

Smackdown – August 2, 2016: Double The Problem And It Might Go Away

Smackdown

Date: August 2, 2016

Location: Bridgestone Arena, Nashville, Tennessee

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, John Bradshaw Layfield, David Otunga

Last week's show wasn't the greatest in the world and the reception has been mixed at best. That doesn't mean the show is in trouble by any means though as Raw started off great and wasn't exactly as strong last night. If nothing else we get American Alpha tonight. Let's get to it.

We open with Shane McMahon and Daniel Bryan watching the end of Raw last night with Randy Orton. Shane isn't happy because he thinks Orton has jeopardized everything but it was pretty awesome. There's a bunch of security standing by but Orton doesn't think they're necessary. The bosses walk away and run into Miz and Maryse with the former saying he's their Jason Bourne. Bryan announces a triple threat match between Baron Corbin, Apollo Creed (yes Creed) and Kalisto with the winner getting the shot at Summerslam. They keep walking and run into Dean Ambrose who says nothing of note.

Opening sequence.

Here's Ambrose to say he loves being the captain of the blue brand and he's here to stay. That brings us to Summerslam so Dean would like Dolph Ziggler to come out here right now. Ziggler started here as a male cheerleader and knows what it means to work hard to get to the top. Dean doesn't want to hear it though because people told him that he wasn't championship material and you can't pay attention to all that negativity. You can't be worried about what fans chant and what people say on the internet and stealing the show all night long.

All that matters is that Ziggler is facing him for the title at

Summerslam. Ziggler goes into a story about going to his first WWE live event when he was five and then being a star at Kent State University as a walk-on. He's spent seven years being told he's too good and then not good enough and he's going to walk into Summerslam to take the title like he deserves to.

Dean leaves and there go the lights with Bray Wyatt appearing to lay out Ziggler with Sister Abigail. Bray calls him worthless and wants a match with Ziggler tonight for the #1 contendership. Putting Wyatt in the spot would make sense but I have a bad feeling that they're going with this as a way to put Ziggler over because the last six to eight years haven't accomplished that yet but having Wyatt lose would be the ticket.

Post break Ziggler tells the bosses that he wants the match.

Kalisto vs. Apollo Crews vs. Baron Corbin

Winner gets the Intercontinental Title shot at Summerslam with Miz on commentary. Everyone also now has a little tail of the tape during their entrance to make things feel a little more professional. Corbin gets double teamed to the floor to start but he's able to low bridge Crews to the floor, only to have Kalisto take Baron out with a suicide dive as we go to an early break.

Back with Corbin in control with Kalisto sends him outside. A Samoan drop gets two for Crews but Corbin comes back in with Deep Six for two of his own. Another hurricanrana attempt is countered but Corbin gets dropkicked to the floor, leaving Crews to pin Kalisto for the title shot 6:45.

Rating: C. This was barely long enough to rate with the commercial but Crews was the only option. They're not going to go heel vs. heel for the title and Kalisto is a lost cause so Crews had to get the win. It's nice that they're actually doing something with him for a change though and maybe it can actually mean they're serious about these random callups.

Post match Corbin goes after Kalisto with Crews making the save, only to eat a Skull Crushing Finale.

Becky Lynch vs. Eva Marie

Eva gets her big over the top entrance, which seems to be her new standard. Actually hang on a second as Eva is claiming a leg injury before the bell. We get a trainer brought in and there's no match. This comes off as the latest answer to "we can't have Eva wrestle live."

We go to Renee Young for an interview with Carmella but Natalya cuts them off. They get catty with each other (because that's what WWE women do) and a match is teased for later.

American Alpha vs. Vaudevillains

Gable quickly takes Gotch down to start before it's off to Jordan. That doesn't go as well so it's right back to Gable for a top rope double clothesline. A double dropkick sends the Vaudevillains to the floor and Alpha does their sliding pose. Chad gets beaten down for a few seconds before the hot tag brings in Jordan to clean house. The dropkicks and suplexes set up Grand Amplitude to end English at 3:28.

Rating: C+. This was exactly what the debut needed to be as they kept it short but got in everything they needed to hit. These guys really are like a modern day Steiner Brothers and the high flying makes it even more entertaining. I still don't know why they're doing new Smackdown Tag Team Titles though when of the seven or so teams they have, two of them are jobbers and another is Breezango. Anyway though, Alpha looked great here.

Video on John Cena hosting the Teen Choice Awards.

Here's AJ Styles with a message for Cena but he's cut off in a hurry by Cena himself. AJ thinks he could beat Cena up but he's done that time after time and Cena just keeps sticking around. Styles doesn't like Cena making these kids delusional and taking the kids with them. You don't get dessert before dinner, you don't stay up late with school the next day and you don't get a trophy for participation. You're rewarded for winning like AJ did when he beat John Cena last time.

Cena does his standard "they make up their own minds about me" but AJ cuts him off again to rant about his win again. Styles wants to know why Cena is still here with all that stuff he has going on outside of WWE. As usual, it's because Cena loves this place. He loves doing the ESPYs and

the Teen Choice Awards because people always ask him when he's leaving WWE. That gives him another chance to say the WWE is his home and he's never leaving.

Tomorrow when AJ is kicking it on his day off, Cena will be in New York on the Late Show representing WWE. All AJ has to do is be a great wrestler who can get up and leave when he needs to. There is no other place for Cena so what the heck is AJ doing here? AJ mockingly applauds him and issues the challenge for Summerslam, which Cena immediately accepts. Cena was great as usual but I'm really not sure what AJ's issue was here and that's not good.

Randy Orton vs. Fandango

Security is around ringside. The fans already want an RKO but get Orton working on the leg but walking into a dropkick instead. We're already in a chinlock as JBL incorrectly says Orton's father was in the main event of the first Wrestlemania (being in the corner for doesn't mean being in the match). Breeze tries to come in and eats a powerslam, leaving Fandango to take the elevated DDT. There's the RKO but cue Brock to come in for the F5 and the DQ at 3:05.

Rating: D. Normally I wouldn't rate this when the last fifteen seconds of the match were Brock coming out to watch and the F5 but it's not like it matters that much. Thank goodness they can use a team like Breezango as cannon fodder like this. But hey, we should totally buy them as title contenders soon after this.

During the break, Lesnar was forced to leave the arena.

Heath Slater comes in to see Daniel Bryan and asks for a contract. Bryan gives Slater a match next week and if he wins, he gets a job. Slater thinks he's facing Jumping Marty Lunde (Arn Anderson's real name) but gets Gored by Rhyno instead.

Ambrose says nothing surprises him.

Carmella vs. Natalya

And again no match with Natalya jumping Carmella from behind and putting

on a Sharpshooter.

The bosses try to talk Ziggler out of the match and he says screw them.

Bray Wyatt vs. Dolph Ziggler

Ziggler hits a dropkick and Fameasser for two less than ten seconds in. The threat of a superkick sends Bray outside and he's hobbling on his previously injured leg. Back from a break with Bray hitting a superplex and putting on a cravate. Bray's leg seems fine as Ziggler comes back with clotheslines and a neckbreaker. The superkick is blocked though and Bray gets two off the backsplash.

Bray goes to pull off the turnbuckle pad but gets caught with a Zig Zag for a close two. Even Dean is stunned off the kickout. Sister Abigail is countered into a rollup for two but the release Rock Bottom gets two on Dolph. Back up and Bray is sent face first into the exposed buckle (as usual, right in front of the referee because they're worthless in WWE), followed by a superkick for the title shot at 11:34.

Rating: B. The false finishes were really good here but that lack of a DQ makes the match look so faked. At least try to make it clear that the referee isn't looking or something because it makes them look incompetent. Speaking of incompetent, we're really sticking with Ziggler vs. Ambrose at Summerslam? That's what they're going with? I mean, I know it's not a popular move and the match won't be that great but that's what we're getting because WWE decided it.

Post match Erick Rowan comes out to beat down Ziggler. Ambrose's save attempt doesn't work and it's Sister Abigail on Dolph to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. I liked it better than last week but it's really clear that adding more titles would be a horrible decision right now as the depth just isn't there. The depth was barely there for one set of titles so the solution is clearly to double everything. That ending gives me hope that we won't be seeing just Ambrose vs. Ziggler at Summerslam. The worst part is the match will be at least decent but there's just no WOW factor to it and that's a really bad thing for Smackdown's future.

Results

Apollo Crews b. Kalisto and Baron Corbin – Rollup to Kalisto

American Alpha b. Vaudevillains – Grand Amplitude to English

Randy Orton b. Fandango via DQ when Brock Lesnar interfered

Dolph Ziggler b. Bray Wyatt – Superkick

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New Column: Reviewing the Reviews

Bringing this one out of mothballs, much like Ziggler as a credible main eventer.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-reviewing-the-review/>

Smackdown – July 5, 2001: That's A Bad Sign

Smackdown

Date: July 5, 2001

Location: Tacoma Dome, Tacoma, Washington

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jim Ross

This is another old request as I try to knock some of my way too long list down. We're very early into the Invasion and Steve Austin is currently out due to an injury and is sitting in Vince McMahon's office singing campfire songs with Kurt Angle, who has basically decided he's Austin's best friend. Let's get to it.

The opening recap looks at Torrie Wilson trying to seduce Vince to get a contract, only to have Linda catch them in a scene that wasn't very funny. This is in no way a reason for Vince to get physical with Torrie Wilson in a swimsuit top.

Opening sequence.

Tag Team Titles: Chris Jericho/Spike Dudley vs. Dudley Boyz

Bubba and D-Von are defending as Spike tries to find someone to help fight off his brothers, who don't like him dating Molly Holly. This is another sign of the times as you would just have random title matches on TV instead of spending weeks setting up a title match on pay per view. D-Von and Jericho start things off with Jericho scoring off some chops. A springboard dropkick sends D-Von outside and Spike dives on both Dudleys. Well the other Dudleys that is. I can assure you he didn't dive on himself.

Back in and Spike plays D-Von in What's Up to D-Von but the Dudley Dawg is easily broken up. It's time for Spike to get beaten down, including an awesome double flapjack to send him crashing to the mat in a great looking landing. D-Von misses a middle rope legdrop and the hot tag brings in Jericho to clean house. Jericho can't keep the Walls on though

as D-Von makes a quick save, leaving Spike to come in instead. A quick 3D ends Spike to retain the titles.

Rating: C-. That flapjack alone makes this match go up in value. I mean Spike just slammed into that mat and landed on his face. How can you not love that? Jericho vs. the Dudley Boyz wasn't the most interesting feud and it didn't do much other than fill in a little time before he moved on to the big time with the invasion.

Jericho clears the ring post match.

Austin and Debra come in to see Vince, who rants against Torrie for what happened on Monday. Debra blames Vince but Austin has a present to make things better. Vince opens the big red box and it's.....a cowboy hat. Austin has one of his own but Angle comes in and feels left out. There's one more box though and it's a smaller hat, just for Kurt, who has never been happier. Austin looks like he wants to kill him. Then why did Austin buy the hat? This was an awkward phase of comedy but they're nailing the timing and it's actually really funny stuff.

Earlier today the WWF and WCW referees got in a fight, which actually set up a pay per view match for reasons I don't want to comprehend.

Crash Holly vs. Jacqueline

Crash knocks her around to start but they head outside with Jacqueline sending him shoulder first into the post. Back in and we hit the armbar for a bit before Crash gets two off a northern lights suplex. Crash gets crotched on the top and a super hurricanrana gives Jacqueline the pin.

Rating: D-. This was a stretch when Jacqueline was wrestling various men despite there being no real reason to see her do so. Basically it was a way to show off how awesome she was (quite the stretch) and, again, no one was really all that interested. This would happen from time to time and the fact that it never lead anywhere didn't seem to change much.

Trish (looking GREAT here) comes in to thank Jeff Hardy for saving her from Big Show. Lita and Matt come in to make her leave. Jeff thinks there's nothing wrong with this, which might have something to do with

Trish kissing Matt last week.

We look back at Austin, Angle and WCW wrestler Buff Bagwell beating down WCW World Champion Booker T. Austin and Angle beat Bagwell down and threw him outside.

Various wrestlers, many of them who used to work in WCW, laugh at Booker for taking such a beating. Booker says he's ready to defend his title tonight.

Vince gets a summons about a settlement with Linda. Austin blames Angle and wants his hat back but Angle calls him an Indian giver.

WCW Cruiserweight Title: Billy Kidman vs. Gregory Helms

This is a WCW match complete with graphics and Scott Hudson and Arn Anderson on commentary. Helms used to be Gregory but we can't have two Shanes on the roster. The announcers talk about Booker defending the WCW World Title tonight and ignore the match to really make this feel like something out of WCW. Helms is sent to the floor and taken down with a dive.

Back in and Kidman is hiptossed out for a big crash. Anderson rips on the cowboy hot segment as Kidman gets beaten down even more. A BK Bomb (Sky High) gets two but the shooting star misses. The Nightmare on Helm Street gets two and a modified Kid Crusher (basically the Killswitch) gives us a new champion.

Rating: C+. The match was what you would expect from these two but the crowd just did not care and I can't really blame them. These fans have no reason to care about WCW or its titles because that's not what they came here to see. Kidman and Helms are very talented but there's no connection to them for the WWF fans. Build these guys up under the WWF banner and then do the big war.

Vince blames women for his problems and Debra is incensed. His plan is to explain to the people and everything will be ok. Angle thinks telling the truth is the answer, just like he learned in the Boy Scouts.

Christian has Edge's King of the Ring trophy ready for Edge's

Intercontinental Title shot tonight. Apparently Edge would rather Christian stay in the back though and Christian looks disappointed. You can see the split coming and it's really well done so far.

Here's Vince to talk about what's been happening to him recently. See, when you die you leave a good or a bad reputation behind. Linda would like you to believe that he has a bad reputation because he's a womanizer and a skirt chaser. Just for the record he wasn't going to go that far with Torrie because he was just testing her loyalty. Yeah that's it. On July 23 he has to appear before a judge about division of assets with Linda and right now he'd like to say he's sorry. Vince drops to a knee and apologizes to everyone and IS THERE A POINT TO THIS COMING ANYTIME SOON???

William Regal and Tajiri come out and beg Vince to get up because it's not his fault. Vince hugs Regal and we cut to Austin and Angle looking stunned. It's not Vince's fault that women are so attracted to him or that he's a self made billionaire. He's Vince McMahon and he's proud of it. Again, if anyone can explain the point of this to me, I'd love to hear it and tell you that it's nothing more than an excuse for Vince to take up more TV time.

Hardy Boyz vs. Big Show/Billy Gunn

Apparently Billy and Big Show think everyone is against them. Right. Billy charges into an armdrag and Matt grabs an armbar. It's off to Jeff (wearing a hat) for two off Poetry in Motion. Big Show and his one piece women's swimsuit come in for the Alley Oop (lifts Jeff for a powerbomb but falls backwards to send Jeff face first into the mat). Show takes a ridiculous amount of time going to the middle rope, allowing Jeff to avoid an elbow drop.

The hot tag brings in Matt (European Champion, which isn't important enough to mention until nearly the end of the match) who is quickly launched out to the floor. Lita uses the distraction to hit the hurricanrana on Billy, allowing Jeff to hit a missile dropkick on Big Show. The Twist of Fate/Swanton/legdrop crush Show but Billy comes back in with his cobra clutch slam to give Show the pin on Matt.

Rating: D. For the life of me I do not get the obsession with pushing Billy Gunn outside of his most popular character. He's just a guy who has a look and almost nothing more. If Big Show and Billy Gunn are the best they can do for a tag team at this point, they might as well just have the Hardys feud with Edge and Christian and the Dudleys forever because there's nothing worth seeing here. Well other than Lita of course.

Vince tells Angle/Austin/Tajiri/Regal that he's taking the night off and going to a bar. Actually, Tajiri can come with him. I'm assuming Tajiri will put a shirt on at some point. The two of them leave so Austin and Angle can yell at Regal for hugging Vince without their permission. Austin and Angle get in an argument over who makes the other sicker.

Intercontinental Title: Albert vs. Edge

Believe it or not (and I'm not sure why you wouldn't), Albert is defending. You can tell how much this match matters as the video during the entrances is about Undertaker (who challenges for the title on Monday) vs. Diamond Dallas Page. Before the match, Edge rips on Albert's X Factor theme (I always liked it) to tick the monster off. Edge has to fight out of the Baldo Bomb (chokebomb) but eats a bicycle kick square to the hands.

We hit a backbreaker, which Tazz informs us works on the back. A torture rack neckbreaker gets two for the champ and it's off to a bearhug (which also works on the back). Albert misses a splash and Edge grabs the Edge-O-Matic for no cover. Instead he goes up and scores with the missile dropkick but Albert hits him low and grabs the Baldo Bomb to retain.

Rating: C. I have no idea why but I remember thinking Albert was a cool choice for the Intercontinental Title. It wasn't going to last much longer as it would be sacrificed on the altar of the invasion but at least they gave the belt to someone fresh. You can only have Jericho, Angle, Edge and Benoit hold the thing for so long before it's time for some new blood.

The locker room apologizes to Test for beating him up (as they thought he was a WCW mole) when Austin comes in to tell them to get together and fight the bacteria that is WCW. They can start tonight by beating up

Booker T. Angle praises Austin and says Steve could beat up Booker T. and everyone else in this room, thereby screwing up the plan. Austin stares at him and throws his hat down.

Scotty 2 Hotty vs. Dean Malenko

Scotty is recently back from an injury. Malenko has Perry Saturn and Terri with him. Things start fast with Scotty armdragging Dean a few times but missing a dropkick. Malenko starts in on the leg but the Cloverleaf goes on too close to the ropes. Scotty's rollup gets two but he gets knocked to the floor with a clothesline but Dean is down as well. Cue Saturn with Scotty's hat to try the Worm on Dean (just go with it), only to have Scotty come back in and hit the real thing for the pin.

Rating: D+. Uh...yeah. Saturn being insane was funny and stayed entertaining enough for a long time though Malenko having character stuff like this wasn't the best idea. I mean, it's better than having him be a ladies man and all that (save for the Lita vignettes) but he really wasn't cut out for the WWF in general.

A WCW referee wishes Page luck but Page talks about wanting to go after Undertaker and/or Kane.

We look back at last week's Tough Enough. HHH will be on the show after Smackdown tonight and gave a speech that I believe talked a buddy of mine out of wanting to wrestle.

Austin yells at Angle and Debra about various things and is ready to beat up Booker T. Angle wants to bounce Booker around like a pogo stick so Steve sends him out to break Booker's ankle. Angle: "Hold onto my hat."

WCW World Title: Diamond Dallas Page vs. Booker T.

Page is challenging and it's another full on WCW match. By that I mean WCW logos with graphics nowhere near as good as the company had and a commentary team that never did commentary for them. Page jumps the champ during his entrance but gets elbowed out to the floor in something that looked edited. Back in and the Diamond Cutter is broken up but Booker gets dropped face first onto the buckle.

They head outside again with Page being thrown over the announcers' table and then into the crowd despite a lack of any real personal issue between them to warrant this kind of violence. Page takes over and stomps on Booker's hand back inside. A good looking Batista Bomb gets two on Booker and sets off his comeback, including the ax kick. Page bails to the floor and sends Booker into the steps before grabbing a chair. The referee is shoved down (DQ? Anyone?) and a DDT onto the chair gives Page two. Cue the Undertaker for a distraction and Booker rolls Page up to retain.

Rating: B-. Good match and all but again there's almost no reason for the fans to care. As far as WWF fans are concerned, these are brand new wrestlers who just happen to be fighting over a title. I'm sure a lot of them know who these two are but that doesn't mean they want to see a title match here. If they did, they probably would have watched Nitro more often.

Undertaker chases Page off and here's Angle to go after Booker. An ax kick puts Angle down and there's a belt shot to the face.

We go to the parking lot where the WCW guys jump Undertaker but can't even knock him off his feet. Eight guys pounding on him and barely having any effect should tell you all you need to know about this story. They FINALLY get him down but WCW owner Shane McMahon comes in for the save, only to have Page beat him up too. Booker calls them off and gets beaten down as well to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. The show wasn't bad and the Austin/Angle comedy stuff is oddly hilarious but this WCW story is clearly dead in the water. You can blame it on probably a dozen factors but a lot of it comes down to people not wanting to see WCW wrestlers on the WWF show. If I didn't want to watch WCW with all of its star power, why would I care about Booker T., Diamond Dallas Page as a character so different from what made him famous and then everyone else that just happens to be there? Things are only going to get worse from here but they're really not off to a good start.

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Smackdown – July 26, 2016: The Big Problem

Smackdown

Date: July 26, 2016

Location: First Niagara Center, Buffalo, New York

Commentators: David Otunga, Mauro Ranallo, John Bradshaw Layfield

We're into the new era of Smackdown now and it should be interesting to see where they go now that they're all on their own. Given who they have on the roster, there's a chance we'll have to get some new titles or at the very least some new stars to challenge for the titles that already exist. Let's get to it.

Daniel Bryan and Shane McMahon are in the back and say this new era is all about us as they walk into the arena.

Just like Raw, there's a new intro accompanied by new music.

The roster is around the ring with the bosses inside. Shane talks about how we have the only WWE Champion here so it's time to find a new #1 contender. Dean Ambrose comes out to say he's ready for a new challenge and has Smackdown Live fever. Tonight there's going to be a Six Pack Challenge for the right to face Ambrose at Summerslam. Included in that match will be:

John Cena

Bray Wyatt

Dolph Ziggler

AJ Styles

Baron Corbin

That leaves one spot open so let's have a battle royal right now for that final position.

Battle Royal

Kane, Tyler Breeze, Fandango, Apollo Crews, Konnor, Viktor, Simon Gotch, Aiden English, Kalisto, Zack Ryder, Jey Uso, Jimmy Uso, Erick Rowan, Alberto Del Rio, Mojo Rawley

The camera has a slightly different camera angle, starting from over the cover and down a bit lower instead of the stationary shot. Kane throws out Gotch and clotheslines Ascension out to start clearing out the ring early on. Breezango gets together to eliminate Jey Uso and we take a break.

Back with Rowan and English having been eliminated, leaving us Breeze, Fandango, Kane, Del Rio, Crews, Kalisto and Ryder. I didn't bother listing Rawley as he was eliminated a few seconds after we came back. A double clothesline gets rid of Del Rio and Kane throws out Breezango to get us down to four. Everyone starts taking shots at Kane but Crews seems to injure his knee on a standing shooting star.

All four are down for a bit until thankfully Crews gets up fine. A clothesline sends Ryder to the apron and Kalisto hits Salida Del Sol on Crews. Ryder goes up for the Elbro but slips off, only to have Kane do the dramatic sit up. Kane dumps Kalisto with ease and Ryder follows him out, leaving Kane and Crews. Apollo backflips out of a chokeslam and low bridges Kane out for the win at 12:45.

Rating: C. The ending really does this match a lot of good and teasing

Kane winning made it even better. Above all else though they kept this moving very quickly and didn't overstay the welcome as so many battle royals do. Crews isn't likely going to win the Six Pack Challenge but it's a nice win to get him noticed.

Crews says he won't celebrate until he wins the main event.

Shelton Benjamin is coming back.

Dolph Ziggler is ready to break through the glass ceiling. You can't be a multiple time World Champion and still complain about the glass ceiling.

Natalya vs. Becky Lynch

Battleground rematch because those are still a thing in the new era. Becky takes her to the mat for a bit but gets run over by a shoulder. Natalya flips to her feet and slams Becky off the top as we take an early break. Back with Becky jawbreaking her way out of a chinlock and getting two off a guillotine legdrop. The Disarm-Her is broken up and Nattie By Nature gets two. The slow motion Sharpshooter that is only designed to be countered is countered into the Disarm-Her to make Natalya tap at 10:21.

Rating: C-. I don't know any other way to put this but Natalya is really dull. She wrestles the exact same match as a heel that she wrestled as a face and there's really no motivation for her other than something that happened a few weeks ago and now she's a villain basically in name only. It doesn't help that these two don't have the best chemistry, especially when they're the best in the Smackdown division.

Post match Becky says you can call her Becky Balboa (No.) but is interrupted by Alexa Bliss who says this is what the new era looks like. This is followed by the returning Naomi, Carmella (almost no reaction) and Eva Marie, who comes out with a voiceover like a movie trailer, listing off every possible positive attribute about herself. It's really corny but I actually liked it, even though Eva didn't say anything.

Baron Corbin says he'll win.

It's time for MizTV with special guest....The Miz. He brags about how awesome he is (well duh) until Randy Orton interrupts. Orton thought Miz

was talking about him with all those accolades and agrees that Miz is awesome. Miz brings up the upcoming Brock match and Orton is ready to take Lesnar to Suplex City because he'll be taking Brock to Viperville. Orton suggests a match against Miz tonight and he'll even make it non-title so Maryse accepts for her husband.

Randy Orton vs. The Miz

Non-title. They're quickly on the floor with Miz stomping Orton down, throwing him back inside, and then whipping him into the steps. Back in and the RKO knocks Miz silly for no cover. Instead Orton stares at the entrance and slowly gets up before slapping the ropes a bit. Miz has been down for about two minutes before getting up to take a second RKO for the pin at 4:53.

Rating: F. Oh screw you WWE. Smackdown has almost nothing and you have Miz lose to one move with almost half the match spent on him standing up after the RKO. You know who would have been perfect for this spot? Kane. He's established, he's tough, he loses NOTHING by taking the loss and it makes Orton look like he can beat a monster. This was stupid and one of the things that ticks me off more than any other nonsense WWE pulls.

Video on American Alpha. They're here next week. Well I mean they were here earlier but we don't have time for the hottest tag team act in a long time. I mean, aside from New Day of course.

A jobber is in the ring for a match when Heath Slater comes in and knocks him out. Slater isn't happy that he wasn't drafted to either show and wants to be in the main event. He starts a SIGN HEATH SLATER chant and the fans actually go along with it. Cue Shane McMahon to say Slater needs to send in his resume. Slater says his resume would say he was the brains behind the Nexus, the Corre (there's a name I never thought I'd hear again) and the Social Outcasts. As Slater rants, Rhyno of all people sneaks up behind him for a Gore.

AJ thinks Smackdown is against him because he's too good. Why else wouldn't the Club have been drafted together and why else would he have to fight five guys at once?

Bray Wyatt says it all revolves around him and tonight he'll have the whole world in his hands.

John Cena vs. AJ Styles vs. Apollo Crews vs. Bray Wyatt vs. Baron Corbin vs. Dolph Ziggler

One fall to a finish, no tags and the winner gets a shot at Ambrose at Summerslam. We take an early break and come back with Bray and AJ double teaming Crews with the other three down on the floor. That lasts about as long as you would expect it to as Bray takes AJ's head off with a clothesline, only to be dropkicked down by Ziggler. AJ adds a springboard 450 with Cena diving back in for the save. Crews comes back in with rolling German suplexes on AJ, only to walk into an STO of all things from Corbin. Baron throws on a chinlock, which really shouldn't be seen in a six way match.

We go to another break and come back with stereo Towers of Doom (because that's how wrestling works) and Corbin getting two off Deep Six to Crews. Apollo's toss powerbomb gets two with Bray pulling the referee out. The Zig Zag should finish Bray but there's no referee. Cena finally remembers he's in this match and AA's Ziggler and AJ with the latter getting two.

Crews and Wyatt take AA's as well but Corbin takes a bit more to get up and elbows his way out. And scratch that as the second attempt works, only to have AJ springboard in with the forearm. Styles turns right into a superkick though and Ziggler gets the very surprising pin at 16:12.

Rating: C+. ZIGGLER??? Of all the people you have here you pick ZIGGLER??? I mean I know this lets you have Styles vs. Cena and....well that's about it actually. Yeah Smackdown needs new stars but the best they can do is having Dolph Ziggler's main event push brought out of mothballs? I don't hate it but I'm going to need to see a lot more of this before I accept Ziggler as a top challenger.

Shane, Bryan and Ambrose come out and say nothing to fill in the last four minutes of the show.

Overall Rating: C. This show's main issue is it followed last night's great Raw. It's certainly not a bad show and they did some good things

(Crews getting a push, setting up the title match, the women showing up) but on the other hand you have Orton's completely needless destruction of Miz, Heath Slater and Rhyno instead of American Alpha (which at least gives you something to look forward to next week so it's not all bad. This show set left a lot to be desired but it's certainly not terrible. The problem is Smackdown didn't look great in the first place and now those suspicions are even more confirmed.

Results

Apollo Crews won a battle royal last eliminating Kane

Becky Lynch b. Natalya – Disarm-Her

Randy Orton b. The Miz – RKO

Dolph Ziggler b. AJ Styles, Apollo Crews, John Cena, Bray Wyatt and Baron Corbin – Superkick to Styles

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

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

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

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

Smackdown – January 29, 2004:

Viva La Smackdown

Smackdown

Date: January 29, 2004

Location: MCI Center, Washington D.C.

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

This is another request that I got so long ago that I can't remember why someone wanted to see it. I'd assume it's due to the big battle royal for the #1 contendership to the Smackdown World Title with the winner getting to face Brock Lesnar at No Way Out 2004. This was a fun time for Smackdown so let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Smackdown GM Paul Heyman is in the ring to start but he's quickly interrupted by Vince. The big boss wants to know why the Royal Rumble winner (Chris Benoit) isn't on Smackdown anymore after jumping to Raw. Vince blames Heyman for getting rid of Benoit so Heyman goes on a rant about how the old Vince would just march on past it like he did when Hall, Nash, Hogan or even BRET HART left the company.

That's why Heyman has an idea: tonight we'll have another Royal Rumble RIGHT HERE TONIGHT. We'll have a fifteen man version with the injured Matt Morgan being replaced by Hardcore Holly and Chris Benoit's spot being taken by Eddie Guerrero. The winner gets the shot at Lesnar at No Way Out...because they can't just have the shot at Wrestlemania for some reason. Vince says it's on.

Smackdown Tag Team Titles: Basham Brothers vs. Paul London/Billy Kidman

The Bashams (Doug and Danny, a pair of very similar looking brawlers) are defending and have the useless Shaniqua in their corner. Doug (I think, though it's like trying to remember which Uso is which) starts with Kidman, who takes him down with a headscissors. Danny low bridges London to the floor though as Cole is already forgetting which Basham is which.

A spinning belly to back gets two for London and it's time to work on the

spine. We hit the double arm crank for a bit until London dropkicks his way to a hot tag. Kidman's enziguri gets two on Doug with Kidman getting off the cover to dropkick Danny. Shaniqua offers a distraction and we get some twin magic, setting up a super DDT to retain the titles.

Rating: D. The Bashams were yet another lame team in a big list of them around this time. There was no reason to have two Tag Team Titles and I think everyone knew it but there was no way WWE would ever admit that. London and Kendrick would get the titles in July with three other title changes in between.

Kurt Angle is incensed that he has to pull his own number and jets off when he sees it.

Chavo Guerrero is all bruised but promises his dad that he'll get revenge on Uncle Eddie.

Speaking of Eddie, he comes in to pick his number and seems very pleased. Cruiserweight Champion Rey Mysterio comes in with his friend boxer Jorge Paez and nothing happens.

John Cena hits on Dawn Marie (attending the ball hopper) and draws his number. Rhino comes in and suggests he'll end Cena's career by going after his bad knee.

Cruiserweight Title: Rey Mysterio vs. Jamie Noble

Noble is challenging, gets no entrance and has his blind girlfriend Nidia in his corner. This is a rematch from the Rumble where Nidia accidentally tripped Noble and cost him the match. Jamie takes him down with a hammerlock but an ankle scissors gets him out of trouble. Something like a torture rack has Rey in trouble so he armdrags Noble down and into 619 position. It's way too early for that of course but Nidia accidentally trips Jamie again to little disaster.

Noble stays on the back and puts on a seated abdominal stretch. Back up and Noble sends him into the corner and bends Rey's back around the post. A superplex puts both guys down as Noble can't follow up. My what convenient timing. Mysterio comes right back with a middle rope bulldog

and the 619 but he tweaks his knee on the West Coast Pop. Jamie sends him outside right in front of Nidia, who gets in the way of Jamie's attempted dive. For reasons that aren't clear, Jamie throws her inside but apparently she can see just fine, allowing Rey to hit a springboard seated senton to retain.

Rating: B-. Really good TV match and an improvement over the pay per view match but there's this misconception that people cared about Nidia enough to make this story interesting. Noble got what he had coming here and it's a simple story but Nidia doing a face turn isn't going to get anyone anywhere.

The new correspondent tells us that Playboy is looking for two women for the next spread. Ignore the fact that Torrie Wilson and Sable had already been announced for the issue. This sets up a quick history of the WWE/Playboy relationship, which has basically been buried in the archives ever since.

Dawn has to pick Big Show's number and "chicks dig it big" jokes are made.

Brock Lesnar isn't worried about Goldberg saying he's next because Goldberg is clearly a Lesnar wannabe instead of the other way around. Tonight he's issuing an open challenge to anyone on the Smackdown roster for a non-title match. This might be the longest I've ever heard Brock talk and I've certainly heard worse.

Charlie Haas and Shelton Benjamin are about to pick their numbers when someone comes in to tell Heyman that Eddie has been attacked. Everyone runs to Eddie while the Chavos deny having anything to do with this. Rey comes in and goes after Jr. but gets pulled back.

Eddie is put in an ambulance.

Brock Lesnar vs. Orlando Jordan

Oh yeah Jordan is a person that exists. I always forget. He's still a rookie at this point so this shouldn't take long. Brock actually gets knocked outside to start as the fans remind Lesnar that he tapped out

recently. Jordan can't even get one off a sunset flip so Brock easily drives him into the corner for some shoulders to the ribs. We hit a modified rear naked choke for a bit before Jordan comes back with a dropkick and jumping elbow. A clothesline cuts that off though and the Brock Lock ends Jordan with ease.

Rating: D-. I'm so glad they let Jordan get in some offense on the champ like this before he was destroyed. It really enhanced his career and made me care about him. Jordan continues to rank very high on the list of worthless wrestlers as he just stayed around for years despite showing absolutely no reason to keep a spot on the roster.

Some wrestlers went to Walter Reed Hospital to see some wounded soldiers.

We see clips of Kane being tormented by the spirit of the Undertaker.

Vince says forget about Undertaker because he's buried. Uh, right. There is something to be said about Vince refusing to accept the idea that someone who comes back almost annually is coming back again.

Angle accuses Heyman of having Eddie injured. Apparently Eddie is already conscious again but Angle says that's not enough. Heyman says if Eddie is here when his number is up, he can be in the Rumble.

Royal Rumble

There are fifteen entries and we have 90 second intervals. Kurt Angle, who has dedicated this to the US Armed Forces, is in at #1 and Rhyno is in at #2. They slug it out to start and Rhyno hits a quick Gore in the first minute. Angle gets in a quick Angle Slam though and Charlie Haas is in at #3. Charlie mocks Angle for reasons of general stupidity, allowing Rhyno to jump him from behind. For some reason Angle doesn't help Rhyno get rid of Haas and goes after horned one.

Shelton Benjamin is in at #4 and the partners double team Rhyno but Angle makes another save with a German suplex. Nothing of note happens until it's Bradshaw in at #5 and it's time for the Clotheslines. We take a break and come back with Tajiri coming in at #7 but stopping to go after the Cat (who came in at #6 and was eliminated during the break) and his

manager Lamont.

Billy Gunn is in at #8 and nothing happens so it's Big Show in at #9 to start clearing out some room. Everyone gets ready for him but he shoves all seven of them off like they're villagers. Tajiri is easily put out and Bradshaw follows him via a low bridge. John Cena is in at #10 despite sporting a bad knee. Cena puts Show on the apron and we come back from a break with A-Train and Nunzio having entered at #11/#12 but Nunzio is already out.

Eddie Guerrero is in at #13 and apparently Rhyno was eliminated during the break. Guerrero actually backdrops A-Train out and it's Rikishi in at #14. Gunn is superkicked to the apron and Show gets the Stinkface. Shelton and Billy get the same thing and it's Hardcore Holly in at #15 to complete the field with Angle, Haas, Benjamin, Gunn, Show, Cena, Eddie, Rikishi and Holly.

Show chokes Cena to the apron and then the floor for an elimination that would stop the match dead in its tracks today. A big group of people almost have Show out and Cena pulls him down to the floor as we're down to seven. Since nothing else is going on, let's look at every elimination in the match so far! You know, because this couldn't be shown on a split screen for some reason.

Eddie gets rid of Haas and Shelton is sent out a few seconds later. A frog splash hits Rikishi before Angle gets rid of Holly (basically ending his "main event run" in the process). Eddie gets Gunn out and we're down to Guerrero, Angle and Gunn. Rikishi starts cleaning house until he misses a Banzai Drop. That's enough for Angle and Eddie to put him out and now we're down to the real showdown where either story would be awesome. Angle easily takes him to the mat and starts with the rolling Germans. Eddie stays on the apron and grabs an ankle lock on Kurt, only to be reversed into one from Angle (because of course).

Another elimination attempt doesn't work and it's the Three Amigos to put Kurt in trouble. The frog splash is broken up with some crotching and both guys are down near the corner. Kurt grabs a sleeper/chinlock but Eddie sends him out to the apron for another slugout. They fight over a

suplex with Eddie shaking his legs to save himself and suplexes Kurt to the floor for the title shot in a big surprise.

Rating: A-. This started slowly as battle royals tend to do but then it took off and turned into a great match when you knew it was going to be Angle vs. Guerrero at the end. This was the start of Eddie's rocket push and you could tell the fans were on board with the idea as Guerrero had earned this after a lot of years trying to get off the ground. It also needs to be emphasized that making this a Royal Rumble instead of a battle royal made it work so much better.

Overall Rating: B. This was one heck of a show with a good Cruiserweight Title match and the last third of the show being dedicated to one of the better battle royals you'll ever see. They're still in the era of having having big time shows because the Brand Split was still working at this point, meaning you would get stuff like this instead of EVERYTHING being about the pay per view. I had a good time with this show and it flew by, mainly on the strength of good wrestling, though having Eddie's injuries mean a bit more would have helped.

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

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

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

New Column: Draft Fallout

Everyone is doing one of these and it's not like there's anything bigger going on right now.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-draft-fallout/>

Full WWE Draft Results

Including the picks from the Network.

Monday Night Raw

1. Seth Rollins
2. Charlotte
3. Finn Balor
4. Roman Reigns
5. Brock Lesnar
6. New Day
7. Sami Zayn
8. Sasha Banks
9. Chris Jericho
10. Rusev w/Lana
11. Kevin Owens
12. Enzo Amore/Big Cass

13. The Club
14. Big Show
15. Nia Jax
16. Neville
17. Cesaro
18. Sheamus
19. Golden Truth
20. Titus O'Neil
21. Paige
22. Darren Young
23. Sin Cara
24. Jack Swagger
25. Dudley Boyz
26. Summer Rae
27. Mark Henry
28. Braun Strowman
29. Bo Dallas
30. Shining Stars
31. Alicia Fox
32. Dana Brooke
33. Curtis Axel

Smackdown

1. Dean Ambrose
2. AJ Styles
3. John Cena
4. Randy Orton
5. Bray Wyatt
6. Becky Lynch
7. The Miz w/Maryse
8. Baron Corbin
9. American Alpha
10. Dolph Ziggler
11. Natalya
12. Alberto Del Rio
13. Usos
14. Kane
15. Kalisto
16. Naomi
17. Ascension
18. Zack Ryder
19. Apollo Crews
20. Alexa Bliss
21. Breezango
22. Eva Marie

23. Vaudevillains

24. Erick Rowan

25. Mojo Rawley

26. Carmella

Smackdown – July 19, 2016: Draft Notice

Smackdown

Date: July 19, 2016

Location: DCU Center, Worcester, Massachusetts

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, Jerry Lawler

Now this is a big one. Tonight we're not only going live but also splitting the shows into two rosters again for the first time in a few years. There's only been one other draft like this in company history and it wasn't the greatest show in the world. The interesting things here tonight are the potential returns of former stars as well as the guaranteed NXT callups. Oh and a rematch from last night's World Title match as a bonus. Let's get to it.

We open with the Commissioners and the GM's on the stage and a quick explanation of the rules:

1. Raw gets three picks to every Smackdown two.
2. Tag Teams are selected as a unit unless a GM wants either.
3. Raw has the first pick.
4. Six NXT picks will be made.

Stephanie cuts Foley off and picks Seth Rollins number one. So much for the title meaning a lot.

Daniel Bryan picks Dean Ambrose to put the Shield boys on different shows.

I won't bother saying the specifics so I'll just say which show.

Raw: Charlotte

Smackdown: AJ Styles

Raw: Finn Balor

Before we get to another pick, it's time for a match.

John Cena vs. Luke Gallows

The rest of the Club, Enzo and Cass are at ringside. We go to a quick commercial but this time they're showing the match during the commercial on a split screen. Gallows powers him down and is apparently too heavy to take the AA. Cena gets in a dropkick and we come back from the break. A spinning side slam gets two for Luke but he walks into the ProtoBomb and the Shuffle. Gallows breaks up the AA with a superkick (GET THAT MAN A T-SHIRT!) but the other four get in the ring and the match...is allowed to continue with Anderson and Styles being sent to the floor. An AA gives Cena the pin at 5:27.

Rating: C-. This didn't have time to go anywhere and I'm hoping the airing the match during the break doesn't become a regular thing. If there's one concept WWE never got, it's the idea of giving the fans a breather. You can't present every single moment as must see and expect the fans to stick with you through the insane amount of content WWE pumps out.

Time for more picks.

Raw: Roman Reigns

Smackdown: John Cena

Raw: Brock Lesnar

Smackdown: Randy Orton

Raw: New Day

Darren Young/Zack Ryder vs. Rusev/The Miz

Challengers vs. champions. Backlund atomic drops Miz to start and Ryder adds a slingshot elbow for two. Miz pulls Zack off the ropes for a crash before it's off to Rusev for some shots to the back. Miz gives up the hot tag to Young for his still generic offense. A quick Gut Check gets two but Rusev suplexes Darren, only to throw Ryder into a Rough Ryder on his partner. Zack dropkicks Rusev off the apron and the crossface chickenwing makes Miz tap at 4:05.

Rating: C-. No time here and I have a feeling that's going to be the case for almost all matches tonight. That's how things should go though as the wrestling isn't the point here. Young making Miz tap sets up the title match just fine, though I don't see much of a reason to get hyped for Ryder vs. Rusev. Maybe it was the losing to Sheamus in two minutes flat.

Xavier Woods vs. Bray Wyatt

Everyone is at ringside. Bray stands in the corner with his back to Bray before bending backwards. He even kneels in the middle of the ring to offer a free shot but Woods is afraid. Woods seems to be hypnotized so Bray beats him down and chokes a bit. The release Rock Bottom plants Woods again but he makes a quick comeback, only to walk into Sister Abigail for the pin at 4:47.

Rating: D+. This was all about the story instead of the match and that's the right idea. Bray squashing Woods is the right idea too and it's cool to see someone freaking out at the sight and thought of Bray. That almost has to play into the finish on Sunday but it also makes the titles more interesting. If Woods is teasing a split, they'll have to drop the belts soon and that's not happening Sunday.

Kevin Owens vs. Kane

And never mind as Sami Zayn runs out to attack Owens. Kevin sends Sami in for a chokeslam from Kane but he chokeslams both of them for fun. No match.

Back to the picks!

Raw: Sami Zayn

Smackdown: Bray Wyatt (not the Wyatt Family)

Raw: Sasha Banks

Smackdown: Becky Lynch

Raw: Chris Jericho

Sasha Banks vs. Charlotte/Dana Brooke

Dana starts for the team but Sasha knocks Charlotte outside and hits the double knees off the apron. Back in and Dana misses a charge to set up the Bank Statement, only to have Charlotte break it up and hit Natural Selection for the pin at 2:21.

More picks:

Raw: Rusev w/Lana

Smackdown: The Miz w/Maryse

Raw: Kevin Owens

Smackdown: Baron Corbin

Raw: Enzo Amore/Big Cass

Chris Jericho vs. Cesaro

Cesaro uppercuts him to the floor and hits a running version up against the barricade. Back in and we hit the pinfall reversal sequence until Jericho slams him off the top. The Lionsault is countered into a Russian legsweep off the middle rope and it's time for a Swing. The spinning springboard uppercut is countered into the Codebreaker for the pin on

Cesaro at 4:53.

Rating: C+. In case you didn't get enough of these two during the build to Money in the Bank. I'm really not wild on the idea of Jericho winning here as they don't seem interested in actually doing anything with him despite giving him a bunch of wins. Cesaro continues to be that guy who keeps losing and WWE keeps expecting him to be over, which to be fair he kind of is.

Back from a break with Becky Lynch attacking Natalya before a match. Ok then.

Draft time.

Raw: The Club

Smackdown: American Alpha

Raw: Big Show

Smackdown: Dolph Ziggler

Raw: Nia Jax

Rollins says he'll win tonight.

Time for the final five televised picks before 30 more will be made on the WWE Network.

Raw: Neville

Smackdown: Natalya

Raw: Cesaro

Smackdown: Alberto Del Rio

Raw: Sheamus

WWE World Title: Dean Ambrose vs. Seth Rollins

Ambrose is defending and Rollins jumps him during the big match intros.

We take a break before the bell rings with Dean being posted. Back with Ambrose saying ring the bell, allowing Rollins to hammer away in a hurry. A backbreaker sets up the chinlock before Rollins sends him outside for a chop off. Dean gets whipped into the barricade but he backdrops Rollins into the timekeeper's area. Back in and Seth hits a low superkick for two as we take a break.

We come back again with what sounds like a CM Punk chant accompanying Rollins hitting a running forearm in the corner. Dean fights back with elbows to the face and a swinging neckbreaker for two. A quick Buckle Bomb sets up a missed frog splash but Rollins grabs a quick superplex. He loads up the Falcon's Arrow but Dean reverses into Dirty Deeds at 12:21.

Rating: C+. The match was fine but it's pure filler with Battleground and the triple threat looming. Rollins getting pinned clean is interesting as now Dean looks a lot more like an equal instead of someone who keeps getting beaten in the big matches over and over. It's a good main event, though it feels kind of worthless after last night. Like, what did any of that accomplish?

Shane and Bryan come out to celebrate and a PPV rundown ends the show.

Overall Rating: B-. These are the hardest shows to review as there's nothing to compare it to. They kept it moving fast enough and the wrestling was just there for the most part but they kept the draft picking moving and that's a very good thing. This felt like something professionally run and that's never really been the case in previous drafts. Good show here but this would have been better off after Battleground.

Results

John Cena b. Luke Gallows – Attitude Adjustment

Darren Young/Zack Ryder b. Rusev/The Miz – Crossface chickenwing to Miz

Bray Wyatt b. Xavier Woods – Sister Abigail

Charlotte/Dana Brooke b. Sasha Banks – Natural Selection

Chris Jericho b. Cesaro – Codebreaker

Dean Ambrose b. Seth Rollins – Dirty Deeds

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

All 30 Televised Draft Picks

I'll be updating this throughout the night with all the picks so keep refreshing. I also won't update the tags until after the show in case you don't want to be spoiled. There will be an additional thirty picks on the Network later tonight.

Monday Night Raw

1. Seth Rollins
2. Charlotte
3. Finn Balor

4. Roman Reigns
5. Brock Lesnar
6. New Day
7. Sami Zayn
8. Sasha Banks
9. Chris Jericho
10. Rusev w/Lana
11. Kevin Owens
12. Enzo Amore/Big Cass
13. The Club
14. Big Show
15. Nia Jax
16. Neville
17. Cesaro
18. Sheamus

Smackdown

1. Dean Ambrose
2. AJ Styles
3. John Cena
4. Randy Orton
5. Bray Wyatt
6. Becky Lynch

7. The Miz w/Maryse
 8. Baron Corbin
 9. American Alpha
 10. Dolph Ziggler
 11. Natalya
 12. Alberto Del Rio
-

WWE Releases Draft Rules

<http://www.wwe.com/article/wwe-draft-rules-2016?sf31145497=1>

Just in case you thought Smackdown would be treated equally or better you see. Of course I don't know why you would think that when Stephanie runs Raw.