. Like, no one should.) gives Neville two but Owens shakes the ropes to break up the Red Arrow. The Pop Up Powerbomb is countered into a superkick (that's two) and a reverse hurricanrana for a very close two. Neville has to bail out of the Red Arrow again and it's the Pop Up Powerbomb to send Owens to Survivor Series at 10:46.

Rating: B-. This got a lot better after the commercial when they let both

guys just go. That's the NXT style and it works just fine on the big stage. Owens winning by pin will help a lot when he goes down on Sunday, either to Ambrose or Reigns. Either way I hope it's not clean, but you know that's coming eventually.

We look at Paige debuting the night after Wrestlemania XXX and winning the Divas Title, which is her claim to starting the Divas Revolution.

HHH and Kevin Owens shake hands in the back while talking about something we can't hear.

Clip of Reigns beating Big Show last week.

Update on Rollins' knee injury.

Tyler Breeze vs. R-Truth

Truth slams him down to start and does a little dance before dropping a leg for two. Another suplex puts Tyler into the corner and we stop for some lip balm. It seems to work as Tyler cranks on a half crab for a bit, only to have Truth fight up with that sitout gordbuster. The two kicks set up another gordbuster but the Beauty Shot puts Truth away at 4:10.

Rating: D+. Standard "let's have R-Truth lose to someone because Truth is still over with his rapping" match here which is like your first merit badge on the main roster. Truth is still fine in the role and can do this for a long time to come. Breeze is going to be fine if he gets a decent feud, but I'm not sure where he goes to start.

WWE World Title Tournament Quarterfinals: Dolph Ziggler vs. Dean Ambrose

The winner gets Owens. Feeling out process to start with both guys working on the arm until it's a standoff. Dean tries Dirty Deeds but Ziggler gets away because it's way too early. The announcers talk about how the champ is going to be on various talk shows because that's what we're still supposed to believe.

Ziggler takes him down and puts on a surfboard followed by a cravate into a rollup for two. A nice dropkick staggers Dean and a backbreaker does the same to Ziggler. Dean grabs a half crab of his own for all of ten

seconds before going with the top rope standing elbow drop. Ziggler's sleeper doesn't go anywhere so he settles for two off a sunset flip. Dirty Deeds is broken up again and they cross body each other. Both guys go up top and fall out to the floor as we take a break.

Back with Ziggler getting two off a Fameasser. He loads up a superkick (Cole: "Looking to pay homage to Shawn Michaels!" If that's the case then Shawn is now the world's fourth largest religion.) but has to settle for a sleeper instead, which Dean counters into the rebound lariat for two. Dean's small package and Ziggler's superkick (that's three) get near falls each. Back up and Ambrose slugs away until he gets rolled up for two, only to come back with Dirty Deeds to advance at 16:47.

Rating: C. This was watchable but it felt like they were trying to have a big match which almost never works. I wasn't wild on the idea of these two working together and the result was about what I was expecting. I'm not sure who wins between Ambrose and Owens but it has the potential to be a better match than this. It wasn't a bad match but I really didn't like how it went.

Post match Dean says he's turning the place upside down if he wins. No more suits, more pyro, less talking, we'll replace Michael Cole with a fish tank and have breakfast for dinner.

We look at Stephanie McMahon starting the Divas Revolution four months ago. So why are they still arguing about who started it? And can we please never see this again? That would be nice.

Here's New Day to say we should be talking about the one year anniversary of the New Day. They didn't get an invite to the Tonight Show or a chance to be on Sportscenter. Woods brings up Jey's shoulder injury and Big E. has a little impression. Big E.: "WHEN I SAY US, YOU SAY OW!" As for Ryback, don't let him drag you down into the much of negativity because NEW DAY ROCKS.

New Day vs. Ryback/Usos

Jey and Woods start things off while Cole tells us about Kevin Owens and Melissa Joan Hart feuding on Twitter. After some dives from the Usos, Jey

gets caught in the Unicorn Stampede as Woods plays the trombone. Now it's off to a discussion of Patrick Swayze movies as Big E. gets two off the Warrior Splash. There's the abdominal stretch to put Jey in more trouble before it's off to Kofi for a middle rope stomp. Jey gets over for the tag but the referee didn't see it (now there's an old trope I'd like to see make a comeback). Ryback comes in anyway and cleans house, eventually shoving the referee for the DQ at 5:49.

Rating: D+. The time killed this but you know we're getting the Usos vs. New Day on Sunday. I'm still not sure what that leaves Ryback with as they're not going to do Woods vs. Ryback. Unless there's a rematch of this, Ryback might be left off the card. Also, no mention of Ryback losing to Kalisto. We did however about Terry Funk being in Road House.

Post match New Day is dispatched, including a double superkick from the Usos (that's four and five).

Clip of Charlotte winning the Divas Title from Nikki Bella. They're pushing the heck out of the contract signing later.

HHH suggests that it might be time for Cesaro to grab the brass ring. He'll be watching to see if Cesaro takes that next big step tonight. Hey stop laughing. It could....I mean it's possible.....who am I kidding.

Here's Roman Reigns to ask if the Roman Empire is here tonight. He recaps HHH's offer and says he thought it it very hard, but he'll never sell out. The road is going to get harder but it ends with him as WWE World Champion. Believe that.

WWE World Title Tournament Quarterfinals: Roman Reigns vs. Cesaro

Cesaro takes Reigns into the corner to start but lets go with a clean break. A top wristlock doesn't get Cesaro anywhere so Reigns puts him on the top, only to have Cesaro cartwheel off. Cesaro gutwrench suplexes him for two as JBL talks about the Buffalo Bills losing all the time back in the day. Reigns misses the running clothesline and the springboard spinning uppercut (that always looks great) drops him again. Things get even worse for Roman as he's sent shoulder first into the post, followed by a running uppercut against the barricade as we take a break.

Back with Reigns being thrown to the floor but Cesaro gets kicked in the face. Reigns takes him inside and slugs away with the bad arm, only to have the apron kick caught and countered into the Cesaro Swing. Cesaro takes him over into the Sharpshooter and then the Crossface on the bad arm. That's still not enough to beat Reigns as he powers up into a Samoan drop for two. A backdrop sends Cesaro over the top and he goes elbow first onto the apron.

Back in and Reigns fires off clotheslines with the bad arm until Cesaro punches the arm away. So Cesaro's fist is much harder than his chest. Cesaro grabs the arm but gets lifted up into a sitout powerbomb for two. The Superman Punch is countered into Swiss Death for two more as these near falls are getting nuts. Cesaro loads up the apron superplex but Reigns escapes and hits a quick Superman Punch. Back in and the spear is blocked by another uppercut. The Neutralizer is countered but Cesaro grabs a backslide, only to take the Superman Punch and the spear to send Reigns to Survivor Series at 20:24.

Rating: A-. Outstanding power match with both guys just beating the heck out of each other. They had me for a second with Cesaro getting in those last few counters at the end. There was no way Cesaro was going to win here but it was awesome to see them get a lot of time and just beat the tar out of each other like this.

Clip of Paige turning on Charlotte. So is the contract signing closing the show? Really?

In Memory of Nick Bockwinkel graphic, with thirty five minutes to go in the show.

Dudley Boyz vs. Ascension

Viktor grabs a headlock on Bubba to start and gets kicked in the face for his efforts. Bubba gets taken into the corner for some right hands from Konnor, who is quickly put down with a Rock Bottom. The hot tag brings in D-Von and the 3D puts Viktor away at 3:13.

Rating: D. Was the show running short or something? I had almost forgotten that the Dudleyz were back as they haven't done anything since

the last match against New Day. Ascension on the other hand hasn't done anything since they debuted because WWE wasted all the effort put into them, but I'm sure they're just having fun while they fight on Friday night, which is the best night in the world of sports entertainment right Maggle?

Colter brags about how awesome MexAmerica is because it has no crime or taxes. HHH comes up and suggests Del Rio could be more than he is now.

WWE World Title Tournament Quarterfinals: Kalisto vs. Alberto Del Rio

Non-title. Kalisto says flukes don't happen when you're fighting for your dreams. Del Rio starts fast in the corner but misses a charge to the floor, allowing Kalisto to snap off a hurricanrana from the apron. Back with Alberto getting two off a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker and tying Kalisto in the Tree of Woe.

Alberto rips at the mask and stomps away, only to miss a charge into the post (popular mistake tonight). Kalisto hits his corkscrew cross body and the hurricanrana driver for two but the Salida Del Sol is countered with Del Rio dropping him on the top rope. Del Rio gets him in the Tree of Woe for the double stomp to go to the semi-finals at 10:26.

Rating: D+. It wasn't a total squash but DEAR GOODNESS I can't stand that stupid stomp. It's the new 619, though less exciting. Yeah it looks cool, but couldn't they find something new to set it up other than whatever TOTALLY NATURAL way they have that week. Kalisto was never going to win here so the ending is fine, but I could have used a few more hope spots for him.

Here are the semi-finals.

Roman Reigns

Alberto Del Rio

Kevin Owens

Dean Ambrose

It's time for the contract signing, which is actually the closing segment. Cole asks where this friendship went wrong. Paige says there is no friendship and she'll prove it on Sunday. Charlotte asks what happened to Paige because they started off cut out from the same mold. She even wanted to be like Paige when she got here. Charlotte got into the business because of her brother, who isn't alive to see her success.

She starts to cry so Paige makes fun of her as a heel should. Paige rips on the idea of PCB because she didn't need them anymore. Charlotte isn't going to be champion forever but when she loses the title it won't be to someone like Paige. A brawl is about to start when Paige rips on Ric for not being here and being way over the hill.

Paige brings up Charlotte's brother again and the fight is on with Charlotte taking it to the floor and beating Paige down. They get back in and Paige throws a table at her before they brawl in the corner again. The crowd is mostly dead for all of this and that's not a good sign. They're finally pulled apart and stare at each other to end the show. Charlotte was in WAY over her head here as she just isn't ready to do this kind of talking and it showed badly. They tried something new here and it's really hard to call it anything but a failure.

Overall Rating: C-. The wrestling alone makes it a passable show but this was the awkward part of the tournament where you knew what you were getting and just had to clean out all the people who didn't have a chance. On top of that we still only have five matches announced for Sunday (Divas Title, Wyatts vs. Brothers and the three tournament matches) though you can probably pencil in a few others. The show felt uneven as they were trying to have a regular show while also focusing on the tournament the entire time.

I'm still trying to get over the idea that the contract signing closed the show. It's a very different idea and I'm guessing they went with it as a hail Mary to mess with the sagging ratings. Charlotte's story about her brother was good but it would have been better if she had been able to go into details. A heroin overdose isn't going to fly on today's show though so there wasn't much they could do. Anyway, good show at times tonight but it felt all over the place.

Results

Kevin Owens b. Neville – Pop Up Powerbomb

Tyler Breeze b. R-Truth – Beauty Shot

Dean Ambrose b. Dolph Ziggler – Dirty Deeds

New Day b. Ryback/Usos via DQ when Ryback shoved the referee

Roman Reigns b. Cesaro – Spear

Dudley Boyz b. Ascension – 3D to Viktor

Alberto Del Rio b. Kalisto – Top rope double stomp

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New Column: Beyond the Brackets

The good and the bad of tournaments. You might know which side I'm on already.

Monday Night Raw – November 9, 2015: It's A Tournament! Uh, Yay!

Monday Night Raw

Date: November 9, 2015

Location: Manchester Arena, Manchester, England

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

We're across the ocean for the annual European tour and for once it's a big night as the World Title tournament begins. Seth Rollins is out due to a torn ACL, meaning it's time to have a tournament for the vacant title. The brackets will be revealed tonight and it should be interesting to see what they have planned. Let's get to it.

We open with the title on a stand in the middle of the ring as Cole recaps Rollins' injury.

Here's HHH to address the title situation. HHH thanks Seth for always living up to the expectations the Authority had and pauses for a THANK YOU SETH chant. There's going to be a tournament set up with the winner becoming the new champion at Survivor Series. A few weeks ago though, we crowned a new #1 contender so HHH would like Reigns to come out here right now.

While it's true that there's a tournament, it seems unfair to HHH that Reigns should have to walk through the tournament with no advantage. Instead, HHH offers to let Reigns advance to Survivor Series to face the winner of the tournament. The reality is that the Authority was thinking

about giving Reigns the spot before they picked Rollins. HHH saw so much potential in Reigns and thinks he could have been the biggest star in the business.

Could Reigns have fought and beaten Brock on his own and then held the title as long as he wanted? It would have been interesting to see. What HHH has seen is Reigns going up against wall after wall and never quitting. All Reigns has to do now is be HHH's man, which Reigns calls selling out.

HHH doesn't like that term and says forget all these morals because he could be given everything that he deserves. He even gets more serious by bringing up Reigns' family. Roman could secure his daughter's daughter's future by just saying yes. The fans still say NO and Reigns says the same because he wants to do it his way. HHH thanks him for reminding him why he didn't pick Reigns in the first place, so welcome to the back of the line. Reigns' first match is right now. This opens a few doors as Reigns could change his mind or someone else could take the spot instead. Most interesting indeed.

WWE World Title Tournament First Round: Roman Reigns vs. Big Show

Show headbutts him down to start and they go to the floor with Show throwing him over the bottom rope and back inside. See, Show is big and strong. That makes him entertaining in case you haven't gotten it in the last nearly seventeen years. Reigns dives into a chop to the chest and gets whipped across the ring as this is one sided so far. Show's splash gets two and he throws Reigns down again as we take another break.

Total dominance so far but at least we're getting this thing out of the way in the first round instead of sitting through a bunch of Show wins. Back with Reigns firing off right hands but getting caught in a bearhug (that felt like they came back a few seconds early). Reigns throws him off and grabs a Samoan drop, followed by the corner clotheslines. That earns Roman a chokeslam for two but the Superman Punch and spear advance Reigns at 11:57.

Rating: C-. Remember all those other matches they've had before? This is the most recent one. There's nothing interesting between these two and no

one on the planet believed Reigns wasn't advancing here. At the end of the day, Roman Reigns vs. Big Show is the most simple idea that they have anymore and it's really not working. Find someone else for Reigns to beat up because this match is already rammed into the ground.

Here are the full brackets.

Roman Reigns

Cesaro

Sheamus

Alberto Del Rio

Stardust

Kalisto

Ryback

Titus O'Neil

Kevin Owens

Neville

King Barrett

Dolph Ziggler

Miz

Dean Ambrose

Tyler Breeze

That's uh....pretty lame. You can almost see the finals from here, save for a quick swerve. If they do turn Ambrose heel against a face Reigns, sweet goodness they've lost their minds even more than I thought they had.

Quick video of Undertaker and Kane during their most dominant days. The Wyatts will be paying respect to them later.

Wayne Rooney of Manchester United is here.

WWE World Title Tournament First Round: Titus O'Neil vs. Kevin Owens

Non-title of course. Before the match, Owens says you can buy his theme music on iTunes and put some change in his pockets. "And yes, I actually have pockets on my wrestling gear. That's how awesome I am." Owens talks about how WWE needs change right now and what better place than in the smartest fans in the world here in England. However, Owens thinks they're dumb for following something like the Royal Family. The change is all about Owens though, because this is his show.

Kevin fights out of the corner to start but gets kicked in the face to knock him outside. We take an early break and come back with Titus fighting out of a chinlock. Titus is told that he isn't on Kevin's level and pounds away in the corner, followed by the dog bark and a missed charge. The Pop Up Powerbomb ends Titus at 6:56.

Rating: D. Well at least it's over. This was just an extended workout for Owens and the kind of match he should win with ease. I'm glad we're getting these lame matches out of the way in the early rounds and at least they're keeping them quick. Owens could make a real run in this thing and I hope he doesn't lose clean whenever he's eliminated.

Owens steals JBL's hat. Thank goodness that won't lead to a feud.

Paige thinks Becky Lynch is a rat and the only thing better than beating Baby Flair for the title is beating the B and then taking out the C. I kind of dig that.

Clip of Undertaker beating Sid for the title at Wrestlemania XIII and one of Kane cashing in Money in the Bank to win the title at Money in the Bank 2010.

Paige vs. Becky Lynch

So do they keep the #1 contender strong or have her lose at home instead? They brawl to start with Becky in trouble against the home country star. The fans quiet down until THIS IS MY HOUSE wakes them up all over again. Paige puts her in the Tree of Woe and pulls back on Becky's arms in an

incredibly painful looking hold. They trade abdominal stretches until Becky charges into a superkick (of course) for two. The Rampaige gets the same as Becky is too close to the ropes. Paige loads up the PT0 but Becky rolls her up for the pin at 5:00.

Rating: C. They had two options here and they picked the stupid one because this is WWE and that's all they know how to do. Becky and Paige could do something great but that's hard to do in just five minutes. It's very nice to see Becky get a win for a change though as she hasn't won anything on her own on TV since August.

Post match Paige puts Becky on the table for the PT0 (It's like the same move! BUT ON A TABLE!) until Charlotte makes the save.

Video on Wrestlemania tickets going on sale.

WWE World Title Tournament First Round: Dolph Ziggler vs. The Miz

They start fast with Ziggler grabbing a leg but having to escape the Skull Crushing Finale. Miz bails from a superkick but walks into a clothesline. Dolph misses a charge into the corner and Miz starts in on the knee. Now it's Miz's turn to have a charge hit buckle and Dolph gets two off a backslide. Miz kicks him in the head and puts on the Figure Four though. Dolph finally makes the rope, pops up and superkicks Miz for the pin at 5:07.

Rating: D+. Logical story with the leg work aside, I really wasn't feeling this one. The ending felt completely out of nowhere as Ziggler just popped up and hit his secondary finisher. Shouldn't it at least have been weakened due to the knee injury? Not the worst match here but it's clear that this generation (as in the pre-NXT generation) really doesn't get how to put a match together.

Dolph holds up the title. I wouldn't get used to that Ziggy.

Undertaker dominated people at Survivor Series 2005 and Kane won the Tag Team Titles with Daniel Bryan at Night of Champions 2012.

Here's MexAmerica to say they don't want England around because they're just so hateful. Now England is listening to Germany and Russia and

they're despised around the world. Del Rio calls them all haters and Zeb thanks HHH for the first round title match on Smackdown. Wow that's not something you hear on Raw anymore. And when is the last time we saw a promo with no action?

Natalya vs. Naomi

Natalya's epic FACEBOOK challenges continue as she keeps trying to figure out who leads Team Bad. Naomi accepted the challenge on Twitter, which may or may not be on the same footing. Natalya helps the fans with the WE WANT SASHA chants. They go to the floor very quickly with Sasha sending Natalya into the post and messing up her leg. Back in and we're already on the chinlockery until Natalya fights up with a clothesline. Natalya: "WE WANT SASHA!" The Rear View misses and Natalya sends Naomi into Tamina for a rollup at 2:05.

Sasha comes in post match and is put in the Sharpshooter until Tamina saves for a beatdown.

Undertaker beat up Edge in the Cell in 2008 while Kane destroyed a wedding in 2005.

WWE World Title Tournament First Round: Sheamus vs. Cesaro

The winner gets Roman Reigns and King Barrett is in Sheamus' corner. During the break after Sheamus' entrance, Barrett got in an argument with Wayne Rooney to continue a Twitter feud they had earlier in the year. They brawl into the corner to start as is their custom, while JBL goes on about European sports that most Americans don't care about as is his custom. Sheamus comes back with a quick throw and pounds away with the forearms to the chest as we take a break.

Back with Cesaro fighting out of a chinlock but getting crotched on the top. Cesaro spins around Sheamus' arm and runs him over, only to have both guys fall out to the floor in a big crash. Cesaro is holding his arm and both guys dive in to beat the count at nine. Sheamus drives him into the corner and loads up a Brogue Kick but Cesaro ducks under a Brogue Kick and tries the Sharpshooter, sending Sheamus bailing to the ropes.

Cesaro uppercuts with the bar arm and dropkicks Sheamus off the top to the floor. There's another uppercut against the barricade but Sheamus and Barrett start arguing with Rooney. Wayne slaps Barrett in the face and a running uppercut sets up Cesaro's arm trap small package for the pin at 15:35.

Rating: B-. Take two big, strong guys and let them hit each other for a long time. Sometimes you just need a power brawl and that's what you got here. Cesaro has no chance against Reigns so we'll call this his latest win to make you believe he might be a player a few times before he loses three or so in a row. Good stuff here though, as always between these two.

Tyler Breeze calls Renee ugly and wants to get rid of Dean Ambrose's ugly clothes.

WWE World Title Tournament First Round: Dean Ambrose vs. Tyler Breeze

This is Breeze's main roster debut. Tyler ducks a clothesline to start and hides in the ropes. Dean loads up a suicide dive but Summer takes Tyler's place and screams to stop Dean. Ambrose takes him down on the other side of the ring and lays on the barricade as we take a break. Back with Dean hammering away in the corner until Breeze throws him to the floor and takes over. Cole lists off all of Breeze's nicknames and we get a nice pinfall reversal sequence.

A rollup out of the corner with feet on the ropes gives Tyler a two count. Dean goes up for a missile dropkick but stuns himself on the landing, possibly injuring his shoulder. If it wasn't hurt though, Tyler sends him into the post twice in a row to make sure it's hurting. A Fujiwara armbar makes Dean scream but he makes the rope for the break. Tyler gets kicked to the floor and a kid who sounds about five says "THAT'S WHAT YOU GET FOR MESSING WITH DOLPH ZIGGLER!" Back in and Dean grabs a small package for the pin at 11:05.

Rating: C+. Good debut for Breeze here, save for the whole losing thing. Why they would put him in a match like this for his debut can only be summed by "WWE is stupid and doesn't get it" but at least it wasn't a squash. You have to assume Zigler vs. Breeze for Survivor Series, which

should be a Tyler win but stupider things have happened.

Here are the updated brackets.

Roman Reigns

Cesar

Alberto Del Rio

Stardust

Kalisto

Ryback

Owens

Neville

King Barrett

Ziggler

Ambrose

The next Undertaker/Kane moments are Wrestlemania XXVIII for Undertaker and the 2001 Royal Rumble for Kane.

The other three first round tournament matches will take place on Smackdown.

Here's New Day to complain about being left out of the tournament. Big E. declares it outrageous that they're being treated like outcasts, even while they stand here so fresh and clean. It wasn't long ago that they laid out Dolph Ziggler (Big E. faints here), took out their childhood favorites the Dudley Boyz and put out John Cena. This match is for their captain Seth Rollins, so get your horns out. Actually never mind because European magic is gar-bage. Kofi: "And Harry Potter sucks."

Neville/Usos vs. New Day

A chop sends Woods to the floor and we take a break 32 seconds in. Geez just don't start the match then. Back with Jimmy caught in the Unicorn Stampede but being able to avoid the Warrior Splash. It's off to Neville for the fast kicks and a standing moonsault to Woods, followed by the double superkicks and dives from the Usos.

Neville dropkicks Woods onto his partners and it's time for a big corkscrew moonsault off the top to the floor. Big E. runs over an Uso and Neville goes up for the Red Arrow, only to have the trombone thrown in for a distraction. Big E. shoves Neville off the top and Xavier grabs a rollup with feet on the ropes for the pin at 8:37.

Rating: C. This was exactly what you would expect when you have these six in there. It's good enough with the high flying and fast tags but New Day is much more entertaining when Woods is on the floor being goofy. The Usos will get their rematch and probably the titles back and I'm ok with that at this point. Fun match here but nothing great, ignoring Neville, as in a guy in the tournament, taking a pin of course.

We see the Wyatts taking out Undertaker and Kane recently.

Here's Bray Wyatt to eulogize the Brothers of Destruction. Bray says change is a part of life and determines who you are. They have been the benchmark for over twenty years and they have reigned supreme. He asks us to bow our heads in remembrance but calls the fans fools for chanting Undertaker's name. There was no passing of the torch because Bray took the torch and burned both of them into ashes.

Now he controls the thunder and lightning and the demons respond to his commands. The apocalypse is here. Bray kneels and an Undertaker and Kane highlight video starts playing in reverse before going normally. Bray looks upset and Undertaker's voice says REST IN PEACE. Lightning makes fire come out of the posts and the gong sounds.

Cue Undertaker and Kane to scare Bray even more. They stare him down but the lights go out again (pay your bills you deadbeats) and the other three Wyatts are here. Undertaker punches Bray down and Harper and Rowan are punched away as well. Strowman gets in and takes off his mask but Harper and Rowan have to be chokeslammed first. A double clothesline to

the Brothers just causes a double situp and Strowman is sent to the floor. Bray is all alone but Braun has to be sent over the announcers' table. Bray gets chokeslammed to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. I don't like tournaments. They're a fun idea in theory but you wind up seeing the same people fight multiple times and dragging out a concept longer than it needs to go. Now this show did a good job of keeping things moving and at least seemed to set up the semi-finals and finals at Survivor Series. Some of the matches are lame and you can see where they're going with it, but at least the final match should be fun and there are several seeds being planted for later. Good, efficient show this week but the big stuff is coming soon.

Results

Roman Reigns b. Big Show – Spear

Kevin Owens b. Titus O'Neil – Pop Up Powerbomb

Becky Lynch b. Paige – Small package

Dolph Ziggler b. The Miz – Superkick

Natalya b. Naomi – Rollup

Cesaro b. Sheamus – Arm trap small package

Dean Ambrose b. Tyler Breeze – Small package

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Thought of the Day: Keep This In Mind

In case you haven't been paying attention this week, the big story is Seth Rollins tearing his ACL and being forced to vacate the WWE World Title. This has set up a tournament at Survivor Series 2015 for the vacant belt and there's a really popular theory out there about the result. Here's something to keep in mind about it.

So the theory is that Roman Reigns turned corporate/heel and wins the tournament, possibly beating Ambrose in the finals. That's the theory I'm going with (meaning it's likely wrong) and so are a lot of other people because it makes a lot of sense. However, this brings up a problem.

With so many people predicting it, don't think that it's a bad idea. Assuming it happens, don't think that it's stupid booking just because people guessed it was going to happen. This is a good idea, no matter how many people figure it out because it opens the door for a lot of stories and sets up a bunch of matches down the line. Reigns isn't great as a face but imagine him with that smug grin saying something like "You knew it was happening one day and now it's happening whether you like it or not."

For some reason, people think predictable is bad. NXT is one of the most predictable shows in wrestling but it's also entertaining because they don't do crazy things just to fool the audience. As usual, I'll go back to Wrestlemania XIV: would you have Austin lose to Michaels and not win the title just because everyone knew he was winning that night? Of course not, because it would be a horrible decision. People knew it was coming and it kicked off some of the most profitable times the company and business have ever seen.

Just because you've figured out the ending doesn't make it stupid. That's like saying a mystery isn't a good story because you read the clues

properly and solved it. It means you're thinking logically and picking up on the clues like you were supposed to. Keep that in mind as we head to Survivor Series.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of Complete 1997 Monday Night Raw Reviews at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/product/B015IN12I2>

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Seth Rollins Tears ACL, Out 6-9 Months, Title Tournament At Survivor Series

<http://www.wwe.com/inside/seth-rollins-injury-title-tournament-survivor-series-28164051>

Well that changes everything. I'd assume Reigns gets it but my goodness how much do they wish they had Orton and Cena back right now.

I'm not even sure how they do a tournament. You figure eight guys but do they have eight names big enough? Does Wyatt enter or do the match with Undertaker?

Reigns would seem to be the heavy favorite and most logical choice but they might throw a curveball. It's their best chance to in a long time.

So who would be in?

Reigns
Sheamus
Barrett
Wyatt?
Del Rio
Ryback
Owens
Ambrose

I'm having trouble coming up with any more but that's more like an Intercontinental Title tournament than a World Title tournament.

New Column: Wish List

Today we're looking at a few things that I'd like to see tweaked that could make things better. These aren't the major ideas like turn so and so heel or make this guy champion.

<http://www.wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-wish-list/44582/>