

Smackdown – May 26, 2016: The Wrestlemania Show Sequel

Smackdown

Date: May 26, 2016

Location: Norfolk Scope Arena, Norfolk, Virginia

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Byron Saxton, Mauro Ranallo

It's actually a big night here as we have two title matches on a single show. First of all we have Miz defending the Intercontinental Title against Cesaro after the champion lost a non-title match this past Monday on Raw. The second title match will see the new US Champion Rusev defending against Kalisto in the masked man's rematch. Let's get to it.

The opening video recaps Monday's Money in the Bank qualifying matches.

Opening sequence.

Michael Cole is in the ring with the Money in the Bank briefcase and brings out Dean Ambrose for a chat. Dean says he loves getting violent and the idea of being in a seven man ladder match sounds great to him. This brings out Kevin Owens to tell Cole to get out of the ring because Owens is sick enough of him on Raw. Owens says there's no way Dean is winning that briefcase because he's ready to climb the ladder, just like he did at Wrestlemania.

Cue Sami Zayn (Lawler: "The man with the stupid hat.") to say this isn't a joke because he's going after everything at Money in the Bank. Now it's Alberto Del Rio (who hasn't qualified) to say he's cashed in before and he'll do it again here tonight. Sami turns to yell at him and gets decked by Owens. The three in the ring start brawling and Sami vs. Dean is teased.

Money in the Bank Qualifying Match: Zack Ryder vs. Alberto Del Rio

Beating Ryder is almost a running joke at this point. Alberto kicks him down and chokes on the ropes to start, only to get kicked into the

barricade as we take an early break. Back with Del Rio working on a chinlock and a clip of Del Rio hitting the double stomp on the floor during the break. Ryder fights up but misses his middle rope dropkick.

The low superkick gets two for Alberto, only to have Zack grab a jawbreaker. The Broski Boot gives Ryder a near fall of his own but Del Rio counters the Rough Ryder. He can't the top rope double stomp though and walks into the Rough Ryder for no cover as Del Rio gets outside. Back in and the cross armbreaker makes Ryder tap at 9:35. Well that could have been shorter.

Rating: D+. Does beating Ryder really mean anything anymore? Alberto is another name that really doesn't need to be in the match but can be there to fill in a spot. It's another case of just having people in the match for the sake of having them in the match as no one buys Del Rio as a realistic winner but he can clutter things up even more.

Video on Sunday's main event and Seth Rollins' return, including the announcement of the Money in the Bank title match.

Here are Enzo and Cass with something to say but before Enzo can get anywhere, here are the Dudleyz to interrupt (Lawler: "WOOHOO! Thank goodness."). Enzo says he isn't Willy Wonka so he won't sugar coat anything. The Dudleyz are as sweet as a Cinnabon and he isn't biting his tongue when he's chewing someone out. Cass offers to throw them a beatdown right now but the Dudleyz say not tonight. Instead, we'll do this on Raw but for now, Bubba asks D-Von if they can please get out of this town.

Rusev says after tonight, Kalisto will never be able to fly again.

Video on Cesaro making Miz tap at Extreme Rules and then pinning him the next night on Raw.

US Title: Kalisto vs. Rusev

Rusev is defending after defeating Kalisto on Sunday. During Kalisto's entrance, Byron almost casually mentions the impending Brand Split. Kalisto goes right after him to start and sends Rusev to the ropes with a

headscissors. A springboard is knocked out of the air though and we take a break about thirty seconds in. Back with Kalisto being sent hard into the corner and actually trying to slam the champion. This works as well as you would expect and Rusev stomps away to stay in control.

Kalisto pops up again and gets the slam, which shocks the way too confident Rusev. A rollup gets two on Rusev and the corkscrew cross body gets the same. Kalisto follows up with a springboard moonsault to the floor for two as Lana looks....well she looks normal actually. Rusev blocks the Salida Del Sol, only to miss a running headbutt in the corner. He's fine enough to raise his knees to block a 450 though and it's the jumping superkick and Accolade to retain the title at 8:53.

Rating: C+. I don't think there was any doubt here but at least Kalisto got in some offense. They're trying to make Rusev into a big time champion but I'll need to see him get a few more big wins before I can buy this as anything more than a run destined to put over a bigger name.

Rusev goes after Kalisto again post match until Titus O'Neil of all people comes in for the save. This is either a curve ball to make us think it's not going to be the start of Cena vs. Rusev on Monday or a very odd choice.

Video on Charlotte retaining on Sunday and then turning her back on her dad the next night. This is accompanied by clips of wrestlers talking about how horrible this was and how big of a mistake Charlotte really made, because how could she be good without Ric Flair? That look from Ric when he said nothing was wrong and left actually got to me a bit.

Natalya vs. Dana Brooke

Charlotte is on commentary. Natalya fires off some forearms in the corner but gets knocked down and put in the Sharpshooter, only to have Charlotte come in for the DQ at 45. This isn't exactly a wrestling heavy show tonight.

Natalya puts Charlotte in the Sharpshooter and then throws the villains together. Charlotte gets back up though and Natalya gets beaten down. They're really continuing this feud after Charlotte has beaten her twice?

Stills of Sunday's main event and video of the Club breaking up on Monday plus Owens pinning AJ Styles to qualify.

Styles doesn't know what he's doing next.

Golden Truth vs. Breezango

Truth and Breeze get things off but it's quickly off to Fandango who gets two off a dropkick. Fandango goes after Goldust to get him off the apron though, allowing Breeze to sneak in a Supermodel Kick to give give Fandango the pin at 1:40.

Post break Goldust tries to convince Truth that the team needs to stick together. Breezango comes in and laughs at them so Truth agrees to keep going.

Here's Seth Rollins for a talk. In case you missed it, he's back and couldn't be better. Unfortunately he can't say the same for the fans and that's that.

Intercontinental Title: The Miz vs. Cesaro

Miz is defending. Cesaro dropkicks him out to the floor to start and cannonballs down onto the champ as we take another early break. Back with Miz going after the shoulder and sending it into the post and barricade. The champ slaps on an armbar until Cesaro fights up with the uppercuts. Miz gets two off a Reality Check before distracting the referee so Maryse can rip off the turnbuckle pad.

Cesaro blocks the steel though and gets two off a small package. The Sharpshooter doesn't work either as Miz gets to the rope and tries to leave with the title. Instead he eats the running European uppercut for two. The Swing is kicked away though and Cesaro goes shoulder first into the buckle. Miz grabs the Skull Crushing Finale for the pin to retain at 10:31.

Rating: B-. More 50/50 booking of course. This was ok but the lack of time didn't really help things. Unfortunately this is Cesaro 101 as he comes so close most of the time but can never have the trigger pulled. I'm fine with Miz as champion and thankfully they made sure that it

wasn't a clean pin, but this was still a lot less entertaining than I was hoping for after Sunday.

Overall Rating: D. This show felt like the nothing episodes that they air before Wrestlemania when they know no one is watching and they want to set up the pay per view. We had about half an hour of wrestling tonight and most of the matches ranged from ok to something most people would have no interest in seeing. Extreme Rules was a good show but it's nothing that I really wanted to see again. I'm really not sure what they were going for tonight but it missed and it missed badly.

Results

Alberto Del Rio b. Zack Ryder – Cross armbreaker

Rusev b. Kalisto – Accolade

Natalya b. Dana Brooke via DQ when Charlotte interfered

Breezango b. Golden Truth – Supermodel Kick to R-Truth

The Miz b. Cesaro – Skull Crushing Finale

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The Roman Reigns Problem, Now Featuring Seth Rollins

Kind of a bonus column this week.

So this past Sunday at Extreme Rules, Seth Rollins made his return and attacked WWE World Champion Roman Reigns, seemingly becoming the new top face to take down the rapidly heel turning Reigns. However, the next night on Raw, it was clear that Rollins was in fact still heel and Reigns was in fact still the big dog face that fans are getting very tired of in a hurry. Today we're going to take a quick look at why this continues to make people scratch their heads.

Let's get this out of the way first: Roman Reigns has an audience. Allegedly he's rather handsome and there's something about his arms and hair that appeals to women. If you read most house show results, Reigns gets one of the loudest pops of the night but for some reason that doesn't translate to TV. You can claim that it's the new cool thing to do (which I can completely buy) or whatever, but the fact of the matter is that these reactions are happening and there's no way around them at the moment.

Reigns has a big value to WWE. He has a good look, he can more than hold his own in the ring and he's getting better on the mic. I don't think anyone would suggest that he's worthless or doesn't belong in WWE and if they did, they're just flat out wrong. However, there's a difference between having a spot on the card and having THE spot.

Here's the thing: there's not much that sets Reigns apart. Yeah he has a good look but so do a lot of people. Yeah he can wrestle a good match but others can do it better. Yeah his talking is improving but that's still not saying much given how bad it was in the first place. Reigns is better than he used to be and has improved by leaps and bounds from just a year ago but he's still missing the big thing: a connection.

Why should I care about Roman Reigns? After everything he's said and done over the years, I have no reason to feel a connection to him. He debuted

as part of this elite group where he almost never talked, then became the monster of the team who set a bunch of records and finally became the top dog after the team split, leading to his main event run where he kept beating up everyone in sight because HE IS THE CHOSEN ONE. We don't really have a reason for him getting this spot but he's getting it, he's winning the title at Wrestlemania and there's nothing that's changing that because it's been decided months in advance.

In other words, Reigns is basically Superman: he barely has any weaknesses and he's better than you because everyone is beneath him. There's no personality there and it makes for some really dull exchanges and feuds because Reigns is just going to win no matter what happens. How am I supposed to get interested in something like that?

This is why someone like Daniel Bryan worked. While he was very talented in the ring, he faced a lot of adversity and was held down because of his size, look etc. How many times did you hear the Authority tell him that he didn't have any right to be near the World Title because he belonged somewhere else? In other words, WWE set it up so that people WANTED to see Bryan get this spot. Compare this to Reigns where it was more "Reigns is awesome and is getting the title. You like him!"

Now let's jump back to Rollins. Seth has been presented as the smart one of the Shield, often being referred to as the Architect and an all around mastermind who keeps figuring out a way to escape, normally with the title at the same time. Rollins never lost the World Title and had a reason to immediately challenge his old nemesis Reigns. It helps that Rollins can wrestle one of the most exciting in ring styles of anyone on the roster. This really should have been one of the biggest and easiest layoffs that WWE could do for a very long time.

And then they just didn't do it. Rollins came out on Raw last night acting like a face and then went right back to heeling it up on the audience, no matter what the fans were begging to see. At the end of the day, a lot of the fans want to see something else on top of the company. Whether or not that's Rollins isn't what matters. What matters is that Reigns just is not working as the undisputed face of the company.

But for some reason that only Vince himself can explain, we're getting Roman Reigns as the star of the company. Now a lot of these problems could be changed by a big heel turn, which really seems like what a lot of the fans want to see. I have no idea what WWE is waiting for as there's an army of names ready to challenge a heel Reigns (imagine Sami Zayn as the underdog vs. the big dog for the title) but this is what we're stuck with whether we like it or not.

Rollins is just another name added to that list. The fans were more than ready to cheer him before he got hurt and then they had the face turn set up for them even stronger than before Rollins was hurt. I can more than accept the idea that Rollins is a better heel than a face but this is another case of someone who looks ready to be the good to Reigns' bad, only to have it be the same thing all over again.

At this point Reigns is just in a really weird place. Look back at the AJ Styles feud and tell me who I was supposed to cheer for there. Anderson and Gallows were certainly acting like heels while AJ was getting more aggressive but the Usos lost their big face entrance and generally acted exactly the same way as the newcomers. I really wasn't sure who I was supposed to be for in that feud as Reigns continues to act like a tweener/heel while being presented as the undisputed top face of the company.

So what can be done about all this? I really have no idea. Basically we're stuck in this same holding pattern of the fans rejecting Reigns as this star until he either changes things up a lot (read as a heel turn to make him the guy that everyone wants to boo) or Vince changes his mind. Really at this point it seems that Reigns is at the top because Vince says so and that's just not going to work for the fans who have rejected him.

The worst part of this is that a lot of the criticism can't be placed on Reigns. It wasn't him that set up this push or had him walk out of the Royal Rumble for half an hour (What was that anyway? Of all the things they could do like having him taken out on a stretcher or just left him there unconscious, they had him get on his feet and walk to the back like a heel. Who thought that was a good idea?) or give the main event of

Wrestlemania twenty seven minutes.

Let's talk about that match for a second. What could they possibly have been thinking there? After the show had already gone on for six hours, we got a Mad Max style speech from Stephanie which can be loosely translated as "BOO US! WE'RE EVIL!" to try and get the fans away from booing Reigns out of Texas. As you might have guessed, this really didn't work because that's not what the fans wanted to see.

Then the fans were treated to a match that ran nearly half an hour with a meaningless story of working on a shoulder and capped off by a spear to give Reigns the title (again). Yeah I'm not sure why this third title reign is supposed to be more interesting than the other two times where he won the title clean but apparently this is a much bigger deal.

In that whole big mess of a match, there was one moment that changed the whole thing. At one point, Reigns went for a spear on HHH but hit Stephanie instead. The entire audience suddenly went insane and wanted to cheer him because he did something the fans wanted to see. Stephanie had been the most annoying character in the company for years but never got anything that was coming to her. Then Reigns cut her in half with a spear and he was the most popular thing in the company (for all of five minutes).

This isn't even the first time this has happened. At TLC 2015, Reigns was up against ridiculous odds as he had to face the League of Nations and the Authority at the same time. There was a moment where Reigns just started firing off Superman Punch after Superman Punch to keep the League at bay as long as he could. It made him feel like a superhero and again, the crowd ate it up and treated Reigns like WWE wants him to be treated. Then Sheamus retained the title anyway because that's what WWE felt was the right idea.

After the match, Reigns completely snapped and annihilated HHH with a bunch of power moves and a powerbomb onto but not through the table (because we needed one more moment to define Reigns' career). Again, this worked PERFECTLY as the fans wanted to see Reigns break away from this mold that he had been stuck in and just act like a 6'4 monster with

insane power and some good natural charisma. You know, EXACTLY WHAT MADE HIM COOL WHEN HE WAS IN THE SHIELD. Things got even better the next night when Reigns beat the heck out of Sheamus, Superman Punched Vince in the face and won the title clean.

But after all that and all the face pops we got as a result, it was HHH winning the title at the Royal Rumble, setting up the mess of a title match. All the while, Reigns was back to his cookie cutter self that people didn't want to see but WWE had decided they knew how Reigns should be pushed and the crowd didn't know what they really wanted.

That's where we are now: Reigns has the tools to make the fans cheer him (or boo the heck out of him) but instead WWE is still having him tread water as a lukewarm face while the booing gets louder and louder. There's an army of names waiting to face him (AJ Styles, Sami Zayn, Cesaro, a bunch of people in NXT and I could probably go on) but instead it's the same Rollins vs. Reigns feud that we've seen before (they used to be in the Shield together you know).

Reigns has a big future in front of him and at age 30 (31 tomorrow), he's going to be around for a very long time. I have no idea why WWE is insisting on pushing him this way but as soon as he turns heel (or does something that people want to see), he's going to explode on WWE and be a much bigger deal. Until then though, this is going to be the same kind of thing we're stuck with for months because WWE has decided that's what we're getting. Rollins is just the latest name on a long list of people that the fans want to see take out Reigns but nah, let's just keep going with what hasn't worked because that's what Vince wants.

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Extreme Rules 2016: Extreme Kickouts And Cleaning Supplies

Extreme Rules 2016

Date: May 22, 2016

Location: Prudential Center, Newark, New Jersey

Commentators: Byron Saxton, John Bradshaw Layfield, Michael Cole

It's a night of rematches but in this case we have a few bonus stipulations to carry things forward. The main event is another match between WWE World Champion Roman Reigns and AJ Styles, in this case under Extreme Rules. The question here is who interferes and helps either guy pull off the win. Let's get to it.

On the pre-show, here are the Dudley Boyz with something to say. Bubba starts an ECW chant before telling the fans to stop buying everything they're told to do. Once the Dudley Boyz left ECW, it completely fell apart. As for today, ever since they got here, Bubba has been dying to say something. "D-VON! LET'S GET OUT OF NEW JERSEY!"

Bubba rants about how much he hates the New Era until Big Cass interrupts. After listing off a bunch of food (these jokes lose some of their connection without Enzo), Cass says the New Era is doing what the ECW guys did in Bingo halls but in front of millions of people. A quick brawl breaks out with Cass clearing the ring and calling them S-A-W-F-T.

It was smart to have them doing something here but if Enzo is going to be out much longer, they need to either give Cass a new partner (even a temporary one) or have him do a singles feud. Cass is legitimately hot

right now and it would be very risky to waste that while waiting on Enzo, who is probably better suited as a mouthpiece, to come back.

Pre-Show: Dolph Ziggler vs. Baron Corbin

Rubber match because rubber matches are awesome and No DQ. The bell rings nine minutes before the regular show is supposed to start so they're in a hurry here. Ziggler dropkicks him down but Corbin takes it to the floor and sends Ziggler face first into the post. Back in and Corbin pounds away as Mauro lists off a bunch of biographical facts about Corbin (double degree in college and a Slipknot fan), making me miss the days of Mike Tenay doing the same thing in WCW. I know it's nothing all that interesting but it lets you know a few things about the guy.

Corbin's chinlock goes nowhere as Dolph gets in a jawbreaker and clothesline to take over. The Stinger Splash into a neckbreaker gets no cover as the countdown to the pay per view reminds us that this is in fact heavily scripted and certainly won't go over because that's how wrestling works. Corbin's powerbomb is countered into a sunset flip for two, followed by a Deep Six for the same on Dolph. Ziggler grabs a tornado DDT and the Fameasser for two and both guys are down. The superkick misses and Corbin hits him low, which FINALLY plays into the rules. End of Days gives Baron the pin at 7:58.

Rating: D+. It's not so much the action itself but more along the lines of how weak the gimmick stuff was here. They had a total of one instance of using the rules (the posting early on is marginal at best) and that's not something that should happen in a No DQ match. It doesn't help that this didn't need such a gimmick but the calendar insisted on it and we certainly can't question that.

The other issue here, and this one is certainly not their fault, is the time. That clock on the screen kept letting you know that it would be over soon and really took me out of the match more than once. This should have started about ten to fifteen minutes earlier so they could have had the extra time to let this build up. It never ceases to amaze me that WWE, who OWNS THE NETWORK AND HAS AS MUCH TIME AS THEY WANT, can't time this stuff better. It really is inexcusable and yet it never stops

happening.

The opening video talks about how rules control us but tonight is the chance to write our own rules.

Karl Anderson/Luke Gallows vs. Usos

Texas Tornado rules and this is their fifth match in less than a month, not counting six man tags. It's a brawl in the aisle to start with the Usos getting the better of it, despite certainly not being the most popular guys in the building tonight. Jey dives over the top to take out Gallows, followed by a high cross body for two on Anderson. JBL calls this a dream match, which might have been true on the first match or maybe even the second. I lost interest somewhere around the third but I'm not smart enough to keep up with WWE booking.

Something like the Boot of Doom off the apron blasts Jimmy and the Club takes over. The Usos fight out of what looked like a Doomsday Device and it's Jey dropkicking Gallows into a rollup for two. Anderson comes back in and knees Jey so hard that he holds his foot before getting two. Jimmy breaks up the Boot of Doom but the Superfly Splash gets the same treatment.

A Whisper in the Wind misses and it's the Gallows Pole to Jimmy, followed by a spinebuster for two on Jey. Anderson sends Jey outside but charges into a superkick, setting up the running Umaga Attack against the barricade. Gallows is back up with a clothesline (JBL: "LARIOTO!") and grabs the bell (insert your own Festus joke), only to eat a superkick from Jimmy. The Superfly Splash only hits the bell though and the Magic Killer pins Jimmy at 8:32.

Rating: B-. The match was fun but again, I lost all my interest in seeing these two teams fight weeks ago. It also helped that they were going somewhere with the rules being changed, basically starting the standard tag finishing formula at the beginning of the match. This was fine but they both really need to move on.

The Usos are helped out, which is mentioned as having a factor on the main event.

We get a quick recap of the main event with Rusev injuring Kalisto on Raw to make this even more one sided on paper.

US Title: Rusev vs. Kalisto

Kalisto is defending and tries to start fast with the corkscrew cross body, only to have it knocked out of the air with an ax handle. The fans are split on Rusev (now there's something you don't often see) as he pounds Kalisto down. We hit the bearhug and a CM Punk chant starts up. Kalisto fights out of a torture rack and counters into a sleeper with Rusev looking more shocked than worried. The hold goes nowhere so the champ grabs a tornado DDT (second of the night) and now the corkscrew connects.

There's the hurricanrana driver for two, followed by a hurricanrana through the ropes to send Rusev face first into the steps. Back in and Rusev escapes the Salida Del Sol so Kalisto scores with a moonsault to take him down again. Kalisto goes up but Rusev slams him off the top and right onto the apron to stop Kalisto cold. The doctor comes out to check on him so Rusev grabs the Accolade, bending Kalisto back so far that Rusev is on his back, easily making Kalisto tap at 9:30.

Rating: C. That stuff with the doctor had me worried that they might actually keep the title on Rusev here. There was no reason to not change the title here, especially with Cena coming back in a week on Memorial Day. I really wish they had done something more with Kalisto but the curse of the midcard title got to him again, which really is a shame as it's taken down so many people now.

Trailer for Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 2, featuring Sheamus.

We recap the Tag Team Titles match with the old school Vaudevillains winning a tournament to earn this title shot against New Day. This included New Day building a time machine, which was NOT an empty refrigerator box.

Tag Team Titles: New Day vs. Vaudevillains

New Day is defending but first they have something to say. After

insisting that it was NOT a refrigerator box, Woods implies that he could use some photos or videos on his private feed. Big E. tries to cut him off but Woods insists that he get to shoot his shot. Fans: "SHOOT HIS SHOT!" Big E. has some gardening tools with them and since they're in the Garden State, it's time to put some hoes in the ground.

Kofi is the odd man out here which you don't see that often. The champs get jumped to start and Woods is sent into the post to give the Vaudevillains early control. Gotch comes in for something like a dragon sleeper but Woods gets out and blasts him with a jumping enziguri.

The hot(ish) tag brings in Big E. for some house cleaning in the form of some belly to belly suplexes. It's quickly back to Woods though with Big E. being sent into the steps. The Whirling Dervish only gets two on Woods and Big E. gets back in to spear English through the ropes. Kofi interferes with a kick to Gotch's head and Woods adds a Shining Wizard for the pin on Simon at 6:13.

Rating: C-. In theory this sets up Gallows/Anderson as the serious challengers but this really didn't do anything for me. For one thing, it's really not making sense to have the face champions use the numbers advantage. It's against logic in wrestling and needs to stop happening. It's not like Big E. and Kofi can't pull this off on their own. On top of that, this was just a six minute match after a pretty strong build with the Vaudevillains being treated like the young guys they really are. I wasn't feeling this one but it seems like a one off match.

AJ says he'll win tonight and walks into the Club dressing room.

We recap the Intercontinental Title match with Miz defending against Sami Zayn, Cesaro and Kevin Owens. They've done a great job of setting up the four way feud with everyone going after each other and having a reason to want to fight their opponents. Basically Sami vs. Kevin and Cesaro vs. Miz were combined into one feud to this is the big blowoff.

Intercontinental Title: The Miz vs. Kevin Owens vs. Cesaro vs. Sami Zayn

Miz is defending and this is one fall to a finish. Sami hits a Helluva Kick on Owens at the bell and Kevin falls outside. Cesaro uppercuts Miz

and we've got a good guy showdown early on. Sami starts in on the still bad shoulder before kicking Cesaro in the face for two. That's enough for Cesaro as he grabs a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker for two of his own and Sami is in trouble. Back up and Sami low bridges Cesaro out to the floor as Miz comes back in, only to be clotheslined outside.

Byron tries to call the match but JBL says if Saxton was on life support, he'd unplug the cord and charge his iPhone. Ok, can we PLEASE cut out the JBL doesn't like Byron stuff? They've been going with it for like ever now and since it's certainly not leading to a match or likely anything, drop it already as it's been old but just keeps going for no reason other than picking on Byron. Sami flip dives onto Miz and Cesaro to put all three down. Back in and we almost get a Tower of Doom until Owens runs in for the save.

Kevin cleans house and gets two off the backslash to Sami. The frog splash is broken up by Miz though and now we get the Tower of Doom with Owens getting the worst of it as Cesaro powerbombs everyone down. Sami knees his way out of Cesaro's suplex and the Blue Thunder Bomb gets two. Miz grabs an exploder suplex on Sami but Cesaro suplexes both of them at once because he's just that awesome.

All four are down in a corner now and that means it's time for the running uppercuts all around. Kevin stops Cesaro though and it's Cannonballs for everyone. Sami breaks that up though, only to eat Swiss Death. The Skull Crushing Finale gets two on Cesaro and everyone is down. Miz yells at Cesaro for kicking out and makes the mistake of slapping him in the face, setting up the springboard corkscrew uppercut to the champ.

That means it's time for the Cesaro Swing for over twenty seconds, followed by the Sharpshooter. The rope break doesn't exist in a four way so Maryse has to offer a distraction while Miz taps. You would think the referee, two feet away from Miz, would have heard that but instead Owens has to make a save. Miz grabs the ropes to block another Swing and Owens dives in with a frog splash to the elevated champion.

The Neutralizer gets two on Owens with Sami diving in at the very last moment for the save. Cesaro's powerbomb to Sami is countered into a very

fast sunset flip for two. Cesaro BLASTS him with an uppercut but walks into an exploder suplex into the corner, only to have Owens come in with the Pop Up Powerbomb for two on Cesaro with Miz making the save.

Owens yells at Maryse and gets a Skull Crushing Finale on the floor, only to have Miz dive in for two more on Cesaro. These near falls are insane. Fans: "FIGHT FOREVER!" Miz is backdropped out to the floor but Cesaro turns around and eats the Helluva Kick for two with Owens making a save this time. While the two of them fight, Miz slides in and steals the pin on Cesaro to retain at 18:20.

Rating: A. This was some of the best timing I've ever seen in a multi-man match with the near falls getting me more than once. It's not often that I get fooled by some near falls but this match did it multiple times in less than twenty minutes. I had a great time watching this and the storytelling at the end with Sami getting obsessed with Owens and costing him the title as a result.

Pre-show chat.

We recap Dean Ambrose vs. Chris Jericho in an Asylum match (cage with weapons). They had a match at Payback with Dean winning clean so Jericho hit him in the head with Dean's potted plant (Mitch). Dean then ripped up Jericho's \$15,000 jacket and the result is this match.

Dean Ambrose vs. Chris Jericho

There are weapons around the top of the cage, you win by pin or submission and Jericho is in boots and jeans. Jericho quickly takes him down to start but Dean makes a quick save and sends Jericho into the cage. It's time for the first weapon so Dean grabs...a mop, which he uses to blast Jericho in the ear. Cole: "He's looking to mop up Jericho here." Even Byron rips on him for a line that bad.

Jericho scores with a dropkick to take over but takes too long going up, allowing Dean to belly to back superplex him down. Both guys go up and it's Dean coming back with nunchucks, only to have Jericho grab a barbed wire 2x4. That goes nowhere so they both climb up with Jericho getting in a few kendo stick shots to put Dean back in the ring. The crowd isn't

exactly thrilled by this.

Now some nunchuck shots have Dean in trouble and Jericho makes it even worse (I think?) by grabbing a leather strap. A whip to the head doesn't have much effect so Dean flips him off the top to put both guys down again. Dean straps him a few times but gets sent into the cage. Jericho climbs up but Dean is on the top rope to crotch him back down. Dean pulls off a fire extinguisher so Jericho throws a straitjacket over his head and gets two off an enziguri.

Thankfully Chris gets smart and ties Dean in the straitjacket....which he doesn't tie. Dean pops up with forearms which don't wake the crowd up so a clothesline gets two instead. A butterfly backbreaker gets two for Jericho and the fans want Ryder. Dean drops him again and climbs to the top of the cage for the standing elbow drop and almost no reaction. Like you would think it was a clothesline for a meaningless one count a minute into the match.

Since this hasn't gone on long enough, Dean goes up to get a mop bucket. That gets no reaction either but the bag of thumbtacks inside gets a bit better reception. They tease going into the tacks multiple times each until they give up for the time being, killing the crowd again.

The Lionsault hits knees but Jericho counters Dirty Deeds into the Walls. That goes nowhere (of course) so Dean breaks a kendo stick over Jericho's back. Chris saves himself with a fire extinguisher blast, setting up the Codebreaker for two. Some barbed wire 2x4 shots to Dean's ribs have almost no effect as he counters another Codebreaker by dropping Jericho onto the tacks. Now THAT woke the crowd up. Dirty Deeds ends Jericho at a ridiculous 26:23.

Rating: D+. I think you can guess my biggest issue with this match. Dean vs. Jericho third from the top in a semi-comedy cage match on a gimmick pay per view shouldn't be 45 seconds shorter than the main event of Wrestlemania. The crowd just did not care here and they lost me as soon as the mop came into play. How much hatred and anger can you have in a match where the big violence for the first twenty five minutes is a mop to the head? Oh and they didn't even use the plant, which was the big

idea of the match. I really wasn't feeling this one and it just went on WAY too long, even though it was a decent brawl at times.

We recap the Women's Title, which is somehow centered around Ric Flair. Natalya made the champ tap but Flair distracted the referee so Charlotte could escape. Therefore the result is a submission match with Flair barred from ringside.

Women's Title: Charlotte vs. Natalya

Charlotte is defending and this is a submission match. Natalya takes her down by the ankle to start and asks where Ric is now. A surfboard has the champ in even more trouble but she rolls out to the floor and fires off some chops. That's fine with Natalya who sends Charlotte shoulder first into the post to give her a new target. Back in and Charlotte kicks her in the face but gets rolled up into a cross armbreaker. I can always go for some basic psychology like that.

Charlotte gets up and powerbombs Natalya to break the hold before grabbing something like a reverse Figure Four (with Natalya on her stomach and Charlotte on her back). Natalya crawls to the ropes and out of the ring for the break as the rope break rule still isn't clear over the years.

Charlotte scores with the moonsault and puts on a half crab but Natalya (with her leg just fine) pops up and throws her down with a German suplex. The Sharpshooter goes on so Charlotte climbs the ropes....which doesn't work as she crashes back to the mat. Cue a fake Ric Flair which is revealed to be....Dana Brooke. The distraction lets Charlotte get in a cheap shot and put on the Figure Eight for the submission at 9:34.

Rating: D+. Well that was nothing and so much for the women stealing the show at every pay per view. I didn't see any selling in this (Natalya being on her feet after the leg work and Charlotte's arm being fine for the Figure Eight) and the ending was stupid. Somewhat predictable as you knew something was going to happen (though Dana was a surprise) but stupid at the same time. I don't know if I just died in that marathon cage match or in the fact that Natalya was clearly just a filler opponent but I really wasn't feeling this one.

Flair, Dana and Charlotte celebrate post match. Cole thinks this was a set up because Cole is forced to sound like a stupid puppet.

We recap the World Title match, which is a Payback rematch after AJ won by countout and DQ but the match was restarted twice, allowing Reigns to pin him. Since then AJ has been forced to go extreme against his will but eventually he seemed to like the idea. There's still the question of whether or not he's been behind the Club attacks but that hasn't been treated as such an important idea this time around.

WWE World Title: Roman Reigns vs. AJ Styles

AJ is challenging and this is under Extreme Rules, meaning street fight. Styles tells him to bring it to start so Reigns elbows him in the face. AJ ducks some shots and fires off kicks, which are quickly shoved away so Roman can fire off corner clotheslines. A big jumping knee to the face knocks AJ silly and they head outside.

Reigns takes too long setting up the announcers' table though and gets knocked into the crowd. They fight over to the pre-show panel with AJ throwing him into various objects, including the table and a barricade wall. The Phenomenal Forearm off the table just staggers Reigns and they fight back to the timekeeper's area. AJ sends him into the post and peels back the floor pads, which can never go well.

The Styles Clash on the concrete is of course countered so AJ tries it on the announcers' table. Reigns counters that as well and catches a charging AJ in a big old backdrop through the other announcers' table. Fans: "YOU STILL SUCK!" Back in and Reigns hits a Razor's Edge into a sitout powerbomb (that should be someone's finisher) for two and the champ is shocked.

With little else working, Reigns loads up the Superman Punch but AJ hits him in the knee and Reigns buckles to the mat. AJ knees him in the face from the apron but Reigns catches him in a powerbomb (so much for the leg) through the other announcers' table (with AJ bouncing on the table before it breaks). The spear only hits the barricade though and Reigns is out.

They very slowly get back up and it's AJ trying the Phenomenal Forearm with Reigns Superman Punching him in the face for the counter. The spear connects off the steps but neither guy can get up. Cue the Club as AJ is thrown back inside. Now this brings up the question: who am I supposed to cheer for here? Cole acts like this is a big heel act but Reigns is hardly a good guy.

The Boot of Doom only gives AJ two (so much for that move meaning anything) but the Usos run out (so much for that angle earlier in the night) for the superkick party. Jimmy's Superfly Splash gives Reigns an obvious two. Another spear is countered and AJ scores with the Clash for two. The Superman Punch is countered again with an enziguri and the Styles Clash on the chair gets two more. Oh come on now. AJ is stunned so he unloads on the Usos and Reigns with the chair. Another Phenomenal Forearm is countered and a single spear retains the title at 22:13.

Rating: B+. This was really good, crippling the Styles Clash aside. It certainly wasn't one sided but I have a real hard time buying Reigns kicking out of all the offense before the run-ins, the Boot of Doom, two Styles Clashes and a bunch of chair shots. At some point it gets stupid and we hit that with about five minutes to go. Either way though, this was another really good brawl as they beat each other up for a long time before the finishing sequence that people weren't interested in seeing. I don't think anyone expected AJ to win here and that's fine, but good grief enough with killing the Styles Clash.

Post match Seth Rollins makes his return and lays out Reigns with a Pedigree. I have no idea if that makes him a heel or a face but I don't think WWE does either.

Overall Rating: B. The strong matches more than carry this show as you had the amazing fourway, the strong main event and a good opener to balance out the WAY too long (though certainly not horrible) cage match. The show was very up and down though and instead of leading up to a big ending, it was much more "here's something good now here's something bad." Thankfully it looks like we're setting up some fresh stuff with Money in the Bank in a month, but that show tends to just throw everyone together in one big mess and forget all the feuds. Still though, strong

show and outstanding if you cut out one match.

Results

Karl Anderson/Luke Gallows b. Usos – Magic Killer to Jimmy

Rusev b. Kalisto – Accolade

New Day b. Vaudevillains – Shining Wizard to Gotch

Miz b. Cesaro, Kevin Owens and Sami Zayn – Miz pinned Cesaro after a Helluva Kick from Zayn

Dean Ambrose b. Chris Jericho – Dirty Deeds

Charlotte b. Natalya – Figure Eight

Roman Reigns b. AJ Styles – Spear

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2015 Awards: Wrestler of the Year

We'll wrap it up with the biggest one of the year.

We'll start with one of the last remaining worldwide talents in AJ Styles. The guy goes around the world and has great match after great match. He was a huge star in New Japan and fought almost anyone you could ask him to face. Styles has earned the WWE run he's about to get and 2015 was a big part of that.

You also have to consider Kevin Owens for how far he's come in just a year. People kind of forget that he made his WWE debut at the end of 2014 and was pinning John Cena about six months later. Couple that with a dominant performance against Sami Zayn and the Intercontinental Title and it's hard to argue anyone having a stronger debut year in a very long time.

Also out of NXT you have Bayley, who rose up from a good but not great NXT woman to the most over person in the hottest promotion in wrestling. Watch her come out on NXT and just take in how much the people love her. She's on a roll in the ring too and is a genuine character that young girls can get attached to. I honestly don't remember the last time that happened in wrestling and it's amazing to see it happen right before your eyes.

That leaves us with the main two options and we'll start with the younger. Seth Rollins threw in a legitimate surprise finish to Wrestlemania when he cashed in and went on to have one heck of an in ring year. Rollins' biggest problem came down to his horrible booking. There's only so much you can do when you're treated as HHH and Stephanie's kid and get stuck trying to carry Kane to a serious World Title match at a major show.

This is a situation where someone was doing the best with what they were given and Rollins did everything he could. It's not his fault that WWE doesn't know how to book a heel as anything but a coward or subservient to the Authority. Rollins did his best and it's clear that he's going to be a huge deal when he comes back (hopefully not being associated with HHH) with his knee all fixed up.

Finally, as always, there's John Cena. This was an odd year for Cena as he started off hot against Lesnar and Rollins, went into a very hit or

miss feud with Rusev (more miss than hit unfortunately), how an awesome feud with Owens, disappeared for a few weeks due to his reality show, then had another hit or miss feud with Rollins (though it was much more the booking missing than the wrestlers). Then he came back for like five minutes but got hurt again and is out for the next several months.

However, there's a major weight in his favor and that's the US Open Challenge. This is what separated Cena from the rest of the pack all year as it was one awesome match after another with any and all comers. The question became who was going to walk through the curtain, making every week a big surprise. Some of them were better than others, but you knew you were going to get something special. This series of matches impressed even some of Cena's harshest critics as Cena just could not have a bad match during this thing. At the end of the day, good wrestling is more important than anything else and no one did that better week in and week out this year than Cena.

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2015 Awards: Match of the

Year

This is one of the hardest ones to pick because it's one of the two biggest awards of the year.

We'll start over in Japan with Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Kota Ibushi in the WON Match of the Year. I didn't remember this being as awesome as it was but I gave it an A and you have to mention it after winning such a big award. Ibushi made this a war and came so close to the huge upset in a great story with great action but he just couldn't pull it off. Still great though.

Reigns vs. Lesnar from Wrestlemania was better than I was expecting as they just beat the tar out of each other for a long time until the big screwy ending. That ending is what holds it back for me as it turned into more of an angle than a match. What we got until that point was more than worth seeing though and it far exceeded most expectations. It's the main event of Wrestlemania so you have to at least give it a mention.

In another surprise, Kevin Owens pinned John Cena at Elimination Chamber. This was the big trading finishers showdown with both guys hitting each other with bigger and bigger shots to set up the big surprise finish with Owens winning. This was built up with weeks of great promos and then gave us a great match. What more can you ask for than that?

There's another match from outside WWE with Mil Muertes vs. Fenix in a Grave Consequences (casket) match. It's not the match of the year, but it runs away with the award for having no business being awesome but blowing the roof off the place. Casket matches are some of the goofiest gimmick matches you'll ever find but these two turned it into one of the most dramatic things I've seen in a very long time. Given how bad the gimmick was holding them back, this was a borderline miracle.

We'll go in reverse for a second and mention the Iron Man match at Takeover: Respect. It's not quite the first match but the ending with Bayley KICKING SASHA IN THE HEAD to win and Banks making Izzy cry were things of beauty. These two have mad chemistry together and the rematch even being near the level of the original is the highest praise.

That leaves us with the final two matches that everyone knew we were coming to. First up there's the amazing triple threat from the Royal Rumble with Brock Lesnar vs. John Cena vs. Seth Rollins. I rewatched this a few days ago and good night it was something to see. All three guys hit everything they could and the story of Lesnar having to be double teamed to leave the other two fighting was great stuff.

The things Lesnar was doing and was being put through by the challengers were awesome and the ending with Brock going Beast Mode to beat Rollins left me out of breath. This was the most action packed match of the year and the clubhouse leader for a very long time. It was going to take something special to come close to it and that's what we got about nine months later.

Women in wrestling get a lot of flack. They're treated as eye candy, sideshow acts, popcorn breaks and second class citizens who do some of the dumbest things imaginable. That's what makes the NXT women's division so much fun. Instead of being treated like morons, they're treated as serious competitors who happen to be women. The idea of a Women's Title match being the main event of a random week of TV doesn't even make NXT fans think twice these days and that's a really good sign.

That's what makes Bayley vs. Sasha Banks so important. This wasn't just a great match but it was also a great moment. The wrestling, the emotion and the post match scene all wrapped this up into one of the greatest things I've seen as a wrestling fan. This was a moment for wrestling and had me losing my mind every single time, even though Bayley winning wasn't exactly a shock.

So that brings up the big debate that never ends in wrestling: action vs. emotion. The triple threat was non-stop insanity with one big spot after another. The women's match on the other hand was all about Bayley's journey from the goofy fangirl to the serious competitor who was the best in the company. However, it didn't have Brock Lesnar breaking stuff, including various people for twenty minutes.

I keep going back and forth on this but the more I think about that sequence with Sasha getting Bayley in the Bank Statement and stomping on

her hand, only to have Bayley reverse it into a Bank Statement of her own, the more I have to go with the women. For my money, the hardest thing to do in wrestling is to convince fans that something they know is happening isn't going to happen. Like I said, Bayley was the obvious winner but they managed to convince me that it wasn't going to happen for that split second.

The thing is though the match kept going and had one heck of a finishing sequence with Bayley hitting a great looking reverse hurricanrana to knock Banks senseless. That's where the match got even better for me: Bayley had Banks beaten before the Bayley to Belly, which really just put her out of her misery. In other words, Bayley looked like the decisive winner instead of someone who happened to win. It felt like an actual changing of the guard and a moment, which is what it was supposed to be. Couple that with the Four Horsewomen post match stuff and this beats anything else in the year in a big milestone.

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2015 Awards: News Story of

the Year

Again, this one could depend on your definition of "news".

We'll get the two annual ones that still seem to surprise people out of the way first.

First of all, the Raw ratings bombed in the fall. I know they always do and yeah they were even worse this year, but then football season ended and the company started trying again, meaning the ratings went back up. This happens every year and I'm right there with you by saying it was never this bad, but this really does happen every year.

Second, TNA got thrown off another network and the audience continues to be dismal. This is what TNA is these days and until something major changes, it's not going to get any better no matter what happens.

Next up we have an actual surprise as Seth Rollins shredded every single piece of his knee and had to vacate the WWE World Title. This changed quite a few things depending on whose original plans you believe. Either way, Rollins being out changed quite a few things and potentially fast tracked Reigns toward the title. It was certainly shocking and changed a lot and that's how news works in wrestling.

Now we get to the big theme of the year: it's a bad time for 80s legends.

We'll start with the surprise deaths of both Dusty Rhodes and Roddy Piper. These two were giants of wrestling and passed away less than two months apart. On their own these two are much more sad than anything else but back to back like that was quite the big hit.

We also have Jimmy Snuka's potential murder trial, but given that Snuka is 72 years old and potentially mentally unfit to stand trial, this might not lead anywhere. Still though, it's quite the surprise to actually see this story come up again after all these years.

Finally in this group, we have Hulk Hogan's racist rant. Now here's the thing: it was several years ago and came at one of the lowest points of Hogan's life. Most people, including myself, thinks this comes off like

Hogan venting off a lot of steam rather than the way he actually thinks. That seems to be the general consensus from his co-workers over the years so it's something I can believe.

The thing to remember with Hogan though is he said something. He didn't break a law, he didn't hurt anyone physically and he didn't do anything other than sound stupid. People say this kind of nonsense every day and Hogan happens to be a celebrity who got caught on camera. It's stupid for sure, but not the worst thing in the world.

Overall though, there's something else that comes off as a major news story to me, which shouldn't surprise a lot of you: the continued expansion of NXT. Between the wild extension of the house shows, breaking boundaries with Bayley and Sasha Banks main eventing a Network special, bringing in a bunch of new talent and the sellouts almost everywhere they go, NXT has turned into something special that we haven't seen before. It's ROH all stars under the WWE banner and this looks like the future. If so, we're in for a very good time in the coming years.

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2015 Awards: Moment of the

Year

This one is always kind of hard to pick.

Again, we'll get through some of the easier ones first.

The Salida Del Sol through the ladder at TLC was amazing and one of the biggest high spots in a LONG time. Just...dang. It doesn't really have a long lasting impact but it was really cool and definitely deserves mentioning.

For a quick one, Brock Lesnar sitting up next to Undertaker and laughing at him, only to have Undertaker do the same. Again, didn't mean much but it was awesome at the time.

The Ronda Rousey appearance at Wrestlemania was great as well with the great line of "She's going to reach down your throat and play jump rope with your Fallopian tubes." This would be a nearly runaway winner if Rousey had really hurt Stephanie but pesky contracts prevented it.

Shield reunited for all of thirty seconds. That's more of a preview than an awesome moment though.

Now we'll get down to the actual top choices.

First up was the Divas Revolution, which would have been even better had Stephanie not been involved. I get that she wanted to be involved because she's Stephanie and has to be involved in something cool every time, but it was Paige's story and should have gotten the moment to make the whole thing work.

Another major one is Seth Rollins cashing in Money in the Bank. This was a legitimate shocking moment and the big story that people remember from Wrestlemania. I don't know if I'd put it at number one but it worked very well at the time, before WWE decided to make Rollins a worthless champion.

From the same show, there's the NWO vs. DX. This was the Monday Night Wars in the span of fifteen minutes and I had a blast with it. Points off

for the complete lack of continuity and HHH winning, but this was so much fun.

Then Bayley did a reverse super hurricanrana, gave Sasha Banks a Bayley to Belly and won the Women's Title, followed by the Four Horsewomen posing in the ring one last time. Wrestling is all about emotion and that's what you got here. This was as good as it got in 2015 and it's going to be a long time before anything tops this.

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2015 Awards: Worst Match of the Year

It's not the Divas for once.

This is actually a tricky one as it depends more on your definition of the word "worst". So often, a match that is described as the worst is really more boring than anything else. It's kind of rare to have a match that really is horrible, but often times boring is a lot worse than bad. Therefore, your mileage might vary here.

We'll start with a match that actually was bad, at least in its booking:

Seth Rollins vs. Brock Lesnar from Night of Champions. This was a nine minute squash with Brock squashing the champ and then a screwy finish as Undertaker came back to get revenge for a match he lost clean a year and a half ago. The story made sense, but I see no need to have the World Champion get DESTROYED to get there. At least have Seth cheat to get in some offense or something, but don't have him get beaten down that badly. He's the World Champion for a reason.

Then we have a match that might take this one running away: TNA's Gauntlet for the Gold at Bound For Glory. No matter how you look at this, it was a twenty four minute Royal Rumble with 12 names (one of which was Pope, who eliminated himself), including Mahabali Shera, Chris Melendez, Tommy Dreamer, Aiden O'Shea and the winner, earning a World Title shot at some point in the future, Tyrus. This was stupid booking (setting up Tyrus as a title contender), stupid planning (the show never recovered after this mess) and just bad in general. We'll come back to this idea in a bit.

We'll go back to the mess at TripleMania XXIII with Los Villanos vs. Los Psycho Circus. This was the Villanos' (youngest member: 50) retirement match as a trio and the match made them look older than their ages. The match was a disaster and the technical issues weren't any help either. However, I can put this one lower on the bad list because what was supposed to happen here? One team is over 150 years old combined so what are they supposed to really do out there? Yeah it's a disaster, but it's a disaster that I feel sorry for.

One more thing before we get to the worst match: I've seen a lot of loathing for the Intercontinental Title Elimination Chamber match. I really don't get this as I found the match to be totally watchable. It's completely forgettable and was boring at times, but one of the worst matches of the year? Really? The right guy won, the lineup was decent enough and the match wasn't horrible. I really don't get the hate for this as it's really more middle of the road than bad.

Then there's the match that I think you know is coming: the Royal Rumble. This was the 1993 version all over again as everyone in the arena knew Reigns (Yokozuna) was winning and Daniel Bryan (Undertaker), the only

person with a prayer of eliminating him, was taken out early, leaving the crowd to be bored for the rest of the match.

On top of that, you had what looked like a hot finish with a bunch of promising talent in there near the end. Here's the final ten in the match: Reigns, Rusev, Big Show, Kane, Ambrose, Wyatt, Ziggler, Cesaro, Barrett and Swagger. Save for Big Show and Kane, that could be one heck of a hot finish as the new generation shows that they can take this thing over.

And never mind as Big Show and Kane took out Swagger, Ziggler, Wyatt and Ambrose before being dumped by Reigns at the same time in a moment that was done way better when Shawn Michaels eliminated Yokozuna and Vader in 1996 (a good way to do a Rumble where everyone knew who was winning).

This was a complete disaster with the Rock not even able to save it. Unfortunately this continued Reigns' push to the main event of Wrestlemania WAY before people wanted to see it (though at least they were smart enough to not pull the trigger just yet). The match was just boring throughout and saves the Gauntlet for the Gold by having so many of the same problems but at over double the time. This one wins and I'm almost scared to look at it again for the redo.

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2015 Awards: Worst Angle of the Year

Now this one doesn't have the ending you might expect.

We'll start with the most recent as Paige brought up Charlotte's deceased brother Reid to help set up their title match. Here's the thing: this was short. Yeah it was a bit tasteless (though nothing compared to some of the stuff WWE has done before) but they didn't bring up Reid by name or how he passed away etc. This was more tasteless than bad, but the match itself was even worse because they didn't go anywhere with the hatred. It's bad, but I think there's worse stuff they could do.

Earlier in the year in a much bigger story we had Roman Reigns' original push towards Wrestlemania XXXI. This is one where we all knew what we were going to get but again I didn't hate it as much as some. They felt like they were trying to push someone new and we got some good matches out of it. The problems here were the feeling predictable and that Reigns hadn't earned the title yet. However, what people overlook is that he didn't win it just yet. They bailed out at the last second and that helps things so much more. The ending and the fact that it wasn't that bad in the first place keeps this away from winning.

Also from late in the year, we had the latest Wyatt Family disaster with Bray kidnapping the Undertaker and Kane, stealing their souls (whatever that meant), taking their fireworks power, and then apparently just leaving them alone so that they could escape and win the match at Survivor Series. As bad as this was, it's actually pretty low on the list of bad storytelling with the Wyatts and Bray in particular. This is just what happens to the Wyatts and until it changes, it's hard to really call it horrible all over again.

Then James Storm threw Mickie James on train tracks. It's stupid, it's ridiculous, and at the end of the day it's TNA. I almost feel bad about picking on them at this point and I have issues complaining about anything involving Mickie James. The biggest problem here was that Mickie

was back way too soon with no problems, which makes it more stupid than bad.

At Summerslam, Jon Stewart cost John Cena the WWE World Title because he didn't want Cena to tie Ric Flair's record. I mean....yeah. What else is there that I'm supposed to say on this one? You had a talk show host there as the celebrity and then he costs Cena the World Title? At Summerslam? REALLY? This was the best they could come up with?

However, last but not least, we have the love...whatever shape it was with Ziggler/Summer Rae/Rusev. You had Summer loving Rusev and maybe loving Ziggler while Lana jumped to Ziggler from Rusev and thought it was about 1984 with all the denim. This went on forever with the pairs teasing getting back together and the whole thing was a big soap opera, ultimately ending with Lana getting hurt and WWE deciding that EVERYONE followed TMZ and knew that Rusev and Lana were engaged in real life.

And I liked it. Yeah to this day I'm still not sure why, but I really don't get the hatred for this storyline. I know it's stupid and I know the story really didn't make sense and I know the ending was HORRIBLE because WWE pulled the plug on the whole thing but I really didn't mind it. This gave these people something to do and Summer telling Rusev that they weren't getting married until he won a title was a good idea. That and it got Lana into some different looks and started to expand her character until the injury derailed the whole thing. I know it's hated, but I really didn't mind this story nearly as much as some people did.

For me, the worst was Jon Stewart. The celebrity stuff is stupid in the first place, but to have it be at Summerslam for the World Title and having it wind up as ANOTHER way to remind us how amazing Ric Flair is and how his record is just so sacred was too much for me. I love Jon Stewart and it was cool having him around, but this was just so stupid and such a lame way to keep the title on Rollins.

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New Column: Three Ways To Make It Work

Looking at the three best matches of the year and why each worked in different ways.

<http://www.wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-three-ways-to-make-it-work/47281/>