

# Best of 2016: Worst Angle of the Year

We're down to the final two and this is one of the harder ones to get through. Over the years, wrestling tries all kinds of things to get their wrestlers over. In this case, we're going to be looking at the worst angles of the year. Which stories that WWE put effort behind wound up going nowhere and doing more harm than good for everyone involved? As usual, these are in no particular order.

## 1. Cesaro and Sheamus' Excellent Adventure

Over the course of the end of the summer and a good chunk of the fall, Sheamus and Cesaro engaged in a best of seven series for a future championship opportunity. While the matches were entertaining enough, the fans really seemed to get tired of the same match over and over again. I was one of them and, knowing WWE, I had a bad feeling they would somehow have the series end in a draw and give Sheamus and Cesaro a Tag Team Title match instead.

AND THAT'S JUST WHAT THEY DID! No matter how much people were sick of seeing them fight, now it was time to see them as a tag team who still fought each other despite going after a title. They actually wound up winning the titles off New Day but that doesn't really make up for everything we had to sit through on the way there.

This was a good example of having to put up with what WWE wanted whether we were interested in seeing it or not. While the end result wasn't the worst, it was the equivalent of going to the dentist, having a tooth pulled, and then hearing your condescending dad say "oh come on it wasn't THAT bad". Yeah, actually it was that bad and in this case it took the better part of four months to finally get to the point.

## 2. Emmalina Debuts. Eventually.

Injuries are horrible things in any sport and wrestling in particular as there's no off season to eat up some of the down time. In this case, Emma was put down with a horrible back injury that has left her off TV for several months. While she's been working house shows as a special guest referee for some of the women's six man tags, she hasn't been seen on WWE TV in a long time.

Well not live at least. Instead we've been getting vignettes for the Makeover of Emmalina, which really seems to just be Emma in various swimsuits. During her time on the main roster, Emma hasn't exactly been one of the women to turn up the sex appeal but that's what we're getting here for some reason. These vignettes have been going on for months now and there's no indication that they'll be ending anytime soon.

The worst case scenario is that this is the female version of Brodus Clay. You might remember that idea: over the course of several months, we were teased with the unveiling of Clay as a monster (which we had seen before). What we wound up with was Clay as a dancer in bright red and called the Funkasaurus. I liked the surprise, but I have a bad feeling about what WWE might find funny.

### **3. Anderson and Gallows Aren't Funny**

Speaking of comedy, we have this gem. Over the course of the year, Anderson and Gallows chased New Day for the Tag Team Titles, just like several other teams. Anderson and Gallows came close to defeating them a few times but could never actually get their hands on the belts. They could however do one thing over and over: put on some of the worst, most unfunny vignettes you'll ever see.

The big problem with them was they tried to use the WWE brand of "comedy", which is to beat you over the head with the same joke until your head hurts from getting the same idea over and over again. These were such brilliant ideas as "New Day is old and we work at a retirement home" or "we're doctors and want to crush New Day's testicles". That's really the best thing they can do to sell a title match on a pay per view?

Overall it just wasn't a good idea and I don't know of anyone who actually enjoyed the vignettes. They weren't funny and they didn't advance the story to any special degree. Anderson and Gallows might be able to get in a few little chuckles here and there but they're not the kind of people who are going to get somewhere by just saying "Hey, here are jokes! LAUGH WITH US!"

### **4. Roman Reigns vs. Lana**

I really don't even know where to start with this one. So back in the fall, Reigns started feuding with Rusev over the United States Championship. Around the same time, Rusev and Lana were married and spent a lot of time bragging about how amazing their wedding was.

One of these nights included a party, which of course had a cake. As you might expect, Reigns came out and crashed the party which included shoving Lana's face into the cake.

Let me make that a little bit more clear: Rusev and Lana were celebrating the fact that they were married and Reigns shoved Lana's face into a cake for no real reason other than they were considered bad guys. How in the world is this supposed to make me want to cheer for Reigns in the situation? In what way is he the good guy in this whole story?

I know WWE is obsessed with the idea of making Reigns into the king of all things good and wholesome about wrestling. Somehow though, I don't think this is the best way to go about the whole thing. People aren't going to look at Reigns and think he did anything great. Well in theory at least, but I'm not sure I'd want those people to be supporting my product in the first place. This is just a horrible idea that doesn't make a bit of sense, unless you're in some weird WWE style mindset.

#### **5. Naked Enzo Amore**

It wasn't a good year for Lana and these stupid stories. One night on "Monday Night Raw", Big Cass locked Amore out of their dressing room and, because it's a wrestling show, Amore was missing his clothes. If that's not bad enough, he then ran into Lana. This turned into an awkward flirting session with Lana seemingly getting into the idea. Rusev wasn't cool with it though and wound up destroying Amore as a result.

This continued the following week as Rusev and Lana seemingly had a fight, which led to Amore offering a shoulder to cry on. As a result, Lana invited Amore to her hotel room for some, ahem, entertainment. Since Amore isn't the smartest guy in the world, he accepted and wound up getting one heck of a beating from Rusev, who was of course waiting on them in a trap.

What in the world was the point of something like this? I know it gets us to Cass vs. Rusev but did we really have to sit through Amore hitting on a married woman while standing around without any clothes on? It was awkward, it felt really out of place and while funny, it really wasn't the best way for them to go.

#### **6. James Ellsworth**

Now this is a case where your individual miles may vary. Ellsworth debuted in WWE back in July in a match where he was completely destroyed by Braun Strowman. While being off TV for a bit, Ellsworth would be brought back as a mystery partner for AJ Styles, which resulted in several weeks worth of appearances, including a series of victories over Styles in non-title matches, one of which gained Ellsworth a contract.

Those losses are where a lot of people gave up on the story. Ellsworth wasn't around long and he was defeating the Smackdown World Champion. I mean, Ambrose was helping him but that doesn't make it the best idea in the world. It was all about setting up something between Ambrose and Styles and the title was never in any real danger but the champion still lost three times in a row.

That being said, Ellsworth being around was still very tiresome for a lot of people. He overstayed his welcome in the main event and even influenced the ending of the main event at "Tables Ladders and Chairs 2016". It also doesn't help that Ellsworth didn't really gain anything as a result. He's still the comedy goof that was fun to cheer for over a few weeks but then was just kind of there as the story wouldn't end.

## **7. Shane McMahon's Lock Box**

If the Lana stories were just stupid, this one is something that was so confusing that a lot of the audience just gave up trying to figure out what was going on. The problem here was very simple: we never actually got an explanation for what was going on. Shane returned and got into an argument with his father Vince over who would get to run "Monday Night Raw".

Shane brought up something about a lock box that contained evidence of Vince doing....something so Shane agreed to put up its contents against running the show. The match wound up being against the Undertaker at "Wrestlemania XXXII" and Shane lost (thankfully). Depending on who you believe, Shane was originally going to win but Undertaker put his foot down.

This brings us to the second problem. After the match with Undertaker was over, Vince just gave Shane control of "Monday Night Raw" anyway, making the whole thing a big waste of time. It was a fun idea when Shane returned but the whole thing wound up being a huge mess over something that was never made clear in the first

place. And what did this wind up being? More McMahon drama, because that's all any of the big stories around WWE would become.

### **8. Triple H Likes ME Better!**

Oh boy this one. Do you remember "Clash of the Champions 2016" with its main event of Seth Rollins vs. Kevin Owens for the Universal Title? The match itself was fine but do you remember why it was happening? Allegedly it was over the title but I'm talking about the real reason. What were most of the promos about and what did Rollins say his end goal was?

Well that would be proving to Triple H and Stephanie McMahon that HE should have been the chosen one that was receiving the Authority's backing instead of Owens. That's right: this was all about Owens and Rollins trying to impress the McMahon and Triple H, the latter of whom had handed Owens the title in a four way elimination match. Think about that for a minute: this match was about people trying to impress their boss, as in the top heel of the company who was never there.

And people wonder why the match and feud was so poorly received. This whole thing was a complete mess and made both guys look like someone who had no idea what they were doing and had no business being anywhere near the main event. When your whole story is about who should have been Triple's protege and featured star. Not a title, not a personal feud and not even fighting over the profits from a lemonade stand. No, this was all about the Authority and how they were really more important than anything else on the show.

### **9. The Cabinet**

How can I put this? Ah yes: the Cabinet WAS NOT FUNNY. I know everyone went election crazy in 2016 and almost every wrestling promotion tried to do something with it (such as making Darren Young great again) but Ring of Honor decided that they needed a full on election committee.

Comprised of Kenny King, Rhett Titus and Caprice Coleman (all with rather stupid nicknames such as the Secretary of Shoulders), the group wanted to make wrestling great again. It was beating you over the head with an idea and it just wasn't funny. Everyone knew the story was dead after the election was over and that's what happened. The team wasn't done though and then it got even worse.

Now the team is called the Rebellion. Yes the Rebellion, which is just below the Revolution on the list of REALLY STUPID TEAM NAMES THAT EVERY PROMOTION HAS HAD SOME VERSION OF OVER THE YEARS. This was really low intelligence and uninspired booking, which isn't something that should be happening in Ring of Honor. Be creative with it somehow because this was a disaster.

As tempted as I am to go with Rollins and Owens, I've got to go with Cesaro and Sheamus. This was a situation where we knew what they were going to do and then we had to sit through it for months on end with only one ending in sight. I have no idea why WWE wanted to do this one storyline so much or why they kept shoving it down our throats but this is what we were getting, whether we liked it or not. Most people didn't and WWE did it anyway, which is why it's the worst angle of the year.

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# **Monday Night Raw – January 16, 2017: The Champ Is Acting Like The Champ**

**Monday Night Raw**

Date: January 16, 2017

Location: Verizon Arena, Little Rock, Arkansas

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, Corey Graves

We're less than two weeks away from the Royal Rumble and that means we're getting closer and closer to finding out a lot of things for Wrestlemania season. The big story this week is the first announcement for the Hall of Fame and then probably finding out some more names for the Royal Rumble. Let's get to it.

Martin Luther King Day video.

Opening sequence.

Here's Roman Reigns to some of the loudest booing I've ever heard outside of a major city. Reigns can't complain about getting beaten down when he's outnumbered in a fight. He knows he lost the US Title but now he's off to get the Universal Title at the Royal Rumble. Just in case you needed more proof that the US Title meant nothing on Roman. This brings out Paul Heyman who is almost immediately cut off by the GOLDBERG chants. Heyman gives us a spoiler for the Rumble but here are Kevin Owens and Chris Jericho to interrupt.

Jericho loves the idea of the Royal Rumble because no matter who wins, they'll both wind up at Wrestlemania with both titles. Owens seems to agree but here's Seth Rollins to cut them off. That means more promises of winning before Braun Strowman comes and stares Reigns down.

Strowman doesn't say a word before Lesnar himself comes out. Sami Zayn runs in through the crowd and cleans house, including a Helluva Kick to put Braun outside. Brock throws everyone else down and is left alone with Sami, meaning it's another German suplex for Zayn. Lesnar tells Braun to bring it on but Strowman drops to the floor, leaving Reigns to Superman Punch Brock. That earns him an F5 and Lesnar stands tall.

Enzo Amore/Big Cass vs. Rusev/Jinder Mahal

Enzo goes after Mahal to start but an elbow to the jaw takes him down. Mahal is sent outside and we take an early break. Back with Mahal dropping a knee on Enzo and Rusev grabbing a bearhug. Enzo slips out and the hot tag brings in Cass to clean house. Everything

breaks down and the big boot to Mahal sets up the Bada Boom Shaka Laka for the pin at 8:35.

**Rating:** D+. Nothing to see here as is so often the case with Enzo and Cass matches. We need to get to the Rusev vs. Cass match, assuming we're still getting it. Enzo being back in the ring really doesn't do much for me and I'd be glad to have him stay outside full time while Cass does the work.

#### Ariya Daivari vs. Lince Dorado

Jack Gallagher is on commentary. Feeling out process to start with Lince getting in some strikes and the springboard Stunner for two. Dorado completely misses a high crossbody and a wind up lariat (Rainmaker) sets up a cobra clutch to make Lince tap at 2:18.

We look back at Undertaker announcing that he would be in the Royal Rumble.

Video on the UK Title Tournament.

Earlier today, Nia Jax attacked Sasha Banks during a knee injury evaluation.

#### Tag Team Titles: Cesaro/Sheamus vs. Anderson and Gallows

Cesaro and Sheamus are defending as this feud just keeps going. Anderson starts with Cesaro but Sheamus makes a quick blind tag as his partner hits a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker. The champs start speeding things up until Cesaro misses a charge into the corner so Gallows can drop an elbow for two. It's off to an armbar on Cesaro's shoulder which has been taped up since he returned back in April. A slingshot shoulder brings Sheamus back in as things pick up all over again.

Everything breaks down with Gallows kicking Sheamus off the apron as we take a break. Back with Cesaro coming in off the hot tag as everything breaks down. The spinning elbow gets two on Anderson and Gallows' boot to the face gets the same. Sheamus comes in and punches the referee by mistake, leaving no count off the Magic Killer. The fans think it's awesome as another referee comes in to count the pin at 13:00.



**Rating:** B. I liked the match but the story is just doing nothing for me. There's no reason for me to care about either of these teams and that makes for a really hard sit whenever these guys come out to the ring. It's just not interesting as there's no reason for them to be fighting other than "well, we don't really have any other options." I'm sure this sets up a Rumble rematch because that's what we're stuck with for a title feud.

And never mind as it's a Dusty Finish as the champs are disqualified and retain the titles.

We look back at the opening segment. Tonight it's a six man main tag with Reigns/Rollins/Zayn vs. Owens/Jericho/Strowman.

Tribute video to Jimmy Snuka.

Emmalina video.

Sami, Rollins and Reigns talk strategy. Zayn sticks his fist out for the Shield pose and the other two leave. Rollins' eyes were hilarious.

#### Tony Nese vs. Rich Swann

Non-title and a 205 Live rematch. And no match as Neville comes in through the crowd and attacks Swann.

Post break Neville yells at an interviewer for not having enough respect and promises to beat Swann for the title at the Rumble.

Here's New Day to talk about the Rumble. The royal rumblings say that it's going to be foe vs. foe but Big E. thinks that if one of them wins the Rumble, they all win and go on to be in the main event of Wrestlemania. Cue Titus O'Neil and even the announcers are saying enough already. Titus thinks he could replace one of them and take their spot in the Rumble. That's a no of course so Titus will just take it instead. Big E. agrees to put his spot on the line if Titus agrees to leave New Day alone for good.

#### Titus O'Neil vs. Big E.

Joined in progress with Big E. putting on an abdominal stretch.

Titus comes back with a Dominator to set up a chinlock followed by

his own abdominal stretch. The spanking is enough to tick Big E. off and he runs Titus down with ease. The Warrior Splash sets up the Big Ending for the pin at 4:56.

**Rating:** F. Now NEVER LET TITUS NEAR THEM AGAIN! Move on to ANYTHING else!

Jim Duggan talks about winning the first Royal Rumble.

Here's Charlotte to discuss the winning strategy that has kept her undefeated on pay per view. By that she means laughing at the idea of Bayley beating her at the Royal Rumble. We see some pictures of Bayley as a kid meeting people like John Cena, Ivory, Rob Van Dam and Bret Hart from years ago.

Charlotte even has some poetry from what looks like middle school while Charlotte was training and getting scholarship offers. We even get a video of Bayley reading her essay on wanting to be a professional wrestler. Charlotte cuts the video and reads it herself until Bayley runs out to chase her off. Bayley calls this unnecessary so Charlotte says she's just like the average fan.

If Charlotte wants to bring up all these stories, Bayley has a story for her. She didn't have a father who could just make a phone call and get her into WWE. What she did have is a father who would spend everything he had to get her a ticket to every show in San Jose because that was all she ever wanted to do. Bayley even has a new poem for Charlotte: Roses are red, violets are blue, at Royal Rumble, I will defeat you.

Another look back at the opening sequence.

Strowman isn't interested in talking strategy with his partners tonight.

#### Cedric Alexander vs. Brian Kendrick

They start fast with Cedric knocking him outside for a moonsault off the apron, only to get pulled down into a full nelson on the mat. Both guys take elbows to the face but it's Cedric taking over off a springboard clothesline. Kendrick counters what looked like a belly to back suplex into the Captain's hook as Alicia Fox runs out to

play cheerleader. Cedric makes the ropes as we see Noam Dar watching from the back. The distraction lets Kendrick get in a baseball slide to the back before telling Fox to beat it toots. Back in and the Captain's Hook is countered into the Lumbar Check for the pin on Brian at 4:42.

**Rating:** C. Cedric is one of the smoothest in ring performers going today and Kendrick..well he's there too. I'm interested in this idea of the Alicia Fox being crazy story but that might just be because Fox is on my TV more often. Other than that though, this was your usual cruiserweight match, meaning it wasn't the worst match in the world but it didn't do much for me.

Cedric walks off with Fox in the ring.

We look at Nia attacking Banks again.

Nia laughs at the idea of Sasha being the Boss and loved seeing Sasha holding her knee in agony. The hype was over and the Boss was broken.

Fox doesn't want to talk about it.

Kurt Angle is announced for the Hall of Fame. That's LONG, LONG overdue.

Roman Reigns/Sami Zayn/Seth Rollins vs. Kevin Owens/Chris Jericho/Braun Strowman

It's a brawl before the bell and Strowman throws Reigns over the top as we take a break. Back with the match joined in progress with Jericho coming in and taking a beating from Reigns and Zayn. Owens gets the tag and chinlocks Sami down, followed by an enziguri for two. The backsplash hits knees though and the diving tag brings in Reigns to clean house. Rollins and Jericho go at it on the floor, leaving Strowman to choke Reigns down for two.

Back from another break with Owens cutting Seth off so the beating on Reigns can continue. Owens' chinlock is countered into a Samoan drop and the hot tag brings in Rollins. Everything breaks down again and it's Sami and Seth with back to back dives. Rollins' springboard knee to the face gets two on Jericho but Braun shrugs everything

off. The trio gangs up on him though and Sami's high crossbody gets two. The Helluva Kick is easily blocked though the powerslam wraps Zayn up at 14:22.

**Rating:** C+. Nice six man here and a good upgrade over some of the stuff on this show. Strowman getting another big pin is a smart move and it made for a good way to wrap up the night. There was enough action to make the match work and the ending was much better than having a champion get pinned.

Strowman takes Sami up to the announcers' table but Seth comes up with a chair and Reigns adds a spear. The evil Canadians return from whatever hole they fell into and go for the table but Jericho takes a Pedigree on the stage. Owens cleans house with the chair and powerbombs Reigns through the table to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C-. I really wasn't feeling this one as it seems that they're running out of ways to push the Royal Rumble over this many weeks. The show could have been much worse but stuff like New Day vs. Titus and the Tag Team Title feud (good match, boring feud) are dragging this show way down. The main event was better with someone exciting like Sami involved but it still wasn't all that great.

### Results

Enzo Amore/Big Cass b. Jinder Mahal/Rusev – Bada Boom Shaka Laka to Mahal

Ariya Daivari b. Lince Dorado – Cobra clutch

Anderson and Gallows b. Cesaro/Sheamus via DQ when Sheamus punched the referee

Big E. b. Titus O'Neil – Big Ending

Cedric Alexander b. Brian Kendrick – Lumbar Check

Braun Strowman/Kevin Owens/Chris Jericho b. Sami Zayn/Seth Rollins/Roman Reigns – Powerslam to Zayn

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# Monday Night Raw – December 26, 2016: I Love It When They Troll Us

## Monday Night Raw

Date: December 26, 2016

Location: Allstate Arena, Chicago, Illinois

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, Corey Graves

It's the city that keeps giving even after the holidays. We're closing out the Monday Night Raw year in Chicago and unfortunately that doesn't mean the Slammy Awards. With just under five weeks to go until the Royal Rumble, the big story is Braun Strowman invading the main event. That could result in some very interesting reactions from the Chicago crowd. Let's get to it.

The opening video looks at Strowman's destruction last week.

Opening sequence.

Here's Stephanie McMahon to open things up. She wishes us all happy holidays and says Mick Foley is off tonight due to his extreme work schedule as of late (possibly due to hip surgery). The fans cut her off with a CM Punk chant and she actually acknowledges it by saying if the fans could last two minutes and fifteen seconds, they would

last a minute longer than Punk.

Cue Seth Rollins to say he wants HHH tonight but Stephanie says she isn't her husband's keeper. Rollins begs HHH to come down but says he'll settle for Strowman. This brings out Roman Reigns to say he wants Strowman too. Since both guys are wanting to fight Strowman, Reigns thinks they should go back there and drag him out here for a Shield style beating.

Stephanie is really fired up by the idea and even suggests that Dean Ambrose could be here. She's just kidding though because the Chicago fans are that easily manipulated. Instead, tonight we'll have Seth vs. Strowman and Reigns vs. an opponent of Stephanie's choosing.

Tag Team Titles: New Day vs. Cesaro/Sheamus

New Day is challenging with Big E. on the floor. Cesaro gets beaten down in a hurry with double middle rope elbows and a legdrop for two each. Woods is thrown out to the floor and comes up grabbing his knee as we take a break. Back with Woods diving through the ropes into a tornado DDT to plant Cesaro on the floor.

The hot tag brings Kofi in for the flip dive and a slightly botched counter into the SOS for two on Sheamus. Everything breaks down and Woods' top rope elbow gets two on Sheamus with Cesaro making the save. The Swing goes on but Big E. gets on the apron for a distraction. That earns Kofi a gorilla press down onto the big man and a blind tag sets up the Brogue Kick to retain the titles at 10:11.

**Rating:** C+. This was the required rematch so Cesaro and Sheamus can move on to someone else. New Day is in the Edge and Christian position of having long since outgrown the tag division so it's time to move on to a new endeavor. Unfortunately I'm not sure what that's going to be but a strong Kofi singles run could be interesting.

Video on Brock Lesnar. Goldberg is back next week.

Strowman runs into Chris Jericho and Kevin Owens, who seem to have been looking for him. Owens thinks that Strowman is up next for the title after Reigns is dispatched so Strowman should focus on the

Seth and Roman. Apparently Rollins and Reigns have been talking smack about Strowman and said his punches are like being hit with a pillow. Strowman doesn't buy the rumors and seems to want to demolish the two of them.

Golden Truth is in the back talking about Scrooge when Bayley comes up to give Goldust a Bayley Bear dressed like Dusty Rhodes. Karl Anderson and Luke Gallows come in and RIP THE BEAR'S HEAD OFF.

### Nia Jax vs. Scarlet

Scarlet is a jobber wearing a Sasha shirt so the destruction is over in 53 seconds off a Samoan drop.

Nia tells Scarlet to choose a better role model and drops the big leg.

Charlotte shakes Stephanie's hand when Owens and Jericho come in to lodge an official complaint. Jericho doesn't bring spiders or being in shark cages. Is Foley going to put the spiders in the cage? It might give Jericho arachnophobia! They want to be face Reigns for the US Title tonight as punishment for Foley. Stephanie says she hates bosses who use their authority to advance some personal agenda (HAHA STEPHANIE IS SO IRONIC AND FUNNY!) so she gives Owens the title shot. Jericho doesn't seem pleased but goes along with it.

Here's Bayley for a chat. She's so happy to be in Chicago because she's the new #1 contender. This brings out Charlotte to show us the clip from last week where her shoulder was up at two. Since there was a problem, Stephanie has agreed to expunge the match from the record books. However, since Charlotte is feeling charitable, she'll let Bayley have another chance to win right now. Oh and there's going to be a guest referee: Dana Brooke.

### Charlotte vs. Bayley

Dana won't let Bayley go into the corner so Charlotte starts in with the chops. Bayley takes over and gets dragged off so Dana gets suplexed. Another referee runs in as Charlotte takes over in the corner with more chops. Bayley shrugs it off and grabs the Bayley to Belly but Dana pulls the referee out. Back in and Charlotte grabs a

rollup with feet on the ropes, allowing Dana to count the pin at 3:39.

**Rating:** D. Just an angle here instead of a match and that's fine. I'm not sure how we get to Bayley's title match without Foley around, though of course there's a chance that Stephanie will be all nice and happy and give Bayley the match anyway. Bayley is going to get over huge when she wins the title, if she isn't there already. Stephanie yells at Braun, who wants Sami Zayn in a last man standing match next week. The boss agrees, as long as Seth gets the same beating Sami will get.

We look back at Neville's speech from last week, which is one of my favorite moments in a long time. He's nailing the heel character at the moment and I'm hoping he annihilates Swann to take the title.

#### TJ Perkins vs. Neville

Austin Aries replaces Saxton on commentary. Neville won't shake hands (as he shouldn't) so Perkins knees Neville in the chest for two early on. A spinning kick sends Neville outside and a high crossbody gets two back inside. An AUSTIN ARIES chant starts up as Neville kicks TJ in the head to send him to the floor. Back in and we hit the chinlock for a bit before a double chickenwing into double knees to the chest gives TJ two. The Detonation Kick looks to set up the kneebar but Neville reverses into a rollup and grabs the tights for the pin at 4:58.

**Rating:** C-. Well that didn't work quite as well as it had before. Neville really shouldn't be giving up that much offense and it's really annoying to see them possibly screwing up a great character this fast. I loved watching Neville in that tag match last week because he was eight steps ahead of everyone else but here he was just slightly better, which isn't how to make the character work that well.

Neville yells about people making fun of his accent and face not being appropriate for Monday Night Raw. It's American ignorance and arrogance that prevents them from appreciating him. Tomorrow night,



Neville wants Rich Swann.

We look back at Enzo Amore getting destroyed by Jinder Mahal and Rusev at sensitivity training.

Here are Enzo and Cass with the former in a wheelchair (and of course it's leopard skin). Enzo says the sensitivity class isn't for him because he's already gotten a degree in being a certified G (which means you can teach that). We get a long rant from Enzo about how his cup runeth over and he's spilled his Haterade. Since he's done that, the big man is hitting cleanup. Cass calls out Rusev but gets someone a bonus with Jinder Mahal. Enzo pops out of the chair and pulls Mahal off the apron, leaving Cass to clear the ring. The injured Enzo is thrown into Mahal and Cass stands very tall.

#### Shining Stars vs. Bo Dallas/Darren Young

This is over an incident on Facebook Live earlier today. And never mind as it's Strowman time...and he's got a Christmas tree. The beatdown is on and it's officially a no contest at 1:04 (though it should be a DQ as he hit Dallas first).

Strowman destroys everyone, including Bob Backlund (though just by proxy).

#### Seth Rollins vs. Braun Strowman

Strowman throws him into the corner to start but Seth gets in a suicide dive on the floor. Back in and the enziguri and springboard knee to the head stagger the monster. A second knee has him even more wobbled but he pulls Seth out of the air on the third attempt. Seth actually drops him with a Blockbuster but the Pedigree is countered with a backdrop over the top. Braun runs him over again...and here's Sami through the crowd to jump Strowman for the DQ at 3:34.

**Rating:** C. I would have had Strowman go over clean here but I can live with what they did. Rollins shouldn't be squashed but he sold quite a bit for the monster, which is the best thing they could have done without having him get destroyed. Strowman didn't lose though and that helps so much.

Post match Braun chases Sami to the back, leaving Rollins to take the Codebreaker from an invading Jericho.

Owens praises his best friend for getting rid of Rollins, leaving it one on one tonight.

Emmalina says the wait will be worth it but she's still premiering soon.

#### Golden Truth vs. Anderson and Gallows

Goldust takes Anderson down in the corner to start but Gallows comes in to start the beating. Truth fights up and brings Goldust back in as everything breaks down. We actually get some fire from Goldust, who throws Anderson into the barricade. They head inside though and it's Karl getting in a rollup for the pin at 3:34.

**Rating:** D-. Goldust can't even get revenge for someone ripping his dad's head off a teddy bear? I mean, they could have NOT BOOKED IT THAT WAY but how else would we get the third rollup finish of the night without it? Anderson and Gallows going after the belts is a good idea, albeit one we've seen for months now.

#### Rich Swann vs. Ariya Daivari

Non-title. Daivari takes him down to start but misses the early frog splash attempt. That means a double stomp to the back and the spinning kick to Daivari's head for the pin at 1:22.

Post match Swann agrees to face Neville, who jumps the champ from behind.

Daivari calls Jack Gallagher a scoundrel so of course Gallagher is next to him. Jack challenges Daivari to a duel, SLAPS HIM WITH A GLOVE, and corrects Daviari's American history by saying this makes Gallagher more like Aaron Burr.

Video on Lesnar vs. Goldberg from Survivor Series. I still don't know why I would want to see them fight a third time.

#### US Title: Kevin Owens vs. Roman Reigns

Reigns is defending. Owens hides in the corner to start and gets knocked to the floor with a right hand. Back in and Owens starts to

slowly hammer away but Reigns clotheslines him down. Cue Jericho for a distraction so Owens can score with a DDT. The backslash gets two and we take an early break.

Back with Owens getting two off the Cannonball and we hit the chinlock. Owens: "ASK HIM!" Reigns fights up and gets in the apron kick, only to get caught with a Backstabber for two. It's too early for the Pop Up Powerbomb though so Reigns grabs the sitout powerbomb for two.

The Superman Punch misses but the second attempt connects for two on Owens. Jericho offers a distraction though and Owens gets in a Codebreaker for two. This brings out Rollins to Pedigree Jericho on the floor but Owens superkicks Seth down. Back in and the spear ends Owens at 16:21.

**Rating:** C-. I'm actually starting to get a kick out of WWE trolling the fans so hard. They just had the World Champion get pinned as close to clean as a World Champion is going to get pinned by Reigns again and they did it in Chicago no less. As much as I can't stand the booking, there's something amazing about how much WWE is willing to screw the fans over for their own ambitions.

Post match Owens gets Pedigreed and Jericho gets speared to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** D+. This wasn't a horrible show but you could tell they weren't putting in much of an effort on the tail end of a holiday weekend. The ending was rather annoying but it's balanced out by Strowman being this unstoppable monster. I'm not sure where he's going next but he's already an entertaining part of the show. That being said, there's really nothing that has me interested at the moment, though maybe that's due to the end of the year and the rather awful main event scene.

### Results

Cesaro/Sheamus b. New Day – Brogue Kick to Kingston

Nia Jax b. Scarlet – Samoan drop

Charlotte b. Bayley – Rollup with feet on the ropes

Neville b. TJ Perkins – Rollup with a handful of tights

Shining Stars vs. Bo Dallas/Darren Young went to a no contest when Braun Strowman interfered

Braun Strowman b. Seth Rollins via DQ when Sami Zayn interfered

Anderson and Gallows b. Golden Truth – Rollup to Goldust

Rich Swann b. Ariya Daivari – Kick to the head

Roman Reigns b. Kevin Owens – Spear

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# **Main Event – December 22, 2016: Why the Cruiserweights Don't Work**

## **Main Event**

Date: December 22, 2016

Location: Schottenstein Center, Columbus, Ohio

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Byron Saxton, Austin Aries

I'm curious to see what they're going to do with what should be a holiday show. I know we already had one of those last week but

shouldn't that have been taking place this week instead? Either way we're at one of the last shows before the end of the year and it's hard to guess what we might get here, save for some uninteresting lower card matches. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

### Goldust vs. Curtis Axel

Goldust, who apparently debuted before Tom was born (according to Aries at least), works on the arm to start and grabs a powerslam to send Axel outside. Now it's time for Curtis to work on the arm as I guess he's a heel again this week. R-Truth plays cheerleader on the floor as Goldust comes back with a spinebuster to put both guys down. Ten right hands in the corner have Axel in more trouble and the Final Cut wraps Axel up at 5:21.

**Rating:** D. Nothing to see here but that's what Main Event is for now that Jinder Mahal seems to be getting a small push on Raw. Why Mahal is the one getting that spot isn't clear but I'm sure general idiocy can be blamed on some level. That being said, what did Axel do to deserve all these losses? He can't even beat Goldust anymore?

Back to Raw for the first time.

Here's New Day to address their title loss. They're cool with losing the titles because Ric Flair couldn't become a sixteen time champion without losing fifteen times. Big E.: "And that's Charlotte in a month." After declaring that they still rock, here are the new champions to interrupt. Sheamus and Cesaro are already bickering over who won last night so New Day insults Sheamus a bit more.

Cesaro on the other hand has catlike reflexes and is strong like a.....someone help Big E. out. Cesaro: "Like an ox?" Kofi was thinking more like a carpenter ant who can lift seven times his own weight. They bicker a lot with Woods talking about how much merchandise they have at the moment. Cue Anderson and Gallows to talk about how sick they are of the New Day nerds, only to be cut off by the Shining Stars. A brawl breaks out and you can book the eight man tag from here.

## Shining Stars/Anderson and Gallows vs. Cesaro/Sheamus/New Day

This is joined in progress with Epico hitting a nice double underhook gutbuster on Kofi. Gallows and Anderson take turns on Kingston as Saxton thinks Cesaro and Sheamus had one of the greatest accomplishments in the history of the division last night. This is why people make fun of you Byron. Anderson spikes Kofi and we take a break.

Back with the Shining Stars diving onto the champs and the Boot of Doom getting two on Kofi. Big E. comes in to clean house but Sheamus tags himself in, setting up an assisted White Noise for two on Epico. Cesaro comes in and swings Primo into the Sharpshooter for the submission at 10:46.

**Rating:** C. That's your tag division people: the bickering champs, the bald guys who put "ski" at the end of random words, the jobbers and the team that is better than all of them put together. New Day is in a weird place now as they need something new to do but I'm not sure how they're going to go fight outside of the division.

From Raw again.

Here's Charlotte to address winning the title back last night. She goes into a big speech about how no one is on her level because she's a guaranteed win on pay per view. This brings out Bayley and Charlotte isn't pleased. Bayley knows Sasha vs. Charlotte was the greatest rivalry of all time but now it's time for the Bayley vs. Charlotte rivalry to begin.

Last night was all about the scoreboard and Bayley is 2-0 against Charlotte, including at Survivor Series earlier this year. Charlotte put up four fingers last night for the Four Horsewomen but Bayley didn't come up with the rest of them because she just wasn't good enough. The challenge is issued and Charlotte actually agrees to fight right now.

## Bayley vs. Charlotte

Non-title. Charlotte works the arm to start and puts Bayley in trouble with the figure four headscissors. A headlock gets Bayley

out of trouble and she rides Charlotte on the mat. We even get a little strut before Charlotte is sent outside. Back from a break with Charlotte ramming Bayley face first into the mat over and over. A chinlock keeps Bayley in trouble but she fights out of the corner and gets in her sliding clothesline. Charlotte sends her into the corner again but the moonsault only gets two. Bayley reverses a chop into a backslide (with Charlotte's shoulder clearly up) to put Charlotte away at 14:45. Graves points out the shoulder being up and replays confirm it.

**Rating:** D+. This was actually one of the sloppier matches I've seen in a good while. Maybe it was nerves or Charlotte being a bit tired after last night but this really didn't work as well as I was expecting. I don't think Bayley gets the title at the Royal Rumble but the big match at Wrestlemania has a lot of potential.

#### Tony Nese vs. Lince Dorado

Dorado speeds things up to start and snaps off some armdrags into an armbar. Aries' suggestion: poke him in the eye. Nese finally powers him up into a backbreaker as we go to a break. Back with Dorado going hard into the buckle and Nese posing a bit. One heck of a clothesline gets two for Tony and it's off to a bodyscissors. Dorado fights up and hits the handspring Stunner, followed by the big dive over the top for good measure. Back in and Lince kicks him on the top, only to get shoved away, setting up the 450 for the pin at 11:48.

**Rating:** C-. Nese's posing and power displays helped but this really wasn't the most interesting thing in the world. Dorado really doesn't do anything for me as he really is as generic of a luchador as you're going to find. In other words, this was the cruiserweight equivalent of power vs. speed and it didn't work all that well.

We see Jericho getting locked inside the shark cage on Monday.

We'll wrap it up with Monday's main event.

#### Seth Rollins/Roman Reigns vs. Kevin Owens/Chris Jericho

Rollins gets caught in the wrong corner to start and the Canadians

take turns stomping him down. A quick Sling Blade puts Jericho down for two and the bad guys try to leave, only to get caught from behind. Back from a break with Reigns hitting his running clothesline on Owens, only to get decked so Jericho can take over. The slow beating continues and we even get one of the suddenly favorite crowd reactions shots, showing a very bored looking girl. Owens puts on a chinlock of his own until Reigns gets free off a Samoan drop. Rollins comes in with a DDT/neckbreaker combo, earning himself two more crowd reaction shots. Jericho blocks a Pedigree and the frog splash to set up the Walls, sending Seth over to the ropes. Reigns gets in a Superman Punch and reaches for the hot tag, only to have Strowman run out to go after Roman for the DQ at 15:04.

**Rating:** D. Strowman getting involved is at least a little more interesting but DANG I'm bored with the main event scene right now. People were ready to cheer for Jericho, only to have the carpet pulled out from underneath them because SURPRISE, we're right back where we were when these matches were announced.

A powerslam plants Reigns as Jericho and Owens watch from the ramp.

**Overall Rating:** D. This was bad even by Main Event's standards and that's about as low as you're going to get in wrestling. The stuff from Raw wasn't very good, the original wrestling wasn't very good and Byron Saxton still has a job. Aries was his usual entertaining self but you have to give him something to work with or it's going to be bad, like this one. Really lame show this week and that's not nice around the holidays.

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



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# Monday Night Raw – December 19, 2016: The Holiday Blues

## Monday Night Raw

Date: December 19, 2016

Location: Schottenstein Center, Columbus, Ohio

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, Corey Graves

It's the night after Roadblock and we're less than six weeks away from the Royal Rumble. That means it's still the lull period as WWE knows the audiences will be smaller over the holidays, meaning there's a good chance this is going to be a burn off show. If nothing else we can get more from Kevin Owens/Chris Jericho vs. Roman Reigns/Seth Rollins in that fresh main event story. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Owens and Jericho are in the ring to start things off with the champ welcoming us to the Chris and Kevin Show. Kevin says he'll do whatever it takes to retain the title, including taking a Codebreaker from his best friend. "MONKEYS! SHOW US THE PICTURES!" They talk about the devastating Codebreaker, which was only so huge to make everyone believe.

Jericho thinks they're so close now that Owens can have the Hug of Jericho as a special gift. Chris isn't happy though because someone else named Chris has stolen his gimmick. Yeah, that Kris Kringle makes lists and gives people gifts so HE JUST MADE THE LIST. That brings Mick Foley (so much for the hip surgery at the moment), who reveals a Christmas shirt with a leather vest over the top.

Mick sets up a tag match for later but gets the city wrong, completely destroying the aura of the cheap pop. Going forward though, Owens is going to defend the title against Reigns at the

Royal Rumble, with Jericho locked in a shark cage above the ring. Owens: "It's not even safe!"

Due to general stupidity, Jericho gets inside the cage and demands that Foley prove it safe. Owens: "Uh Chris, get out first." Foley locks him in and can't find the key (though he does find a New Day shirt, a Dude Love wallet and a key that doesn't fit). Mick says it's fine because the cage doesn't go up until he does this signal....so Jericho goes up, presumably for a good while.

Back from a break and Jericho is down, though he's dizzy and sick.

### Big Cass vs. Rusev

Cass pounds away in the corner and that's a DQ at 1:01.

Here's Sasha Banks with her leg wrapped up and walking on a crutch. Last night she was defeated by the better woman and she's not feeling much like a boss right now. Sasha wants Charlotte to come out here so she can congratulate her to her face. Instead it's Nia Jax, who says Sasha will never be a boss because she's just a little girl. The crutch is kicked out and Sasha is thrown around like she's not even there.

Foley congratulates Sheamus and Cesaro for winning the Tag Team Titles because he feels like a proud papa. He even has a present for them: new title belts, with an identical design to the Smackdown belts but with red straps. A referee comes in and tells Foley there's an emergency.

We cut to the hallway where Braun Strowman is destroying things. Foley comes up and Strowman demands Sami Zayn tonight. Mick says Sami is about a hundred miles away so Braun has to wait a bit.

### Cedric Alexander vs. Noam Dar

This is over Dar hitting on Cedric's girlfriend Alicia Fox with Austin Aries on commentary. A forearm puts Dar on the floor and it's off to a break thirty seconds in. Back with Dar missing a dive off the top and possibly twisting his ankle. Cedric comes in with a springboard clothesline of his own, followed by the Lumbar Check for the pin at 5:10.

Post match Dar says they're not even because Alexander still has Alicia.

Here's New Day to address their title loss. They're cool with losing the titles because Ric Flair couldn't become a sixteen time champion without losing fifteen times. Big E.: "And that's Charlotte in a month." After declaring that they still rock, here are the new champions to interrupt. Sheamus and Cesaro are already bickering over who won last night so New Day insults Sheamus a bit more.

Cesaro on the other hand has catlike reflexes and is strong like a.....someone help Big E. out. Cesaro: "Like an ox?" Kofi was thinking more like a carpenter ant who can lift seven times his own weight. They bicker a lot with Woods talking about how much merchandise they have at the moment. Cue Anderson and Gallows to talk about how sick they are of the New Day nerds, only to be cut off by the Shining Stars. A brawl breaks out and you can book the eight man tag from here.

#### Shining Stars/Anderson and Gallows vs. Cesaro/Sheamus/New Day

This is joined in progress with Epico hitting a nice double underhook gutbuster on Kofi. Gallows and Anderson take turns on Kingston as Saxton thinks Cesaro and Sheamus had one of the greatest accomplishments in the history of the division last night. This is why people make fun of you Byron. Anderson spikes Kofi and we take a break.

Back with the Shining Stars diving onto the champs and the Boot of Doom getting two on Kofi. Big E. comes in to clean house but Sheamus tags himself in, setting up an assisted White Noise for two on Epico. Cesaro comes in and swings Primo into the Sharpshooter for the submission at 10:46.

**Rating:** C. That's your tag division people: the bickering champs, the bald guys who put "ski" at the end of random words, the jobbers and the team that is better than all of them put together. New Day is in a weird place now as they need something new to do but I'm not sure how they're going to go fight outside of the division.

We recap the opening segment.

Enzo and Cass are talking about what they're doing tonight when Enzo gets a letter. Due to exposing himself in the workplace on November 21, Enzo has to undergo sensitivity training.

Here's Neville to brag about beating down TJ Perkins and Rich Swann last night. What he can't understand is why people cheered him. Normally they only cheer for him because they feel sorry for him but he doesn't need their pity. Neville will obliterate the division and can show up on 205 Live anytime.

Cue Swann to ask what was up with last night. Neville cuts him off and talks about mentoring Swann in Japan and getting no gratitude. This brings out Brian Kendrick to say he respects Neville. The double beatdown is on with TJ Perkins making a failed save attempt. Neville was GREAT here and maybe the best thing about the show so far.

It's time for sensitivity training with Darren Young, Bob Backlund, Bo Dallas and Jinder Mahal joining Amore. Enzo gets to go first and starts in with his usual promo. He blames his partner for being here, which the therapist interprets as Enzo and Cass being married. Mahal goes next and the therapist asks how to spell his name. Enzo stands up and says exactly what you would expect him to say.

#### Titus O'Neil vs. Sin Cara

Strowman comes in for the no contest at 40 seconds.

Braun drags Cara to the stage and throws him through a Christmas tree and a bunch of presents as Foley looks on helpless.

Jericho is annoyed at being stuck in the cage because he's arachnophobic. Owens: "That means scared of spiders." Jericho: "I'm scared of them too!" After asking if Owens knows what it's like to hang above the ring like a sexy pinata, they agree to work together tonight because Reigns and Rollins need to get.....IT!

Here's Charlotte to address winning the title back last night. She goes into a big speech about how no one is on her level because she's a guaranteed win on pay per view. This brings out Bayley and

Charlotte isn't pleased. Bayley knows Sasha vs. Charlotte was the greatest rivalry of all time but now it's time for the Bayley vs. Charlotte rivalry to begin.

Last night was all about the scoreboard and Bayley is 2-0 against Charlotte, including at Survivor Series earlier this year. Charlotte put up four fingers last night for the Four Horsewomen but Bayley didn't come up with the rest of them because she just wasn't good enough. The challenge is issued and Charlotte actually agrees to fight right now.

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Non-title. Charlotte works the arm to start and puts Bayley in trouble with the figure four headscissors. A headlock gets Bayley out of trouble and she rides Charlotte on the mat. We even get a little strut before Charlotte is sent outside. Back from a break with Charlotte ramming Bayley face first into the mat over and over. A chinlock keeps Bayley in trouble but she fights out of the corner and gets in her sliding clothesline. Charlotte sends her into the corner again but the moonsault only gets two. Bayley reverses a chop into a backslide (with Charlotte's shoulder clearly up) to put Charlotte away at 14:45. Graves points out the shoulder being up and replays confirm it.

**Rating:** D+. This was actually one of the sloppier matches I've seen in a good while. Maybe it was nerves or Charlotte being a bit tired after last night but this really didn't work as well as I was expecting. I don't think Bayley gets the title at the Royal Rumble but the big match at Wrestlemania has a lot of potential.

More from sensitivity training with Enzo making fun of Mahal but not hitting him, which shows progress.

Emmalina is sick of hearing about the Four Horsewomen and will be here when she feels like it.

The sensitivity class graduates. Enzo unsuccessfully hits on the teacher until Rusev comes in. Mahal blocks the other way out and the double beatdown is on. Lana comes in for a slap to Enzo's face.

## Seth Rollins/Roman Reigns vs. Kevin Owens/Chris Jericho

Rollins gets caught in the wrong corner to start and the Canadians take turns stomping him down. A quick Sling Blade puts Jericho down for two and the bad guys try to leave, only to get caught from behind. Back from a break with Reigns hitting his running clothesline on Owens, only to get decked so Jericho can take over.

The slow beating continues and we even get one of the suddenly favorite crowd reactions shots, showing a very bored looking girl. Owens puts on a chinlock of his own until Reigns gets free off a Samoan drop. Rollins comes in with a DDT/neckbreaker combo, earning himself two more crowd reaction shots. Jericho blocks a Pedigree and the frog splash to set up the Walls, sending Seth over to the ropes. Reigns gets in a Superman Punch and reaches for the hot tag, only to have Strowman run out to go after Roman for the DQ at 15:04.

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A powerslam plants Reigns as Jericho and Owens watch from the ramp.

**Overall Rating:** D+. There was some effort this week but you could tell they weren't putting forth their best try. Stuff like the sensitivity training felt like the old, bad comedy bits and the main event, save for Strowman, was just horrible. My guess is this is due to the holidays but they didn't do themselves any favors this week. Not a good show but not a complete waste of time.

## Results

Rusev b. Big Cass via DQ when Cass wouldn't stop attacking in the corner

Cedric Alexander b. Noam Dar – Lumbar Check

Cesaro/Sheamus/New Day b. Shining Stars/Anderson and Gallows – Sharpshooter to Primo

Titus O'Neil vs. Sin Cara went to a no contest when Braun Strowman

interfered

Bayley b. Charlotte – Backslide

Roman Reigns/Seth Rollins b. Kevin Owens/Chris Jericho via DQ when Braun Strowman interfered

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# Roadblock: End of the Line: Feel Free to Try Something

## **Roadblock: End of the Line**

Date: December 18, 2016

Location: PPG Paints Arena, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, Corey Graves

We'll wrap up the pay per view calendar with this show, our third pay per view in about a month. This isn't the hottest card in the world with a fairly lame main event of United States Champion Roman Reigns challenging Kevin Owens for the Universal Title. There's also an Iron Man match as Sasha Banks defends the Women's Title against Charlotte. Let's get to it.

Pre-Show: Rusev vs. Big Cass

This is over Big Cass defending Enzo Amore, who tried to sleep with

Rusev's life. Before the match, Enzo says something about Lana owing him money and Rusev playing Jumanji in the hotel room. Enzo puts on a red nose and Cass lists off the eight reindeer. Cass kicks Rusev in the face and we take a break less than thirty seconds in.

Back with Cass hammering away and dropping the Empire Elbow for no cover. They head outside Rusev taking him out into the crowd, leaving Enzo to go after Lana. Rusev defends his wife while Cass checks on Enzo, leaving Rusev to beat the count at 4:33. Not enough for a rating but this was rematch bait.

The opening video has a police chase theme with the idea being that everything ends at the end of the line.

#### Tag Team Titles: New Day vs. Cesaro/Sheamus

New Day is defending. Big E. is confused about what the show is called because he thinks it's a rather different, very un-PG kind of blocking. I'll let you figure out what the joke there is. Woods suggests that the challengers should be called Swing Low Irish Chariot. Cesaro dropkicks Kofi at the bell for two and it's already time for the uppercut train. It's too early for the Swing so Sheamus clotheslines Kofi instead.

The slingshot shoulder gets two on Kingston and Swiss Death is good for the same. This has been completely one sided so far. Kofi breaks up the ten forearms and brings in Big E. for the spear off the apron. The Warrior Splash gets two on Sheamus and everything breaks down. Sheamus kicks Cesaro by mistake and Woods kicks Cesaro by design, setting up the Big Ending for a very close two.

The Midnight Hour is broken up and Big E. gets the Brogue Kick. Cesaro Swings Kofi into the Sharpshooter for the submission...but Woods has the referee. Cesaro lifts Kofi up into a suplex and rolls into the Neutralizer for two with Big E. making the save this time. That was some scary power, as is always the case with Cesaro.

Woods sacrifices himself to take the Brogue Kick and the SOS gets two on Sheamus. Cesaro comes in without a tag (though Sheamus was right next to him), meaning Kofi kicks Cesaro for no count. Instead



Sheamus sneaks in and rolls Kofi up for the pin and the titles at 10:00.

**Rating:** B-. The ending was really good but I have no interest in Sheamus and Cesaro holding the belts. It's more than fine to take them off New Day now but you really couldn't do this at the Rumble against Enzo and Cass or ANYONE that might draw some interest? People didn't care about Cesaro and Sheamus at first and I doubt they will now, but this was going to happen no matter what.

New Day gets the big show of respect and we get the battle for the spotlight from the new champs.

Kevin Owens doesn't care about New Day because that will never happen to him. After insulting the interviewer, Owens flags down Chris Jericho and gives him a present. Jericho isn't impressed with his holiday scarf.

#### Sami Zayn vs. Braun Strowman

Ten minute time limit as Raw GM Mick Foley is scared for Sami's health. The ring announcer says Sami must last ten minutes though, which makes things a bit unclear. So can Sami not even go for wins? Sami dodges for the first thirty seconds and Braun no sells a chop. Braun gets his hands on Sami for a big toss and kicks him in the ribs for good measure.

We're down to eight minutes as Sami knocks Braun over the top, only to have Strowman come back in and hammer away with ease. The referee starts to check on Sami with about six minutes to go but Zayn wants to keep going. Braun lets Sami stumble around as we get down to five minutes. Some very hard clotheslines take us to four minutes and here's Foley with a white towel.

Sami is thrown down at Mick's feet and Braun goes outside to talk trash. Zayn grabs the towel and throws it into the crowd with two minutes left. Strowman promises to finish this himself but misses a charge into the post. Another missed charge sends Braun through the barricade but Strowman beats the count with 47 seconds left. A third missed charge hits the post and Sami gets two off a high crossbody.

Sami is knocked to the floor but comes back in for the Helluva Kick as time ends at 10:00 (really 10:12).

**Rating:** D+. Corey sums it up perfectly: Sami didn't win anything here. He just didn't get killed. This really belonged as an angle on Raw to set up the pay per view match instead of being the match itself. Sami hitting his finisher (which didn't knock Braun down) to end the match was a nice touch but I really have no idea where this goes outside of Braun beating Sami in another match.

Package on the UK tournament.

We recap Chris Jericho vs. Seth Rollins. Jericho lost to Rollins several times but then started costing Rollins matches against Owens. This earned Jericho a Pedigree on top of a car and that means a match.

#### Seth Rollins vs. Chris Jericho

Jericho headlocks him to start and does the Gift of Jericho pose. Chris stops him with a raised boot and the missile dropkick gets two. A rake of the eyes slows Rollins down (he even makes like he can't see for a bit, which you almost never see anymore) but he's easily able to catapult Jericho into the buckle.

Jericho gets in a clothesline and we hit the ASK HIM chinlock. Back up and Rollins fires off some right hands followed by the Slingblade. A Blockbuster gets two and Jericho gets shoved out to the floor. Rollins' springboard knee is countered into the Walls which last about as long as you would expect them to. Now the Lionsault is good for two and Seth's Falcon's Arrow gets the same.

Rollins tries the Pedigree but Jericho powers out and gets in a hurricanrana, which transitions into the Walls. Seth counters that with a small package for two, followed by the frog splash. Cue Owens for a distraction, just as Jericho grabs a small package. The Pedigree is countered again but Jericho stops to yell at Owens, allowing Seth to get in the jumping knee. Rollins gets the Pedigree for the pin at 17:12.

**Rating:** B+. I really liked this one as Jericho's roll continues. You

can almost pencil in Jericho vs. Owens for the Rumble and that story is going to write itself very well. Rollins getting the pin makes sense and maybe we can FINALLY do the blowoff between him and HHH so Rollins can move on with his career.

Pre-show recap. Cass vs. Rusev II is set for tomorrow night.

Cruiserweight Title: Brian Kendrick vs. TJ Perkins vs. Rich Swann

Swann is defending and Austin Aries is sitting in on commentary. One heck of a forearm puts Kendrick on the floor, leaving Perkins to take the champ down. Swann hurricanranas both guys down at the same time (Aries: "I've done it before.") but gets caught in the Captain's Hook.

Perkins makes the save with the kneebar but Swann makes a save of his own. Cole: "Who is the favorite now?" Aries: "I would be if I was in there." Kendrick gets tossed and Perkins slaps on another kneebar, sending Swann to the ropes. That's not a break in a triple threat but Perkins lets go anyway. Back up and Swann kicks Perkins in the head to retain at 5:59.

**Rating:** D+. Can we please, please, PLEASE get Aries anything he wants? He was by far and away the most interesting thing about this match as he just commands respect and I completely buy him as the greatest cruiserweight of all time. I mean, I know he's not but he gives you the belief that he is and that's what matters.

Post match Neville makes his return to celebrate with Swann before turning heel (!) and destroying all three. Fans: "THANK YOU NEVILLE!" I can totally go for this, though the idea that Neville weighs under 205lbs is downright laughable.

Owens goes to Jericho's locker room but Chris won't let him in. Kevin tells him to put his name on the list but Jericho still doesn't open the door. That hurts Owens' feelings and he walks away.

Recap of Sasha Banks vs. Charlotte. They've traded the title for months and this is the final match.

Women's Title: Charlotte vs. Sasha Banks

Banks is defending and this is a thirty minute iron man match,

though JoJo says the winner is the woman with the most pinfalls. I'm going to assume that's an error because nothing like that was ever mentioned before. Feeling out process to start and they hit the mat for the first two minutes. Banks headlocks her down and things stay slow to start. Some chops have Charlotte in more trouble but it's too early for the Banks Statement.

Another attempt fails just as much so Banks opts for a dropkick instead. Banks: "Your daddy loves me more!" Sasha wraps her up in something like a rear naked choke but Charlotte drops her back onto the mat for two. Charlotte heads outside and takes the double knees as we hit eight minutes in. A cross arm choke has Charlotte in more trouble but she doesn't tap out as we get to ten minutes.

Sasha throws her outside for a suicide crossbody, only to be tripped face first into the steps in a bad looking crash. We're twelve minutes in now as the referee slows things down a bit to check on Sasha. Three straight knees get two on the champ but another one misses to give Sasha a breather. Charlotte does the figure four headscissors and we're at the halfway mark.

Something like a neckbreaker onto the knee gets two on Sasha and Charlotte seems to be getting frustrated. Natural Selection connects for two but Banks can't get the Bank Statement. Instead Charlotte is put on top, only to come back with a super Natural Selection for the first fall with 10:45 to go.

Charlotte talks a lot of trash but can't get another fall as we hit nine minutes left. Banks goes to the air and spins into a rollup for the tie with 8:43 to go. That means Charlotte needs to get aggressive, only to have Sasha grab the Bank Statement for the tap out with six minutes left. Charlotte gets smart by draping the knee over the middle rope and crashing down onto it as the clock keeps ticking.

Some cannonballs down onto the knee set up a leglock as we've got three minutes left. A not great Figure Four goes on with two minutes left and Sasha is in big trouble. The hold is turned over a few times until Sasha gets caught in the middle of the ring. We're down

to thirty seconds left and Banks screams a lot. Charlotte FINALLY turns it into the Figure Eight and Banks taps with two seconds left, meaning it's a draw at 30:00.

This is the END OF THE LINE though so let's do sudden death. Charlotte gets in a shot at the bad leg before the bell rings and a small package gets two for the champ seconds into the extra period. The Bank Statement goes on but Charlotte grabs the bad leg to break the hold. It's turned into a Figure Four and Sasha (with a bloody mouth) taps to the Figure Eight at 2:58 of overtime.

**Rating:** B. Well that happened. I'm completely out of things to talk about with these two trading the title because WWE has no concept of how to wrap up a feud in an appropriate manner. Charlotte winning is fine, though the question now is who challenges her next. I know the obvious answer is Bayley, but do you trust them to do something that logical?

We recap Owens vs. Reigns. Roman beat him a few weeks ago to earn another shot here tonight but the big story is about the drama between Jericho and Owens.

#### Universal Title: Kevin Owens vs. Roman Reigns

Owens is defending and I'll only refer to him as champion for the sake of simplicity. Kevin quickly bails to the floor but gets punched in the mouth for his efforts. Something like a spinebuster gets two for Reigns but the threat of a jumping clothesline sends Owens outside. The champ takes over on the floor and hits the backplash off the steps, followed by the chinlock back inside.

Owens wants to know why Reigns didn't put his title on the line but suspects it's a lack of testicular fortitude. A standing flip legdrop of all things gets two on Roman and it's back to the chinlock. Reigns finally powers out and drives Owens into the corner, only to have the champ throw him down with a German suplex. The Superman Punch is countered into a DDT for two more.

Reigns no sells the Cannonball and hits the Superman Punch for two of his own and both guys are down. Owens goes up top and gets

Superman Punched again but still manages to grab the swinging superplex. A Swanton Bomb hits Roman's raised knees and it's spear time. It might be the big scream before the spear but somehow Owens knows to bail to the floor. Reigns gets suckered in and a splash off the apron onto the announcers' table doesn't break the table.

The second attempt works though and Reigns' ribs are hurt again. Reigns dives in at nine so Owens bolts to the top for another frog splash and the accompanying near fall. Roman's sitout powerbomb and Owens' Pop Up Powerbomb get two each and the champ doesn't know what to do. He goes outside for the title belt, earning himself a spear as he comes back inside. Cue Jericho, who looks back and forth at both guy. A Codebreaker to Owens draws the DQ at 23:33.

**Rating:** B. Good, though the waiting for Jericho took a little away from it. Unfortunately this shows the problem with Reigns being US Champion coming into this match: what good does it do to tie the title up in this match with no challenger for the title in sight? Yeah Owens vs. Jericho will be fine but sweet goodness enough with the champion vs. champion nonsense.

Jericho raises Owens' hand because IT WAS A SWERVE to end the show. Uh, couldn't he just tap Reigns and get the same result? Rollins comes out and helps with the beatdown, including a DoubleBomb to put Jericho through the table. Owens goes through the announcers' table to end the show to almost no reaction.

**Overall Rating:** B+. I liked this a lot more than I thought I would but it's a great example of a show I'm never going to watch again. Other than Charlotte getting the title back like we've seen before, nothing was really interesting here, though I can always go for a night of good wrestling. That being said, they really, REALLY need something fresh in the main event scene on Raw because "oh wait they're still best friends who get beaten up by the Shield guys" was tired a month ago.

### Results

Cesaro/Sheamus b. New Day – Small package to Kingston

Sami Zayn b. Braun Strowman by surviving the time limit

Seth Rollins b. Chris Jericho – Pedigree

Rich Swann b. TJ Perkins and Brian Kendrick – Spinning kick to the head

Charlotte b. Sasha Banks three falls to two

Kevin Owens b. Roman Reigns via DQ when Chris Jericho interfered

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## **Roadblock: End of the Line 2016 Preview**

It's time for Roadblock and that means....no that doesn't mean we're a month away from Wrestlemania. No actually it means WWE is really stupid for using the same name twice in a year when there are plenty of other names available for this show. I mean, was Vengeance taken? Or No Way Out? Or We Really Don't Need to Have This Show But We're Doing It Anyway? It's a Raw show and that means we're likely in for an annoying cameo from one or both of the bosses. Let's get to it.

We'll start with the pre-show match between Big Cass and Rusev. This is one of the few matches on the show I'm looking forward to as Cass is clearly on the rise but Rusev isn't the kind of guy that is going

to lose to someone who is making his solo pay per view debut. The match springs from the usual: someone beat up Cass' buddy Enzo Amore and the big man is out for revenge. There was also something about Amore trying to sleep with Rusev's seemingly willing wife but that detail might make Rusev seem sympathetic again so we'll ignore that part.

As much as I want to go with Cass to start his rocket push, I really can't imagine Rusev losing another pay per view match. It's also a bit early for Cass to get a win like this, though I've heard of worse ideas. This really could go either way, though they would be better off having Rusev win via a Lana distraction or the threat of Amore getting hurt again. If nothing else, I want to see a mixed tag between these four down the line, assuming man vs. woman is allowed.

We'll knock out a title match next with New Day yet again defending the Tag Team Titles against Cesaro and Sheamus. New Day set the record on Monday (for all intent and purpose) and now they get to defend against these guys again because WE WILL RESPECT CESARO AND SHEAMUS!

I know the obvious move is to change the titles not but I think I'm going to say New Day retains yet again with the big change coming at the Royal Rumble. There's no reason to keep the belts on them any longer save for breaking the 500 day mark, which means a grand total of nothing. Maybe it's just that I'm really not a fan of Cesaro and Sheamus but I have no desire to have them be the ones that finally get the belts off New Day. There's a good chance I'm wrong and I probably am but I'll say no title change here.

In another title match, Cruiserweight Champion Rich Swann is defending the title against TJ Perkins and Brian Kendrick in a triple threat match. Swann beat Kendrick for the title and both of them have gotten into it with Perkins, who is the only other man to hold this incarnation of the title.

It would seem that they're setting up Noam Dar as the next challenger for the title and he would seem to match up best against Swann. I'll go with another title being retained with Swann



overcoming the odds. He's a more interesting champion than both former champions and it would be a really bad idea to take the title off of him already. Either that or turn Perkins heel like he should have been from day one, but for some reason that seems out of the question.

We'll jump towards the main events now with Chris Jericho facing Seth Rollins in a match that should be for the US Title. Jericho keeps costing Rollins World Title matches against Kevin Owens so Rollins Pedigreed him on top of a car. Instead of assault and battery charges, we get a pay per view match as a result.

I'm going to go with Rollins here, as the big match on the horizon seems to be Jericho facing Owens in some form. Therefore, with Jericho being more than ready to turn mega face for the match, the WWE is almost guaranteed to make him lose because that's how they get people to cheer for you. So yeah, Rollins goes over and it's Jericho vs. Owens, likely at the Rumble.

Now we'll move on to the first of two timed matches on the card with Sami Zayn facing the monster Braun Strowman in a ten minute time limit match. This is about Zayn wanting to be like Mick Foley (I'm still not sure how that works) and not wanting to have to be treated like a baby because Strowman will crush him.

I think this goes to the draw with Zayn showing that he can hang in there with Strowman but barely surviving at the end of the match. Zayn certainly shouldn't beat Strowman, who could be ready for a huge match down the line, but at the same time you don't want Zayn to be completely destroyed. Strowman has Zayn done but the time runs out and it's officially a draw.

In the other timed match we have Sasha Banks defending the Women's Title against Charlotte in a thirty minute Iron Man match. This is being billed as the final match between the two of them but the stipulation sets up the prospect of a draw, meaning they get one more match.

That being said, I think they'll put the title on Charlotte again because the big pay per view winning streak ending at Wrestlemania

would be a better way to go rather than ending it at a nothing show like this. I like the Iron Man idea but it also brings up the problem of there not being much of a point to watching the first twenty five minutes of the match unless the two of them tear the house down, which of course they're capable of doing.

We'll wrap it up with the main event as Universal Champion Kevin Owens is defending against United States Champion Roman Reigns. As much as I can't stand the idea of a double champion, I have a bad feeling WWE might pull the trigger on another Reigns title run for the sake of trying to be like the UFC with Conor McGregor.

That being said, I'll actually go for the long shot and say Owens retains to set up a major title defense against Jericho at the Royal Rumble. Unfortunately that match can be done with or without the title so there's no real need for Owens to hold the belt here. I really don't need to see Reigns as champion again this soon as it isn't exactly going to do much for making him into a bigger star.

Overall Roadblock is really just there, much like most Raw pay per views. The wrestling should be fine but WWE is going to manage to make it feel like it's overstaying its already limited welcome. The main event scene is ice cold right now as I can barely even remember why Owens and Reigns are fighting in the first place. There will be some good stuff but this is just a filler show until we get to the important stuff in January.

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# Tribute to the Troops 2016: It's Just Getting Worse

## Tribute to the Troops 2016

Date: December 14, 2016

Location: Verizon Center, Washington D.C.

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, John Bradshaw Layfield

I try so hard to care about this show but it feels like WWE puts in less of an effort every single year. This is the annual show for the members of the United States military, meaning almost nothing of consequence will happen and the big main event will be Americans vs. foreigners. Let's get to it.

Shane and Stephanie McMahon welcome us to the show.

Video on the history of the series with a look back at all of the shows. The ones where they went overseas just feel so much more important.

Lillian Garcia is back to sing the National Anthem.

Cole says this is a rare occasion when the Raw, Smackdown and cruiserweight rosters are on the same show. You mean like Survivor Series?

Here's Roman Reigns to get things going. Reigns says the people in this arena are the real champions of the United States but here's Kevin Owens to cut him off. Kevin thinks he should get the praise around here because he's the longest reigning Universal Champion in history. Trash talk is exchanged with Owens saying he would take the US Title and put a maple leaf sticker on it to turn it into the Canadian Heavyweight Title. So he's a Lance Storm fan. I admire the cut of this Canadian's jib.

A challenge is issued but here's Rusev to interrupt. We get a rare

kiss with Lana but Reigns wants a soldier to come out here and show Rusev how to do that properly. A brawl is about to go down but Big Cass comes out to even things up. Mick Foley comes out to make the main event, even though it's not Raw and he shouldn't have any authority.

Package on wrestlers visiting troops.

### Cesaro/Sheamus vs. Shining Stars vs. Anderson and Gallows vs. Golden Truth

The winners get New Day on Sunday with one fall to a finish. Anderson punches Goldust to start before it's off to Epico who gets beaten up as well. The Shining Stars get together to put Goldust on the floor and we take a break. Back with Gallows kicking Goldust in the face because it's beat on the old man night.

An elbow drop gets two with Sheamus making the save. The hot tag brings in R-Truth to clean house with an ax kick getting two on Primo. Cesaro comes in to clean house with his usual stuff, including the high crossbody for two more on Primo. Epico saves his cousin from the Swing but gets Brogue Kicked for the pin at 9:28.

**Rating:** D+. If they just have to give Cesaro and Sheamus the titles so be it, as long as New Day has the record once and for all. I'm still not a fan of the team but they're probably the only option out of these four. The tag division means nothing at the moment so they're as good an option as there is otherwise. Also, how weird is it to see storyline development on one of these shows?

More wrestlers meeting troops.

Here are Miz and Maryse for a chat with Miz calling himself an inspiration due to his role in the Marine movies. Anyway it's open challenge time so here's comedian Gabriel Iglesias to answer. They argue about who is out of their element until Iglesias brings out a friend to answer the challenge.

### Miz vs. Apollo Crews

Non-title. Miz starts with the Daniel Bryan mockery fast by doing the YES pose and hitting the running corner dropkick. The running

corner clothesline is countered into a belly to belly suplex as Iglesias starts taking pictures with Maryse. Neither Miz nor Maryse are pleased so Crews kicks Miz in the face, meaning another picture can be taken. The distraction lets Crews grab a rollup for the pin at 2:30.

Some troops say hello to their families.

#### Dolph Ziggler/American Alpha vs. Wyatt Family

Jordan immediately goes for the belly to belly on Harper but gets headlocked for his efforts. Luke is knocked out to the floor and we take a break. Back with Ziggler coming in to clothesline Orton and dropping him with a neckbreaker. The triple teaming puts Ziggler down in a hurry though and Orton's snap powerslam gets two. Ziggler gets away for the hot tag without too much effort and everything breaks down. That's fine with the Wyatts who clean house off a release Rock Bottom to Gable. The RKO finishes Chad at 10:55.

**Rating:** C-. Well that was rather squashy. The Wyatts completely destroyed the three of them here and that's not a good sign for Alpha's title hopes going forward. You would think they would be the best option to eventually take the belts from the Wyatts but that really doesn't seem to be the case, at least not yet. At least they're keeping the Family strong for a change.

Bayley, Charlotte and Dana Brooke meet a rescue dog. Dana isn't impressed and a match is made for later.

#### Bayley vs. Dana Brooke

Charlotte and the dog are at ringside. Dana takes her down and cranks on an arm and a leg at the same time. Bayley comes back with her spinning elbow in the corner but Charlotte grabs the leg to break up the suplex. The fans want Sasha but have to settle for Bayley throwing Dana into Charlotte. Back in and the Bayley to Belly wraps Dana up at 2:24.

Bayley celebrates with the dog just in case she's not adorable enough yet.

#### TJ Perkins/Jack Gallagher/Rich Swann vs. Brian Kendrick/Tony

## Nese/Drew Gulak

Perkins and Kendrick speed things up to start with TJ sending him outside, meaning it's time for all the dives. Gallagher goes last but opts to climb through the ropes and hit an ax handle from the apron for the pop of the night. Back in and Gulak puts Perkins in something like the Edgecator to take over for the first time.

Perkins cross bodies Nese but it's not enough for the hot tag. Gulak gets kicked away and it's off to Swann as things speed up.

Everything breaks down with Jack headbutting Nese out to the floor but shaking himself up in the process. A double superkick drops Kendrick and the spinning kick to the jaw ends Gulak at 5:33.

**Rating:** C. This was exactly what this match needed to be with the right ending. I liked the fact that they didn't do much to set up the triple threat here as this was much more an exhibition than anything involving storylines. They need to find some better heel jobbers than Gulak and Nese though as they've lost so many times now that it's starting to lose meaning.

HHH and Stephanie went to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier for a ceremony.

More wrestlers in Afghanistan.

New Day talks about their title defense on Sunday but instead opt to dance over breaking the record. Big E. thinks they're the greatest trio of all time when the Club comes in to laugh at the thought. They throw up the too sweet sign and here's the Shield to stare all six of them down. Reigns: "Nah." Well that worked.

## Big Cass/Roman Reigns vs. Rusev/Kevin Owens

Enzo is back and we hear about how the Americans are going to beat down the bad guys for every branch of the military. Rusev and Reigns get things started with the Bulgarian actually taking over. The running splash misses though and Rusev has to bail from the threat of the Superman Punch. Instead it's the apron dropkick and the good guys stand tall as we take a break.

Back with Owens getting in a cheap shot on Reigns to give the bad

guys control. Owens gets all angry with the trash talk and drops a backplash on the floor. Reigns finally throws Rusev down and a big uppercut to Owens allows the hot tag to Cass. Everything breaks down but Lana shoves Enzo into the steps. The distraction lets Rusev get in a superkick to set up the frog splash for two. Another hot tag brings in Reigns for the spear and pin on Rusev at 12:55.

**Rating:** C-. Totally standard main event to end a totally standard show. Lana laying out Enzo was the highlight of the match here and actually makes me want to see them have a wacky comedy match. I'm really happy with the idea of Cass moving higher up the card and while I don't see him beating Rusev, it's a good sign to have him in that spot on a pay per view.

A quick thank you to the troops wraps us up.

**Overall Rating:** D. Is that really what they think of the troops? This was basically an extra hour for Raw and Smackdown with nothing interesting whatsoever going on. In two hours we had maybe ten combined minutes of stuff on the troops, making this one of the lamest tributes ever. It used to be a show in the Middle East. Then it was a show at a military base. Then it was a glorified house show. Now it's something thrown in as a bonus when you went to Smackdown. To suggest this was about the troop is a joke and you almost have to know that just by paying attention. Totally unnecessary show, as it's been for years.

### Results

Cesaro/Sheamus b. Shining Stars, Anderson and Gallows and Golden Truth – Brogue Kick to Epico

Apollo Crews b. Miz – Rollup

Wyatt Family b. Dolph Ziggler/American Alpha – RKO to Gable

Bayley b. Dana Brooke – Bayley to Belly

Jack Gallagher/Rich Swann/TJ Perkins b. Drew Gulak/Tony Nese/Brian Kendrick – Spinning kick to Gulak's head

Roman Reigns/Big Cass b. Kevin Owens/Rusev – Spear to Rusev

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# Monday Night Raw – December 12, 2016: New Day Still Rocks

## Monday Night Raw

Date: December 12, 2016

Location: Wells Fargo Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, Corey Graves

It's the go home show for Roadblock: End of the Line (because there were NO OTHER NAMES FOR A PAY PER VIEW BESIDES ROADBLOCK so they had to use the name twice) but we've got two big deals to get through before the pay per view. Tonight we have the long awaited debut of the made over Emmalina as well as New Day trying to extend their Tag Team Title reign one more day in the hopes of matching Demolition's all time record. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Tag Team Titles: New Day vs. Anderson and Gallows vs. Cesaro/Sheamus

New Day is defending and if they keep the titles, they tie the record for the longest Tag Team Title reign in WWE history. Woods



talks about how this is their chance to elevate every New Day fan ever, along with Woods' grandma. However, Xavier doesn't get the idea of one more triple threat. Kofi says New Day IS the triple threat with Woods as the brain, Kofi as the handsome finesse and Big E. as the big, thick, meaty third leg.

Kofi and Cesaro start things off and the spinning high crossbody gives Kingston an early two. A dropkick sends Sheamus into the corner so the champs can run him over for two. Anderson and Gallows get to take over on Kofi and it's off to a break. Back with Big E. down and Anderson and Gallows hitting something like a running Demolition Decapitator (nice touch) for two on Kofi. Sheamus tags himself in and starts cleaning house with the Philadelphia fans getting way into the ten forearms to the chest.

Big E. dives in to save the cover but gets an Irish Curse for his efforts. The Boot of Doom gets two on Sheamus with Cesaro making the save this time. That's enough for the hot tag to Cesaro, who busts out all of his favorites, capped off with a high crossbody for two on Karl. Anderson gets caught in the Swing into the Sharpshooter but Big E. makes the save, only to have Cesaro hurricanrana his way out of a powerbomb. A Hart Attack with a Brogue Kick drops Anderson but Kofi runs in with Trouble in Paradise to pin Sheamus at 11:57.

**Rating:** B. I find it interesting that New Day won this clean instead of doing a heel turn, or really anything heelish for that matter. Of course there's always the chance that something is done later in the night to screw this up but for now, that's one of the unbreakable record that I never would have expected to be broken coming down.

The place goes NUTS for the record as New Day celebrates.

Back from a break with New Day arriving at their celebration party. After we stop to hug Stephanie, champagne is poured and goes right into Stephanie's eyes. She throws the big bowl of Booty0's everywhere and storms off because we haven't had enough Stephanie moments lately. We just saw (what should have been) one of the longest, most untouchable records in WWE history matched and broken but no, because WE NEED A STEPHANIE STORY!

We look back at Sami Zayn/Braun Strowman/Mick Foley's issues over the last few weeks. Sami has said he wants a match with Strowman "or else".

Back with Stephanie all covered in champagne (because we're supposed to believe that the smartest, most amazing woman that ever lived didn't realize that she might get covered with champagne in a celebration INVOLVING CHAMPAGNE BEING SPRAYED EVERYWHERE) when Owens comes in to ask for a yet to be determined favor.

#### Braun Strowman vs. Curtis Axel

Splash, torture rack, wheelbarrow slam, Braun wins at 1:14.

Braun says Foley is protecting Sami because Sami can't last two minutes against him. Foley is watching from the back when Sami comes in to demand the match on Sunday. No one saved Foley and Mick wouldn't be where he is now if someone did. Mick says he'll put Sami up against anyone on the roster but Strowman. That's interpreted as Foley believing Sami can't do it so Sami says if Mick won't give him the opportunity, then maybe he doesn't need to be on Raw anymore. Foley says he'll call Daniel Bryan and work out a trade.

#### Ariya Daivari vs. Lince Dorado

Daivari knocks him to the floor to start but here's Jack Gallagher to interfere. Gallagher has a mic though and actually announces his intentions to interfere in this match (because it would be ungentlemanly to not announce it in advance) because Daivari is a right scoundrel who deserves a proper thrashing. Jack officially comes in for the DQ at 2:37.

It's time for Seth Rollins with the Rollins Report. After saying he wants HHH again, Rollins wants to know if Kevin Owens will be in Chris Jericho's corner this Sunday so he brings out Owens as his guest. Owens comes to the stage...and sits on his own stool. Seth asks about the friendship with Jericho so Owens says they'll have each others backs. As for tonight though, Owens will be teaming with Jericho against New Day for the Tag Team Titles.

Cue Jericho to say he thinks Owens is nuts. Owens loves the idea of

stopping New Day's bid for the record but Rollins suggests that Owens is trying to order Jericho around. Rollins calls Jericho sparkle crotch and that means HE.....is going to make Jericho drop his pen. He's going to put Rollins on the disabled list instead. The Canadians head to the ring and beat Seth down. Reigns comes out for the WAY too late save and the Canadians bail.

Rich Swann recaps the incident on 205 Live that set up Sunday's Cruiserweight Title triple threat. Brian Kendrick comes in and threatens to stab Swann in the back. TJ Perkins comes in to laugh at Kendrick and it's time for a match.

#### TJ Perkins vs. Brian Kendrick

An early wristlock doesn't get Kendrick very far and he has to bail from the kneebar. The Wrecking Ball dropkick knocks Brian outside and we take a break. Back with Perkins hitting a jumping spin kick to the head and a springboard missile dropkick for two. The Captain's Hook is countered into the kneebar so Kendrick dives over to the ropes. Back up and Sliced Bread #2 gives Kendrick the pin at 8:24.

**Rating:** C-. So flash back to any time these two have fought in the last few months and update the details as necessary. This wasn't interesting because neither of the wrestlers are interesting. The triple threat has some potential but for the life of me I never need to see these two fight again.

Foley adds Rollins/Reigns to the Tag Team Title match because it's Philadelphia and we need another three way dance.

Charlotte and Sasha Banks will have no rematch after Sunday.

Video on Sasha vs. Charlotte.

#### Bayley vs. Alicia Fox

This is over a destroyed Bayley Bear. Bayley rides her to the mat to start and rides Fox for a bit, earning some HEY WE WANT SOME BAYLEY chants. The ax kick gets two for Fox but she spends too much time talking trash and walks into the Bayley to Belly for the pin at 2:45.

Here are Lana and Rusev to make fun of Enzo Amore. They've got some footage of what happened after the doors closed last week and of course we don't get to see it. They make some more fun of Enzo until Big Cass comes out to brawl. Rusev and Lana bail, likely setting up a match on Sunday.

Jericho suggests that winning the Tag Team Titles might help his friendship with Owens.

Emmalina's debut is postponed.

### Sami Zayn vs. Jinder Mahal

Sami dropkicks him to start but gets kneed in the face to give Jinder what is likely a short term advantage. The chinlock keeps Sami down until the exploder and Helluva Kick give him the pin at 3:20.

**Rating:** D+. This was just a way to possibly write Sami off Raw, assuming they send Sami over to Smackdown like he should have been in the first place. Mahal is fine for a spot like this, though I find it hard to believe that this match was already set up coming into tonight's show. Granted I can live with this though because IT'S NOT MAHAL VS. DARREN YOUNG!!!

Post match Mick comes out to say that Sami will be traded to Smackdown for a talent to be named. All he has to do is sign the deal, but first Mick offers to tell him who the talent will be. The official offer will be Sami for.....Eva Marie. Sami goes nuts because he's worth 100 Eva Marie's and he's tired of making up for Foley's mistakes. He actually grabs Mick's shirt and shoves him away because he wants Strowman so badly.

Foley agrees to make the match for Roadblock but says Sami better have the anger ready. There was never any trade proposed (the paper was blank) because Foley wouldn't trade him. The only catch is there's a ten minute time limit (earlier tonight Braun said Sami couldn't last two minutes) because that's all Mick is willing to risk Sami's health.

Video on John Cena hosting Saturday Night Live.

Recap of New Day's night.

Tag Team Titles: Seth Rollins/Roman Reigns vs. Chris Jericho/Kevin Owens vs. New Day

New Day is defending and has the chance to surpass Demolition's record reign. Again. Woods and Rollins start things off with a Sling Blade dropping Xavier. It's off to Reigns vs. Big E. with E.'s spear being blocked by a raised knee. Jericho gets smart by tagging himself in to take over on Big E., including a top rope back elbow to the jaw. Owens and Big E. are both dropped by a double clothesline so it's back to Woods.

Xavier is taken to the top and it's almost a double Canadian superplex, only to have everyone else get involved for the super Tower of Doom to send us to a break. Back with Owens holding Woods in a chinlock until he misses the backsplash. The hot tag brings in Big E. to clean house with the belly to belly suplexes. We hit the hip swivel and the Warrior splash crushes Jericho, only to have Seth tag himself in. Everything breaks down again and Seth suicide dives onto Chris.

Another one takes out Big E., followed by a third to get rid of Kofi and Big E. at the same time. Jericho's Codebreaker to Reigns is countered into a sitout powerbomb for a hot two. The Superman Punch nails Owens and Jericho rolls Reigns up for an even hotter near fall. Woods makes a blind tag and hits his really long top rope elbow for two on Roman. A knee to the face drops Woods but Rollins superkicks Owens to the floor.

Jericho crotches Rollins on top and Owens adds a Cannonball. The Lionsault gets two on Woods (I bought it for a second) and it's off to the Walls to put Xavier in even more trouble. Woods turns it over and small packages him for two but he walks into a Pop Up Codebreaker. Rollins dives in for the save by shoving Owens into Jericho to break up the pin (smart). That means CANADIAN ARGUING, leaving Rollins to Pedigree Jericho. Big E. pulls Seth to the floor and Woods covers to retain at 20:23.

**Rating:** B+. This whole match is summed up with one line: New Day

retained. That's the only logical way to end this and it's all that matters in the grand scheme of things. Now what makes it even better is they had some outstanding near falls and false finishes. New Day breaking the record makes the most sense and that's what matters, no matter how you look at it.

Post match Owens and Jericho yell at each other with Chris saying they're done. Jericho leaves and tells Owens to turn around, allowing Reigns to spear him to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B+. It really is amazing how well something can work when you tease a bad ending and then do the smart thing to send the fans home happy. I really liked the show this week as Raw has found a bit better balance. New Day retaining in two very good matches is the right way to go about things and the show was a lot of fun as a result. I don't really care about Roadblock but at least we had a great go home show.

### Results

New Day b. Cesaro/Sheamus and Anderson and Gallows – Trouble in Paradise to Sheamus

Braun Strowman b. Curtis Axel – Wheelbarrow slam

Ariya Daivari b. Lince Dorado via DQ when Jack Gallagher interfered

Brian Kendrick b. TJ Perkins – Sliced Bread #2

Bayley b. Alicia Fox – Bayley to Belly

Sami Zayn b. Jinder Mahal – Helluva Kick

New Day b. Roman Reigns/Seth Rollins and Chris Jericho/Kevin Owens – Pedigree to Jericho

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# Main Event – December 9, 2016: It's Spread

## **Main Event**

Date: December 9, 2016

Location: Frank Erwin Center, Austin, Texas

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Byron Saxton

We've had a steady schedule for all of a week now so of course it's time to change again. This show is now being released on Fridays on Hulu and will be available online a day or so later. If nothing else it's kind of nice to wait a little bit instead of having the show airing just a day or two after Smackdown. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Darren Young vs. Jinder Mahal

....no. No no, no no no. NO! How many times can they possibly do THIS SAME MATCH??? Young wristlocks him down to start and we hit the mat with a headlock takeover. Jinder goes after the knee to take over but some cannonballs down onto the leg only get him kicked out to the floor. The Gut Check is broken up but a second attempt is enough to put Mahal away at 5:00.

**Rating:** D+. Just a simple match but the repetitive nature is just killing the thing. I have no idea who is loving these matches so much but I really question their taste in wrestling. Just find something new already because, even though not a lot of people are watching, these shows have an audience and they deserve a bit more respect.

Back to Raw.

It's time for the big ending with Charlotte (who has accepted the Iron Man challenge) apologizing to her dad. We see her yelling at Flair (that makes three times tonight) but it was even harder to see

Flair raise Sasha's hand last week. Charlotte says no one can imagine how hard it is to be Ric's daughter because of how big his legacy really is.

Then last week she saw her dad raise Sasha's hand and she knew she had failed as his daughter. Flair comes out and hugs her but, of course (that's a trend tonight) she slaps him in the face. Cue Sasha but Charlotte Alley Oops her face first into the post. Charlotte mocks Flair crying and walks away to end the show.

From Raw again.

#### Anderson and Gallows vs. Cesaro/Sheamus

The winners get New Day, at ringside here, next week for the titles. Anderson and Gallows go outside and get in New Day's face to start but the Europeans run them over, sending the cereal flying. Back from a break with Cesaro fighting out of Anderson's chinlock and escaping the Magic Killer with some help from Sheamus. The hot tag brings Sheamus in for the ten forearms to the chest but everyone winds up on the floor for the brawl with New Day and that's a no contest at 9:58.

**Rating:** C. This was fine though the triple threat for next week was obvious. I'm really not sure who wins the thing but it's a cool feeling to have a match where I don't know the ending. The match should be fun and I really could see it going either way. This match was just a means to an end and that's fine.

#### Bo Dallas vs. Sin Cara

Another rematch. Cara starts fast by knocking him outside for a suicide dive. Back in and Bo runs the masked one over and implores that we Bo-lieve in him. Cara's moonsault seems to hit knees and he sends Bo into the ropes while trying to throw Dallas outside. We take a break and come back with Cara failing to suplex Bo out to the floor.

Dallas' belly to back suplex does work but Cara throws him into the ropes for another crash. A Lionsault press gets two for Cara and a middle rope Regal Roll gets the same. Cara fires off some knees until the referee pulls him away, allowing Bo to grab a rollup (and maybe some tights) for the pin at 10:40.

**Rating:** C+. This was much better than I was expecting with both guys actually working a lot harder than you would have guessed. Dallas



has a place on the roster but he needs the right character to really pull it off. I mean, he's beating a main roster guy here but that doesn't count because Cara is just a lowly cruiserweight and therefore meant to be beaten right?

Back to Raw one last time to wrap things up.

#### US Title: Chris Jericho vs. Roman Reigns

Roman is defending and is actually driven into the corner to start. The Superman Punch is countered with a dropkick and a clothesline puts the champ on the floor. A big dive to the floor takes Reigns out again and we take a break. Back with Reigns caught in a chinlock for a bit before being tossed out to the floor.

The Lionsault only gets two and the fans are getting WAY into Jericho all over again. A Samoan drop and Superman Punch get two on Jericho and the Codebreaker is countered into a sitout powerbomb. Roman goes shoulder first into the post though and we hit the Walls. As Reigns grabs the rope, cue Owens for a superkick. The Codebreaker gets two on Reigns but the Canadian argument sets up the spear to retain the title at 13:43.

**Rating:** B. Is there a reason why Reigns needs the US Title? Someone answer that for me. His feud is over the World Title and he doesn't have a long term challenger but he's still US Champion with no real prospects for a title feud anytime soon. Jericho vs. Rollins over the US Title could elevate the belt but Reigns is keeping it anyway. I don't think I need to explain this one being good as Jericho is still on fire.

**Overall Rating:** C-. Just a show here really and that's mainly due to how stale Raw feels at the moment. With almost nothing interesting going on Monday nights, it's kind of hard to get into a recap show with a decent featured match. I'm already missing the old Main Event format and again, that's just because Raw's roster isn't as interesting or entertaining.

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