

# Monday Night Raw – June 29, 2015: What A Shock

## Monday Night Raw

Date: June 29, 2015

Location: Verizon Center, Washington, D.C.

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

Battleground is on the horizon and the Authority seems to be reunited to help Seth Rollins defend his World Title against Brock Lesnar. This means Kane and Joey Mercury at the moment, as Lesnar injured Jamie Noble last week, meaning there aren't many obstacles for Lesnar to overcome to get to Rollins. Let's get to it.

The opening recap shows the ending of last week's show with Lesnar being laid out by the devastating forces of Kane, Mercury and Rollins. I'm so glad they had Lesnar get beaten up as he was getting way too close to feeling like something special and they needed to cut his legs out from underneath him. Well, maybe just the toes or so as Lesnar is going to be fine.

Here's the Authority, complete with the secret weapon of Noble, to open things up. This is officially Monday Night Rollins, because Rollins has been watching some old Nitro matches. Perhaps on the WWE Network for \$9.99? He talks about the power in this city, which you attain by doing things no one else could do. Rollins did something that Cena and even the Undertaker couldn't do, as he conquered the conqueror last week. Suplex City was burned to the ground and Lesnar is now on his way to Japan.

That's what he deserves after what Lesnar did to Noble last week. We even get a quick Jamie Noble chant because these fans are that intelligent. They're quickly tossed aside though as Rollins demands that the fans show Noble the respect that he deserves. However, it's time for presents! Rollins has Apple Watches for everyone, likely fulfilling a product placement agreement. Kane is getting a bonus though. He debuted back in 1997 (that really shouldn't be brought up) and a lot of things have

changed since then.

Bill Clinton was in charge, the internet was dial-up and Paul Heyman was fat and disgusting....so not everything has changed. In all that time, Kane hasn't asked for a thing, so Rollins is sending him to.....Hawaii, complete with a picture saying Hawaii, thereby making this a complete copy of the segment where Rocky Maivia took over the Nation, giving the members watches and Faarooq a picture of Rocky himself.

As a hula dancer and ukelele player come out to complete the mood, Kane is looking forward to deciding which animal to throw into a volcano, but Rollins thinks they should team up to destroy Ambrose and Reigns in a No DQ tag match tonight. Rollins still isn't done though as he has a 2015 Cadillac for the Stooges to travel in. The guys celebrate as Rollins lists off the price and features. I was right about that product placement it seems. This goes on until Big Show comes out for his match.

The tag match later is presented by the new Terminator movie. I'm sure some people will get annoyed by this but it's money for the company in like 30 seconds. It's not the worst thing in the world.

### Big Show vs. Mark Henry

Oh...yay. Miz is on commentary to cheer for Henry but Show pounds Mark into the corner with right hands (which are the size of typewriters according to JR), only to have Henry knock him down and hit a splash for two. Not that it matters as two big right hands knock Henry silly for the pin at 1:24.

Ryback (sans belt) hits the ring to take Show down with a shoulder to the leg. Miz runs in to kick Ryback in the jaw, so Ryback wants their match to happen right now.

### Miz vs. Ryback

Non-title., but now Ryback has the belt. I know it doesn't mean as much today but it disappears? Miz tries to stomp him down but gets his head slammed into the mat for his efforts. Ryback whips him across the ring with authority (not THE Authority of course. Like they'd be involved with

the Intercontinental Title), followed by a totally ridiculous FORTY SECOND delayed vertical suplex.

Miz bails to the floor but comes back with a short DDT for two, setting up a nice face pull. A chinlock goes nowhere but the Reality Check gets two more. That's it for Ryback as he comes back with a spinebuster but the threat of a Meat Hook sends Miz running for the countout (the rare three count countout before the referee just says screw it and ends the match) at 5:11.

**Rating:** D. I would say this is what you would expect, but what you would actually expect is for Miz to beat him off a rollup when Big Show distracted Ryback. The triple threat match really isn't doing anything for me, but at least there's an actual feud over the title instead of just a one off match for a change.

#### Alicia Fox vs. Paige

Alicia comes out to the Bellas' music and has them at ringside. Paige takes her down into an armbar to start and drives a knee into the face for two. Some kicks in the corner don't bother Paige much as she hits a Thesz press, only to have the Bellas offer a distraction so Alicia can take over again as we go to a break. Back with Fox standing on the hair before we hit the chinlock.

As the fans start falling asleep due to the rest hold, the Bellas are right there with the COME ON (insert name here) shouting. A tilt-a-whirl backbreaker gets two on Paige and it's back to the chinlock. Two chinlocks in a match this show tells me that Fox has no idea where to go on offense. Paige comes back with her three clotheslines and a kick to the face for two. Nikki tries a distraction so Fox can roll her up, only to have Paige roll through (with nothing on Fox's arms, meaning there's no reason she didn't kick out) for the pin at 9:43.

**Rating:** D. The idea was fine here but it's very clear that Fox had no business controlling most of a match this long. Paige vs. Nikki could be good, but I don't buy for a second that Paige is going to win as Nikki just MUST get the Divas Title record so we never think of AJ Lee again. I mean, that would just change so many things right?

Here's John Cena for the US Title Open Challenge (with the promo during the entrance instead of in the ring)...and here's Kevin Owens! I'll ignore Cole calling this a budding rivalry because Cole is that big of a schnook when he stops thinking.

#### US Title: Kevin Owens vs. John Cena

Owens drops to the floor after the Big Match Intros and says he'll just wait for Battleground. He'll take the US Title there, but maybe this man can do it instead.

#### US Title: Cesaro vs. John Cena

Owens joins commentary, which should be entertaining stuff. Thankfully they're immediately talking about the Balor vs. Owens NXT Title match this coming Saturday. Cena starts with a headlock and monkey flip to send Cesaro into the corner, meaning it's time for a standoff. This time it's Cesaro putting on a headlock before planting Cena with a powerslam, followed by a crucifix of all things for two.

The AA is countered and Cesaro drops Cena with a right hand for another near fall. As usual, why make things more complicated than they need to be? Off to an abdominal stretch on the mat as Owens talks about having what it takes to be a real champion. A dropkick staggers Cesaro but he casually slugs Cena down and gets two off a crossface punch to the head.

Back from a break with Cesaro trying a Sharpshooter of all things but Cena kicks him away, only to take a big clothesline for two. Cesaro loads up the Swing but opts for a catapult instead, only to have Cena bounce back into something similar to a springboard Stunner (it barely connected) for two of his own. Cesaro flips out of the AA and hits a massive Swiss Death for two more.

There's the STF but Cesaro rolls out, adjusts his legs and turns the hold over into the Sharpshooter. That was Hart vs. Perfect-esque. Cena makes a rope though and Cesaro's frustration is setting in. Owens: "Cena is in trouble. Not as much trouble as he'll be in at Battleground but close enough."

The apron superplex puts Cena down again as Cole thinks this is going to be a match of the year candidate. It kind of loses its appeal if you keep saying it over and over again, which is why a lot of Cole's commentary gets old. And yes, I'm aware it's mainly him being fed lines. Cena gets two more off a tornado DDT and they slug it out until Cesaro tries a high cross body, only to have Cena roll through into...actually not the AA as he spins Cesaro forward into a faceplant for another near fall.

Owens gets up and swings at Cole for praising Cena, who is dropkicked off the top rope and out to the floor. Back in and Cena tries a sunset flip but has to settle for a sunset bomb for yet another two. There's a Neutralizer out of nowhere but Cena kicks out again. A spinebuster sets up the Swing (good idea to have a power move set it up. It's weird when he just grabs the legs) which sets up the Sharpshooter but Owens comes in for the DQ at 20:20.

**Rating:** B+. Can Cena have a bad match at the moment? The guy is on one heck of a roll, which says a lot given how good he normally is. Cesaro using the Sharpshooter is fine but debuting it against Cena isn't the best idea as Cena hasn't tapped out in about thirteen years. Very good match here, but did you really expect anything else?

Kevin powerbombs both guys and says if anyone is taking the title off Cena, it's going to be him. Owens comes off as such a jerk on commentary and I love it very much.

Tonight, Dolph Ziggler and Lana are going public. Oh man this is going to be bad isn't it?

We get what I think is the same recap that opened the show. That's quite the use of another three minutes.

Bray Wyatt pops up on screen with the ANYONE BUT YOU picture of Reigns. He wants Reigns to open his eyes to see the truth and close his mouth so no more lies can be spread. Wyatt wasn't his father's favorite because his father threw him away like a piece of trash. I wonder if IRS wrote that off his taxes. Wyatt has his wings back now though and Reigns knows everything Bray stands for. There will be no distractions at Battlegrounds because the insects that watch them every week are

inconsequential. They're the yin to each others yang and Bray will be Roman's crown of suffering. Anyone but you Roman. Run.

### Lucha Dragons/Prime Time Players vs. New Day/Bo Dallas

JBL: "We lucha on Monday nights!" We get a clip of Rock's big surprise appearance at a house show over the weekend where he laid out Dallas, which is a GREAT advertisement for the house show circuit. It's the same thing as when they would occasionally have a title change and then turn it right back soon after. No it's not going to happen all the time, but make the people think it could and you can sell some more tickets.

Woods and Kalisto get things going with the masked one flipping off the top rope into a wristdrag as JBL says the Dragons remind him of the APA days. Off to Cara vs. Dallas with Sin cranking on the arm, only to have Darren come in for his standing Earthquake splash for two. Titus comes in to throw Dallas around with ease, which is a really simple yet effective power move. Kalisto doesn't have the same luck as Bo knees him in the head to finally take over.

Back to Young for a chinlock as the match slows down. The belly to back suplex onto the apron plants Dallas again and the threat of a huge brawl sends us to a break. We come back with Woods holding Kalisto in a cobra clutch (that's a move that has gotten a lot more popular recently) but it's quickly off to Cara to flip around and kick Big E. in the head.

E. isn't in enough trouble to get caught in the Gut Check though as he shoves Young to the floor to take over. We get the rotating stomps before it's back to Bo for the chinlock. That goes nowhere and the hot tag brings in Titus and everything breaks down. The Dragons hit big stereo dives, allowing Titus to hit a sitout spinebuster for the pin on Kofi at 14:35.

**Rating:** D+ Longer match than they needed to have here and I'm not wild on New Day losing again before their big rematch. That's why you bring in someone like Dallas: to take the fall and keep the New Day looking as strong as possible, but since WWE never actually thinks these things through, this is what we get. At least the champions didn't lose though.

Here are Dolph and Lana for their big moment. Originally they weren't on the best of terms because Lana was just trying to get back at Rusev. Then things changed, Ziggler is a real man, and Lana cares for him. Rusev finally hobbles out with Summer Rae by his side. He never cared about Lana because kissing her was like kissing the ring post.

Ziggler cuts him off and calls Lana his girlfriend and violence is teased, but Summer grabs the mic and calls Lana a gold digger. She was with Rusev when he won the US Title, but as soon as that was gone, so was Lana. That's enough for Lana and the fight is on, with the fans seemingly very pleased when Lana's skirt comes up. The match could be a disaster but the moment wasn't bad.

Ambrose talks to some Terminators when Reigns comes in and assures Dean that he's ready. Dean is the only family Reigns has around here and they're ready to rage.

#### Neville vs. Sheamus

Before the match we get a cool video of Neville being turned into a comic book superhero. I actually said he wrestled like a superhero when I saw him at a house show a few months back so they really nailed the idea here. Sheamus takes him down to the mat with a headlock as the announcers debate Neville beating him in the King of the Ring. JBL: "Nobody remembers who came second to Usain Bolt." Cole: "We did." JBL: "Well you're nobody."

Neville kicks him to the floor and Sheamus grabs the briefcase for comfort as we take a break. Back with Sheamus hitting the Regal Roll and a release suplex for no cover. Instead Sheamus just smiles like a bully is supposed to do. The fans think this is boring, so Sheamus puts his hand to his ear and slaps on a chinlock. Now THAT is a great heel move. No sarcasm there if it's not clear.

Neville kicks him in the face for a breather but Sheamus calmly hits three straight Irish Curses to regain control. Sheamus gets low bridged to the floor though, setting up a great looking Asai moonsault. Back in and Sheamus gets kicked in the head again but is still able to kick the ropes for a huge crash to break up the Red Arrow. The Brogue Kick ends

Neville at 12:41.

**Rating:** C. This was fine and again I like that they're pushing Sheamus instead of having him go on the stupid, stupid losing streak that has become the trend for Money in the Bank winners. I'm hoping Neville can bounce back from this as it felt like a downgrade for him, but there's a very good chance that it's a one off loss and nothing else. The superhero video was a very nice touch and gives me hope.

#### Jack Swagger vs. King Barrett

Before the match, Barrett demands that all of his opponents must bow down to him. Swagger will have none of that so Barrett bails to the floor to start. Back in and Swagger throws him down with ease and gets the Patriot Lock with Barrett already in the ropes. Well he's a hoss you see so you can't expect that much intelligence. Jack runs into a knee in the corner and the Bull Hammer ends this at 1:47.

#### Roman Reigns/Dean Ambrose vs. Kane/Seth Rollins

No DQ. The Stooges come out in the Cadillac. It's a brawl to start as it should be with Rollins quickly being knocked out to the floor. Kane gets double teamed but Rollins gets back in to shove Ambrose off the top rope. Back from an early break with Rollins holding Reigns in a chinlock and the partners on the apron, because WWE doesn't get what NO DISQUALIFICATION means. Reigns fights away from Kane and it's a double tag to bring in Ambrose and Rollins.

Dean quickly cleans house and knocks Rollins to the floor. It's weapons time with a table getting things started. As if the fans didn't love Dean enough already. The Stooges pull it away so Reigns comes back with a bunch of kendo stick shots to Mercury, followed by three straight Superman Punches to various evildoers. Speaking of evil, cue Bray Wyatt to take out Reigns, including a Rock Bottom onto the announcers' table. Dean can't fight them off alone though and it's a chokeslam and Pedigree for the pin at 11:45.

**Rating:** C. Again, this was totally fine and they covered all the bases they needed to cover here. Wyatt costing Reigns the match makes perfect



sense and at least the pin on Ambrose took two people. It's a pretty standard main event tag, but I'm glad they made it no DQ to avoid the same tired ending we always get.

Post match Reigns saves Dean from a TripleBomb through the table but Kane chokeslams him down too. Reigns fights back again but is finally thrown through the table in the corner. Another Pedigree puts Reigns down, leaving Wyatt to come back in (where was he for the last eight minutes?) and hit Sister Abigail to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. Well it took me three days and....eh. I'm not at all surprised as it wasn't the best looking show in the world but at least it had the awesome Cena vs. Cesaro match (I'm as shocked as you are) and a few other good things in there as well. The Ziggler/Lana segment started off looking bad but Lana getting physical was long overdue. The show wasn't too bad and had more than enough moments to make it work. Good enough stuff here, but the car actually survived. That's quite the shock.

### Results

Big Show b. Mark Henry – KO Punch

Ryback b. Miz via countout

Paige b. Alicia Fox – Rollup

Cesaro b. John Cena via DQ when Kevin Owens interfered

Prime Time Players/Lucha Dragons b. New Day/Bo Dallas – Sitout spinebuster to Kingston

Sheamus b. Neville – Brogue Kick

King Barrett b. Jack Swagger – Bull Hammer

Kane/Seth Rollins b. Dean Ambrose/Roman Reigns – Pedigree to Ambrose

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# Smackdown – June 25, 2015: This Match. Again.

## **Smackdown**

Date: June 25, 2015

Location: Huntington Center, Toledo, Ohio

Commentators: Jimmy Uso, Jerry Lawler, Tom Phillips

Well Lesnar is back and a full on hero now, complete with a knee injury and Kane attacking him. We're still a few weeks away from Battleground though and Seth Rollins needs something to do before he has to face the Beast. Other than that we have Bray Wyatt being creepy about Roman Reigns' daughter. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Lesnar and Heyman promising to hurt Rollins on Monday, followed by Rollins trying to get the Authority to help him again. This led to the team reforming for no obvious reason and Lesnar being beaten down to end Raw.

Here are Rollins, Kane and Joey Mercury (Jamie Noble was injured at the end of Raw as Brock rammed him into the barricade) to open things up. What an odd looking trio. The band is back together and they took a little road trip to Suplex City on Monday, but they burned it to the ground. Good line.

Things change in this business, such as Rollins going from a member of

the Shield to the WWE World Heavyweight Champion in just about a year. Here he is now with a genius like Joey Mercury (the grin on his face from that line is awesome), but unfortunately they're missing a member of their family due to Noble having three broken ribs from Lesnar ramming him into the barricade. Tonight's show is dedicated to Jamie, who would want the Authority to celebrate.

No one in the Authority has more to celebrate than Kane, who got to beat up both Lesnar and Dean Ambrose on Monday because he is forever the Devil's Favorite Demon. Off to a completely different subject, Kane blames Ryback for Big Show not being here tonight. After a clip of Ryback laying Big Show out, here's Ryback himself. He defends his actions but Rollins criticizes him for not acting as a champion is supposed to. Ryback calls Rollins a sellout, earning himself a match with Kane tonight. That's some punishment.

The music plays but Rollins says cut it. He's sick of the lack of respect he's receiving as World Champion, so Kane can take care of Ryback tonight. Rollins isn't happy with Dean Ambrose though, as Ambrose is still walking. Let's remedy that tonight with a one on one match tonight. Ambrose will learn that the Authority always wins.

### Sheamus vs. Dolph Ziggler

Ziggler knocks him to the floor with an early dropkick but here comes Rusev. He begs Lana to come back to him because he'll "kiss her the right way." Lana, with her hair down in a ponytail, walks towards the ring, as the match just stopped so Rusev could talk. A big knee puts Ziggler on the floor and we take a break.

Back with Ziggler in a chinlock before Sheamus takes his sweet time going to the top, allowing Dolph to run the ropes for a faceplant. A superkick is blocked but Ziggler is able to crawl over Sheamus into a sunset flip for two. Back up and the superkick connects this time (Uso: "SUPERKICK PARTY!") for two, followed by a sleeper from Ziggler. Sheamus shrugs it off and puts Ziggler on the top rope, setting up the Brogue Kick for the pin at 9:26.

**Rating:** C. Run of the mill match between these two but it's nice to see

Sheamus racking up some wins like this. They're actually treating him as something important instead of just letting him lose all the time so he can hold up the briefcase and beg us to believe that he still matters.

Rusev freaks out in the back until Summer Rae comes up and tells him that Lana isn't worth it.

Here's a clip of Rollins breaking up the Shield last year.

### Alicia Fox vs. Naomi

Fox has the Bellas with her and remember that Jimmy is married to Naomi. Alicia gets kicked in the head and taken down with a nice hurricanrana, followed by a legdrop for two. They fall out to the floor with Naomi yelling at the Bellas, allowing Tamina to superkick both of them. Back in and Fox hits her reverse Fameasser for the pin at 3:10.

**Rating:** D. This was just a way to set up I'm assuming Naomi as Paige's new partner against the Bellas, which is about as uninteresting an idea as you could have. The match was your standard Divas fair: no time to go anywhere and too much other than the wrestling being packed into just a few minutes.

Recap of Cena vs. Owens, including everything that happened on Monday.

New Day says you can't live a positive life if you focus on the individual losses. They'll overcome all of their trials and tribulations at Battleground, but here are the Prime Time Players to interrupt and do their version of the clap. They laugh at the idea that New Day will be down a man at Battleground but here's Bo Dallas for a pretty obvious pairing. Dallas has been allowed to join the New Day against the Players and any two other partners. New Day likes him but Dallas can't get the clap down. This has potential to be funny stuff.

### Kane vs. Ryback

Non-title. Not so fast though as Big Show attacks Ryback during his entrance and beats on him for a very long time. Show chops him, kicks him, whips him into the barricade, steps on his throat, and finally throws him in for the match against Kane. Somehow this is totally fine

and the bell rings with Kane quickly covering for two. Ryback tries some shoulders in the corner but gets stomped back down with ease. Kane is sent shoulder first into the post and the Meat Hook connects, only to have Big Show come in for the DQ at 2:25.

Ryback gets beaten down and chokeslammed a few times but keeps trying to pull himself up. I like the idea they're going for here, but it still ends with Big Show and Kane dominating, just like they have for over fifteen years now.

Clip of Rollins vs. Ambrose from Elimination Chamber.

Recap of this week's Tough Enough.

### New Day/Bo Dallas vs. Lucha Dragons/Prime Time Players

Kofi and Titus get things going with O'Neil hitting some very loud chops in the corner. It's off to Young who doesn't do as well, with Kofi driving him into the corner for a tag to Dallas. I miss Jesse Ventura criticizing teams for tagging their normal partners and praising heels for tagging anyone on their team. Darren headlocks Bo to the mat but the threat of a Gutcheck has the heels on the floor as we take a break.

Back with Kofi dancing a bit before diving into a Sin Cara dropkick for two. Woods has some better luck by stomping away, followed by all three of his partners getting turns. It always amuses me to see someone get stomped about forty times total and just stagger to their feet. Off to Big E. for his abdominal stretch before handing it off to Kofi for a superbomb, only to be countered into a hurricanrana. The hot tag brings in Kalisto for his hurricanrana DDT to Woods but everything breaks down. It's down to Kalisto vs. Woods again with the masked man hitting a handspring kick to the head and a springboard 450 for the pin at 10:30.

**Rating:** C. This was fine with the New Day losing again, though I'm not sure if I want to see them get a title shot after all these losses. That being said, you also don't want to have the champions lose so soon after winning the titles. In other words, it would have made sense here to have New Day just beat Lucha Dragons in a regular match, but why do that when you can have something like this?

Ambrose tells Reigns to not worry about Bray Wyatt because they can look through every inch of this building until they find him. Dean: "Cincinnati style!" Roman: "We're not even in Cincinnati." Reigns says he'll take care of Wyatt at Battleground and he'll have his back out there tonight. Dean leaves and Reigns finds a picture of himself in his jacket with the words ANYONE BUT YOU written in red.

After a break, Reigns searches for Wyatt but finds Kane instead. Kane won't tolerate Reigns yelling at a production guy so he's banned from the building tonight. Reigns was far more interesting here due to having something personal to deal with and I'm digging this feud a lot.

### Dean Ambrose vs. Seth Rollins

Non-title. Dean starts with some armdrags into an armbars, followed by a clothesline to put Rollins on the floor. Back from a break with Rollins starting to go after the knee. Rollins puts on a complicated leg lock with Ambrose on his stomach but Seth laying like he's putting on a Figure Four. Either way Dean makes the ropes and Rollins is way too cocky. He's cocky enough to take forever getting to the top, allowing Dean to slam him down for a breather.

The tornado DDT is countered so Dean settles for a swinging neckbreaker instead. Dean gets all fired up but opts for a suicide dive to take out Kane instead. Back in and the standing elbow looks to finish but Mercury offers a distraction to earn his paycheck for the night. Scratch that actually as the look he gave earlier was more than worth it. A DDT gets two on Seth but Dean can't follow up. The rebound clothesline is countered into a buckle bomb which is countered into a hurricanrana to put them both on the floor. Dean dives on everyone but gets distracted again, allowing Rollins to Pedigree him for the pin at 13:03.

**Rating:** B-. They accomplished the goal of showing that the reunited Authority is capable of beating anyone on the roster, but Lesnar isn't exactly the same as a guy that Rollins has drawn about even with over the last few weeks. That's the problem here: they've done this match so many times recently that they're running the risk of taking away its effectiveness. Reigns not being there to help Ambrose could lead

somewhere, but I really, really hope it's not to an Ambrose heel turn.

**Overall Rating:** C. This was a totally fine show and the best part was it flew by. The show never dragged like so many Smackdowns have done over the last few years, but at least they had some decent matches and advanced a few stories, even though we're not likely to see those advancements until Monday. Totally acceptable show here but as usual, it's nothing you need to see.

### Results

Sheamus b. Dolph Ziggler – Brogue Kick

Alicia Fox b. Naomi – Reverse Fameasser

Ryback b. Kane via DQ when Big Show interfered

Lucha Dragons/Prime Time Players b. New Day/Bo Dallas – Springfield 450 to Woods

Seth Rollins b. Dean Ambrose – Pedigree

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## **New Column: From Days Gone By**

I ramble about character development for a few pages.

<http://www.wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-days-gone/36486/>

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# Smackdown – June 11, 2015: Ho-Freaking-Hum

## Smackdown

Date: June 11, 2015

Location: CajunDome, Lafayette, Louisiana

Commentators: Byron Saxton, Tom Phillips, Jerry Lawler

It's the last show before we get to Money in the Bank, meaning it's the last time we have to cram an entire pay per view build into two weeks for a very long time. The big story coming out of Monday is Ambrose using Instagram (just go with it) to warn Rollins that he was coming, only to lay Seth out again to end the show. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's Ambrose, wearing a ton of Mardi Gras beads, coming through the crowd to open things up. He holds up the title and says let the good times roll because he's been having a good time on Bourbon Street. Ambrose takes us through the Instagram pictures from Monday, thankfully pointing out that the ticket wasn't real and that Reigns just saved him a seat. After a clip of the main event from Raw, Ambrose promises to drop Seth on his head with Dirty Deeds and take the World Title for real this Sunday.

Cue Rollins who says Ambrose is just like all the other scum in this arena: not in his league. Rollins wants the title back and Dean drops it right in the middle of the ring. The champ picks it up but realizes it's just a replica because the title is somewhere between here and New Orleans. Dean: "It's been a blurry few days. It still feels like Tuesday to me." Kane comes out and brings up Mercury and Noble beating Rollins on Monday when he was all alone. Tonight he gets to be alone all over again against Dolph Ziggler. As usual, Ambrose and Rollins have a great promo when people just leave them alone.

Ryback vs. Miz



Non-title. Miz bails to the floor to take off the sunglasses and has his sunset flip attempt countered by having his head slammed into the mat. A ridiculous 26 seconds vertical suplex sends Miz outside again but he throws Ryback over the announcers' table as we take a break. Back with Ryback fighting out of a chinlock and hitting a backpack Stunner. A powerslam gets two for the champ but Miz kicks him in the head to set up the Figure Four.

That goes nowhere (just like always because it's a horrible move for Miz to use) as Ryback powers out, only to take a short DDT for two more. The threat of a Meat Hook sends Miz to the floor but Ryback runs him down out there just as easily. Back in and Shell Shock is countered into the Skull Crushing Finale for two and Miz is stunned. Ever the genius, Miz tries a Meat Hook of his own but takes the real thing, setting up Shell Shock to give the champion the pin at 7:44.

**Rating:** C. This was fine for what it was and served the purpose of giving Ryback a nice win. Miz is settling into this midcard role as he loses his matches but is able to talk himself right back into being hated all over again due to pure delusion. Ryback vs. Big Show isn't going to be anything great but at least the Shell Shock at the end will be good. Assuming of course WWE doesn't feel the need to feed someone else to Big Show for reasons I'll never fathom.

Post match here's Big Show who says he doesn't impress easily with over twenty years of experience (not quite as he debuted in October 1995). The Shell Shock was fine on Monday but this Sunday ends with one of these right hands. He's holding up his left hand but close enough. Ryback says he'll have the fans in his corner on Sunday so bring it right now, little man. As expected, Show turns him down.

Tough Enough finalists, including former OVW TV Champion Michael Hayes (not that Michael Hayes. This one only has one leg).

### Jack Swagger vs. King Barrett

R-Truth is on commentary before his pre-show match with Barrett on Sunday and has decided that he should be King after beating Barrett recently. He also thinks he's in the ladder match on Sunday. Barrett stomps Jack down

in the corner to start as Truth puts on the robe. The distraction breaks up the Bullhammer and Jack nails a big clothesline on the floor followed by a Vader Bomb for two. The Patriot Lock is broken up and the Bullhammer gives Barrett the pin at 2:23.

Truth has disappeared.

More Tough Enough finalists.

We recap the Bellas' Twin Magic from a few weeks back and Paige being sick of the whole thing.

Alicia Fox yells at Paige and there's going to be a match later. I really wish WWE would mix up this kind of thing. We're long past the suspension of disbelief that a package on the Divas would air then there just happened to be a camera on Paige when Fox came up to challenge her. All you need is to say this happened earlier in the day.

This week's sitdown interview is with Lana, who says she and Dolph read books together and talk about things. Rusev comes in again and says don't ruin this. Ziggler has been with a bunch of other women but Rusev has only been with her. Lana says it's over and leaves so Rusev scares Cole away.

### Dolph Ziggler vs. Seth Rollins

Non-title and Seth is on his own. The champ takes it to the mat with a headlock but Ziggler counters into an armbar to send Seth to the ropes. Back to the headlock on Dolph for a bit before the threat of a superkick sends Rollins out to the floor. They're still in first gear here as Rollins takes a breather. Back in and Dolph hammers away in the corner, only to get caught in an electric chair for two. The standard chinlock kills some time as the fans want Lana. Speak for yourselves. I don't want her and Ziggler anywhere near each other.

Dolph fights up and a Cactus Clothesline puts both guys outside, where Rollins catapults him over the barricade as we take a break. We come back with Ziggler slugging away until Rollins drops him with a Sling Blade for two. Well at least it wasn't another chinlock. Ziggler comes back with a

backdrop to put Rollins on the floor, followed by the running DDT for two. The Buckle Bomb is countered into a rollup for two and the Fameasser gets the same. Dolph keeps speeding things up and goes to the top for a high cross body but Rollins rolls through and grabs the trunks for the pin at 13:53.

**Rating:** B-. Nice main event style match here with Rollins getting the kind of a win he should be getting. Ziggler doesn't lose anything either and everyone comes out looking fine. It's very nice to see them breaking from the same pattern that they've been having for months for Rollins as it was getting repetitive.

Remember the two times we've seen Tough Enough finalists already? Make it three.

#### Paige vs. Alicia Fox

Paige takes her down to start and cranks on a reverse chinlock for a bit before Fox takes her down and puts on a chinlock. They aren't exactly dishing out the creativity. At least Fox adds in some knees to the head to mix things up. A big boot to the face gets two on Paige but she snaps Fox's throat across the ropes. This is her house, which makes me wonder how much a Diva makes since Paige must have 40 houses around the country. The PT0 makes Fox tap at 4:46.

**Rating:** D. They did a good enough job of making Paige look good going into Sunday but I don't buy her as having a chance at taking the title because All Hail the Bellas. It didn't help that the match was nearly half chinlock. You really shouldn't need two of those in a match that doesn't last five minutes.

Long recap of Owens vs. Cena to set up the rematch on Sunday. The first match was great and I really hope Owens just walks out on the second because he has nothing to gain.

The Prime Time Players say they're like butter because they're on a roll. Whole wheat and gluten free that is. They incorporate the clap into the Millions of Dollars dance and even Renee joins in.

Final batch of Tough Enough finalists, including the Big O.

### Roman Reigns/Randy Orton/Neville vs. Sheamus/Kane/Kofi Kingston

Those are quite the interesting teams. Reigns decks Kofi to start before Neville comes in and eats a right hand to the face. Neville flips over Sheamus and tags in Orton, because we haven't seen Orton vs. Sheamus enough lately. The good guy keeps control for a bit until a Kane distraction lets Sheamus nail a tilt-a-whirl powerslam to take over. Back from a break with Orton fighting out of Sheamus' chinlock.

The lukewarm tag brings in Neville to clean house with his variety of kicks but Kane breaks up the Red Arrow. Kane comes back in for some weak stomping and a big side slam for two as this isn't exactly inspiring stuff so far. Kofi comes back in to fire the New Day up again with Woods declaring him the greatest of all time. A dropkick gets two and Woods says he's getting annihilated right now. Sheamus gets two of his own off the Irish Curse and it's off to the chinlock.

Neville avoids a charge into the post though and it's a hot tag to Reigns, who runs Kofi over in a hurry. The New Day is easily dispatched but Kane counters a Superman Punch with a chokeslam, which earns Kane an RKO, followed by a Brogue Kick, followed by a dropkick from Neville, followed by Trouble in Paradise. Reigns is back up though and the Superman Punch connects to Kofi, only to have the New Day come in for the DQ at 13:25.

**Rating:** C-. This was boring. That's the best word I can come up with for it. We were sitting around and waiting on the big parade of finishers to close things out and it eventually came and went. It's not a terrible match or even bad but I never came close to being interested in what was going on.

Reigns takes a Midnight Hour and it's ladder time. Cue Dolph with a ladder of his own but Neville climbs the ladder and dives onto everyone who was nice enough to brawl right beneath him. Neville pulls down the briefcase to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C. Totally average show here as they talked up the pay

per view a bit but didn't do much to make me care about what I was seeing. Money in the Bank is a show that sells itself with the big ladder match and it gets very difficult to build towards it as the singles matches and tags don't change anything. As for the rest, it was just a standard Smackdown: watchable wrestling, nothing important, two hours gone.

## Results

Ryback b. Miz – Shell Shock

King Barrett b. Jack Swagger – Bullhammer

Seth Rollins b. Dolph Ziggler – Rollins rolled through a cross body and held Ziggler's trunks

Paige b. Alicia Fox – PT0

Roman Reigns/Randy Orton/Neville b. Sheamus/Kane/Kofi Kingston via DQ when New Day interfered

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# Monday Night Raw – June 1, 2015: Stop And Think For A Second

## Monday Night Raw

Date: June 1, 2015

Location: AT&T Center, San Antonio, Texas

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Booker T.

We had some interesting developments last night at Elimination Chamber with Kevin Owens pinning John Cena completely clean in the middle of the ring and Dean Ambrose winning the match by DQ but leaving with Seth Rollins' World Title anyway. There are now two weeks left before Money in the Bank, and we already know six of the competitors in the ladder match. Let's get to it.

The opening recap only focuses on the World Title match.

Here's the full Authority to open things up. Stephanie asks the fans how they should punish Dean Ambrose for what he did last night. Maybe it should be a fine or a suspension, but maybe they should just get rid of him altogether. HHH calls Ambrose out to the ring but gets Roman Reigns instead. Roman says Dean isn't here tonight and he might not be back again unless he gets one more match against Rollins. He wants one more match for the title and he wants it to be a ladder match.

Reigns lists off all the people that have beaten Rollins and says he might be the worst WWE Champion of all time. That's too far for Seth and the rematch is on for Monday in the Bank. He'll do it all by himself too because he doesn't need the Authority. Rollins storms off and Stephanie goes beast mode on Reigns (hide your balls!) until HHH calls her off. HHH brings up Reigns being in the Money in the Bank ladder match and says Roman has to earn his spot in the match right now.

Money in the Bank Qualifying Match: King Barrett vs. Roman Reigns

They want to take the spot away from Reigns and this is the best they can do? Wait, wouldn't the Authority have selected the people in the match in the first place? Reigns is already in the match but the spot is on the line. Barrett tries a rollup to start but Roman takes him down with a headlock. The King escapes a Samoan drop and throws Reigns to the apron, only to get kicked in the chest a few times. Back in and a clothesline puts Barrett on the floor but Barrett jumps over the steps and whips Reigns into them as we take a break.

We come back with Barrett holding a chinlock before he avoids a charge in the corner and kicks Reigns in the ribs. Barrett cranks on both arms with a knee in Roman's back before switching back to the regular chinlock. Roman fights up again and Reigns nails a Samoan drop before winning a slugout. Against a former bare knuckle fighter of course. Winds of Change gets two for the King but the Bull Hammer is countered into a rollup into a sitout powerbomb for two. The second attempt at a Bull Hammer misses and Reigns nails the spear for the pin at 14:10.

**Rating:** C. Well at least it wasn't Big Show. This is another example of having a match with a stipulation that is there for no reason other than to fill in time before the obvious ending. I'm not a fan of this kind of TV show more often than not (and yes there are exceptions) and seeing Barrett lose didn't help things. The match wasn't bad though as Barrett can wrestle a good one, even though there's no reason to believe his push is going to last.

Post break Roman Reigns runs into the Authority and is told he has to win another qualifying match against Mark Henry. So it's the Chris Jericho Intercontinental Title story from 2000, also involving Stephanie.

Nikki Bella is honored to be the longest reigning champion in WWE today when Paige comes in and asks for a one on one match for some point in the future. Nikki says let's do it tonight and Paige is game.

Here's the new Intercontinental Champion Ryback with something to say. No one likes an emotional Big Guy, (I did. The speech he gave about his injury was the best stuff he's ever done) but he's honored to be the new Intercontinental Champion. That's enough talking though so it's time for

his first title defense.

### Intercontinental Title: Ryback vs. Miz

We even get big match intros. The bell is about to ring....and Big Show is back. Well at least it's in the midcard. He KO's Miz and says if anyone is beating Ryback for that title, it's going to be him. Ryback calls himself the Big Guy but he has nothing on the Big Show.

Here's Kevin Owens for his victory speech. An interesting note here: Owens has complained about Cena having so many shirts and is now in his third different shirt in three appearances on the main roster. That's a very nice touch. Owens brags about doing everything he ever says he's going to do, whether it's winning the NXT Title, taking out Sami Zayn, or beating John Cena in the middle of the ring.

Last night he talked to his wife who was proud of him but his son is still a big John Cena fan. Cena is portrayed as a living superhero and while Owens was traveling the world for ten years, Cena became the hero to his son that Owens should have been. He became Super Cena. Well last night, he beat Super Cena and now the words hustle, loyalty and respect are being uttered by a shell of a man. Owens is going to beat him again in two weeks and he's going to make sure that his son watches every minute of it. A real role model is the kind of person who promises something and then delivers, just like he does.

Cue Cena for the big showdown. Cena gets right to the point: he got beat last night. Until Owens ran his mouth, Cena was about to come down here and hand Owens the US Title because he earned it last night. But now, Owens doesn't deserve either the US or NXT Title. Owens is so worried about being a role model that he doesn't even realize he's not a real man.

According to Owens, his son is a Cena fan because of the WWE machine. If that's the case, Owens' son would be wearing a Funkasaurus shirt and want to grow up to play in the XFL. We hit Serious Cena mode as he talks about how the fans believe in him because he's for real, including the kid in the crowd holding up a sign saying "I'm beating cancer" and wearing a John Cena t-shirt. Cena: "You keep fighting man. And that's from me."



The three words that define Owens shouldn't be Fight Owens Fight, but Never Give Up. Cena wants to give Owens a bit of advice from a man to a non-man. In two weeks, Owens is going to have to explain why a really good wrestler got beaten up by a man. Owens teases a fight but walks away. That's one of the best promos I've seen in years. Go find this and watch it in full.

New Day comes out to brag about their win. Xavier Woods says this city now has champions they should be proud of, because the Spurs are old and Tim Duncan needs to retire. The New Day is on fire and in two weeks, Kofi is going to become Mr. Money in the Bank. CHA-CHING! Kofi: "That's a cash register!" Big E. says it would mean they're all Mr. Money in the Bank because NEW DAY ROCKS!

#### Kofi Kingston vs. Dolph Ziggler

No exaggeration: these two have fought close to thirty times on TV alone. Lana is out with Dolph and that's exactly who the fans want. They grapple to start until Kofi does his double leapfrog and stops Dolph with a kick to the face. We hit the chinlock on Dolph but he fights up and hits a quick neckbreaker. Dolph misses the superkick but grabs the running DDT for two, followed by a quick rollup for the pin on Kofi at 3:16.

**Rating:** C. What can I say? These two have fought each other such a ridiculous amount of times (I can't imagine any pairing has fought more times, and yes that includes Cena vs. Edge) that there's almost nothing left for them to do out there. They kept this short enough though and it was fine enough to help build to the ladder match.

New Day comes in but the Prime Time Players make the save.

#### Prime Time Players/Dolph Ziggler vs. New Day

Joined in progress after a break with Young hitting a seated senton on Kofi but getting tripped by Woods, allowing Big E. to hit a belly to belly. Off to Kofi who is sent into the corner for a seated dropkick before it's off to the chinlock. The actual trio triple teams Darren and Big E. knocks Dolph off the apron for good measure.

E. takes too long running the ropes though and splashes Young's knees, setting up the hot tag to Titus. A powerslam gets two on Woods with Big E. making the save as everything breaks down. Titus boots Woods in the face and Dolph adds a superkick to Kofi, setting up a pumphandle powerslam to pin Woods at 5:36.

**Rating:** C+. Just a six man here to set up the Players as the next challengers and there's nothing wrong with that. We've covered Tyson/Cesaro as the challengers so it's time to advance on to someone else, as the tag division...well there actually is one at the moment. This did what it was supposed to and that's all you can ask it to do.

#### Money in the Bank Qualifying Match: Mark Henry vs. Roman Reigns

Wasn't Henry a face last night? These turns are getting slower. Again, Reigns is already in but has to defend his spot here. Roman pounds away to start but Henry takes him over to the ropes for some choking. Reigns seems to be having issues with his left eye after Henry gave him a big right hand. That's fine with Roman as he comes back with some clotheslines in the corner and a shoulder to put Henry down. A Samoan drop sends Mark outside and Roman nails a Superman Punch for good measure, giving him the countout win at 3:46.

**Rating:** D+. Power brawl here with Reigns' story being very clear tonight. Henry is one of those guys that is only there for one purpose and it doesn't mean he's the most interesting guy in the world to watch. At least they aren't hiding the fact that Reigns isn't done tonight and that's a fine story.

Post match Henry gives him the World's Strongest Slam and a big splash.

After a break, Reigns, Authority, Bray Wyatt is next.

Various wrestlers audition to be the face of Sonic Shakes. Hilarity ensues.

#### Divas Title: Paige vs. Nikki Bella

Nikki is defending and they cut away during her entrance because WWE doesn't get why she's out there. Paige gets shoved into the ropes to

start and Nikki does some jumping jacks. Off to some pushups before Nikki drives Paige into the corner. Nikki cranks on both arms before hooking a leg lock of all things.

Paige gets to the ropes and kicks Nikki to the floor, allowing her to do some situps. The PTO is countered and Nikki gets two off the Alabama Slam. The Rack Attack is countered and Nikki goes to the middle rope, only to get pulled down with a Rampaige. Nikki rolls outside and they actually bust out Twin Magic with Brie coming out from under the ring for a small package to retain at 5:48 because WWE referees are stupid.

**Rating:** C-. Well they turned face with no explanation so why not turn heel again with no explanation? I love how they did a whole Total Divas episode about how they don't look the same and now the Bella with lighter skin, less plastic enhancement and difference hair is still a dead ringer for her sister. Only in WWE because the script says so. Nikki doing exercises isn't a bad gimmick though.

### Sheamus vs. Randy Orton

So yeah Orton is back after not being mentioned for two weeks. Orton grabs a headlock to start and rolls Sheamus up for two, sending the pale one out to the floor. Back in and they slug it out before both guys go outside with Orton dropping him back first on the announcers' table.

We take a break and come back with Sheamus in control and dropping a middle rope knee for two. A chinlock doesn't get him very far though as Orton belly to backs him down to escape. The ten forearms are countered and Orton nails the powerslam, followed by the elevated DDT. An RKO attempt is countered and Sheamus knees him out to the floor. Orton throws him into the timekeeper's area but Sheamus nails him with a chair for the DQ at 12:16.

**Rating:** D+. Gah I hate these matches where they just pair up people who are in a big match down the line. It's the same stuff that got annoying last week with the Elimination Chamber people and it doesn't help that Sheamus and Orton do not have good matches together. They're not horrible but I've never seen these two do anything interesting.

Sheamus Brogue Kicks Orton and throws him over the announcers' table post match.

Rusev says he is a broken man with a broken spirit but he'll get it all back. Yo Rusev! Get in here so we can keep ruining you because we want monsters to be three dimensional characters or some garbage like that!

Kevin Owens will have an NXT Open Challenge this Thursday on Smackdown.

Here's Bo Dallas to say he tried to help Neville but now he just wants to hurt him.

### Bo Dallas vs. Neville

Rematch from last night where Neville won. Bo hammers him in the corner to start and throws him out to the floor. Back in and we hit the cravate with Bo yelling at Neville and then quieting down to call some spots. Neville fights up with some forearms, a kick to the head and the Red Arrow for the pin at 3:09.

**Rating:** C-. Yeah whatever man. Just get on to the next match so we can finally end this show. This was a shortened version of the match we saw last night and Dallas is ready to move on to something else. At least it wasn't Neville against someone in the ladder match to freshen things up a bit.

Tough Enough videos.

### Money in the Bank Qualifying Match: Roman Reigns vs. Bray Wyatt

For the third time, Reigns is already in. Roman slugs away to start but Bray runs him down and slows the pace. The Authority comes out to watch as Bray stops a comeback with the running cross body. Roman bails for a minute but Bray takes his head off with a clothesline as we take a break. Back with Bray still in control until Reigns explodes out of the corner with a clothesline.

After a quick trip to the floor with Reigns sending him into the barricade, Bray comes back with a big clothesline of his own for two. They trade slaps until the Samoan drop puts Bray down. The Superman Punch

connects and here come Kane and the Stooges. Kane gets up on the apron but the distraction into Sister Abigail doesn't work as Bray is sent into Kane, setting up the spear for the pin at 13:14.

**Rating:** C. Nice power brawl again but did they really need to have Bray take the loss here? I hate to say it, but this was the perfect spot for Kane. Wyatt won at Payback, then lost to Ambrose last week and now to Reigns here and for what? To advance a main event feud when the Authority has minions? As usual, this company refuses to think anything through.

Post match the Authority surrounds the ring but Ambrose comes out (to a MONSTER pop). He actually gives Rollins the title back, only to hit him with Dirty Deeds before leaving with Reigns to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** D+. The show was far better than last week but this was one of those episodes where the show felt like it was going on for nine hours. It just kept going and going and you could see they had nothing to go on so they were just throwing stuff out there. This is a show that would have been really entertaining if you cut out an hour. Stuff like Ziggler vs. Kofi, the Divas Title (with that STUPID ending), Neville vs. Dallas and maybe even Orton vs. Sheamus could have easily been cut to get us down to a much shorter and better paced show, but such are the perils of three hours every Monday. Not horrible, but insufferable.

## Results

Roman Reigns b. King Barrett – Spear

Dolph Ziggler b. Kofi Kingston – Rollup

Dolph Ziggler/Prime Time Players b. New Day – Pumphandle powerslam to Woods

Roman b. Mark Henry via countout

Nikki Bella b. Paige – Brie Bella switched with Nikki and pinned Paige with a small package

Randy Orton b. Sheamus via DQ – Sheamus hit Orton with a chair

Neville b. Bo Dallas – Red Arrow

Roman Reigns b. Bray Wyatt – Spear

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# Elimination Chamber 2015: The Future Is Here

## Elimination Chamber 2015

Date: May 29, 2015

Location: American Bank Center, Corpus Christi, Texas

Commentators: Michael Cole, Booker T., Jerry Lawler

It's another pay per view just two weeks after Payback but the card has been put together fairly well this time. The main event this time is WWE World Champion Seth Rollins defending against Dean Ambrose, plus the Tag Team Titles and Intercontinental Title being decided inside the Chamber, both for the first time ever. Let's get to it.

Pre-Show: Zack Ryder vs. Stardust

Bonus match. Ryder had a decent match against Cena on Monday so it's nice to see him get a PPV spot, even if it's something like this. Stardust

hits some shoulders to start but Zack punches him to the floor for a quick baseball slide. Back in and the announcers talk about the World Title match as Stardust cranks on the arm. That goes nowhere so let's talk about Love Boat.

Ryder fights back up as the announcers transition into a discussion of Arrow's Stephen Amell wanting to fight Stardust at some point. JBL promises us a new move from Stardust called the Queen's Crossbow (Arrow reference), which winds up being Cross Rhodes and it puts Ryder out at 5:53.

**Rating:** D. Well so much for Ryder. He had a nice little comeback and the fans liked him, but we need to keep Stardust strong for a match with a celebrity which is probably coming at Summerslam. Nothing match here and that's the problem with pre-show matches. Ryder could be very good in a midcard role but this is what we're stuck with instead. Joy indeed.

It's time for MizTV with special guest Daniel Bryan. We look at Bryan vacating the title and Miz said that was hard even for him. In his time away, Bryan has written a book but his career isn't over. Miz thinks he can help Bryan with marketing and merchandising and it's only going to cost him 10% of the profit.

Bryan passes but promises he'll be back. Miz wants to slap him in the face but knows he can't so he has some advice for Bryan....which we don't hear as Bryan thinks it's going to be boring. Therefore, he's brought someone who also thinks Miz is boring: Axelmania and Macho Mandow. House is quickly cleaned and the good guys celebrate. Nothing to see here as it was just a big commercial for Bryan's book.

The opening video sets up both Chamber matches with a focus on the structure itself. Owens vs. Cena gets some hype as well.

Tag Team Titles: Lucha Dragons vs. Ascension vs. Los Matadores vs. Prime Time Players vs. Cesaro/Tyson Kidd vs. New Day

Inside the Elimination Chamber, no tags required, New Day is defending, all three champions will be allowed in and we have four minute intervals. Two teams start and one more enters every minute. As the name suggests,

it's elimination rules and the last team standing wins the titles. Lucha Dragons and Ascension get things going (these teams can never escape each other) with the Dragons hammering on the power guys as fast as they can but Ascension starts slugging Cara down in the corner.

Sin escapes and throws Kalisto up onto the New Day pod but they try to pull him down inside. Cara gets slammed down but Kalisto kicks both Ascension members down, allowing Sin Cara to get up and hit a HUGE Swanton off a pod to crush Viktor. Kalisto loads up a dive of his own but New Day pulls him down to break it up, giving us New Day doing the LUCHA dance. Cesaro and Kidd are in next and Cesaro starts busting out the European uppercuts, including Tyson launching Konnor into Swiss Death for two.

Kalisto is still on top of the pod until Cesaro superplexes him down and Kidd adds a springboard elbow drop for two with Cara having to dive in for a save. Only Kidd and Cesaro are on their feet and Kidd slaps the Sharpshooter on Viktor but Konnor breaks it up. The La Mistica mat slam plants Konnor as Lawler calls JBL JR by mistake. Cara powerbombs Kidd as Kalisto is on top of the Prime Time Players' pod.

Los Matadores, with Torito on top of their pod, are in third with the bull hitting a good looking hurricanrana on Konnor. During the entrance, Kalisto has climbed to the top of the Chamber itself and drops down onto everyone for one of the biggest crashes (or at least the highest) I've ever seen.

Torito gets thrown into Fernando, setting up the Fall of Man on Diego for the first elimination. Did anyone buy Los Matadores as a real threat anyway? Kalisto, thankfully able to walk, climbs the corner but gets pulled down as well for another Fall of Man to get rid of the Dragons. There goes my pick of course. So we have Ascension vs. Kidd/Cesaro at the moment but the Prime Time Players are added...with Ascension nailing them as soon as their pod opens.

Titus fights back and throws both guys into the ring so Young can hit his gutbuster on Viktor for a quick elimination. Things settle down a bit with Titus suplexing Young onto both guys for two, but Cesaro pops up and



drills O'Neal with a clothesline. Cesaro loads Young up for a gutwrench superplex but Titus adds a powerbomb to make it a Tower of Doom for two. New Day comes in to complete the field but Cesaro and Kidd are all over them with a triple suplex.

Things get smart in a hurry as Cesaro and Kidd throw Woods into the pod and shut the door to even things up. The Swing into the dropkick knocks Kofi silly but Young sneaks in to roll Cesaro up for the elimination. It's the Prime Time Players vs. New Day for the titles and Big E. gets Woods out of the pod to make it 3-2. New Day stomps Titus against the chamber wall and get his head through the chain.

Young fights back and sends Big E shoulder first into the pod with his head hitting the pod for good measure. Everyone is down but Titus frees himself and starts throwing Big E. into the wall. Xavier gets the same treatment and the gutbuster takes out Kofi for two. Big E. is back up and suplexes Darren on the cage floor, only to walk into a powerslam from Titus. Not that it matters though as Trouble in Paradise sets up a triple pin to retain the titles at 19:34.

**Rating:** B. This was a lot of fun and the best choice they had on the card for an opener. New Day winning will be worth it for the victory promo alone and the more I think about it, the more I like the booking. Any team can say they haven't gotten a fair shot at them since it was 3-2 so this doesn't close all the doors for challengers. I love this protecting the losers booking they've had lately and it helps so much in places like this.

Rusev is out of the Chamber with a broken foot. No replacement has been announced yet.

Ziggler is getting ready when Lana comes up. Tonight isn't about showing Rusev up but about getting the title around Ziggler's waist. Dolph says that after he wins the title, maybe it can be about them.

Divas Title: Nikki Bella vs. Naomi vs. Paige

No one is allowed at ringside. Nikki is defending after Paige won a battle royal a few months back but was laid out by Naomi. The champ is

quickly taken to the floor and thrown into the announcers' table, leaving Paige to hit her clotheslines on Naomi. Nikki is quickly back in with a facebuster for two on Paige. The Alabama Slam plants Paige again but Naomi rolls Nikki up for two.

Naomi starts cleaning house and loads Paige up for a belly to back superplex, only to have Nikki come in for a Tower of Doom. The Rack Attack to Paige is broken up with a Rear View for a near fall with Paige making the save. Naomi heads to the corner but gets caught in an electric chair from Paige, only to be countered into a reverse hurricanrana. It didn't go smoothly but it could have been a lot worse. Not that it matters as Nikki Rack Attacks Naomi to retain at 6:05.

**Rating:** C. What was I thinking to question Nikki's title reign of awesomeness that is TOTALLY better than Trish and Lita's reigns combined? The match was fairly good but again, there's only so much you can do other than cram in spots with just six minutes. I have no idea where they can go next with Nikki aside from another Brie feud or facing an NXT callup.

We recap Kevin Owens vs. John Cena. Owens answered a Cena open challenge a few weeks back but said he already had the prize he wanted in the NXT Title. He got in a surprise powerbomb on Cena and stepped on the US Title to show how big of a jerk he was. This set up a showdown tonight in a champion vs. champion match.

### Kevin Owens vs. John Cena

Alright WWE. This is your chance. You can elevate someone or go with the same old stuff. Owens is very fired up to be in there and actually doesn't drop to the floor at the bell as is his custom in NXT. A quick shoulder puts Owens down but he takes Cena into the corner and puts a boot in his face. Cena gets punched to the apron so Kevin can rip at his face like a villain should.

The fans chant for NXT and we hit the chinlock. Cena powers up into an AA attempt but Owens calmly escapes and hits a DDT for two. Owens opts to just punch Cena in the face (I love it when people do that) for a bit before a backsplash connects for two more. Back up and Kevin tries a

swinging Rock Bottom but Cena counters into a crucifix, only to have Owens slam him down in a kind of Samoan drop for another near fall. The Cannonball gets the same and Owens says it's time for Johnny boy to give up.

The pop up powerbomb is countered with a leapfrog and Cena initiates his finishing sequence. Cena loads up the AA but gets countered into the pop up powerbomb for a close two, stunning Owens. Kevin gets crotches on top but headbutts Cena down, only to miss a moonsault of all things. The AA gets two (take a shot!) and both guys are down. Owens nails a superkick and tries his own Five Knuckle Shuffle (because he's that awesome) but Cena pulls him down into the STF.

Cena tries to pull him back to the middle but Owens kicks him away and hits an AA of his own (good one too) for another near fall. Both guys are down again and it's Cena up first for the two off the top rope Fameasser. Cole calls that patented, but I'm not sure Cena ever filed that paperwork. Back up again and Owens loads up the package piledriver (his pre-WWE finisher) but slams Cena to the side instead of dropping him on his head.

Kevin starts talking more trash before winning a slugout, only to get caught in the springboard Stunner for two. Frustration is setting in so Cena takes him up top for a superplex, only to have Owens counter into a spinning superplex of his own for two. Owens runs to the top for a Swanton for two more and now Kevin is frustrated. Cena nails that big running clothesline and Owens is rocked. John goes for another but walks into the pop up powerbomb for the completely clean pin at 20:03.

**Rating:** A. My jaw dropped on the pin. This is EXACTLY the way they should have gone as Cena hit him with the best and Owens pinned him in the middle of the ring. The key thing here is Cena isn't going to lose a thing out of this as he'll be fine in about two minutes. Owens on the other hand looks like the biggest new deal in years and couldn't get a bigger rub if they tried. Great, great stuff here and I loved the booking so much.

Owens says he debuted on Raw a few weeks back and started a fight, but

tonight he finished it. He has some veteran advice for Cena: it's time for him to go because his time is way up and THE CHAMP IS HERE!

Pre-show panel chat.

### Bo Dallas vs. Neville

Neville has a bad knee coming in, partially thanks to Dallas. The knee is fine enough for Neville to do his flips out of the corner before sending Bo to the floor to avoid a Red Arrow attempt. That's fine with Neville as he hits a huge moonsault to the floor. Back in and Neville puts on a chinlock (rare sight for a good guy) but Bo gets to the ropes ("LET ME GO!"). He offers peace but starts elbowing Neville in the face and gets two off a running forearm.

Off to a cravate on Neville to slow things way down as the announcers talk about football from the 1960s. Back up and Bo elbows him in the head, only to be sent out to the floor. Bo's stunned look is great. Neville comes back with kicks to the head and a running forearm, followed by a standing shooting star for two. The Bodog is countered and the Red Arrow connects for the pin at 9:07.

**Rating:** C-. Nothing great here as it was basically a long TV match. Neville winning was the right call as Bo can be back off another cheesy promo, but Neville gets a nice push with a win he should have gotten. The knee didn't go anywhere, but at least there was a story coming into the match.

Reigns and Ambrose are in the back when HHH comes in and bans Reigns from ringside. If Reigns interferes, Ambrose will be disqualified. You mean like in any match?

The Chamber is lowered.

### Intercontinental Title: Sheamus vs. Ryback vs. Dolph Ziggler vs. King Barrett vs. R-Truth vs. ???

The title is vacant coming in due to Daniel Bryan vacating it due to injury. There are four minute intervals again and Rusev's replacement is.....Mark Henry. Bray Wyatt had been rumored but I like this better as

Wyatt isn't likely winning so why give him another loss? Ziggler and Barrett get things going. They trade rollups to start but Barrett shrugs him down and puts Dolph on the top rope for a kick to the ribs.

We hit a chinlock on Dolph for a bit before he realizes this is the freaking Elimination Chamber and fights back with his dropkick and neckbreaker for two. Barrett sends him into the cage and talks a lot of trash until R-Truth is in third. The King is smart enough to jump Truth before he can get out of the pod and stomps him down. He kicks Truth and Ziggler in the face to keep control but Truth gets back up for the spinning forearm and ax kick.

Barrett rolls away from the cover but Ziggler is back up with a kick to the face for two. Back up and Barrett drives Ziggler through a pod wall, freeing Mark Henry to come in before his entrance. There's nothing the referee can do because it's no disqualification, and likely because the show is threatening to run long and they need to save some time. Ryback comes in a few seconds later and runs Henry over for two. Henry stands around as Barrett plants Ziggler with Wasteland, only to break it up at two like the schmuck that he is.

Back up and the parade of finishers eliminates Barrett first because OF COURSE IT DOES! The four in the ring pair off with Ryback stomping Ziggler into the corner and Henry doing the same to Truth. Sheamus is supposed to be in last but the door won't open. Ryback, Truth and Ziggler trade rollups as they try to fix the door before Henry gets triple teamed. Shell Shock gets rid of Truth and a very delayed suplex plants Ziggler.

Ryback's Meat Hook is countered by a superkick and all three are down. With all three down, Sheamus takes out the Celtic cross that he had put in the door to keep the door stuck shut. Well that was smart. A Brogue Kick gets rid of Henry in a hurry and we're down to three. Ziggler counters a suplex into a small package for two but Sheamus counters the running DDT. The second attempt gets two but a quick Brogue Kick gets us down to Sheamus vs. Ryback.

They trade powerslams with Ryback getting the better of it and driving

shoulders to the ribs in the corner. The Meat Hook doesn't work and Sheamus tries to get back in his pod. Ryback picks him up before he can get in, only to have Sheamus counter into White Noise on the cage floor for two. The ten forearms are countered but Sheamus hits the Regal Roll on the cage again. A Brogue Kick is countered into a powerbomb into the ring and Shell Shock gives Ryback his first title at 25:06.

**Rating:** C+. Well that was a surprise. I didn't like the action as well as I liked the first one but it was still a fun match. They've set up Ryback as never having won a title so this was a good way to pay that story off. Ryback has been pushed pretty strong since returning (ignore the loss at Payback) and this was the right call for a step up.

Daniel Bryan congratulates Ryback and presents him with his new title.

We look at Owens pinning Cena earlier tonight. The rematch is official for Money in the Bank.

Dolph Ziggler, Neville, Roman Reigns, Randy Orton, Kofi Kingston and Sheamus are official for the Money in the Bank ladder match. More will be announced later.

We recap Ambrose vs. Rollins. The theme is that Ambrose made a bad decision by trusting Rollins in the Shield but tonight no one can help him, including his mommy and daddy.

#### WWE World Title: Seth Rollins vs. Dean Ambrose

Dean is challenging but has to deal with Kane and the Stooges at ringside. Rollins grabs a headlock to start but Dean counters into an armbar. Back up and the champ stomps away in the corner until Dean goes back to the arm to take over again. Dean drapes him over the middle rope for a Fameasser but the Stooges offer a distraction so Seth can crotch him into the Tree of Woe.

A huge top rope double stomps gets two on the challenger and Rollins takes over. We hit the chinlock for a bit followed by a clothesline to put Dean back down. Dean comes back with a sitout Tesshocker (belly to back suplex but he slams Rollins face first instead of dropping him back)

for two. The Stooges pull Rollins to the floor but Dean dives through the ropes to take everyone out. Back in and Rollins tries to counter a superplex into a sunset bomb, only to have Dean nail a Cactus Clothesline to put both guys outside again.

More Stooges interference lets Rollins take over again and the top rope knee (really a shin) to the head gets two. Dean finally comes back with a tornado DDT (second person tonight to use that) and the running dropkick against the ropes. A clothesline turns Rollins inside out for two more and the flying standing elbow gets the same.

The Rebound clothesline is countered by a clothesline from the champ and a suicide dive puts Dean down again. Back in and the buckle bomb is countered with a clothesline (we get it) out of the corner but Dean opts to dive on Kane and the Stooges. The referee gets bumped and Dean nails Dirty Deeds, drawing in another official for the pin at 21:48. Lawler: "This may start a new Attitude Era." Oh shut up.

**Rating:** C. I don't buy for a second that this is going to stand so I'm not going to bother treating this very seriously. This felt like a long Raw match instead of something worth watching, and the ending is clearly there to set up a rematch at Money in the Bank. The match was decent but it had the recurring problem of all WWE pay per views: you don't bother caring about the meat of the match because you're just waiting on the wacky finish.

And of course it doesn't count because the first referee says the Stooges pulled him to the floor for a DQ. Dean gets beaten down but Reigns comes down the ramp for a surprise and beats everyone up. Dean and Roman leave with the belt to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. I liked the show for the most part but this could have been put in a different order to make things flow better. Swapping the Chamber matches would have helped a lot and having Owens vs. Cena later in the card would have been a good move. Still though, for a thrown together show to get people to watch for free and then hope they forget to cancel in the next hour so you get some bonus buys is a decent enough idea. Owens vs. Cena II doesn't need to happen but you know it's going to

and will likely set up a big showdown at Battleground. Good enough show but mostly nothing worth seeing again.

### Results

New Day b. Prime Time Players, Ascension, Los Matadores, Lucha Dragons and Tyson Kidd/Cesaro – Trouble in Paradise to O'Neal

Nikki Bella b. Paige and Naomi – Rack Attack to Naomi

Kevin Owens b. John Cena – Pop up powerbomb

Neville b. Bo Dallas – Red Arrow

Ryback b. Mark Henry, King Barrett, Dolph Ziggler, R-Truth and Sheamus – Shell Shock to Sheamus

Dean Ambrose b. Seth Rollins via DQ when Jamie Noble and Joey Mercury interfered

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<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00X0UNBEA>

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# **Elimination Chamber 2015**



# Preview

It's time for a "let's get people to watch the Network and hope they don't remember to cancel their free month in the hour they have after the show goes off the air" show that they're calling a pay per view. This is going to be an interesting show as they only have two weeks before Elimination Chamber, which means we might get something interesting short term to set up for a change down the road. Let's get to it.

There's no pre-show match this time but Daniel Bryan will be on MizTV. There's nothing to see here other than Miz returning and Bryan plugging the book/DVD/whatever else he has coming out. I can't imagine he's coming back to the ring already and he probably shouldn't yet either. I'll be glad to see Miz back as yes, I still like the guy.

Now we'll go with the bigger matches as we start with the Tag Team Title Elimination Chamber match. Given that it's under elimination rules, we'll look at each team and eliminate them one by one.

Los Matadores – Just no.

Ascension – I'd love to see these guys just massacre everyone in this thing and win the belts like they should have when they debuted before....I'm going to stop myself there because I'll rant all day on them all over again. Ascension won't win, even though they should be a force in this match.

Prime Time Players – They're funny and I dig the team, but I don't picture them winning the titles in one of their first matches back together.

Lucha Dragons – They're the dark horses to win here as they've been pushed strong since debuting and clearly have the offense to get the fans into any of their matches. Why Los Matadores still exist with these guys around is beyond me.

Cesaro/Tyson Kidd – You would think these guys would have a good shot but I just don't see it happening again.

New Day – I've loved the team and it's hard not to, but there's only so long you can keep the joke going. These guys work well together to steal pins, but having them survive five other teams might be a bit too much to ask.

So who do I have winning? This might come as a surprise, but I'm going with the Dragons. I don't see New Day surviving that many teams without someone catching them and Cesaro/Kidd don't feel right. The other teams are filler so yeah, I'm actually picking the Dragons.

Off to the other Chamber for the vacant Intercontinental Title so let's do the same format.

R-Truth – I think I have a better chance of winning the title than he does.

Dolph Ziggler – He has Lana. Don't get greedy. Also there's nothing for him to win here as he's held the title a bunch of times before and doesn't gain anything by winning it again.

King Barrett – He's already jobbing to R-Truth clean in less than three minutes. Heaven help him if he wins the title back and is getting rolled up by El Torito next. Pass here and that's the best for everyone involved.

Ryback – I just can't see it. They're playing up that he hasn't won a title yet so maybe he chases the belt, but I can't see him winning it here.

Rusev/Bray Wyatt – This is in case Rusev can't go due to his leg injury, and it certainly seems that he can't. Wyatt would be a very good option here but again I don't see it. He'll take a Shell Shock to even the "feud" with Ryback and no one will care.

Sheamus – This has been the odds on pick for a while now and he probably does make the most sense. Sheamus has been doing well since he got back and throwing another title on him isn't the worst idea in the world. I'll take him.

Neville defeats Dallas because there's really no reason for him not to.

I'm really tempted to go with Ambrose over Rollins for a two week title reign but I don't see it happening. I think they'll just go with the safe story of having the interference be too much for Dean to overcome and keep the title on Seth, even though Reigns has nothing to do and probably should come out and help his buddy.

Uh....Naomi takes the Divas Title and feuds with Paige for a bit, even though Tamina pinned Paige on Raw in another really dumb booking decision.

Now we get to the match I'm looking forward to the most and the match with the best build: John Cena vs. Kevin Owens in a non-title match. These two have been trading shots for two weeks now and it's going to be a huge moment if Owens somehow pulls off the win. Notice that I said somehow, as there's no need for him to win the match clean. All he has to do is survive it and hang on long enough to win by countout, DQ or maybe a fluke pin.

This is one of the very rare situations where I'm thrilled by the possibilities and really looking forward to the match for a change. Owens is a great bully character and having him win will instantly make everyone more credible. If Owens is sticking around on the main roster, give him the win here and let him become a star. Cena is going to be fine about ten seconds after the match so does it really matter? Just let Owens win and be done with it. Look at Mick Foley winning his first World Title: everyone remembers the win and no one remembers that he dropped it less than three weeks later because only the win matters.

Overall, I'm looking forward to this show, but there's a good chance it's going to be a massive disappointment. There's only so much you can expect from WWE without them rounding back into form, just like they did this past Monday on Raw. There's bound to be something good on the show though and if there's more than a few good things, Sunday could be really, really special.

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## Thought of the Day: That's Sad

So there's a new report out saying that the creative team loves the idea of having just two weeks between pay per views because it makes it easier for them to come up with and write their stories. If this is true.....just dang. Have we really reached the point where a FOUR WEEK BUILD to a pay per view is too much to ask? It's so hard to come up with a month's worth of stories? Are you kidding me? It's freaking professional wrestling. Let the people in the feud go out there and talk, have matches against someone else, have a staredown with the person they're fighting against, talk some more, and then have the match. Now apparently it's set the match up Monday, have a quick build the following Monday, then WE MUST HAVE THE MATCH NOW BECAUSE WE DON'T KNOW HOW TO KEEP PEOPLE INTERESTED ANY LONGER THAN THAT!

Take Wyatt vs. Ryback for example. Here's a simple, more than two week build.

Week 1: Wyatt speaks cryptically about his next target.

Week 2: Wyatt keeps talking, Ryback says he doesn't know what's next for him.

Week 3: Wyatt attacks Ryback.

Week 4: Wyatt laughs a lot and says that's just the beginning. Ryback says he's got someone ready for him and he can't wait to get his hands on Wyatt for what he did.

Week 5: Ryback has a match with say, Rowan, to get a taste of what he's got coming against Wyatt. After the match, Wyatt appears and laughs.

Week 6: Wyatt wins a squash and talks about how he defeated a little guy (say one of Los Matadores so we don't have to sit through him squashing R-Truth for the 94th time) but now he wants the Big Guy.

Pay per view match.

You have five hours of original, top level television a week, plus the Network and WWE.com to build up a story but you can't go more than two weeks before you think your fans will get bored? Maybe the problem is you put together boring stories that don't have a shelf life, but there's zero excuse for not being able to entertain wrestling fans for four weeks.

This report made me shake my head, but it tells you so, so much about the state of wrestling today.

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# Payback 2015: They Did It Again!

[Payback 2015](#)

Date: May 17, 2015

Location: Royal Farms Arena, Baltimore, Maryland

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, John Bradshaw Layfield

We continue the rapid fire pay per views with one of the lower level yet often surprising shows of the year. The main event tonight is Seth Rollins defending the World Title in a four way against Dean Ambrose, Roman Reigns and Randy Orton with Director of Operations Kane's job on the line. Let's get to it.

#### Pre-Show: Stardust vs. R-Truth

Bonus match because we're just that lucky. Truth slaps him in the face to start as the fans chant for Cody and the announcers talk about the main event. Back up and Truth knocks him out to the apron as Cole isn't sure if Truth says he'll "make you disappear like your favorite" magician or mortician. Truth gets two off a jackknife cover but Stardust hits him in the face. Stardust eats the release gordbuster but nails a knee to the head for two. Off to a cravate on Truth followed by Matt Hardy's Side Effect for two. We get a slap to the face with a glove to set off a duel before Little Jimmy ends Stardust at 6:49.

**Rating:** D. What a boring match. There was no reason for this to take place other than "Hey, let's have another match!" Neither guy has anything going for them at the moment and thankfully this didn't have any plastic spiders involved. Nothing to see here but to be fair it was a bonus so it's not like anything is taken away.

There will be a new Steve Austin Podcast with Paul Heyman on June 1.

#### Pre-Show: Mega Powers vs. Ascension

That would be Curtis Axel as Hulk Hogan and Damien Sandow as Macho Mandow in case it's Thursday and this gimmick is already dead. They were listed as the Meta Powers until tonight's show. JBL thinks they look like Nacho Man and the Huckster for you mid-90s fans out there. Konnor kicks Axel in the ribs to start but it's already time for HULKING UP. Curtis gets two off a legdrop and it's off to Viktor for a chinlock. That goes nowhere so the hot tag brings in Mandow as the Powers clean house. The big elbow doesn't work though and it's the Fall of Man for the pin at 2:55. Thank goodness.

The opening video talks about Rollins trying to keep the title and Cena

vs. Rusev in their final battle.

### Sheamus vs. Dolph Ziggler

Ziggler looks utterly ridiculous in his cutoff jean vest and pink bandana. He goes right after Sheamus to start and knocks him to the floor where Sheamus comes up holding his knee. Back in and a cross body gets two but Sheamus takes his head off with a running ax handle. A suplex puts Ziggler down again and we hit the chinlock. Back up and Ziggler sidesteps a charge to send Sheamus into the post. Some forearms and a cross body put Sheamus in the corner and the jumping DDT gets two.

Ziggler sends him back to the corner and there's something resembling a Stink Face to make up for Sheamus bailing on the stipulations last month. A livid Sheamus misses the Brogue and eats the Fameasser for two. Now Sheamus gets all fired up and slugs Ziggler down for some two counts and White Noise sets up the Cloverleaf. Ziggler makes it to the ropes and Sheamus is livid again, demanding that Ziggler give up. Instead Dolph headbutts Sheamus (busting himself WAY open) and superkicks him down for two. Ziggler is dizzy from the blood loss though and the Brogue Kick ends this at 12:27.

**Rating:** B-. I had a good time with this and that blood came out of nowhere. Sheamus needed this win more than Ziggler did as Dolph can bounce back no matter what. Maybe that kick can knock Ziggler out of the 80s and into the late 90s for a change because he looks ridiculous in that attire.

Kane and Rollins bicker some more with Kane implying he wants Rollins to lose the title and doesn't mind getting fired. Rollins threatens Stooze violence and gets laughed off. There was zero reason for this to be on pay per view.

### Tag Team Titles: New Day vs. Cesaro/Tyson Kidd

2/3 falls with New Day defending after taking the belts from Cesaro/Kidd at Extreme Rules. New Day comes out and suggests positive thinking for everyone here, including the Baltimore Orioles in the audience because they haven't won a World Series in over 30 years. Kidd slams Kofi

(teaming with Big E. here) down to start and it's quickly off to the power guys.

A powerslam gets two on E. but he comes back with a gorilla press to put Cesaro down. Back to Kofi who gets caught in a delayed vertical suplex with Kidd coming off the top to drive him down. Kidd catapults Kofi into a spinebuster and the Swing into a dropkick mostly misses but gets the pin and the first fall at 2:50.

Woods wants in via the Freebird Rule but eats a cannonball off the apron for his efforts. Kofi and Big E. officially start the second fall but Big E. misses a spear through the apron for a big crash. Kidd gets greedy though and dives over the top into a release overhead belly to belly to give the champions control. We hit the bearhug on Tyson as Woods shouts that he's the mastermind of the team.

Kidd escapes and makes the hot tag, but Big E. spears Cesaro through the ropes and into the barricade for a big crash. Fans: "THIS IS AWESOME!" Woods: "WE KNOW THAT!" Kofi goes up top but dives into a dropkick. Kidd kicks as fast as he can but gets caught in a mostly missed (notice the trend) Midnight Hour (Kofi's DDT was more like an elbow to the back) to tie it up at 8:14 total.

We start the third fall with Cesaro finally getting back on the apron to take another hot tag. He starts cleaning house but can't get Big E. up for the tiger bomb and just drops him in a bad looking spot. Instead he hits a running European uppercut followed by a kind of Demolition Decapitation with Kidd springboarding into the elbow drop. Big E. is whipped over the announcers' table. A huge uppercut drops Kofi again but E. dives in for the save. In the melee, Woods sneaks in and small packages Kidd for the pin to retain at 13:20.

**Rating:** B. Good stuff here but the botches hurt it for me a bit. Still though, this was the awesome stuff you would expect from both teams. They even left the door open to continue it, as one day Kidd and Cesaro will get a clean shot against these two, which is exactly what they're shooting for here. Also this could have been five minutes longer for three falls.



Elimination Chamber ad.

Ryback promises to prove himself to Bray Wyatt tonight.

We recap Wyatt vs. Ryback. This still doesn't explain why they're fighting.

### Ryback vs. Bray Wyatt

Ryback stomps him down to start and easily clotheslines Bray out to the floor. He grabs him by the beard to bring him back in but Bray hits his running cross body to take over. We hit a bad looking chinlock (Bray's arm is nowhere near Ryback's throat) before he sidesteps a charging Ryback to send him into the post.

Bray sends him into the apron and hits a nice backsplash off the apron to crush Ryback's ribs. The countout is barely beaten so Bray hits a running charge in the corner, only to get powerbombed off the middle rope. They both head to the floor with Ryback circling around, only to walk into a hard clothesline.

Back in again and Ryback kicks the arm away to block another clothesline. A spinebuster has Bray in trouble but he pops up and sets Ryback on the ropes for a superplex. Ryback headbutts him down and hits a top rope splash of all things, causing his injured ribs (from the backsplash) to flare up. Both finishers are countered and Bray pulls the turnbuckle pad off. The referee looks at the pad, allowing Bray to drive the bad ribs into the exposed buckle, setting up Sister Abigail for the pin at 10:29.

**Rating:** B-. They're rolling with these matches so far tonight. This was the power brawl they needed to go with and the ribs helped them out a lot. Bray getting the pin is a nice touch for him and Ryback has a complaint for a rematch (notice the trend tonight). Good stuff here and I had a better time with it than I was expecting.

Money in the Bank ad, with a Home Shopping Network theme. The show is June 14, which is two weeks after Elimination Chamber, which is two weeks after Payback.

We recap Rusev vs. Cena. Rusev won at Fast Lane but Cena won the title at

Wrestlemania XXXI and the rematch at Extreme Rules. Tonight is the final battle in an I Quit match.

### US Title: John Cena vs. Rusev

Cena is defending in an I Quit match. Rusev gives Cena a chance to quit before the match to please half the fans but Cena wants to get on with it, earning him a kick to the ribs. The fans want Lana so Rusev makes her sit in a chair near Lawler. Back in and Rusev stomps away as the fans carry on the dueling chants. Rusev dropkicks him into the corner for a no and a spinwheel kick puts Cena down again.

The fans chant for Lana so Rusev goes outside to yell at her. Cena has had no offense so far. It's time to wave the Russian flag before a fall away slam sends Cena out to the floor. Cena goes into the steps but won't quit so Rusev puts the steps in the corner for two more hard whips. The steps go down and Cena finally hits a backdrop for his first offensive move. Then, like a schmuck, he tries a cross body and gets caught in a swinging Rock Bottom onto the steps.

The big stomp hits the steps though and Cena nails a quick AA onto them as well but Rusev can't speak. Cena sends him into the post for a no and then threatens to put him through the barricade if he doesn't quit. Rusev says no so Cena does what he promised. That's another no so they fight up to the technical area with Rusev gently laying Cena on a table with an Alabama Slam.

Cena pops up and puts the table against the wall before hitting Rusev with a monitor. Still no from the Russian so Cena hits him with a laptop for the same result. The AA is countered into a better Alabama Slam through the table but Cena still says no. Rusev finds the pyro controls but Cena AA's him onto the fireworks, causing them to go off. Somehow that's still a no so Cena finds a piece of a barricade and nails Rusev in the face.

The barricade is put up against the apron but Rusev suplexes Cena halfway through it for another no. The stunned look on Rusev's face is perfect. Back inside the ring and we hit the Accolade but Cena is out cold, meaning he can't say he quits. With nothing left to do, Rusev unhooks the

top rope and pours water over Cena to wake him up. Rusev pulls back the hook but Cena takes him down into the STF with the rope over Rusev's face. He rants in Russian and Lana quits for him at 28:49.

**Rating:** A. Oh yeah this was awesome. They had built up Rusev as never quitting but you knew Lana was going to be involved somewhere in there. Really fun stuff here though as they just let the guys beat the tar out of each other. This should have been the match they did last month and cut out the chain match as this was WAY more extreme than anything last month.

The kickoff panel chats while the ring is repaired.

The New Day toasts their win (with milk!) and ask who are the five greatest teams of all time. "New Day! New Day! New Day! New Day! New Day!" They're role models who don't curse, spit or complain. Kofi: "Toast, toast. Oh pinkies!" Byron tells them that they're defending the Tag Team Titles inside the Elimination Chamber and Big E. spits out his milk while Woods curses.

#### Bella Twins vs. Tamina/Naomi

Nikki takes Naomi down to start and it's off to Brie for the BRIE MODE running knee. Tamina superkicks Brie onto the apron to take over before standing on the hair. Back to Naomi for a front facelock but Brie crawls away (falling on her head in the process) for the hot tag. Everything breaks down and Nikki cleans house but takes the Rear View for a near fall. Tamina drives Brie into the barricade to distract Nikki on the top, allowing Naomi to slam her off the top for the pin at 6:13.

**Rating:** D+. This didn't have time to go anywhere and it was one of the most obvious endings you could have imagined. Allegedly this gets Naomi into the title hunt, despite the fact that there are eight active Divas on the roster (not counting Rosa, who is nowhere near the title and shouldn't be), including the Bellas. Nothing you wouldn't see on Raw here but Nikki looked good, as always.

Ad for the WWE prank show. They can advertise this, but not "YOU CAN WATCH EVERY PAY PER VIEW EVER!" Such are the priorities in WWE.

Rusev throws Lana out.

We look back at Daniel Bryan vacating the Intercontinental Title on Raw.

### King Barrett vs. Neville

Neville starts fast with the front flip out of the corner into a cross body off the middle rope to send Barrett to the floor. He loads up the headstand into the headscissors but Barrett throws the feet into the air for the kick to the ribs. I love it when they adapt like that instead of just doing the same spots in the same places. Back in and we hit the chinlock for a bit before Barrett hits the knees and big boot in the ropes.

Neville comes back with his own kicks and a standing shooting star press for two. The Bull Hammer misses but Winds of Change gets two. Neville heads to the apron for a springboard but has to turn it into an armdrag and cradle to counter another Bull Hammer. Barrett rolls away to avoid to avoid the Red Arrow so Neville dives on him, only to come up holding his knee. He gets back inside but Barrett intentionally takes the countout at 7:26. Neville is able to stand on his own so the knee doesn't seem that bad.

**Rating:** C+. I had a good time with this as these two have chemistry together. Neville's strong push continues as he even gets to win a pay per view match this time. They're developing a nice midcard these days and it's actually working really well. The countout was another good idea as they've really tightened up the booking tonight for the losers.

Post match Barrett comes back in and decks Neville before putting on the robe and crown. He misses a scepter shot though and eats a German suplex, followed by the Red Arrow.

Tough Enough videos.

Kane wishes Rollins good luck.

We recap the World Title match. Kane set up a fan vote which made the match a triple threat, but when Rollins complained, Kane made it a four way with Ambrose involved as well. If Rollins loses, Kane is out of a

job.

## WWE World Title: Seth Rollins vs. Dean Ambrose vs. Roman Reigns vs. Randy Orton

Rollins is defending and it's one fall to a finish. Kane comes down to watch from the beginning. Everyone zeroes in on Rollins to start but the Stooges are here to save the day. Ambrose dives onto Orton and Rollins but Reigns dives onto all of them plus the Stooges. Reigns and Rollins are the only ones in the ring for a bit and the champ hits a quick Downward Spiral into the middle buckle.

Ambrose and Orton take their places and the slug it out with Dean getting two off a powerslam. Reigns comes back in and counters an RKO before Randy and Dean fall to the floor. The champ stomps Reigns down in the corner but Dean comes back in to help his buddy. Kane finally gets involved (a full five minutes into the match) by decking Ambrose and throwing him back in to Rollins.

The springboard knee to the head gets two on Dean but Ambrose fights back with an attempt at Dirty Deeds, drawing in Kane for a chokeslam to break it up. Orton pulls Kane to the floor and slugs away at him before going back inside to t-bone suplex Rollins for two. They head outside with Randy loading up the table....and eating a TripleBomb for a quick Shield reunion. Note the MONSTER pop for that.

Rollins puts his arms around Reigns and Dean before putting out his fist. We'll skip ahead a few seconds to Ambrose loading up Rollins for another powerbomb with Kane having to make a save. Rollins is laid on the table for a DoubleBomb to Kane but the table doesn't break. Fans: "ONE MORE TIME!" They get their wish here and now Kane is driven through Rollins through the table. Reigns: "Not much else to do." Ambrose: "No there's not." Reigns: "Loser buys the beers?"

They slug it out in the ring with Reigns missing the clothesline and eating a cross body for two. Reigns gets a rollup of his own but lifts Dean up into a sitout powerbomb for two of his own. The Superman Punch connects for a very close two but the spear hits knee. Reigns spins out of Dirty Deeds though and nails the spear, only to have Rollins dive in

for the save.

There's a Superman Punch to Rollins but Dean clotheslines Roman down. Dirty Deeds lays out Seth but Kane pulls him to the floor. Kane chokeslams Reigns onto the stairs but Orton is back up to lay Kane out. Mercury breaks up the elevated DDT so both Stooges get RKOs. Now the DDT works but Kane has to eat an RKO, allowing Rollins to hit a Pedigree of all things to retain the title at 20:52.

**Rating:** A-. Loved the match but can we please have Rollins stop acting like HHH is his great and mighty father who must be pleased at all times? It's beyond old already. Anyway, they made the exactly right call by having this be pure chaos and the Shield tease was awesome. Those three are going to headline a show someday and it's going to be a huge deal. Really funny stuff here and a great way to cap off the show. Hopefully this doesn't set up Rollins vs. Kane though.

HHH comes out to celebrate with Rollins to close the show.

**Overall Rating:** A. Why is Payback always so awesome? I'd really like an answer to this. It's clearly meant to be a B show and has a stupid name but this is the third year in a row that it's been one of the best shows all year. Only the Bellas match was kind of lame but other than that, this show was really fun match after really fun match. I had a blast with this and somehow that's becoming less and less of a surprise every year, which is a very good thing.

### Results

Sheamus b. Dolph Ziggler – Brogue Kick

New Day b. Tyson Kidd/Cesaro – Small package to Kidd

Bray Wyatt b. Ryback – Sister Abigail

John Cena b. Rusev – Lana quit for Rusev while Rusev was in the STF

Naomi/Tamina b. Bella Twins – Slam off the top

Neville b. King Barrett via countout

Seth Rollins b. Roman Reigns, Randy Orton and Dean Ambrose – Pedigree to Orton

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## Payback 2015 Preview

I know I'm not the biggest fan of the current product, but this show actually gives me hope. I didn't expect anything the first two years they ran this show and they were both excellent surprises. It's way too soon after Extreme Rules and way too close to Elimination Chamber, but maybe they can pull off something good for a good show. Let's get to it.

We'll start with the preshow and the match that makes me want to go on a hatchet rampage: the Meta Powers (yes seriously) vs. Ascension. Now let's pause for a second here. I like to consider myself a patient man. I've sat through some of the dumbest ideas I've ever seen and managed to survive. I got through every original episode of Monday Nitro and Thunder (and now I'm doing it AGAIN). I even made it through the Ruthless Aggression Era on Monday Night Raw.

But now I think I've reached my breaking point (which may or may not include Randy Orton torture material). After a year of the Ascension

being one of the coolest tag teams of the year in NXT and seeing them debut as a pretty cool throwback idea, I'm going to have to watch Curtis Axel and Damien Sandow imitate great wrestlers beat them in an unfunny comedy match because Vince and Dunn will laugh at it.

Ascension may be the greatest travesty in wrestling in years and now it's time to put this thrown together team over them for the sake of a lame comedy act. Remember when Charlie Haas did this and it got old in like two months? This isn't even getting two months, at least not from me. It's two guys with nothing better to do than imitate legends because WWE decided to have Miz win the blowoff and then run off to go make a movie, leaving Sandow around to flounder because they don't think more than an hour ahead at any given time. I can't stand this idea and it's going to make me want to hurt someone. Maybe Repo Man.

Oh yeah there's a full pay per view to go.

Cena over Rusev, even though Rusev somehow getting the title back would be more interesting. However, I'll take Cena retaining as we can get more of the Open Challenges, which are pretty easily what I look forward to the most on Raw every single week. Even the fans in the arena are catching on. Notice how strong a reaction Cena has been getting lately. Let a good wrestler have good matches and people will cheer. Yes, it really is that simple. What isn't simple is HOW HAVE THESE TWO NEVER HAD A FLAG MATCH? If there has ever been an easier layup for a gimmick I don't know what it is, but we've never seen one.

Rollins to reta....I'm sure about this aren't I? WWE has actually made me think about this one more than once and I can't believe I'm saying that. The key here is Elimination Chamber, because there's the slightest chance they'll pull the trigger on a two week title reign for someone and then get it back on Rollins. Unfortunately I think they'll keep the title on Rollins here and set up his defense against Kane at the nothing pay per view. At least that keeps it quick I guess. Yeah Rollins to retain and no one turns.

I think they'll go with Barrett over Neville. Despite winning King of the Ring earlier this month, somehow he needs the win more. It's very sad to



say but that's actually the truth. Neville is going to be over because of his awesome flips and the fact that he busts out a different move every now and then to keep things going. The fact that this guy debuted like six weeks ago and is basically a coin toss against the King of the Ring is astounding.

Sheamus beats Ziggler to even the series, setting up a blowoff at Money in the Bank because they'll both be inside the Chamber for the Intercontinental Title because WWE keeps the same people in the same spots on the card for like ever.

And now.....wait....I think I.....I THINK I CAN FEEL THE POWAH! Yeah I still love that intro. If this isn't the match of the night by about 18,000 miles, I'm going to be shocked. I think New Day holds the titles in the 2/3 falls match over Kidd/Cesaro and then drops them inside the chamber, which might be best as you don't want them to lose their heat. This is going to be amazing and I can't wait to see how they handle the Elimination Chamber match. I can't believe it but dang this is the best thing going today.

Ryback vs. Wyatt is happening too. That's about the extent of my thoughts about it at this point even though I think about it more than any feud going on right now. It's such a weird feud as they really don't have a reason to be fighting. Bray just picked Ryback and is feuding with him, but the match has the potential to be very entertaining with two guys beating the tar out of each other for about fifteen minutes. I'm actually not sure if this needs more development or not. Bray isn't the kind of guy that needs a reason to do anything and if the matches are good, who cares?

Tamina and Naomi to beat the Bella Twins so Naomi can get into the title hunt, whatever that means. You have like eight activeish Divas (Bellas, Naomi, Tamina, Fox, Cameron, Natalya and Summer. Yes I left off Rosa and if you can't figure out why, I've failed at educating you) including the champion and her partner. Who isn't in the title hunt?

Overall, I'm actually looking forward to this show. This has the potential to be a really, really strong card (when is the last time I

didn't say that actually?) with only the Divas doing nothing for me. Yeah there's another show in two weeks, but this could be a really fun outing, especially with such low expectations.

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