

Smackdown – November 15, 2016: Out of Character Moments

Smackdown

Date: November 15, 2016

Location: Mohegan Sun Arena, Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, David Otunga, John Bradshaw Layfield, Tom Phillips

It's the 900th episode and also the final show before Sunday's Survivor Series. That means there's a lot of potential for hijinks and shenanigans tonight, which could mean for a very entertaining show. If nothing else maybe they can do something other than having wacky partners who can't get along four times in one night. Let's get to it.

We open with a quick montage of great Smackdown moments before previewing tonight's show. It's always cool to see the older days and WWE knows how to pull those things off very well.

Daniel Bryan and Shane McMahon come out and welcome us to the show, mainly focusing on the big events before introducing the first match.

Intercontinental Title: The Miz vs. Dolph Ziggler

Miz is challenging and the winner gets to defend against Sami Zayn on Sunday. After the Big Match Intros, Mauro starts in with the standard talking points about how awesome the Intercontinental Title is. Miz gets him to the ground to start but can't hit either finisher before we take an early break.

Back with both guys down before Miz hits the Reality Check for two. It's time to start in on the knees until Miz gets sent leg first into the buckle to give the champ a breather. The big elbow gets two for Ziggler and he grabs the sleeper, sending Miz straight to the

ropes. The Fameasser (without much contact of course) gets two for Ziggler and we take a second break.

We come back again with Miz mocking Bryan's YES pose before starting with the YES Kicks. A running knee to the face sets up the Skull Crushing Finale with Mauro falling victim to the "WELL THAT HAS TO BE IT" syndrome, guaranteeing that Ziggler kicks out at two. The Zig Zag gets the same result for the champ (because WWE doesn't know many ways to do big matches) but here's the Spirit Squad for the distraction to set up the Figure Four. Ziggler makes the ropes and grabs a small package, only to have Maryse shove it over so Miz can get the title back at 17:53.

Rating: B. This wasn't quite as good as the No Mercy match but that doesn't mean it wasn't entertaining. I'm a bit sick of the Spirit Squad interfering every single time as they really don't have much else to do with Ziggler at this point. The same finish could have been done without them but I've seen worse ideas. At least Miz won and should be able to have a better match as a result.

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

Clip of Steve Austin destroying the DX Express back in 2000.

Alexa Bliss presents her case for a rematch against Becky Lynch to Bryan, who gives it to her but won't give her a date. Cue Natalya with that freaking whistle but her inspirational message sends Bliss storming off.

Kalisto vs. Oney Lorcan

Lorcan is from NXT and goes right after Kalisto with a knee to the head. A suplex gets two as JBL tries to convince us that Lorcan is similar to Brian Kendrick. The Salida Del Sol gives Kalisto the pin at 1:14.

Undertaker picks up his hat.

Clip of Rock vs. HHH from the first episode.

Quick montage of Rock's appearances on Smackdown.

The Smackdown tag team Survivor Series team is ready for Sunday.

Heath Slater and Rhyno have brought in a motivational speaker: KING BOOKAH! Before he can read a proclamation, Breezango comes in to give Booker a ticket for his fashion sense. This turns him into Booker T. to yell at Breezango and hit the catchphrase. An ALL HAIL KING BOOKER chant breaks out. This was perfect for a quick cameo.

Clip of John Cena debuting against Kurt Angle in 2002.

Nikki Bella vs. Carmella

Feeling out process to start with Carmella doing You Can't See Me. A snap suplex puts Carmella down and Nikki mostly botches a dropkick which barely grazes Carmella in the ribs. Carmella comes right back by slamming Nikki neck first onto the floor before ramming her face in for good measure.

Back in and Carmella grabs a chinlock, which actually makes sense for once. We hit the hair pulling but Carmella stops to dance for no apparent reason. The Bronco Buster misses...and here's Charlotte through the crowd to have a seat as we take a break. Back with a Disaster Kick sending Carmella outside and the big shout off between Bella and Charlotte. The brawl is on and it's a no contest at 11:34.

Rating: C. I really don't know why Nikki vs. Charlotte is supposed to be some big deal when we saw it about a year ago and it wasn't anything special. I know Nikki is the star of the Smackdown women's division but at least give us something a little more fresh. Either that or just put the title on Nikki already so we can hear how inspiring it is.

Team Raw comes in for the beatdown (including Bayley, which is pretty out of character for her) and Carmella joins in. Team Smackdown runs out for the save with Carmella celebrating with them, which is just stupid on all counts.

Renee Young previews Goldberg vs. Lesnar, which means she introduces a video package on the match.

Headbangers/Ascension/Spirit Squad/Vaudevillains vs. Usos/Hype Bros/Breezango/American Alpha

The official Smackdown team take turns on Mikey to start but Jimmy

tags himself in, much to Jordan's annoyance. Gotch comes in and gets the same treatment as the fans want Slater. Well they have him, albeit on the floor as extra support. Rawley, in Zubaz pants, gets two off a running seated senton and it's off to Ryder vs. Viktor. Everyone heads to the floor and we take a break during the big shouting match.

Back with Ryder fighting out of the corner and making the hot tag off to Gable for some house cleaning. Everything breaks down with one team coming in to take out the next until only the Usos are left for a big double dive to take out about ten people. A slightly botched Grand Amplitude ends Thrasher at 10:40.

Rating: D+. There's only so much you can do in a match like this where no one is going to get any significant time and the whole thing is going to be a mess. It was fun enough though and they were smart to leave this at four teams each instead of adding the extra four people. Sunday's version should be fun with a little more drama and a chance for people to shine a bit more.

It's time for the Cutting Edge with the Smackdown team as special guests. Edge's hair has grown out a bit and he has a good sized beard, making him look a bit like Mick Foley. After a break, Edge talks about bleeding blue and brings out the team as a group. Edge shakes Ellsworth's hand because James has been such an inspiration for him. Ellsworth is stunned but manages to ask for a Five Second Pose. That's not cool with the champ though because it should be him getting the attention instead of James.

Instead, Edge asks Orton what's up with joining the Wyatt Family. Bray says the Randy that Edge once knew is dead because this Sunday, the world will see a more dangerous viper. Shane takes the mic and says they only have to get along for one night but AJ starts ripping into Ambrose. This turns into a promo for TLC but here's Undertaker to cut them off.

Undertaker actually praises Shane and tips his hat to him before saying he's here for two reasons. Wrestlemania will no longer define who he is because he's back to take souls and dig holes. Survivor

Series was where he was born and Smackdown has always been his home. He says there's no reason for Smackdown to fail but if they do, they'll have reason to fear the Deadman. Raw will Rest in Peace...and that's it.

Overall Rating: C. Undertaker's speech is continuing on the Network right? I mean, he came out and praised the Smackdown team and that's about it. That's really not something you would expect Undertaker to do and it felt out of place for him. At least Shane gets to stay on the team though and that's what matters for some reason.

This show wasn't great but it's miles ahead of Raw. Above all else it actually mixed things up a little bit and didn't drag all night long. They even made a new match for Sunday and built on some stuff that wasn't just about the three matches. Character logic issues aside, this was a perfectly fine go home show and that's all it needed to be.

As for a big anniversary show...yeah this was fine. They aired a few clips and then cut them off in the middle, as is so often the case with WWE. Booker's cameo was fine and it made sense to have Edge and Undertaker show up at the end as they were the biggest Smackdown exclusive stars. They were kind of handcuffed with a major pay per view to set up and that's understandable.

Results

Miz b. Dolph Ziggler – Small package

Kalisto b. Oney Lorcan – Salida Del Sol

Nikki Bella vs. Carmella went to a no contest when Nikki started brawling with Charlotte

Usos/Hype Bros/American Alpha/Breezango b.

Headbangers/Ascension/Vaudevillains/Spirit Squad – Grand Amplitude to Thrasher

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book, KB's Complete 2014 Raw and Smackdown Reviews Part I at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01LY6766K#nav-subnav>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

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

Monday Night Raw – November 14, 2016: Nope. Send This Back.

Monday Night Raw

Date: November 14, 2016

Location: First Niagara Center, Buffalo, New York

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

We're ready for Survivor Series on Sunday and tonight is the last chance for the red show to pump things up. The big story here is Goldberg and Brock Lesnar being in the same ring before their showdown, which you may or may not find interesting. Finally we should get to hear about the big debate between Stephanie and Shane McMahon tonight...which is taking place on the Network after the show. Let's get to it.

All of the Raw Survivor Series participants are on the stage as the bosses are in the ring. Stephanie plugs the debate after the show tonight and Foley says Sunday is about proving what's better between the two shows. This leads to Foley doing Enzo Amore's dance, much to Amore's delight. Stephanie threatens to change Sunday's lineup if some people don't impress them tonight. That includes Cesaro/Sheamus vs. Kevin Owens/Roman Reigns, Chris Jericho/Seth Rollins/Braun Strowman vs. New Day and Charlotte/Sasha Banks vs. Alicia Fox/Nia Jax.

Roman Reigns/Kevin Owens vs. Cesaro/Sheamus

Naturally Reigns and Owens have to do entrances again after being on the stage before the break. Cesaro and Reigns get things going and

Owens is looking bored on the apron. A dropkick sends Reigns into the corner and it's time for an argument between the dysfunctional team over who gets to beat him up. Sheamus dives into an uppercut as I cringe at the thought of that being a World Title feud about a year ago. Owens finally gets involved, only to be taken down by a slingshot dive as we take a break.

Back with Owens clotheslining Cesaro in the corner to set up the Cannonball for two. The hot(ish) tag brings in Sheamus for the apron forearms but he loses a fight to Reigns on the floor. Apparently there was a tag in there somewhere as Reigns is allowed to come in and beat on Sheamus, including the Superman Punch for two. Owens tags himself back in and eats a Brogue Kick, only to have Reigns spear Sheamus to give Kevin the pin at 12:10.

Rating: D+. This is feeling like the leadup to Money in the Bank with the random matches that don't go anywhere. This was a boring tag with the "regular" team losing clean and the makeshift team seemingly setting up something after Survivor Series. I really wasn't feeling this one and the rest of the show doesn't seem like it's going to be much better.

Jericho tries to get Rollins and Strowman to calm down and work together later, ala Owens. He even has presents for both of them: scarves! Rollins declines and Strowman rips up Jericho's scarf because he doesn't like Chris.

Sami Zayn vs. Bo Dallas

This is over Dallas not being happy with Sami getting the Intercontinental Title shot. The standard arm work doesn't last long so it's Dallas being aggressive in the corner to take over. Sami comes right back and hits the exploder into the corner followed by the Helluva Kick for the pin at 2:30.

Brian Kendrick has a speech for the cruiserweights. He knows everyone is concerned about moving to Smackdown but there's no way he's going to lose because he's the standard bearer of this division. Most of the division starts talking about how they could beat Kendrick and an argument breaks out. This really didn't need to exist.

New Day comes out for their match and they've got a merchandise cart. They've been WWE Tag Team Champions for nearly 450 days because they know how to survive. With the holidays right around the

corner, you need their gear to survive, with gear such as New Day Socks. You can stuff that sock with a unicorn horn or a certain brand of cereal.

New Day vs. Seth Rollins/Braun Strowman/Chris Jericho

Jericho and Kofi start things off and that's not a bad thing. An elbow to the jaw puts Kofi on the mat and it's quickly off to Woods vs. Rollins with the latter coming in off a chop to the chest. That goes nowhere either as they hit the mat for Seth's headlock before it's back to Jericho as New Day takes over. The Warrior splash gets two and Kofi comes back in, only to get slammed by Braun as we take a break.

Back with Braun holding Kofi in a nerve hold before handing it back to Rollins. Some double knees put Seth down but it's Strowman running cross the ring to kick Big E. in the face. We wind up with Woods kicking Jericho in the back and Strowman plowing through the other two opponents. Woods finally kicks him in the face and forearms Rollins in the jaw. That's enough for Braun though as it's a powerslam to end Xavier at 14:06.

Rating: C. This picked up a lot near the end as Woods continues to be great at the last chance offense. Strowman is getting better at being a rampaging monster but he's still in need of some more experience. I liked the match well enough though and New Day will be fine with a loss like this. That being said, it's getting harder and harder to care about these one off matches between people with no animosity.

Paul Heyman interrupts the bosses and suggests that there won't be a match if Lesnar isn't happy. Mick orders more security.

Charlotte is in the back with Sasha for the weekly "women like to bicker with each other" segment. The big deal here is that Sasha has a title rematch down the line and they don't like each other.

Brian Kendrick vs. Sin Cara

Non-title and Kendrick jumps him during the entrances. Cara says ring the bell so Brian beats him up in the corner as we hear about 205 Live, which really isn't the best idea during this dull match. The chinlock evolves into the choking on the ropes but a backdrop puts Kendrick outside for a suicide dive. A second dive hits the barricade and we take a break. IN THIS MATCH.

Back with Kendrick choking even more because that's what a heel cruiserweight does. Brian misses a charge in the corner and a top rope spinning splash gives Cara two. The crowd is just GONE here as Cara gets two off a sitout powerbomb. Kendrick goes for the mask and puts on the Captain's Hook (looks terrible) for the tap out at 11:05.

Rating: D. Was this Cara's punishment for the fight with Jericho? This was slow, boring and completely killed what little energy the crowd had left. As has been the case for months now, WWE has no idea what to do with a cruiserweight division. An eleven minute match is bad enough but having it be mostly spent on chinlocks and choking before finishing with a chinlock. This division really needs to go somewhere else and maybe its own show is the solution, but not without some major changes.

Enzo and Big Cass are in the back when Anderson and Gallows come up. They don't trust each other in their eight man tag tonight.

It's time for Lesnar and Goldberg as it's nearly halftime of Monday Night Football. Lesnar slips a bit during his jump to the apron but it's not bad. There's a wall of security as Goldberg tells Lesnar to shut up and stay out of this. Heyman gets cut off by the GOLDBERG chants before finally going on about all the people Lesnar has killed. Goldberg cuts him off again to say his name isn't on that list, only to have the chants start up again. Heyman starts to offer something but Lesnar grabs the mic and tells the fans to shut up.

The offer is for Heyman to find a replacement for Sunday's match. That means Goldberg takes off his shirt so Lesnar shoves some guards down. Heyman says the beating will be so bad that Goldberg's son will call Lesnar daddy. The security is quickly dispatched and there's no one left between them. Lesnar, with one of the palest chests I've ever seen on a wrestler, walks away. This was WAY too long but they don't have a choice because there's nothing left for them to do on the show.

Sasha Banks/Charlotte vs. Nia Jax/Alicia Fox

Bayley is on commentary. Charlotte gets to face Nia to start and Sasha bails to the floor because they're partners that don't like each other. I didn't know if they had made that clear in the two previous matches with the same stories. The champ can't get anywhere with the monster and bails to the floor for an early break.

Back with Sasha rolling Alicia up for one and hitting the chinlock. Charlotte and Sasha finally break down and get in a fight, allowing Fox to bring Alicia back in. A big boot staggers Jax but another fight allows Alicia to come in with a high crossbody. Charlotte neutralizes Nia and the Bank Statement makes Fox tap at 7:45.

Rating: C-. Boring match (due to seeing the same story for the third time in just over two hours) but it makes sense to actually have them get in a fight for a change. I really don't need to see Charlotte vs. Sasha again but I'm sure they'll have one more gimmick match to really hammer home how important it is. Also, well done on having Alicia job here, which you can imagine them screwing up to try to swerve the audience.

Foley gives the Raw team another pep talk.

Enzo Amore/Big Cass/Anderson and Gallows vs. Shining Stars/Golden Truth

Cass throws Epico around to start and everything breaks down, leaving Golden Truth vs. Enzo and Cass. Uh, epic? We take a break just over a minute in and come back with a double Russian legsweep to Anderson. Karl pops right back up and grabs a chinlock on Truth as the fans are some combination of confused over who to cheer for and bored half to death. Primo tags himself in and gets to face Big Cass as everything breaks down. The Magic Killer plants Primo and Anderson tells to go up for the Bada Boom Shaka Lacka before just taking the pin himself at 9:03.

Rating: D. Yeah go back and look at one of the ratings for the same idea earlier on and substitute in the appropriate names. I don't think there's much that I can add to this one because there's almost no story here. Anderson and Gallows don't like the rest of the division and they're mean to their partners. Next segment please.

Here are all four bosses for the really long closing segment. They bicker a lot, the fans chant for Smackdown, Stephanie gets in a funny line with "YOU GUYS ARE AT RAW!", Bryan points out that Foley and Shane are known for jumping off of tall structures and they debate the cruiserweight division being on the line.

Stephanie brings out the Raw team but here's the Smackdown team through the crowd. Owens and AJ get in an argument over whose title is more important with Owens saying it's his because he holds it. AJ suggests that Owens might wind up on the list but Jericho gives him

a hug to calm things down. That means AJ JUST MADE THE LIST (pop of the night). Oh and that stupid soccer mom haircut? IT JUST MADE THE LIST! Jericho still isn't done as he sees James Ellsworth, who is a weird looking guy. "Do you know what happens to weird looking guys on Raw? YOU JUST MADE THE LIST!"

Bray grabs the mic and yells at Braun for abandoning him after being given the keys to the kingdom. This Sunday, Smackdown destroys the monster that Bray created. A staredown ensues but Seth grabs the mic, only to start the brawl. Everyone goes after Braun with Shane getting to knock him outside. Orton gets back in but it's Reigns cleaning house and getting booted out of the building. A DoubleBomb sends AJ onto Team Smackdown to end the show. This got really good once the bosses shut up but it's way too late to save this dog of a show.

Overall Rating: D. The wrestling was acceptable (albeit boring) but the problem here was the lack of effort. This three plus hour show had two main ideas: wacky tag team partners who don't get along and Goldberg vs. Lesnar. The latter of those ideas took fifteen minutes and the other idea took up the rest of the show. Save for a WAY too long cruiserweight match (Yeah I know, I criticize the cruiserweights. Get over it.) and a nothing Sami vs. Dallas match, that's all this show was. For three hours. Two ideas.

I can tolerate a show focused on one thing or a show that is trying to accomplish a goal but this was WAY over the top. You can't showcase someone on the team against people not on the pay per view roster? Or do ANYTHING other than the same idea for most of the show? I checked out on this show as soon as I realized they didn't have anything tonight and that's not something that should ever happen. The quality wasn't the worst here and the ending segment did it a lot of favors but the lack of effort destroys it.

Results

Kevin Owens/Roman Reigns b. Cesaro/Sheamus – Spear to Sheamus

Sami Zayn b. Bo Dallas – Helluva Kick

Braun Strowman/Seth Rollins/Chris Jericho b. New Day – Powerslam to Woods

Brian Kendrick b. Sin Cara – Captain's Hook

Charlotte/Sasha Banks b. Alicia Fox/Nia Jax – Bank Statement to Fox

Enzo Amore/Big Cass/Anderson and Gallows b. Shining Stars/Golden Truth – Magic Killer to Primo

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book, KB's Complete 2014 Raw and Smackdown Reviews Part I at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01LY6766K#nav-subnav>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

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

Smackdown – November 9, 2016: What's Scottish for Average?

I apologize for the delay but my internet was out for a few hours during the middle of the show.

Smackdown

Date: November 8, 2016

Location: SSE Hydro, Glasgow, Scotland

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, David Otunga, John Bradshaw Layfield, Tom Phillips

It's another night in the same building as Smackdown is in Scotland. Tonight actually has a major match announced as Becky Lynch will be defending the Women's Title against Alexa Bliss in a match that was scheduled for No Mercy but was postponed due to an injury. Other than that we're likely going to see more announced for Survivor Series. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's AJ Styles to open things up. AJ isn't in a good mood tonight and doesn't want to hear the booing or see the tweets. He wants to talk about last week's travesty, which saw that mutant turtle James Ellsworth cost him a match against Dean Ambrose. If Ambrose wanted to be champion again so badly, he never would have lost his title in the first place. That brings AJ to Survivor Series, where he doesn't need Dean's help to win.

AJ wants to bring the Survivor Series team down but Baron Corbin interrupts. Baron says he'll deliver, but not to AJ's team. Cue the Wyatts, which now includes Randy Orton. Before anything can happen, here's Dean to bring out James Ellsworth (JBL: "HOW DID YOU GET THAT THING THROUGH CUSTOMS???"), who AJ wants thrown in Loch Ness. Styles suggests that Dean and Ellsworth are outnumbered but Corbin walks out.

Cue Shane (who I wasn't sure was still alive) to talk to team blue. He wants to see the best in the world beat Raw and thinks it's going to be a clean sweep. Ellsworth has an idea: he can be the official mascot! Shane agrees and a six man tag is made for later tonight with the Wyatts vs. Ambrose/Corbin/Ellsworth.

Survivor Series Qualifying Match: Breezango vs. Vaudevillains

Breezango are dressed as cops for no apparent reason. Gotch immediately gives Breeze a Regal Roll and the Swanton gives English two. Everything breaks down and Fandango gives English a falcon's arrow for the pin at 1:23. That was quick.

Natalya vs. Naomi

Coach Natalya now has a whistle. Nikki Bella is on commentary and Naomi is very yellow. Natalya takes her down to start before walking into a sitout jawbreaker. There's a double crossbody to put both women down but cue Carmella to talk some trash. Natalya busts out her whistle to try and restore order but it just lets Nikki forearm Carmella. The distraction lets Naomi grab a small package for the pin at 2:02.

Corbin has walked out of the six man tag (assuming he was ever officially announced in the first place as it wasn't clear) but will face Kalisto tonight.

Ellsworth gets on Dean's nerves until Daniel Bryan comes up. Daniel has a replacement partner for them and it's....Kane. Ellsworth: "So....what's the strategy tonight?" Kane: "Don't. Tag. In."

Baron Corbin vs. Kalisto

We actually get a flashback to their feud from three months ago that never went anywhere. Corbin jumps him before the bell and lays Kalisto out. Kalisto is sent outside but Baron slips off the apron and messes up his knee. With Corbin begging off, Kalisto dropkicks the bad knee into the steps. Corbin is in agony as referees come out to check on him. Kalisto even adds a frog splash to the bad leg. No match.

Video on Alexa Bliss vs. Becky Lynch.

Baron Corbin is officially off the Smackdown team due to the knee injury.

So at this point in the show my cable went out and didn't come back on until right before the end of Crews vs. Hawkins. I saw the rest later but there was a big gap in the middle.

Women's Title: Alexa Bliss vs. Becky Lynch

Becky is defending and this is billed as the main event, halfway through the show. A lockup goes nowhere to start and the Disarm-Her sends Alexa bailing to the ropes. They trade some rollups for two each before a dropkick sends Alexa into the corner. That goes badly for the champ though as she misses a charge into the post and it's off to the armbars. More armbarring is countered into a sitout powerbomb to put both women down as we take a break.

Back with Becky starting a comeback and getting two off a Bex Plex. Bliss avoids a guillotine legdrop though and hits a backflip into double knees to the ribs. The champ pops back up and crotches Alexa on top, only to get shoved right back down. They trade rollups but the Disarm-Her goes on to make Bliss tap at 14:50....with Alexa's

foot on the ropes.

Rating: C+. This was more long than good but it also keeps them set up for another title match down the line. Becky is a good option as the first champion and they made Alexa feel like a bigger deal as she won a lot of matches coming up to this title shot. The match itself was just kind of there though with the basic arm work but the big fight feel helped a lot.

Bryan promises Shane to have a replacement chosen tonight. Miz and Maryse come in to set up some exposition. In exchange for Sami Zayn getting an Intercontinental Title shot, Brian Kendrick will be defending the Cruiserweight Title against Kalisto, and if he wins the cruiserweights come to Smackdown. As a bonus, Miz gets an Intercontinental Title shot next week.

Curt Hawkins vs. Apollo Crews

Hawkins starts fast with a jumping knee to the face and we're in the chinlock about forty seconds into the match. Crews throws him down again though and goes up top, only to miss a high crossbody. An Oklahoma roll gives Hawkins the pin at 1:50.

Dolph Ziggler can't wait to defend the Intercontinental Title against the Miz next week on the way to facing Sami Zayn at Survivor Series.

Wyatt Family vs. James Ellsworth/Kane/Dean Ambrose

AJ is on commentary, giving us a FIVE PERSON BOOTH. My goodness people, think this nonsense through. Kane and Harper do the big power showdown to start with a backdrop sending Harper flying. It's off to Dean vs. Bray with the latter running him over with a shoulder. Orton comes in and runs Dean over before stomping on the fingers. A side slam from Kane has Orton in trouble and the fans want Ellsworth.

That just earns James a throat slit, followed by Orton breaking up a chokeslam attempt on Luke. We hit the stomping for a bit before Bray nails the backplash for two. The stomping continues and we take a break. Back with the Ellsworth chants continuing, only to have

Harper cut them off by dropkicking Kane. Orton grabs a headlock followed by a dropkick but Harper gets DDT'd.

The hot tag brings in Ambrose to clothesline Wyatt, only to have the top rope elbow knocked out of the air. Sister Abigail is broken countered into a rollup for two and there go Kane and Harper to the back. A double clothesline puts both guys down so Ellsworth tags himself in. No Chin Music is loaded up (JBL: "Shawn Michaels is rolling over in his grave and he's not even dead!") but Bray easily reverses into Sister Abigail for the pin at 12:55.

Rating: C-. The ending helped this a lot as there was no reason for it to be anything other than Ellsworth getting run over. It's similar to the old Dungeon of Doom matches where the opponents had to keep the Giant out of the ring because he was going to destroy anyone who got in the ring with him. This was all that made sense and that's fine for what they had here.

The Wyatts swarm Ellsworth but Shane runs out for the save. Before anything else can happen, Daniel comes out and says he can name anyone he wants to the Survivor Series team. Therefore, he picks.....Shane. Well of course he does because Heaven forbid a McMahon isn't involved so we can have it be about the wrestlers. This is nothing more than a way to have Shane vs. Stephanie, which is what this whole mess is all about in the first place. This actually ticks me off and that doesn't happen often on Smackdown.

Overall Rating: C+. This was fine, albeit a little forgettable. The bigger matches worked fine but I can't get over Shane getting the final spot on the team. Unless that gets changed, that's one heck of a stupid way to go for the sake of a surprise or whatever they're going for. I'm sick of the McMahons and all of the forced drama, but they're the stars of the show and that's all that matters.

Results

Breezango b. Vaudevillains – Falcon's arrow to English

Naomi b. Natalya – Small package

Becky Lynch b. Alexa Bliss – Disarm-Her

Curt Hawkins b. Apollo Crews – Oklahoma roll

Wyatt Family b. James Ellsworth/Kane/Dean Ambrose – Sister Abigail to Ellsworth

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book, KB's Complete 2014 Raw and Smackdown Reviews Part I at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01LY6766K#nav-subnav>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

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

Survivor Series Count-Up – 2003: When One GM Isn't Enough

Survivor Series 2003

Date: November 16, 2003

Location: American Airlines Center, Dallas, Texas

Attendance: 13,487

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole, Tazz

This is the first of two redos that I'll be doing for the year. It's an interesting time for WWE and Raw in particular as there are two General Managers for the same show. While that sounds like a dream come true for WWE, it needs to be changed tonight. Therefore we have Steve Austin's team vs. Eric Bischoff's team, winner take all. That's not the main event of course because we've got HHH! Let's get to it.

The opening video asks if you have what it takes to survive. I know

I usually make fun of this but it's something that fits the simple idea of the show. Why mess with something that works this well? It also gives the Smackdown Survivor Series match some focus and doesn't put the whole thing on the less interesting matches.

Team Angle vs. Team Lesnar

Kurt Angle, John Cena, Chris Benoit, Hardcore Holly, Bradshaw
Brock Lesnar, A-Train, Matt Morgan, Big Show, Nathan Jones

Holly is here due to Lesnar breaking his neck over a year ago. Lesnar's partners are just hired guns. Show is US Champion, which he almost never defended. Brock is WWE Champion (Smackdown) so everyone wants to fight him for obvious reasons. Morgan is an unknown and Jones never was any good.

Cena rhymes a bit before the match, saying he's the fetus and everyone else is afterbirth. Can we stick with Dallas is the place to be and John Cena is the man to beat please? He doesn't need a stable, but he might want to trade his partners in for a one night stand with Sable. Brock might have something to say about that but as for Big Show, Cena is like a big whistle. I'll let you figure out the punchline. So he wants Sable and Big Show? That's...uh interesting.

Before we get to the match, I wish they would get rid of the sound effect they use for the name graphics. It sounds like metal creaking and is already annoying. Holly goes after Lesnar before the bell and sends him into the steps. A referee gets shoved down and Holly is disqualified before the match even starts. In the ring, A-Train misses a charge in the corner and eats Bradshaw's Clothesline for another elimination but Big Show chokeslams Bradshaw for the third elimination in less than a minute.

Cena can't FU Big Show and it's off to Lesnar for what would be a very different (and better) match later. John pounds Brock down in the corner and gets two off a rollup until Brock sends Cena flying. It's off to Morgan as the announcers are talking about the Cruiserweight Title for no apparent reason. Morgan's sidewalk slam has Cena in more trouble and it's off to Jones, who is finally allowed to appear on live pay per view. Cena finally scores with the Throwback (I miss that move) on Lesnar and it's off to Benoit.

Lesnar gets pounded into the corner as Benoit always looked awesome

against Brock. A big clothesline puts Benoit down and it's off to Big Show for a gorilla press, who talks trash to Angle while holding Benoit in the air. The chokeslam is countered into the Crossface (I've always loved that counter) but Brock is right there to break it up. We hit the abdominal stretch with Show's back to the camera (that's probably a fine today) and you can't actually see most of Benoit. I never get used to how big Show really is.

The standing legdrop gets two for Show and the big brawl breaks out on the floor. Morgan comes in and gets dropkicked in the leg and face, finally allowing for the hot tag to Angle. We're already at the rolling Germans so it's off to Lesnar who gets suplexed as well. Everything breaks down and the Angle Slam eliminates Morgan to tie it up. Show gets dumped to the floor and the ankle lock gets rid of Jones, only to have an F5 do the same to Angle. So after three more eliminations in less than a minute, we have Lesnar/Big Show vs. Cena/Benoit.

Lesnar misses a charge at Benoit and hits the post so Benoit goes right after the arm. The F5 is quickly countered into the Crossface and Cena is smart enough to knock Show off the apron but Brock gets his feet into the ropes. Another Crossface actually makes Lesnar tap clean, leaving Big Show alone 2-1. The YOU TAPPED OUT chants begin and Benoit takes Show down with a top rope shoulder. The Crossface is knocked away but Cena nails Show with the chain, setting up the FU for the pin and the victory, planting seeds for Wrestlemania in the process.

Rating: C-. I always liked the idea of this match on paper but it really didn't work in execution as it needed another ten minutes or so. There were two stretches here that added up to six eliminations in about two minutes. They went through this way too fast which is probably due to time, but a World Champion's match shouldn't be cut for time. Just too fast here.

Benoit and Cena shake hands after having issues for weeks.

Vince comes in to see Shane and points out that it's father and son vs. brothers tonight in separate matches. The only thing Shane feels is sorry for Vince, who faces Undertaker later. Vince leaves and runs into Austin. They start chuckling and then laughing but Austin gets serious really fast and walks away. Nothing was said and JR and King are confused as well.

Women's Title: Molly Holly vs. Lita

Lita is freshly back from her year and a half off with the broken neck and this is her first title shot. I'll give you two guesses as to who the fans are behind. Lita starts fast and suplexes Molly down, followed by a nice nipup. That's not serious enough for Molly so she sends Lita crashing out to the floor. We hit a dragon sleeper on the challenger as Lawler can't seem to bring himself to talk about Molly's looks. To be fair, it really doesn't feel right to try.

Back up and Lita hammers in some right hands but the comeback is short lived as a sidewalk slam gets two. Molly actually tries to talk some trash in the corner and gets powerbombed off the middle rope instead. The Litasault misses though and the Molly Go Round (top rope flipping seated senton) gets two. Frustrated, Molly loosens the middle turnbuckle and drop toeholds Lita into the steel to retain. No I didn't skip anything. The referee either didn't notice or didn't care and it really is as sudden as it sounds.

Rating: D. Lita just wasn't back yet and the match didn't work as a result. Molly is really talented but the lack of charisma hurt her. At the end of the day, she's the most innocent and kind woman the company had in years and for some reason they made her a heel. It never fit and this was a good example of why it didn't.

We recap Kane vs. Shane McMahon. Kane was doing his annual monster thing and tombstoned Linda due to reasons of evil. That's Kane's evil, not Linda's evil. Shane came back for his annual (popular theme here) wrestling run by trying to stop the monster. This leads us to an ambulance match here.

Kane vs. Shane McMahon

Ambulance match which means casket but with an ambulance instead. Shane goes after him to start but has to use a chair to knock the steps into Kane's face. They're already loading up the announcers' table and thank goodness for that. Would you want to imagine these two trying to do a regular match? Shane hits him in the head with a monitor and drops the sweet top rope elbow through the table. Kane sits up so let's go into the crowd for a change.

They get to the back with Shane sneaking up on Kane with a kendo stick. Not a wrench or a pipe or something made of metal, but rather a wooden stick. He was an athlete, not a scholar. Shane puts him in

a security booth and backs an SUV into Kane before calling in an ambulance on a walkie-talkie (where did that come from?). Also, would that count even if it's not the designated ambulance? Wrestlemania XIV would seem to hold precedence here.

Kane comes back by throwing Shane into a wall and there goes the camera, drawing a lot of booing from the crowd. They're right too as they paid for a live show and are watching most of this on a monitor but then they don't even get to see all of it? I've never been a fan of going backstage for just that reason.

Back to the arena with Kane throwing him against the other ambulance. JR: "Like Shane was a cruiserweight." Shane probably would be a cruiserweight actually, or at least really close. An ambulance door to the face slows Kane down (When all else fails, hit them with a door. It got Christian the Hardcore Title at Wrestlemania XVIII.) but he just blasts Shane in the face. He can only get one door shut with Shane inside though, allowing McMahon to come back with a DDT on the concrete.

Again, since Shane isn't the brightest guy on the planet, he comes back with a trashcan. Not a heavy, thick object but rather a thin trashcan. He makes up for it a bit with a Coast to Coast off the top of the ambulance to drive the can into Kane's face, landing on a box (which appeared to have a crashpad inside) in the process. Kane still gets an arm out of the ambulance door (that's fine in this case as it took a long time for Shane to get him inside) and just throws Shane against the ambulance wall. A Tombstone on the concrete (no wonder Kane's knees are shot) is enough to put Shane away.

Rating: D+. Well that happened. Some of the spots were good but Shane going for the cool looking stuff instead of the logical stuff like HIT HIM WITH A WRENCH really brought it down. It also doesn't help that this got more time than the first match, because you want to push the boss' son in a feud he has no business winning that went on for months. This really could have gone to someone else to give them a rub but Shane gets it instead. That's not good and it got on a lot of wrestlers' nerves back in the day.

The ambulance leaves with Shane inside.

Brock tells Josh Matthews (who looks like even more of a tool than he does now) that he didn't tap out or lose because he's not afraid of anyone. Goldberg comes up to shake his hands, planting the seeds

for their, ahem, match at Wrestlemania.

Here's the Coach in a neck brace to waste some time. Coach assures us that he'll be back to health soon enough and not to worry about him. As he's about to leave, Coach spots Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban in the front row. We get a quick interview where Cuban says he's looking forward to Austin beating Bischoff. Being a Bischoff guy, Coach disagrees and asks Cuban about WWE referees vs. NBA referees (Cuban has a LONG history with NBA referees) so Mark says all referees suck.

This brings out Bischoff (JR: "What happened to Survivor Series?") to say he's in charge tonight. Cuban is in the ring with him now and Eric threatens to have him thrown out, but maybe Bischoff should just do it himself. Eric gets shoved down so here's Randy Orton to lay Cuban out with an RKO. They would actually revisit this SIX YEARS LATER when Cuban guest hosted Raw and screwed Orton out of a match. Again: the opening match with the World Champion gets thirteen match, Shane vs. Kane gets a little more and this gets about six.

Evolution is having a party with some good looking women. They make a toast to HHH getting the title back (from Goldberg) when Orton comes in. Orton: "Guys listen....whoa." They're proud of him for laying out Cuban (why?) and he promises to take out Austin as well. Evolution will drink to that.

Smackdown Tag Team Titles: Basham Brothers vs. Los Guerreros

The Bashams, with He-Man chest pieces, are defending and have Shaniqua with them. My goodness what happened to the Bashams? They spent FOREVER in developmental and were just another tag team on the main roster. It's a brawl to start with Danny (partner of Doug) being sent to the floor but both of them have to save Shaniqua. I'm not sure why as she was one of the most worthless managers and performers of all time.

Eddie starts with Three Amigos to Danny before it's off to Chavo for two off a basement dropkick. Back to Eddie who is sent to the floor and beaten up by Shaniqua. Danny puts on a reverse chinlock as this is just a Raw match. Yeah they're all on Smackdown but Smackdown was a lot better than this. Chavo comes back in with dropkicks and a bad looking tilt-a-whirl slam for two on Doug.

Eddie saves his nephew from a middle rope spinebuster and Chavo adds

a running hilo for two. Chavo and Doug clothesline each other and Shaniqua lets us have some Twin Magic. Even in 2003 I can't get away from the Bellas. Shaniqua takes a frog splash but Chavo accidentally kicks Eddie on a tornado DDT, letting Danny roll Chavo up and grab the tights to retain.

Rating: D+. Just a TV match here which isn't enough when you're on one of the biggest pay per views of the year. The problem here is this was meant to set up stuff in the future (Chavo vs. Eddie) instead of being about the titles. That's fine (see Royal Rumble 1994) down the road but it doesn't make for a good match here. The Bashams had no personality and it's a big reason why they weren't going to make it like this. It's a major problem of this era and the modern era still: finding something that works in developmental and scrapping it when they get to the main roster, making most of the developmental time a waste.

Lawler and JR preview the elimination tag and tell us that Shane is getting ready for a CAT scan.

We recap Team Austin vs. Team Bischoff, which is all about controlling Raw. Austin isn't allowed to touch anyone unless physically provoked which drove him crazy. He also doesn't trust anyone but he's been forced to trust five men tonight though because this is it. Bischoff had fired him as a wrestler but Austin was brought back as co-GM which caused a bunch of friction, setting up this match. If Austin wins tonight, he has full power and can fight whenever he wants.

Team Austin vs. Team Bischoff

Austin: Shawn Michaels, Rob Van Dam, Booker T., Dudley Boyz

Bischoff: Chris Jericho, Christian, Randy Orton, Scott Steiner, Mark Henry

Steiner has Stacy Keibler against her will as part of a very uncomfortable story. The Dudleyz are the Raw Tag Team Champions and Van Dam is Intercontinental Champion. Christian and D-Von get things going, which seems appropriate for old times' sake. That goes nowhere so it's off to Van Dam who gets tow off a quick kick. Jericho comes in and gets shouldered and suplexed for two.

Steiner gets the tag and eats a boot to the face, only to throw Van Dam with a suplex to take over. A little crotching on the top makes

it even worse as we're firmly in the early stages still, meaning that this didn't fall to the curse of "what else can we give the time to?". Booker comes in but gets run over as well with the bicep elbow drop getting two. JR just has to bring up the three mini kings from 1994 because that story NEVER gets old.

Booker nails a quick scissors kick and a Spinarooni as everything breaks down. A low blow stops Booker and Steiner puts on the absolute worst camel clutch I've ever seen. Stacy gets on the apron to play cheerleader for Booker so Steiner breaks the hold. The reverse 3D plants Scott and the Book End is good for the first elimination. Never mind the lead though as the World's Strongest Slam (I didn't realize he had been using it that long) from Henry ties it up thirty seconds later.

Bubba comes in with some hard shots to the jaw but Henry runs him over Vader style. D-Von tries to help his brother, only to be slammed face first into him by Henry's insane power. Speaking of power, the Dudleyz come back with 3D followed by a Five Star (the ECW Special?) to get rid of Mark. Jericho is in next but Van Dam head fakes him to set up a split legged moonsault for two.

It's off to Orton for the first time and he blasts Van Dam with a big clothesline. I can never get over seeing Orton looking human or having hair. That's one of the most jarring physical transformations I've ever seen in wrestling and it always strikes me. Like a viper. Van Dam kicks him in the face but Jericho shoves Rob off the top, setting up the RKO to tie it up again.

The fans want tables but have to settle for D-Von getting two off a headbutt. Jericho comes back in for two off a dropkick, followed by a quick Flashback (sleeper drop) to get rid of D-Von. It's Shawn/Bubba vs. Christian/Jericho/Orton and Shawn gets his first tag to fire the crowd up again. Jericho is quickly sent running over for a tag to Orton who has a lot more luck with some forearms to the chest.

Back to Bubba who cleans house on all three until Jericho breaks up a Bubba Bomb with a low blow, setting up an Unprettier to leave Shawn down 3-1. Christian is up first and Shawn hammers away with right hands, only to be low bridged out to the floor by the other Canadian. The slow beatdown begins and Jericho cuts off the comeback again, allowing Christian to catapult him into the post. JR gets in

his "local basketball team here" dribbling a ball line. Shawn is busted and you know the shaky legs are coming soon.

Christian does the signature Shawn pose and punches away, only to charge right into Sweet Chin Music to make it 2-1. That's where Shawn is at his best: looking dead on his feet with his back against the wall and throwing superkicks because it's all he's got left. Oh and bleeding normally helps. Jericho comes in for some right hands before it's back to Orton who grabs a belly to back suplex.

The heels start making some faster tags but Jericho dives into a kick to the ribs and a DDT. Lawler: "I want to believe. I'm trying to believe." Shawn sends Orton to the floor and blocks the Lionsault with knees. Jericho is up first though and tries the Walls, only to get small packaged to tie it up. Lawler: "I BELIEVE!" Before he leaves though, Jericho blasts Shawn in the head with a chair. Shouldn't that be a DQ on Orton as it's interference when it's down to one on one?

Orton comes back in with a high cross body but Shawn collapses to send Orton crashing into the referee. You can actually feel the drama here, even with JR being borderline obnoxious with the cheering for Austin. The VERY bloody Shawn tunes up the band but Bischoff kicks him down. That's enough for Steve and the beating is on, including a Stunner to Orton. Austin and Batista head to the back and here's Batista to powerbomb Shawn, giving Orton the final pin. And yes, you're supposed to believe that the referee saw or heard NONE of this.

Rating: B+. This took its time to get going but once they handed it over to Shawn, it was all gravy. There's no one better at making the impossible comeback than Shawn Michaels and this was one of the better ones he's ever done. There was really no way you could have Austin's guys win here but they did a GREAT job of making you think that his team could pull it off. That's really impressive stuff and the match was great drama with the action backing it up.

Shawn gets up in the big serious moment and says he let Austin down. Steve doesn't accept that and hugs him anyway as JR is being all serious, which actually works here. Austin isn't done though and comes back to the ring after walking Shawn to the back. He talks about his career starting in Dallas in 1989 and if it has to end, he's glad it ended here. Cue Coach with the cops, singing Goodbye. I

think you get the drill here: he has nothing to lose so the beating is on. Naturally beer is consumed, just like it would be again when he was back in December.

We recap Undertaker vs. Vince McMahon. Undertaker had been feuding with Vince's handpicked champion Brock Lesnar so Undertaker was never going to be allowed to be near the title again. One night, Undertaker won a match granting him any match he wanted at Survivor Series. He picked Buried Alive, which Vince gladly agreed to because Brock would destroy him again. Undertaker meant Vince of course and the match was made. Undertaker is promising to bury Vince once and for all tonight. I'm sure.

Undertaker vs. Vince McMahon

Buried Alive if that's not clear. Tazz even has keys to victory. #3: AVOID THE HOLE! That's good advice in so many areas of life. I miss Undertaker's You're Gonna Pay song. Vince has recently been saying a higher power will protect him in this match. So he's protecting himself? Undertaker starts punching early on and SWEET GOODNESS Vince is gushing. The beating continues with Vince getting crotched against the post. Totally one sided as you would expect so far.

Undertaker chokes with a camera cord as payback for Vince threatening to have Undertaker's wife raped and his home blown up. Yep that happened. One heck of a monitor shot knocks Vince over the table and an even bigger shot with a shovel has Vince in a heap on the floor. Undertaker crushes the ankle with the steps as there are LARGE red puddles underneath Vince's head. That's one of the deepest blade jobs I've ever seen.

Undertaker finally carries him to the grave but a low blow FINALLY gives Vince a breather and his first offense. A shovel to the chest puts Undertaker in the grave but he comes right back and throws Vince in instead. He goes to get in the bulldozer but the cab explodes. Cue Kane to knock Undertaker into the grave. Vince is sent to the bulldozer and Undertaker is buried.

Rating: C+. The match sucked but some of those shots to the head and that SICK blade job more than carries it up. This was a violent mess and that's exactly what it needed to be, especially with the ending designed to get us back to the Dead Man. That being said, WHY DID UNDERTAKER KEEP AGREEING TO THESE MATCHES??? HE NEVER WON IT ONCE! Bad match, GREAT violence and blood.

We recap Goldberg vs. HHH. After losing to him over and over, HHH issued a \$100,000 bounty because he thought he was Harley Race in modern times (look up Starrcade 1983). Batista returned from injury and claimed the bounty by breaking Goldberg's ankle. Tonight is HHH's rematch and Goldberg can barely walk coming in. This gets the music video treatment even though there's really not enough of a story to warrant it.

Raw World Title Goldberg vs. HHH

Goldberg is defending (doesn't that mean Batista didn't take him out?) and HHH is looking WAY less developed than usual. He had a groin injury around this time but did it really mess him up that badly? Like, it's WEIRD to see him looking like this. They slug it out before the bell and the spear connects but Goldberg has to beat up Flair. Ric is clotheslined to the floor and the bell actually rings. Even Lawler thinks waiting that long is pretty stupid.

After a quick trip to the floor it's back inside with Goldberg scoring off a powerslam. The leg goes out though and HHH starts in on it, including throwing him outside for some cheap shots from Goldberg. Back in and HHH drops an elbow onto the leg, followed by a lot of stomping to put the champion on the floor. Say it with me: and Flair gets in some shots too.

There's a half crab with Goldberg grabbing the ring skirt but for some reason that's not enough to break the hold, giving us JR's sarcastic voice. Goldberg pulls him face first into the post and puts both guys down with a clothesline. It's HHH up first but the Figure Four is broken up, meaning we get a ref bump. Oh good as I was worried we might not have one.

Flair throws in some brass knuckles to knock Goldberg silly for two. HHH knocks the referee down again and it's sledgehammer time. Goldberg takes it away and hits Flair in the ribs, knocks out the invading Orton and Batista and breaks up a Pedigree attempt. The spear and Jackhammer connect to retain the title.

Rating: D. HHH sucked in 2003. I can barely remember a single good match he had in the year (and yes I know there are a few here and there) but the big ones were bad on top of bad on top of bad. It's the same formula no matter what and feels like it's never going to end. All that aside, what was up with his physique here? Go check this out. It's like someone went back to 1995 and inflated him. Bad

match here, as you would expect.

Overall Rating: D. This show feels like they put the card together but never bothered to put the show in order. It would have been much better, and made WAY more sense, to have the Austin vs. Bischoff match go on last as it's implied to be Austin's final appearance, which is a lot more important than your run of the mill title defense. The rest of the show is pretty much just there, ranging from bad to dull. Swapping the card wouldn't have fixed it entirely but it would have made for a much more entertaining night instead of wanting to know what else we had to sit through.

Ratings Comparison

Team Angle vs. Team Lesnar

Original: B-

2012 Redo: C

2015 Redo: C-

Molly Holly vs. Lita

Original: D+

2012 Redo: D+

2015 Redo: D

Kane vs. Shane McMahon

Original: D+

2012 Redo: D+

2015 Redo: D+

Basham Brothers vs. Los Guerreros

Original: D

2012 Redo: D+

2015 Redo: D+

Team Bischoff vs. Team Austin

Original: A-

2012 Redo: B

2015 Redo: B+

Vince McMahon vs. Undertaker

Original: D

2012 Redo: D

2015 Redo: C+

Goldberg vs. HHH

Original: D-

2012 Redo: D+

2015 Redo: D

Overall Rating

Original: C-

2012 Redo: D+

2015 Redo: D

One step down every year.

Here's the original review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/11/12/history-of-survivor-series-count-up-2003-austin-vs-bischoff/>

And the original redo:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2012/11/09/survivor-series-count-up-2012-edition-2003-austins-retiring-forever-and-doesnt-close-the-show/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book, KB's Complete 2014 Raw and Smackdown Reviews Part I at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01LY6766K#nav-subnav>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

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

Survivor Series Count-Up – 2001: When Buying the Competition Isn't Enough

Survivor Series 2001

Date: November 18, 2001

Location: Greensboro Coliseum, Greensboro, North Carolina

Attendance: 10,142

Commentators: Jim Ross, Paul Heyman

While there's a full card to go with the Survivor Series match, none of it matters compared to the main event. Some of the WCW and WWF Titles will be unified as well, which was a major problem at the time. There were so many belts floating around at the time that it didn't matter when one would change hands. Thankfully a lot of those problems will be wrapped up tonight. Let's get to it.

The opening video is a cool concept as it shows all of the old logos for the WWF over the years and a bunch of great moments in company history, set to a song called The End Is Here.

European Title: Christian vs. Al Snow

Christian is in the Alliance and defending. He greets his fans in South Carolina (that's what he said) and calls himself awesome. Snow comes out to the Tough Enough (reality competition series where Snow was head trainer) theme which was quite a catchy tune. Snow takes him down to the mat to frustrates the champ. Christian comes back with a foot on Snow's face in the corner followed by a Russian legsweep for two. We hit the chinlock as the match slows down.

Al fights up and hits his headbutts but Christian hits a tiger driver backbreaker for two. Snow gets rammed into the buckle and things slow down again. The trapping headbutts stop Christian again and Snow escapes the reverse DDT into a neckbreaker for two. Heyman schills for the Alliance guys in an always funny bit.

A sitout powerbomb gets two for Snow and now Christian's reverse DDT scores for no cover. Instead Christian talks a lot of trash and gets rolled up for two. A top rope cross body is rolled through by Snow and the Snow Plow gets two. There's the Unprettier out of nowhere to

keep the title in the Alliance. That was quick.

Rating: C-. This is one of those shows where anything but the main event means nothing, which makes the first hour and a half of the show pretty uninteresting to sit through. That's exactly the case here. This match was fine but it could have been on Smackdown on any given week. Snow and Christian are both good hands so a good match is really nothing too shocking.

Austin arrives and yells at the Alliance because he doesn't like being accused of being a traitor to his team. This would be a lot better if Stephanie had more acting ability than say, a carrot. Austin yells at everyone on the team and says stop being paranoid.

Vince and Linda arrive with Vince brimming with confidence. Cole comes up and says this might be their last night in business but Vince doesn't want to hear talk like that. Vince talks about taking calculated risks and being confident because someone is jumping to the WWF. Regal comes up and says he doesn't buy the idea that Austin is jumping back to the WWF.

William Regal vs. Tajiri

These two are former friends. Regal hurt Tajiri's (Japanese wrestler with a lot of fast kicks) girlfriend Torrie (not the same person with the same name but different spelling from years ago) on Smackdown to set this up. Tajiri is Cruiserweight Champion and was supposed to face X-Pac in a title for title match, but according to Commissioner Mick Foley, "No one cared about X-Pac or the Light Heavyweight Title anyway". Tajiri fires off a kick but gets suplexed right back down.

The knee trembler takes Tajiri down but Tajiri goes after Regal's knee with the kicks. There's the Tarantula and Regal is bleeding from the nose. A handspring elbow gets two for Tajiri but Regal ties his head up in the ropes to stop the momentum dead. Regal tries a powerbomb but gets countered by another kick to the head. The Buzzsaw Kick misses and there's the Tiger Bomb from Regal for the pin. Too short to rate but it was fine.

Regal powerbombs him again post match. Torrie (looking GREAT in a purple top and leather pants) comes out to check on Tajiri, only to get powerbombed as well.

We recap Edge vs. Test. These two are both midcard champions after

the seemingly dozens of never ending midcard title changes going on at this point. Edge is US Champion, Test is Intercontinental Champion, tonight only one belt survives.

Test complains about the makeup lady not rubbing in the oil well enough on him. Stacy (his future girlfriend) comes up and agrees with Test. Test hits on her and she'll think about it if he wins.

Edge compares himself to Test and says that there are a lot of similarities between them. The difference is that Edge hasn't been dumped by every chick on the planet. Edge makes fun of Test for sounding wooden and that's about it.

Intercontinental Title/US Title: Edge vs. Test

They fight over control to start with Edge taking over via a series of forearm to the head. Test powers him down and goes after the ribs with a wide ranging selection of stomps. We head to the floor with Edge being dropped across the barricade to further the attack on the ribs. Back in and Edge hits a dropkick to take over before we head outside again. They're quickly back inside and a swinging neckbreaker gets two for Edge.

Test drops Edge onto the top rope ribs first to reinjure him and the taller of the blond Canadian champions takes over again. Test puts on a chinlock as the match slows down again. Edge fights up and avoids a corner charge before hitting a middle rope missile dropkick for two. A middle rope cross body misses though and Test puts him on the top rope.

Edge blocks a superplex with some CANADIAN right hands to the ribs but a sunset bomb doesn't work. Test dives off the top but jumps right into a dropkick to put him down. The problem with this match is neither guy has been able to build up any kind of a run with the title as both have changed hands four times since the Invasion began about four months ago. How can you get behind either guy as a big time champion in that little bit of time? On top of that, Edge has been champion for six days and Test for thirteen. That's not exactly Honky Tonk Man unifying with Luger in the late 80s.

Both guys are down now but it's Edge up first with some clotheslines and a spinwheel kick. Test's pumphandle slam is countered into the Edge-0-Matic for two. Test spears Edge down for two but the big boot misses. There's the pumphandle for two but Test's powerbomb is countered into a hurricanrana. Edge's spear gets a close two but he

can't hit the Edgecution. Test tries a full nelson slam but Edge rolls through for the pin and both titles.

Rating: C+. This started pretty slow but it got going once Edge was able to start countering Test's power stuff. In other words, Edge did the work to make Test's generic big man offense look decent. This was probably the match of the night so far, which isn't surprising given how hot Edge got in the next year.

Angle comes up to see a stressed out Stephanie. My goodness her acting is bad. I know I say that a lot, but IT'S FREAKING TERRIBLE. She says if the Alliance loses tonight, she'll have to buy her own groceries and wash her own car. She can't be a....a....a REGULAR PERSON!!! Angle reminds her that she's special and doesn't think Austin will jump.

A cage is lowered.

Jeff Hardy and Lita are talking about Matt Hardy being different lately. Matt comes up and yells at them for acting strange and not being focused enough. It turns into a rallying speech and things seem ok. The guys leave and Trish comes out of the same locker room Matt came out of earlier. Keep in mind that Matt is dating Lita at this point.

WCW Tag Team Titles/WWF Tag Team Titles: Dudley Boys vs. Hardy Boys

In a cage. The Dudleys are WCW Tag Team Champions and the Hardys are the WWF Tag Team Champions and Stacy is STUNNING at this point as the Dudleys' manager. All four belts get laid out between the guys in the ring and it's time to go. You can win by pin/submission/both members escaping. There are tags required here and it's Matt vs. Bubba to start. Matt can't get anywhere so it's off to Jeff who walks into a Boss Man Slam for two.

D-Von comes in as Heyman talks about Big Daddy Dudley, which JR could not care less about. Back to Matt who rolls D-Von up for two but walks into a reverse inverted DDT for two. Bubba comes in again and drops a bunch of elbows for two. The Dudleys tag in and out a lot and it's back to Bubba for more punching to Matt's ribs. Bubba tries to ram Matt into the cage but gets countered into a reverse DDT.

Off to Jeff who cleans house as everything breaks down. Poetry in Motion hits Bubba and Matt climbs but D-Von makes the save. There's

a Bubba Bomb to Jeff which should likely hurt Bubba as well. Bubba goes up again but Matt slams him down for two. Matt gets rammed into the cage but when the Dudleys try to do the same to Jeff, he grabs the cage and tries to climb out, only to get caught in a Doomsday Device (Paul: "WHAT A RUSH!").

Matt gets crushed against the cage and Bubba whips D-Von into him for good measure. Bubba splashes him as well and the Dudleys are in full control. Jeff gets in a shot and Matt hits a top rope double clothesline to shift the momentum just as fast though. A DDT puts Bubba down for two and Jeff hits the legdrop between D-Von's legs. A double backdrop takes Ray down again and the Hardys go up.

Matt hits a legdrop and Jeff hits a splash off the top at the same time for two on Bubba. Matt makes a climb but gets pulled down with one leg still stuck in the cage. What's Up to Jeff and Bubba asks Stacy for a table. Stacy hits on Nick Patrick and picks the key out of his pocket. There's a table in the ring now but Matt breaks up the 3D by jumping Bubba. Why D-Von didn't flapjack Jeff through the table is anyone's guess.

Bubba and Matt go to the top and pound away at each other until Bubba is knocked down. Matt climbs down to escape but he's left alone against the Dudleys. D-Von is rammed into the cage a few times and Jeff goes up as D-Von climbs onto the table for no apparent reason. Jeff looks down and sees D-Von there before diving off the top of the cage, but the Swanton misses. Bubba covers the table and therefore Jeff as well for the pin and the titles.

Rating: B-. This was the usual good brawl between these teams and it furthers the Hardys' issues, but at the end of the day this feud was played out at this point. There was nothing left for these two teams to do and at this point it was being dragged out way too far. Still though, good match and a good way to I believe finally end this nearly two year long feud.

Jeff is taken out on a stretcher.

Mick Foley is at WWF New York and admits that his job (WWF Commissioner) means nothing.

Scotty 2 Hotty is about to be in the Immunity Battle Royal but Test beats him up to take his spot.

Immunity Battle Royal

Test, Billy Gunn, Bradshaw, Faarooq, Lance Storm, Billy Kidman, Diamond Dallas Page, Albert, Tazz, Perry Saturn, Raven, Chuck Palumbo, Crash Holly, Justin Credible, Shawn Stasiak, Steven Richards, Tommy Dreamer, The Hurricane, Spike Dudley, Hugh Morrus, Chavo Guerrero Jr., Funaki

I won't bother explaining who all of these people are as most of them won't be around again after this show. Some are from the Alliance and some are from the WWF but no matter who wins the main event tonight, the winner of this is guaranteed a job for a year. Stasiak is thrown to the floor before the bell rings and is apparently out. Test drops to the floor to hide as Tazz comes in late. Since it's a battle royal there's really not much to talk about here. Everyone punches everyone and no one is put out for awhile. Heyman freaks out about Tazz because Tazz choked him out on Smackdown.

Hurricane dives at Faarooq and is clotheslined out by Bradshaw. Albert throws Saturn out and Test, who is back in now, dumps Faarooq. Page is put out by someone we can't see and Storm superkicks Palumbo out. Morrus and Chavo run in as wildcards because they tried to jump from the Alliance to the WWF on Raw but got fired as a result. Billy dumps Chavo as Morrus is eliminated as well. Tazz dumps Dreamer and Crash as Storm low bridges Spike out. Bradshaw's clothesline kills Richards and he's gone.

Tazz stops to run his mouth to Heyman and gets dumped by Billy. Test and Kidman put Albert out. We're down to Bradshaw, Kidman, Gunn, Test and Storm. I've missed a bunch of eliminations but most of them weren't shown. The fall away slam puts Kidman out and we're down to four. Bradshaw kicks Storm down and might have hurt his ankle. Things slow way down as Billy and Bradshaw hang on for dear life. Storm and Test team up to put Bradshaw out but Test dumps Storm as well. A big boot eliminates Gunn and Test wins immunity.

Rating: C-. Not bad here but at the end of the day, it's a battle royal so what are you expecting to get? Test would fall through the floor in the next year with no one caring about him at all. This was a pretty big batch of jobbers in there though and that doesn't really make for an interesting match. Then again, neither do most battle royals.

Sacrifice video by Creed. This was a promotional campaign at the

time, with highlight videos set to My Sacrifice by Creed.

Booker is worried about Austin jumping. Shane says it's ok and stick with it.

Women's Title: Trish Stratus vs. Ivory vs. Lita vs. Mighty Molly vs. Jacqueline vs. Jazz

Chyna relinquished the title earlier in the year without being pinned and then disappeared so this is the best we've got to pick from for the new champion. This is Jazz's debut and the fans don't seem to care. Why does no one care? Because Jazz meant nothing in ECW and was a face there but is a heel here. Mighty Molly is Molly Holly as a superhero. Jazz and Lita start things off with Jazz pounding away. Off to Jackie vs. Molly off some blind tags and somehow even fewer people care about Jackie.

Jackie dropkicks Molly down and it's off to Ivory who gets caught in a sunset flip for two. This is one fall to a finish. Ivory slingshots Jackie into the ropes and it's off to Trish for some forearms. Lita gets knocked to the floor and the three Alliance chicks (Ivory, Jazz, Molly) triple team Trish for a bit. Jackie double crosses Lita on Poetry in Motion and everyone hits their finishers on everyone else. The Litasault gets two on Ivory as Jazz saves. Lita gets backdropped to the floor and it's Ivory vs. Trish left. Stratusfaction gives Trish her first title.

Rating: D. It was short, the match wasn't any good, Trish looked great in the skin tight barely there pink shorts, Lita looked good as usual, and that's all I've got here. As usual with situations like this, when the previous champion doesn't lose the title, the new champion comes in at a big disadvantage.

Vince looks at Team WWF and gives them a pep talk, bringing up names like Dr. Jerry Graham, Peter Maivia, Gorilla Monsoon (pop) and Andre the Giant (BIG pop). He understands he might be looking at a group of losers, and if that happens no one will ever forgive them. After listening to that speech, I want to go fight three WWF guys and one guy each from ECW and WCW!

We recap the main event which has been summed up pretty well already. Vince was originally on the team but replaced by Big Show and Rock and Jericho are having major issues. Rock is WCW champion and Austin is WWF Champion. This really does feel like a huge match. The video is set to Control by Puddle of Mudd which fits really

well.

Basically Vince said that he was tired of all of the Invasion (as were a lot of fans at this point) and offered one winner take all match with the losing organization going out of business. Angle joined the Alliance after the announcement but Vince says Austin is coming back to the WWF, giving the Alliance reason to be concerned. Austin stunned Angle on TV recently to further that idea.

Team WWF vs. Team Alliance

WWF: The Rock, Chris Jericho, Big Show, Undertaker, Kane

Alliance: Steve Austin, Kurt Angle, Booker T, Rob Van Dam, Shane McMahon

Everyone gets individual entrances so it takes forever to get to the start of the match. As those are going on, a few things to notice here: Team Alliance has one of the biggest WWF superstars ever, a guy that at this point had only wrestled in the WWF, a WCW guy, an ECW guy, and the then heir to the WWF throne.

Also, as goes the stereotype for the WWF, most of their guys are big and strong instead of the more athletic styles of the Alliance team. One other thing: JR keeps up one of the annoying inaccuracies in wrestling by saying that Undertaker won the World Title in his WWF debut. It was a year later, which you should know if you've read this far.

Rock and Austin start fighting before the bell and you know the early advantage doesn't mean a thing in this one. Austin hits the Thesz Press and the middle rope elbow for a very early two. Rock comes back with a middle finger elbow of his own and dares Shane to get in. Off to Booker who gets clotheslined down for two as Shane makes the save. Expect to hear that line quite a bit. Off to Jericho as Heyman blames Vince for the end of ECW.

Van Dam and Jericho have a nice fast paced sequence with Jericho hitting a spinwheel kick for no cover. Jericho chops away but misses a dropkick, allowing Rob to hit the cartwheel into a moonsault for two. For reasons likely related to high levels of drug use, Van Dam tries a standing hurricanrana on Jericho, only to be countered into the Walls. Shane makes the third save of the match already and it's off to Angle vs. Kane.

Angle gets thrown around but eventually slips behind Kane and hits a

German Suplex for two. Kane comes back with a side slam and the top rope clothesline for two of his own as Shane saves again. Off to the Dead Man who pounds away but misses a charge into the corner, allowing Booker to get the tag. Undertaker immediately drops Booker and hits a legdrop, but Shane breaks up his fifth near fall of the match.

There's Old School to Booker followed by that lifting wristlock which always looks painful. Off to a short armed scissors followed by a clothesline for two, resulting in ANOTHER save from Shane. Austin comes in to pound on Undertaker (and causing Heyman to say WHAT after everything JR says) but he gets caught in Old School. Say it with me: Shane makes the save. Undertaker gets caught in the wrong corner and quintuple teamed.

Angle is in next and tries to slug it out with the Dead Man for some reason. Undertaker escapes a German and DDTs Angle down. There's the tag to Big Show and JR almost immediately bashes him, saying Show can make a huge difference, or he can make some huge mistakes. Show throws around RVD and Angle before clearing off the entire Alliance corner. Angle gets underneath Show and there's the Slam followed by an Ax kick from Booker (and a Spinarooni) and a Five Star and a top rope elbow from Shane for the first elimination.

Shane dances around in celebration before turning around to meet The Rock who beats the living tar out of Shane with right hands in the corner. Off to Kane for a chokeslam, then a tombstone from Undertaker and a Lionsault from Jericho to tie it up. That's the best way to go as Show and Shane were the weak links on both teams. Angle vs. Jericho now with Jericho hitting the forearm to start. A double underhook backbreaker puts Angle down but Austin saves.

Angle uses an amateur takedown and brings in Booker to slam Chris a few times. RVD gets a tag but one of his shoulders in the corner is countered into a sunset flip for two. Off to Kane who catches a punch from RVD. Van Dam's comeback? Kick the guy in the head. Kane pulls Booker in and kicks him in the face too but the numbers game allows Van Dam to take Kane down and hit the Five Star. Rob takes too long to cover though and gets caught in a chokeslam, but Booker kicks Kane. Everything breaks down and Rob kicks Kane from the top for the pin to make it 4-3.

Undertaer pounds on Van Dam in the corner while everyone else is

fighting on the floor. Austin and Angle get in as well and Undertaker has to fight all four guys at once. He gets them all in a corner and keeps charging at all of them with clotheslines in a cool sequence. Snake Eyes and a big boot take Angle down and there's a Last Ride for him as well. Booker comes in with a chair but Undertaker boots him down, leaving himself open to a Stunner from Austin and the pin by Angle. That leaves us with Austin/Angle/Booker/RVD vs. Rock/Jericho.

Booker stomps on Rock but Rocky comes back with right hands. A side kick takes Rock right back down but Rock does the same with a DDT for two. Booker charges into a Samoan Drop for two as Austin makes the save. Rock whips Booker into Angle and grabs a rollup to eliminate Mr. T, making it 3-2.

Rob is in next but as he goes up, Rock kind of powerbombs him off the top for two. Jericho gets the tag and hits a running neckbreaker for two before chopping away in the corner. Van Dam avoids the Lionsault and kicks Chris' head off, followed by the split legged moonsault for no cover. Jericho pops up and hits a Breakdown (Skull Crushing Finale) out of nowhere for the pin and the elimination to tie it up at two each.

Austin slingshots Rock into the post on the floor while Angle and Jericho fight in the ring. Angle picks Jericho's ankle and stomps away on him as Heyman thinks the Alliance can find a place for the Rock. Back to Austin to pound away on Chris and hit a superplex for two. Austin hits a kind of northern lights/belly to belly suplex for two and here's Angle again. Jericho puts Kurt in the ankle lock but Kurt quickly escapes and hits a clothesline to take over.

It's back to Austin for a suplex and an elbow to the face. Angle comes in and stomps away before it's back to Austin who stomps away as well. We hit one of the few chinlocks in this match as Jericho is in trouble. Jericho fights up and it's a double tag to bring in Rock vs. Angle with the Great One quickly hooking a Sharpshooter on Kurt for an even faster tap. Heyman LOSES IT in a great moment.

Off to Austin vs. Jericho with Chris trying the Walls but Austin rakes the eyes to escape. Austin can't put Jericho in the Boston crab either but he gets the knees up to block the Lionsault. Steve loads up a superplex but gets shoved down, followed by a missile dropkick for Jericho for two. Austin counters a rollup out of

nowhere for the pin and the elimination to get us down to Rock vs. Austin.

Rock hits a bad spinebuster but Jericho hits a Breakdown on Rock to take him down in a double cross. It's not joining the Alliance, but rather just personal hatred. That gets two for Austin and Undertaker comes out to stalk Jericho to the back. Austin pounds away before launching Rock over the top and out to the floor. They fight on the floor with Austin being laid on the table and slapped in the chest over and over.

Austin comes back but gets sent over the announce table and punched in the face by Rock. Back in Rock chops away but gets caught in the whip spinebuster from Austin. Austin puts on a bad Sharpshooter and there's your Montreal reference. Rock finally makes the rope so Austin grabs the WWF Title. Rock ducks the swing and puts Austin the Sharpshooter but he's afraid to let go of the belt for some reason. I guess realizing he has a job no matter what, he grabs the rope instead.

Back up and Austin's Stunner is countered into a Stunner from Rock. Why that puts Rock down after Rock had been in control for awhile is beyond me but whatever. Rock covers but here's Nick Patrick to pull Hebner out. A Rock Bottom to Patrick is broken up and Austin Rock Bottoms Rock for two. Austin drills Patrick and pulls Hebner back in, only to be sent into him again as Rock counters the Stunner. There's the Stunner to Rock but there's no referee. Angle runs in and nails Austin with the title, letting Rock hit the Rock Bottom for the pin and the death of the Alliance. JR to Heyman: "You're out of work! AGAIN!"

Rating: A. This felt like a main event and was very entertaining too. It runs forty five minutes bell to bell and feels like about half of that. At the end of the day, it was pretty clear what was going to happen but that doesn't make it a bad match. Rock vs. Austin was pretty much done for a long time after this match, which is the right call as they had run it a lot this year. Great stuff here though.

Everyone celebrates and Vince comes out for the big dramatic pose, because this whole storyline was all about Vince and his kids.

Overall Rating: B+. Like I said, as goes the main event, so goes the show. The rest of the show isn't bad but the main event is over an

hour counting buildup video and entrances and all that jazz. The rest of the show isn't bad at all with a good cage match and nothing truly bad that didn't involve Trish looking great, so I can't complain much here. Also, it gets rid of the Alliance which makes things better already.

As for the Invasion, I could go on at great length, but in short form: it was the biggest waste of time, money, and potential that there ever could be in wrestling. This was the biggest storyline you could possibly ask for and they BLEW IT. There are multiple options you could go with here. One idea is have no mention on TV of the WWF buying WCW and just keep it going with WWF guys in charge behind the scenes. Think a network might have been interested with it being under the direction of the biggest wrestling company ever?

Another option: have the Alliance win. At the end of the day any money they've got goes into the WWF's pocket as they own EVERYTHING, so what difference does it make? Granted that was never going to happen with Vince's ego, but why let money get in the way of Vince feeling good about himself? The Invasion could have been so much more but it wound up running about five months with the WWF dominating the whole way through. Such a shame and a loss for wrestling fans who had waited for so many years for a chance to have this happen.

Ratings Comparison

Christian vs. Al Snow

Original: C+

Redo: C-

William Regal vs. Tajiri

Original: C

Redo: N/A

Edge vs. Test

Original: B-

Redo: C+

Dudley Boys vs. Hardy Boys

Original: B+

Redo: B-

Battle Royal

Original: N/A

Redo: C-

Trish Stratus vs. Lita vs. Jacqueline vs. Ivory vs. Mighty Molly vs. Jazz

Original: D+

Redo: D

Team WWF vs. Team Alliance

Original: B

Redo: A

Overall Rating

Original: C+

Redo: B+

Like I said, as the main event goes, so goes the show. That's apparently the case here as I liked both better the second time around.

Here's the original review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/11/10/history-of-survivor-series-count-up-2001-the-end-of-the-alliance-thank-goodness/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book, KB's Complete 2014 Raw and Smackdown Reviews Part I at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01LY6766K#nav-subnav>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

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

New Column: Smackdown Is Better

Another column where the title should tell you everything. We're looking at a few reasons why the blue show is just flat out better.

<http://www.wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-smackdown-is-better/>

New Column: The Real Clash Of Champions

In case you were confused by what you're going to see Sunday.

<http://www.wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-the-real-clash-of-champions/>

Smackdown – September 13, 2016: Plugging The Holes

Smackdown

Date: September 13, 2016

Location: Wells Fargo Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Commentators: John Bradshaw Layfield, Mauro Ranallo, David Otunga

Backlash has come and gone and a few things have changed. In addition to having inaugural Smackdown Tag Team Champions (Heath Slater/Rhyno) and an inaugural Smackdown Women's Champion (Becky Lynch), AJ Styles has finally won the big one and become Smackdown World Champion. No Mercy is in less than a month and tonight we start dealing with all these new developments. Let's get to it.

We open with a Backlash recap, thankfully kept down to about two minutes.

Opening sequence.

Here's AJ, who is now introduced as the face that runs this place. He's done everything he told us he would do and now he's the WWE World Champion (the belt is a very nice fit too). Now he's the champ that runs the camp but here's John Cena to interrupt. Cena looks a bit stunned before saying AJ has something that he would like back. The 16 time champ is here but Dean Ambrose cuts him off.

Dean wants his title back but Cena cuts him off as well, saying that Dean didn't take AJ seriously enough. Maybe Steve Austin was right to call him out on the podcast. Ambrose doesn't take kindly to that and calls Cena a lazy part timer. Cena would be better off hosting award shows because he's not able to keep up with the new generation.

This brings out Shane McMahon to praise all of their work before talking about AJ taking a shortcut to become WWE Champion.

Therefore, AJ will be defending against Cena and Ambrose in a triple dance at No Mercy. As for tonight though, it's Cena/Ambrose vs. AJ/a

partner of his choosing. If AJ can't find one, Daniel Bryan will pick one for him.

Connor's Cure video.

Usos vs. Hype Bros

No entrances here and the twins start in on Ryder's bad leg. A kick to Jimmy's back allows the tag off to Rawley for the house cleaning but Jey gets in a superkick. The Superfly splash ends Mojo at 2:22. Curt Hawkins talks about wolf cubs.

Here are Miz and Maryse for a chat. Miz has held the title for 162 days, which is longer than 132 other former champions, including Dolph Ziggler. This brings out Ziggler to say Miz will never be seen as a top guy. Yeah he'd never main event Wrestlemania or anything like that. Apparently Miz has never earned any respect so all he has to do is beat Ziggler one time with nothing but the two of them. This brings out Daniel Bryan (JBL: "The General Manager of Raw!") to say Ziggler gets a rematch. Miz says no because he wants his contract renegotiated. Bryan gets in the ring and Miz bails into the crowd.

To recap: since Ziggler challenged Dean Ambrose for the title, the goal has gone from defending the World Title to winning the big one (the Intercontinental Title in this case) to now earning respect by being viewed as a main eventer, which apparently doesn't include a successful title defense in the main event of Wrestlemania. Now the way to earn respect is to pin Dolph Ziggler, meaning almost the whole roster is respected.

Baron Corbin isn't interested in being AJ's partner because he'd rather be his opponent.

Apollo Crews vs. Baron Corbin

Rematch from Backlash's pre-show. Corbin jumps Crews during the entrances and hits the End of Days on the floor. No match but Jack Swagger of all people comes out, seemingly having jumped to Smackdown.

Swagger: "LADIES AND GENTLEMEN IT'S THE ROLLING STONES!" You've seen

him wrestle for a long time but you don't know Jack. We, as in we the people, are going to be a big problem.

Here's Becky Lynch for her first appearance as the Smackdown Women's Champion. That means the required YOU DESERVE IT before Becky can talk about being the only one that survived on Sunday. The journey was worth it so come at her bros.

Naomi vs. Nikki Bella vs. Alexa Bliss vs. Carmella vs. Natalya

Again I'd like to point out that it's a really bad sign that every possible challenger can be put into one match. One fall to a finish with the winner getting a title shot at some point in the future. It's a big brawl to start of course with Natalya taking over off a series of suplexes. Nikki takes her down with a facebuster but Carmella makes the save. That means the big showdown but Carmella bails outside again.

Instead it's Naomi kicking Nikki in the face but getting caught in an electric chair drop. Alexa and Natalya come back in and go to the corner, allowing Naomi to hit a running enziguri. The Bella Buster and Rear View get two each but Alexa kicks Nikki off the top. Carmella comes back in with a superkick but Bliss steals the pin on Nikki at 5:13.

Rating: D+. So Bliss is the most successful of Sunday's losers. This division is starting to act like the X-Division with the wild matches and only a limited amount of character development for most of the women. Bliss is a good choice for the first challenger as she can wrestle a passable enough match to make Becky look good before her more serious opponent.

Kane laughs at AJ for suggesting a partnership.

Here's Shane to introduce Heath Slater (and Rhyno) for the official contract signing. Slater signs before anything else can happen and praises Rhyno for being a great partner. They'll fight anyone anywhere and it's time to thank his kids. However, here's the Ascension to interrupt and ask for a title shot right now. Slater says not right now because there's a table, a red carpet and no

referee. Shane thinks we can fix that so let's defend the belts right now.

Smackdown Tag Team Titles: Heath Slater/Rhyno vs. Ascension

Ascension is challenging and this is joined in progress with Slater in trouble. Something off the top is horribly botched with Viktor dropping Slater as Konnor lands on him. The hot tag brings in Rhyno for a spinebuster before Slater is dumped to the floor. Rhyno Gores Viktor to retain at 2:04.

AJ says he doesn't need a partner but Daniel has appointed one for him: one of the jobbers AJ insulted on Sunday.

Randy Orton comes out to address Bray Wyatt, but not before some extra posing. Orton has finally figured out that Bray calls himself the face of fear because he's afraid. Right now Orton is ready for a fight so Bray can come out here and face his fear. Instead Bray comes up on screen to warn Randy not to sleep. The lights go out again and Bray is on the floor behind Randy, who is actually smart enough to turn around before Bray can do anything. Bray takes off the gear but the lights go out again, allowing Erick Rowan (Didn't they split?) to come in and jump Orton....who scores with a quick RKO to take care of that loser.

John Cena/Dean Ambrose vs. AJ Styles/James Ellsworth

Actually hang on a second as Miz jumps Ellsworth and hammers away. We have a replacement. I fully support the idea of Miz moving back to the main event.

John Cena/Dean Ambrose vs. AJ Styles/The Miz

Joined in progress again with Miz kicking Cena in the face before it's off to Dean for some clotheslines on AJ. A quick Pele takes Dean down and we go to another break. Back with Miz ax handling Dean so it can be back to AJ. We hit a chinlock on Ambrose for a bit before he shoves AJ away and makes the hot tag off to Cena. Everything breaks down and Dean sends AJ to the floor, leaving Cena to AA Miz for the pin at 9:50.

Rating: C. Just a main event tag but it did move us all the way up

to 19:27 of total wrestling tonight, assuming you count the three and a half minutes spent in the commercial. I could have gone without Miz getting pinned but hopefully it means he moves up to the main event for the first time in way too long. I know he's not the most popular guy but he has the credentials and the character to make it work.

Post match Dean gives Cena Dirty Deeds and actually gets booed. I'm not sure if that was a heel turn or not but it felt pretty close.

Overall Rating: B-. They moved a lot of stuff forward tonight and very little of it had to do with the wrestling. We get a new name in Swagger (which was very badly needed), a new main event feud with Cena vs. Ambrose and Miz also moving up to the main event scene, though likely dropping the Intercontinental Title to Ziggler at No Mercy. It really is amazing how much faster this show feels than Raw (which shows you how much that third hour kills Raw) and that's such a help. I'm having fun watching Smackdown and I haven't had that feeling on a Monday in a long time. Good show tonight that helped solve some problems.

Results

Usos b. Hype Bros – Superfly splash to Rawley

Alexa Bliss b. Nikki Bella, Natalya, Carmella and Naomi – Superkick to Bella

Heath Slater/Rhyno b. Ascension – Gore to Viktor

John Cena/Dean Ambrose b. The Miz/AJ Styles – AA to the Miz

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book, KB's WWE Grab Bag at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01IH70904>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

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

New Column: In Case You Missed It – Summerslam Edition

A look at some of the other stories from the weekend, including whatever the main event was.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-in-other-news-summerslam-edition/>

Smackdown – August 23, 2016: Good, But Not Gold

Smackdown

Date: August 23, 2016

Location: Mohegan Sun Arena, Uncasville, Connecticut

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, John Bradshaw Layfield, David Otunga

It's an interesting time for Smackdown as we're past Summerslam and the brand is really starting to come into its own. Tonight we'll see the unveiling of the new Smackdown Women's and Tag Team Titles but possibly more importantly we should get an update on Brock Lesnar attacking Shane McMahon to end Summerslam. Let's get to it.

Various people are in the back when AJ Styles comes in to brag about how awesome he is. AJ puts Cena's armband around his head and talks down to Dolph Ziggler a lot, triggering a brawl.

Opening sequence.

The tag and women's divisions are in the ring around the new titles (The Women's Title is the same as the Raw version but with a blue background. The Tag Team Titles look similar to the Raw versions but with silver instead of bronze.) when the bosses come out. We'll start with the women, all of whom have potential to be the champion. At Backlash, there will be a Six Pack Challenge to determine the first champion. The Tag Team Titles will be decided at Smackdown as well with the finals of a tournament. Cue Heath Slater to say he should be Michael Phelps and get to compete for some gold. Ignoring that THE BELTS ARE SILVER, Daniel says Heath isn't equipped to fight for the Women's Title.

Heath meant the tag belts so Bryan gives him an offer: if Slater can find a partner by the end of the night, the bosses will find another team and make it an eight team tournament. However, Slater only gets a contract if he and his partner win the whole thing. That's fine with Slater but here's AJ to interrupt. He's tired of hearing about the Tag Team Titles and the Women's Ti...."No I won't be your partner Slater." This brings out Zigler to jump him from behind and the bosses send the tag teams out to break it up as we go to a break.

Becky Lynch vs. Alexa Bliss

Naomi and Natalya are on commentary. Becky takes it down to the mat in an armbar but gets kicked in the head for her efforts. We hit an armbar on Becky until some clotheslines have Bliss reeling. Bliss gets two off a nice looking spinning sunset flip out of the corner but a quick Disarm-Her makes her tap at 4:00.

Rating: C. Bliss has improved by leaps and bounds in recent months but sweet goodness Naomi and Natalya have no personalities. Naomi sounded bored and Natalya spoke in the exact same tone that she's had since the day she debuted with the company. At least Becky has some charisma to her, though her recent wardrobe choices are a bit odd.

Heath tries to get Miz on board as his partner and Miz agrees but it

turns out he's on the phone.

Smackdown Tag Team Title Tournament First Round: Usos vs. Ascension

Jey gets beaten down to start with Konnor adding a middle rope shoulder for two. We hit a nerve hold for a bit until an enziguri allows the double tag. Everything breaks down and the Usos start with their superkicks, including one to set up the Superfly Splash for the pin on Viktor at 3:47.

Rating: D+. This was exactly what it should have been and hopefully we just get to Usos vs. Alpha for the belts as it's fairly obvious we're heading towards. I'm also glad that Ascension, who has only won a handful of matches in over a year, was dispatched in less than four minutes here. That doesn't do much for their spot in a tag division but at least they're a pair of warm bodies.

Here's AJ to discuss his win on Sunday. With the NEVER GIVE UP armband around his own arm, AJ says he beat up John Cena and then beat him at Summerslam. All these Cena fans can be his new fans because he should be #1 contender to the WWE World Title. Ziggler fights his way to the ring but here's Bryan to make a match for tonight. AJ already has a shot at Backlash but if Ziggler wins, it's a triple threat.

Nikki Bella vs. Carmella

Renee Young tries to interview Nikki before the match but Carmella jumps Nikki from behind to start. Carmella gives her a bad looking Downward Spiral and a Bella Buster for a heel turn, which makes a lot of sense for her actually. Nikki starts holding her neck and OH NO IT'S JUST SO SCARY AND TRAGIC BECAUSE SHE'S SO AMAZING. No match. Video on the Summerslam main event.

Here's Orton for a chat. He was in a heck of a fight on Sunday night and had ten staples put in his head to close the gash. Randy didn't want the match to end the way it did, including Shane McMahon coming out for a save. He and Lesnar will cross paths again but here's Bray Wyatt to interrupt. Bray: "How's your head Randy?" Wyatt goes on about how great a person Randy is but says he's something a little

higher. Randy will find out all about that in time so Randy says bring it. The lights go out again and Bray is gone.

Shane is asked about Brock and doesn't think Stephanie is going to take it seriously. She's already fined Brock \$500 and that means it's far from over between Brock and himself.

Slater tries to get Arn Anderson to be his partner but Arn says he's not Ric Flair. Rhyno comes up and says he'll do it.

Smackdown Tag Team Title Tournament First Round: Breezango vs. American Alpha

Fandango dances at Gable to start and is of course taken down with ease. It's off to Jordan vs. Breeze with Jason cranking on an armbar to the tunes of a USA chant. Breezango finally cheats by drawing Jordan in so Fandango can get in a clothesline to take over on Gable. Back from a break with Gable making a hot tag and handing it off to Jordan to clean house. A bridging German suplex gets two on Breeze and he hurricanranas Jordan for the same. Gable has to make a save off a superkick but Jordan hits the belly to belly on Tyler. The Grand Amplitude sends American Alpha on at 10:28.

Rating: B-. That was way better than I was expecting as Breezango continues to be a great surprise and far better than they have any right to be. It's good to give Alpha some tougher matches like this before the finals as there's only so much they're going to prove after facing teams like the Vaudevillains or the Ascension.

Dean Ambrose, in a big hat, says he was up in the casino playing roulette. He doesn't care who is fighting tonight because he'll be ready for anyone. Dean gets a shot and coffee but leaves the waitress some casino chips. I guess he was supposed to be drunk?

Dolph Ziggler vs. AJ Styles

Dean is on commentary. Ziggler has a fact file that says he's a supporter of the Wrestlemania Reading "Charllenge." They go right at it with Ziggler dropkicking him to the floor for a break in less than a minute. Back with AJ sending Ziggler chest first into the buckle and working on the other side with a backbreaker. Ziggler

can't get a comeback started yet so AJ stomps him down in the corner before kicking at the leg. A few knee lifts send Ziggler outside and we take another break.

Back again with Ziggler fighting out of an armbar and hitting a great looking dropkick. The big elbow drop gets two and AJ goes shoulder first into the post. The Fameasser is good for another two count and AJ's fireman's carry backbreaker gets the same. Styles misses the springboard 450 and gets caught in the running DDT for yet another near fall.

Dolph avoids a charge into the ropes and a Zig Zag gets a VERY close two count. They almost had me on that one, even though I have a really hard time believing that they would put Ziggler over here. A superkick misses though and AJ kicks him low, setting up a Styles Clash for the pin and the title shot at 21:40.

Rating: B+. So at the end of the day, after a pay per view title match and this big match, Ziggler is right back where he was coming into the Draft: an upper midcard jobber to the stars who isn't likely to win anything important and while he can have some good matches like this, I still have no reason to care about him. AJ winning was the only way to go here and there's nothing wrong with that.

Dean and AJ have a staredown to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. This was the best show they've had since the brand split and that's a good sign. I really don't like having the new titles for divisions this weak but at least the Tag Team Titles (which should be GOLD) look cool. They need more people for those divisions in a bad way so pairing up Rhyno and Slater works well enough. The rest of the show was fine as we wait for AJ to take his place as the king of Smackdown in a few weeks.

Results

Becky Lynch b. Alexa Bliss – Disarm-Her

Usos b. Ascension – Superfly Splash to Viktor

American Alpha b. Breezango – Grand Amplitude to Breeze

AJ Styles b. Dolph Ziggler – Styles Clash

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book, KB's WWE Grab Bag at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01IH70904>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

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