

# Smackdown – June 23, 2016: The Smackdown Gravestone

## Smackdown

Date: June 23, 2016

Location: Tucson Arena, Tucson, Arizona

Commentators: Byron Saxton, Mauro Ranallo, David Otunga

It's an interesting time in WWE as we're less than a month away from the new era really taking hold as the Draft takes place and separates the two shows into different entities. On top of that though, Roman Reigns has been suspended for thirty days, meaning the build towards the triple threat match at Battleground could be interesting. Let's get to it.

The opening video focuses on the recent issues with the World Title.

Opening sequence.

Here's Seth Rollins to get things going. He talks about how when he was a kid, his parents would tell him that he could do anything if he worked hard enough. Well obviously that was a lie because no one works harder than he does but Dean Ambrose is the WWE World Champion. Ambrose should have given him his rematch one on one but instead we're coming up on this triple threat at Battleground to make it as hard on him as possible. As for tonight though, Seth is going to prove that he's more man than Ambrose ever could be by issuing an opening challenge.

This brings out Sami Zayn and the fans seem interested. Rollins: "Did your master Kevin Owens let you off your leash for a couple of hours?" Cue Dean Ambrose, who has his guys turn this into an impromptu Ambrose Asylum. Actually wait because Dean needs to draw a title on the sign because this is now the championship edition. Sami is thrilled to be on the show but Rollins freaks out because he hates this show. Dean says Rollins has always has a poor attitude as Seth storms out to get ready. This was a pretty long way around to set up Sami vs. Rollins.

Cesaro vs. Alberto Del Rio

OH COME ON. Money in the Bank is over! I shouldn't have to deal with these pairings anymore. They get some inset promos with Del Rio claiming Cesaro cost him the briefcase and Cesaro telling him to do something about it. Del Rio grabs a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker to start so Cesaro hits one of his own.

The uppercut train sends Del Rio outside for the flip dive off the apron, only to have Alberto go after the apron as we take a break. Back with Del Rio slapping on an armbar and taking the arm out to block another uppercut. Alberto goes up but dives into an uppercut from the good arm. The corkscrew uppercut gets two (ok do something else) followed by a double stomp for the same on Alberto.

Del Rio comes back with a Backstabber for two of his own but Cesaro comes back with yet another uppercut. Cesaro gets crotchted while trying a superplex but is still able to lift himself up and armdrag Del Rio down. A quick cross armbreaker attempt is countered into the Neutralizer for the pin on Alberto at 10:26.

**Rating:** B-. This was better than most of the Money in the Bank pairings but there's almost no reason to care about any of them anymore. We've seen this so many times now and without a reason to fight, these matches are even less interesting than they were in the first place. At least the match was better this time around.

#### Apollo Crews vs. Sheamus

Sheamus hammers away and tells Apollo to smile now, only to have Crews cross body both of them over the top to the floor. Crews sends him into the steps before having to fight out of the Irish Curse back inside. An enziguri sets up the standing moonsault for two on Sheamus but he comes back with the ten forearms to the chest. The Regal Roll on the floor has Crews in trouble and Sheamus makes it worse by loading up the steps. Crews dropkicks him into the barricade, only to have Sheamus kick him off the apron. A whip into the steps is enough to get Crews counted out at 3:55.

**Rating:** D+. Well that means it's time for a rubber match because the fans are dying to see a rematch from a sub-four minute TV match on a show not

many people watch that ends in a countout. The idea of Crews beating Sheamus is fine but there really wasn't much of a reason for a rematch, save for maybe Sheamus getting pinned again. I really hope we get somewhere new with the Brand Split because this stuff is getting old.

Recap of AJ Styles vs. John Cena on Sunday as well as Monday's fallout.

The Club is happy with what happened on Monday but the Usos return. PLEASE not this match again. Jey calls the bald guys head and shoulders in an unfunny line and we're getting Jimmy vs. AJ for later.

### Jimmy Uso vs. AJ Styles

Mauro bills this as a Smackdown first. This is joined in progress after a break with Jimmy running Styles over and dancing a bit. That's fine with AJ who takes him down into a headlock but Jimmy reverses into one of his own. Jimmy sends him outside but the baseball slide is countered as AJ grabs the feet and sends him head first into the steps.

Back in and AJ catapults him throat first into the bottom rope. Jimmy comes back with an enziguri so Styles Peles him right back. The Phenomenal Forearm is broken up with a superkick but the running Umaga attack hits buckles. Cue the Club to go after Jey, causing Jimmy to dive over the top and take them out. AJ hits a slingshot forearm to the back of Jimmy's head and the Phenomenal Forearm puts Jimmy away at 6:02 shown.

**Rating:** C. For reasons that I'll never understand, this means more Usos vs. the Club. I'm a big Usos fan but there's little interest for them as singles wrestlers and they've done everything there is for them as a tag team, especially fighting the Club for probably the tenth time in a few months. AJ looked good but this was just a step above a squash for him.

### New Day vs. Vaudevillains

Non-title. Kofi and Gotch start things off but it's off to English inside of twenty seconds to start in on Kofi's arm. Aiden's running spin kick in the corner staggers Kofi but he runs English over with a clothesline. The hot tag brings in Big E. to clean house with a string of suplexes. Kofi takes out English and a quick tag sets up the Midnight Hour to pin Gotch

at 2:28.

Post match the Wyatts pop up on screen to say everyone fears them and that New Day will fall.

Bob Backlund wants to review Darren Young's goals. Darren wants to be a singles champion and then main event Wrestlemania. Backlund has wrestled at Wrestlemania and won singles titles but he's already had his era. Now it's time to start the Darren Young Era.

Sami wants to win so he can make a statement. He isn't worried about Kevin Owens.

Charlotte and Dana Brooke are ready to take out Becky Lynch before showing Sasha that Charlotte is the queen because playtime is over.

#### Dana Brooke vs. Becky Lynch

Dana starts fast with some knees and shoulders to the ribs before avoiding Becky's charge. Charlotte eats a forearm though, allowing Brooke to roll Becky up for the pin at 1:21.

Post match Becky gets beaten down until Sasha Banks makes the save.

Dean follows Seth to the ring to get on his nerves.

#### Seth Rollins vs. Sami Zayn

Dean is on commentary. Rollins scores with a shoulder to start and they pause early on. Some armdrags put Seth down and Sami gets in a nice headscissors. A good right hand puts Sami outside before a clothesline takes us to a break. Back with a fight over a suplex until Rollins gets two off a Falcon's Arrow. Seth slowly stomps away as Dean talks about not sleeping for six or seven days.

A big clothesline drops Rollins and it's time to pound some right hands in the corner. Sami gets two off a high cross body and Seth loses an elbow pad. That's not exactly interesting stuff so Sami gets in the Blue Thunder Bomb for two. The Helluva Kick is blocked so Seth scores with the buckle bomb. Sami counters the Pedigree and scores with the tornado DDT.

Rollins bails so Sami hits the big flip dive. Not that it matters as Seth grabs the Pedigree as soon as they get back in for the pin at 8:42.

**Rating:** B-. The ending was really odd as Sami hit two big moves in a row before Seth just hit the Pedigree with nothing in between. It was like they had to go home really fast and had to cut out a few minutes in the middle. The match was what you would expect from these two, albeit a few steps slower than I thought it would have been.

Seth and Dean brawl post match with Rollins running from the threat of Dirty Deeds.

**Overall Rating:** C+. Another acceptable but totally forgettable show. When they're boasting an AJ Styles vs. Jimmy Uso match, you know your show is in trouble. Again though it's not like any of this matters when you consider everything resets three more shows. At least it's not bad and we got some decent wrestling here though. That's about all there is to say, which is going to be the legacy of this era of Smackdown: it wasn't bad, but I can't remember much about it.

### Results

Cesaro b. Alberto Del Rio – Neutralizer

Sheamus b. Apollo Crews via countout

AJ Styles b. Jimmy Uso – Phenomenal Forearm

New Day b. Vaudevillains – Midnight Hour to Gotch

Dana Brooke b. Becky Lynch – Rollup

Seth Rollins b. Sami Zayn – Pedigree

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# Smackdown – June 16, 2016: Happy Birthday Mom

## Smackdown

Date: June 16, 2016

Location: Mississippi Coast Coliseum, Biloxi, Mississippi

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, Jerry Lawler, Byron Saxton

It's the final show before Money in the Bank so just set up the big six man main event already. This week's Raw had some strong story building moments for the coming pay per view but the go home Smackdowns can be all over the place quality wise. Hopefully they don't just bore us with nothing matches that don't fire up the fans for Sunday. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

We open with Chris Jericho in the ring for the Highlight Reel. Jericho says quiet about seventeen times and unveils the new Jeritron 6500 and the new \$2000 carpet. He promises to win Money in the Bank because he created it ("You're welcome."). Tonight his guest is Dean Ambrose, even though Jericho hates him. Dean comes out with a cup of coffee but first we have to look at the clip of the Ambrose Asylum on Monday. Jericho isn't cool with the coffee because this carpet is made of Serengeti yak hair. Dean's coffee is like the Gift of Jericho man. He's just drinking it in.

Jericho says Dean won't be Shawn Michaels tonight and shove his head

through the screen so Dean's Jeritron privileges are revoked. Actually everyone has to raise the screen. Chris brings up the thumbtacks and says the holes don't combine to equal the hole left in Dean's spirit by never being World Heavyweight Champion. Dean isn't winning the briefcase or the title on Sunday but here's Kevin Owens to interrupt. That case is HIS and he might cash in at any time.

Cue Del Rio to speak Spanish and say no one understands how this works except for him but here's Cesaro to interrupt as well. Nothing is said before Sami cuts them off and announces tonight's six man, triggering an argument with Cesaro over the interruption. Jericho calls them stupid idiots and says they'll win tonight so Dean pours the coffee on the carpet to start the brawl.

#### Kofi Kingston vs. Aiden English vs. Luke Gallows vs. Big Cass

Enzo's entrance is cut off by New Day and that's not cool. I guess New Day are haters now? Other than Kofi riding in on Big E.'s shoulders, there's no special entrance from New Day. Enzo and Woods are sitting in on commentary. Gallows powerbombs Kofi to start but Cass clotheslines Luke down and knocks Aiden outside as well. The Club gets Cass to the floor and sends him into the barricade as the guest commentators both get up and we take a break.

Back with Aiden and Gallows taking turns beating on Kofi before naturally fighting over who gets the pin. Cass breaks up what looks like a Doomsday Device with big boots and clotheslines all around. Gotch tries to interfere but Gallows pulls Cass to the floor. Kingston dives off the top to take out Gallows and Cass, followed by Big E. running over Gotch. Back inside it's Kofi hitting Trouble in Paradise for the pin on English at 7:44.

**Rating:** C. This didn't have time to go anywhere and Kofi winning isn't exactly a great sign for New Day's reign going forward. The Club winning the titles makes the most sense which is probably why the Vaudevillains will win the titles. I'm really hoping they don't split up New Day or Enzo/Cass in the Draft but leave it to WWE to go with the worst possible choices.

Natalya and Becky Lynch are ready for their tag match on Sunday and insist that the truth is out there: Charlotte can't win a match on her own. Dana and Charlotte come in so bickering can ensue.

#### Baron Corbin vs. Zack Ryder

Dolph Ziggler is on commentary. Corbin chokes to start but goes outside to yell at Ziggler, allowing Ryder to get in a dropkick off the apron. The Broski Boot gets two (on Baron if that wasn't clear) but End of Days wraps Ryder up at 1:46.

Corbin walks away from a fight with Ziggler post match.

#### Rusev vs. Kalisto

Non-title and Lana does Rusev's intro. They show Rusev beating Titus O'Neal down on Raw to basically guarantee the post match shenanigans. Kalisto gets jumped during the entrances and put in the Accolade. No match.

Sin Cara tries to make a save and gets the same treatment. Titus runs in for the save and cleans house.

Recap of the Styles vs. Cena contract signing.

AJ Styles says he'll prove he can win on his own this Sunday. New Day comes in to laugh at AJ's lack of style and a match is set up between Woods vs. Styles.

#### Xavier Woods vs. AJ Styles

No seconds at ringside. Feeling out process to start with AJ sending Woods off the ropes and saying Xavier can't see him. AJ cranks on a wristlock and says he does this better than Cena. Woods comes back with a strike to the forehead, only to have AJ chop block him down. AJ takes his time to let the referee check on Woods, who catches AJ with a jumping knee to the head. The Pele drops Woods for two though and it's off to the chinlock.

Woods finally gets up and grabs an O'Connor Roll for two, only to get

caught in a backbreaker. We take a break and come back with Xavier punching his way out of a superplex and getting two off a high cross body. A reverse suplex drops Styles and a discus forearm puts him on the floor. Woods follows him out with a big flip dive before walking across the top rope for a LONG elbow drop and a near fall. AJ escapes a superplex and scores with the Phenomenal Forearm setting up the Calf Crusher (Styles: "THIS IS WHAT I'M GOING TO DO TO JOHN CENA!") for the tap out at 12:21.

**Rating:** B-. Woods can go when he wants to but most of the time he's just there for comic relief. Granted it might have helped that the match was against AJ Styles and Woods only had to do the basics to get through this one. The ending made perfect sense as they set up the injury at the beginning and then paid it off at the end. Why is that so complicated?

Post match AJ says that's just a taste of what Cena is getting when his time is up.

This week's lesson with Bob Backlund is about Darren Young reading more. Bob says they're like dumbbells for the brain but Backlund doesn't like the idea of Darren taking advice from anyone, including Backlund himself. That's because Backlund doesn't give advice. Instead he gives orders, like 100 high knees right now.

### Natalya vs. Charlotte

Non-title with Becky and Dana at ringside. Charlotte takes it to the mat with a headlock which is countered into a headscissors. The hold is quickly broken but Natalya breaks up the strut. Charlotte gets caught in a surfboard but it's too early for the Sharpshooter. Natalya will have none of this waiting on the floor and takes Charlotte out with a baseball slide. Dana offers a distraction though, allowing Charlotte to kick Natalya in the face to take over. The advantage doesn't last long though as Natalya throws her over with a German suplex for two.

Nattie By Nature gets two as the announcers talk about video games. Lawler: "The only video game you should be talking about is WWE2K16." That's some veteran shilling. Charlotte goes up for the moonsault but gets caught in a sitout powerbomb for two, only to have Dana hold up the

title as a distraction. Becky and Dana slug it out and Charlotte chop blocks Natalya, setting up the Figure Eight for the submission at 5:48.

**Rating:** C+. I'm not sure how this is supposed to help set up Sunday but I'm not really sure why these women are still fighting. You would think Natalya losing like five matches to Charlotte would be enough to end the feud but let's just keep it going anyway. It's not like there's anyone else around to challenge for the title. One last note: I'd like to point out that the loss to Paige on Monday seems to mean absolutely nothing, barring a surprise Paige title shot coming up after Money in the Bank.

Long video on Roman vs. Rollins.

Dean Ambrose/Sami Zayn/Cesaro vs. Alberto Del Rio/Chris Jericho/Kevin Owens

It's a big brawl to start until Del Rio and Cesaro are left alone in the ring. Alberto misses the corner enziguri but still lands on Cesaro's back. That means it's time for the uppercut train (and Mauro's uppercut party line) before Del Rio avoids the Codebreaker to the arm. Cesaro can't hook the Swing though and has to settle for a flip dive off the apron. The running European uppercut sends Jericho into the timekeeper's area.

Del Rio gets one as well and Cesaro stays on him with a high cross body for two. Cesaro Swings all three heels with Jericho getting the last one and a Sharpshooter to go with it. Jericho taps but isn't legal, allowing Del Rio to superkick Cesaro down for two as we take a break. Back with Jericho posing over a fallen Cesaro before handing it off to Owens for a stomping in the corner. Del Rio tags himself in to hammer Cesaro even more, only to get dropkicked off the top and out to the floor.

The hot tag brings in Sami to take on Jericho as everything breaks down. Sami's high cross body gets two but Owens gets in a cheap shot to let Jericho take over. That means a long and obvious spot call in the corner until Sami gets in a clothesline to set up the hot tag to Dean. Everything breaks down again and Dean sends Del Rio to the floor for the suicide dive.

The standing elbow misses though and Alberto gets two off a Backstabber. Dirty Deeds is broken up and it's Cesaro cleaning house with uppercuts, including one to Ambrose. Del Rio tags out to Owens, earning himself a superkick. Jericho gets one from Owens as well, setting up Dirty Deeds for the pin on Kevin at 13:50.

**Rating:** C+. This was exactly what I was expecting but that's to be expected when you do the same building process year after year. It's a fine Smackdown main event with enough good action and a grand total of almost no storyline advancement. In other words: a big part of why no one watches Smackdown at the moment.

**Overall Rating:** C. You can feel the show being stuck in a holding pattern until we get to the Brand Split and Smackdown possibly starts meaning anything again. This didn't do anything to make me want to see Sunday's show but Raw already took care of most of that. The show wasn't bad or anything but it was so horribly average with nothing memorable whatsoever. If this doesn't change after the split, this show is in major trouble.

### Results

Kofi Kingston b. Big Cass, Aiden English and Luke Gallows – Trouble in Paradise to English

Baron Corbin b. Zack Ryder – End of Days

AJ Styles b. Xavier Woods – Calf Crusher

Charlotte b. Natalya – Figure Eight

Dean Ambrose/Cesaro/Sami Zayn b. Chris Jericho/Kevin Owens/Alberto Del Rio – Dirty Deeds to Owens

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# Smackdown – June 9, 2016: Keeping The Standard

## Smackdown

Date: June 9, 2016

Location: Intrust Bank Arena, Wichita, Kansas

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Mauro Ranallo, Byron Saxton

We're pretty much at business as usual here as Money in the Bank is a week from Sunday and most of the big stories are starting to round into form. AJ Styles is going after John Cena, the Tag Team Titles are in a big mess of a match and we'll see yet another combination of the six Money in the Bank participants tonight because just having them be announced over time isn't an option for whatever reason. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's the Club to get things going. AJ talks about how this Money in the Bank may be the best ever with the Club winning the Tag Team Titles and AJ himself taking care of John Cena. For ten years it's been the John Cena Era and the New Era can't really get started until he takes Cena out. When he came to WWE in the first place, he made it clear that the Club was a package deal. The Club has transcended countries, continents and companies. As for Cena, you can't beat him.

Cue Enzo and Big Cass with the latter reminding AJ that there are two other teams going after the Tag Team Titles. The Mr. Clean Dream Team

isn't taking those belts but Karl says they've been traveling the world for ten years while Enzo was managing a Hooters. Enzo basically says "Well yeah. What's wrong with that?" before saying the Club has wrestled everywhere but Antarctica.

Enzo would love to walk a mile in Karl's shoes because then he'd be a mile away from him. The last time Enzo and Cass had a big match, Enzo fell asleep on the job. Enzo thinks that makes them a couple of haters so in Vegas, money will talk and money will walk. That makes Anderson and Gallows S-A-W-F-T.

### Enzo Amore/Big Cass vs. Karl Anderson/Luke Gallows

New Day is on commentary with Woods eating Booty0's and Big E. holding a broom. Anderson runs Cass over a few times to start before it's off to Gallows for a big boot. For some reason this makes New Day talk about pasta. The Enzo beating continues as Kofi puts Byron on grape duty, meaning he has to feed Kofi grapes on demand. Anderson throws him down to stop a tag attempt, making Kofi think Enzo should switch to Alfredo instead of the marinara.

Big E. does his nerdy commentator voice as Enzo Stuns Anderson over the top rope. A diving tag attempt is stopped by a running boot to the head as the Vaudevillains come out to watch. Back from a break with Gallows suplexing Enzo for two as the fans chant for Cass. Amore punches away but is shoved away, only to get caught by the jumping DDT. Now it's the hot tag to Cass as house is quickly cleaned. A very big boot puts Gallows on the floor as New Day gets up to cut off the Vaudevillains. They all get in the ring and that's a no contest at 10:54.

**Rating:** C. Cass continues to look like the biggest star out of all these guys and that big boot was awesome. I really can't imagine the New Day keeps the titles after Money in the Bank and the Club would be the logical way to go with the belts. Enzo and Cass are hot right now though and you would have to expect Cass to get a big singles push soon.

Enzo and Cass clear the ring post match.

We recap Dean Ambrose vs. Chris Jericho, who will be facing each other

tonight, focusing on the battle over the talk shows.

Muhammad Ali tribute.

The announcers talk about the Money in the Bank card.

Lana and Rusev aren't worried about Titus O'Neil because Rusev is the real greatest of all time instead of Muhammad Ali. Titus comes in and says he'll take the title at Money in the Bank by floating like a butterfly and stinging like a bee.

#### Cesaro/Sami Zayn vs. Alberto Del Rio/Kevin Owens

Sami and Owens start things off with Zayn spinning him around and sending him into the corner for a tag off to Del Rio. That's fine with Alberto who kicks Sami's leg out but lets the tag bring in Cesaro. Alberto takes over and asks Owens for a tag but Kevin says Del Rio is doing fine by himself and walks out. Sami chases him up the ramp so we're down to a singles match.

A shot to the back puts Del Rio on the floor and it's time for a break. Back with Del Rio getting two off a Backstabber. We hit the chinlock but Cesaro is up in less than five seconds. Well he's certainly not lazy at least. Cesaro muscles him up into a suplex as Sami and Kevin fight back down the aisle. Del Rio isn't cool with Owens walking out on him and now it's Alberto walking out. Owens won't let that happen so Sami dives over the top to take him out, leaving Cesaro to suplex Del Rio on the floor.

Back in and Del Rio starts in on the arm but can't get the armbreaker. Everything breaks down and Swiss Death drops Del Rio again. Owens and Zayn are sent outside again, leaving Del Rio to take the Swing. Owens breaks up the Sharpshooter and crotches Cesaro on top, setting up the top rope double stomp from Del Rio, only to have Owens throw his partner out and steal the pin at 13:29.

**Rating:** C+. I'm normally not a fan of the way the build towards Money in the Bank goes but this was kind of a creative way to do more than just another tag match. I'm sure we'll see something else like that next week because there's almost no way around seeing those matches over and over

but at least this was something fresher. The wrestling is all fine and having only six people keeps the match from being such a mess but a change to the build could be an improvement.

We look at Jericho destroying Mitch.

#### Dana Brooke vs. Becky Lynch

Natalya and Charlotte are at ringside. Dana immediately bails to the ropes but Becky snaps off some armdrags to send her outside. Back in and Lynch misses a charge, allowing Charlotte to get in a forearm like a good heel should. Becky comes back with a kick to the ribs but she has to go after Charlotte, triggering a brawl between Charlotte and Natalya on the floor. That earns them both an ejection, leaving Becky to make Dana tap with the Disarm-Her at 3:04.

**Rating:** C-. You know, I wouldn't be opposed to them actually announcing the women's match for the pay per view. I'm assuming it's going to be a fatal fourway or a non-title tag match (which actually fits for a change) but anything is better than another Natalya title shot. Whatever gets us past this and on to Sasha FINALLY getting her title shot would be a good idea though.

Bob Backlund asks to see Darren Young's victory celebration. Young starts doing the Millions of Dollars dance but Bob tells him to bring it back down to earth. Backlund tells him to save money, which Darren interprets as not going to the movies and no popcorn. Darren asks how Bob saves so much money, which apparently is all about wearing only one set of clothes. Young agrees to cut down on the shopping. Backlund: "How do you feel about a bow tie?"

#### Baron Corbin vs. Kalisto

Dolph Ziggler is on commentary because this thing just won't die. Kalisto is still listed as one half of the Lucha Dragons despite them almost never teaming together anymore. Some quick kicks put Corbin on the floor to start but he shrugs off even more kicks and tosses Kalisto onto the barricade to take over.

We get the staredown with Ziggler, who says he'd love to take off his jeggings and get right in there. Back in and we hit the chinlock on Kalisto for a bit before he comes back with the corkscrew cross body. The headscissors driver gets two but Corbin just blasts him in the back of the head. End of Days puts Kalisto away at 3:45.

**Rating:** C. You can definitely add Kalisto to the long list of people who started fast until the company got bored with him and threw him to the side for their new favorite toy. The match was your normal boring stuff as Ziggler vs. Corbin is a feud that needed to wrap up two months ago but for some reason the thing just keeps going.

We look at Ambrose ripping up Jericho's jacket. This feud really isn't big enough to warrant this kind of attention.

Another chat about AJ Styles vs. John Cena with Lawler telling a story about having to face the top ten contenders in order to get a shot at NWA World Champion Jack Brisco. Why can't we hear those stories more often?

Sheamus brags about the success of Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and Zack Ryder/Golden Truth aren't all that impressed. Apollo Crews (Remember him?) comes in and Sheamus suggests that Crews get him a latte. Sheamus gets knocked through some well placed boxes.

### Chris Jericho vs. Dean Ambrose

Ranallo says this is the first time these two have ever fought on Smackdown. Why is that supposed to be something interesting or appealing? I've never gotten that concept. Jericho shouts about the thumb tacks Dean put into his back and the chase is on outside. Back in and Dean strikes away, only to get clotheslined down. That means it's time to yell about the tacks even more but a clothesline puts Jericho outside for the suicide shove.

Dean loads up the announcers' table for Dirty Deeds but gets catapulted onto the floor for a big crash as we take a break. Back with Jericho suplexing him for an arrogant two, followed by the chinlock. Dean's comeback is stopped with a clothesline and it's time to choke on the ropes. Another comeback attempt works a bit better as Dean scores with a

clothesline and elbows but Dirty Deeds is countered into a failed Walls attempt.

Jericho dives into a forearm to the jaw for two but comes back with a middle rope enziguri (looked like a missed dropkick) for two of his own. Dean breaks up a superplex attempt and grabs la majistral for two more before both guys collide to put them down. The Codebreaker and Dirty Deeds are broken up but Dean has to stop himself from running into the referee, allowing Jericho to grab a one legged Codebreaker for the pin at 13:46.

**Rating:** B-. Well so much for Dean's hot streak. The match was fine but that cage match destroyed a lot of my interest in this feud. Jericho only has so much interest these days and it makes sense to have him win a match here or there since he has almost no chance of winning the ladder match. Then again that's what people were saying before he fought AJ at Wrestlemania.

Post match Jericho grabs a ladder but gets sent face first into it for his efforts. The standing elbow drop from the ladder crushes Jericho to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C. Totally run of the mill Smackdown here as it was missing most of what I liked about the show last week. Most of the Money in the Bank card (which is looking stacked) is set so this was a bunch of supplemental material. To be fair though, we're five weeks away from the end of Smackdown before it gets turned into something new, which hopefully turns the thing around for a change.

### Results

Enzo Amore/Big Cass vs. Luke Gallows/Karl Anderson went to a no contest when New Day and the Vaudevillains interfered

Kevin Owens/Alberto Del Rio b. Sami Zayn/Cesaro – Top rope double stomp to Cesaro

Becky Lynch b. Dana Brooke – Disarm-Her

Baron Corbin b. Kalisto – End of Days

Chris Jericho b. Dean Ambrose – Codebreaker

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# Smackdown – June 2, 2016: Hope For The Future

## Smackdown

Date: June 2, 2016

Location: BMO Harris Bank Center, Rockford, Illinois

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Mauro Ranallo, Byron Saxton

Things are rapidly changing around here as we have the new Brand Split in less than two months. More importantly for now however is the freshly heel AJ Styles who has set his sights on the returning John Cena, likely setting up a huge showdown at Money in the Bank. This show will likely focus on the build towards the ladder match so let's get to it.

The opening recap focuses on AJ Styles and the Band reuniting on Monday and Styles turning full heel.

Opening sequence.

Here's the New Day to open the show. Woods mentions Smackdown going live

on July 19 and then it's time to talk about the Club. Yeah they're big and tough but they'll never be your WWE World Tag Team Champions. This brings out Gallows and Anderson with New Day asking what kind of club they are exactly. Do they meet in a tree house? Do you have to pay dues?

New Day wants a fight but the Club says no. Woods: "They don't want none." Cue AJ to say the WWE belongs to the Club but Kofi doesn't seem to get that. Kofi lists off all their accomplishments and laughs that AJ took ten years to get here. AJ talks about what he did to Cena but gets a NEW DAY ROCKS chant.

### Becky Lynch vs. Charlotte

Non-title. Becky sends her into the ropes to start before Charlotte reverses in the corner and grabs a neckbreaker. Dana offers a distraction and Charlotte kicks Becky in the face to put her on the floor as we take an early break. Back with Becky hitting a running forearm in the corner and getting two off the exploder suplex.

Becky misses a knee though and hurts her leg (Did the Flair family find a lucky charm a long time ago or something? It's uncanny how many in match knee injuries their opponents have.) but it doesn't seem to bother her that much. Instead Becky grabs a triangle choke but gets lifted into a Batista Bomb for two. Charlotte misses the moonsault but lands on her feet anyway, only to have the Figure Eight countered into the Disarm-Her, drawing in Dana for the DQ at 8:45.

**Rating:** C+. It's nice to have Becky not lose a match for a change though at some point she needs to actually win something of note. I'm assuming they're gearing up for a four way or something like it at Money in the Bank though I can't imagine they'll take the title off Charlotte this soon. Good match here though.

Post match Natalya comes out but Charlotte and Dana get away before they can be put in submissions.

Dean Ambrose and Sami Zayn are having a friendly argument in the back when Kevin Owens and Alberto Del Rio come up with Owens saying Sami is trying to manipulate Ambrose. Owens: "He's Canadian remember? You can't

trust him." More trash is talked and Dean wants to fight now instead of waiting for their scheduled tag match later.

### Golden Truth vs. Dudley Boyz

Breezango is in the VIP area. The Goldust music hits and the Golden Truth graphics come on but the Dudley Boyz video is still playing. Truth's remix now has the lyrics on screen with a bouncing Goldust head telling you what to say. Also it's apparently "Goldentruth".

Truth drives Bubba into the corner to start and a double suplex puts the big man down. The Dudleyz take over and D-Von's spinning elbow to the jaw gets two. Everything breaks down and Goldust catches D-Von with a spinebuster, only to have Tyler get on the apron for a distraction. Goldust goes to deal with him but gets rolled up by D-Von for the pin at 4:04.

**Rating:** D. I hate to admit it but I'm digging this story more and more every week. It's a naturally developing story and it's actually entertaining me every time they go out and do something else. I'm not sure where this ends but it's been FAR more entertaining than it had any right to be the whole way through.

Post match Breezango laughs at Golden Truth. Fandango: "Just like a game of shooty hoops, three strikes and you're out!"

Recap of Baron Corbin vs. Dolph Ziggler.

Corbin is standing outside because he won't grace the fans with his presence after they cheered what happened on Monday. The next time he comes into a WWE arena, it's to end Dolph Ziggler. Or on Raw next week.

### Dean Ambrose/Sami Zayn vs. Alberto Del Rio/Kevin Owens

Owens goes after Sami to start before it's quickly off to Del Rio, who is rolled up for two. Dean comes in for a shot to the ribs and it's right back to Sami but he walks into a Backstabber for another two. Owens is happy to come in and pick Sami's bones but quickly hands it back to Del Rio for a kick to the ribs. The fast tags continue as Dean is brought back in to dive on Del Rio as we take a break.

Back with Alberto stomping on Dean's chest in the corner before the heels take Ambrose outside for a beating. Unfortunately it's in front of the announcers' table so Sami flip dives onto both of them. Sami gets pulled off the apron though and the beatdown continues on Dean, only to have him escape the armbreaker. The Dirty Deeds attempt is broken up though and the running enziguri hits Owens instead. Sami gets the tag and scores with the Helluva Kick to put Del Rio away at 9:24.

**Rating:** B. Nice fast paced tag match here with both teams working well together and doing some things you don't normally get in the tag team formula. I'm not wild on having these tags where the good guys always team with the bad guys leading up to the ladder match but at least it was an entertaining match this week.

Post match Owens grabs a headset and says he's tired of his partners screwing things up. He goes under the ring and finds a ladder so he can climb up and pull down the briefcase, only to have Cesaro run down and hit the spinning uppercut while still wearing his suit. Cesaro climbs the ladder and pulls down the briefcase instead.

#### Jack Swagger vs. Rusev

Non-title and Rusev attacks before Jack can get in the ring. Swagger says ring the bell and has the Patriot Lock on about two seconds in. Rusev bails to the floor and eats a hard clothesline but Jack's shoulder is banged up from the attack. Back in and Swagger makes a quick comeback but misses the running Vader Bomb. Instead he clotheslines Rusev again with the shoulder mostly fine. Rusev escapes another Patriot Lock attempt and sends Swagger outside for a whip into the steps. The Accolade is countered into the Patriot Lock but Rusev gets the rope and puts on the Accolade so Jack can pass out at 4:43.

**Rating:** C. I know it's been a long time since this happened but it's still not something I'm going to get into. They've had the same match over and over and it's really kind of hard to care about when there's no way Swagger is going to do anything noteworthy. Swagger really needs a change and jobbing to Rusev again isn't a good sign.

Rusev won't let go until Titus O'Neil runs out for the save.

Bob Backlund asks Darren Young for a training update. Young says his running has been great so far but Backlund only wants him running in case he misses the bus. Apparently Backlund has stolen Young's car keys and Young can walk to the next town in eight hours. Backlund: "And if you get there any faster, I'll know you ran!" I freaking love these things.

We look at Rollins and Reigns not fighting on Raw.

### AJ Styles vs. Kofi Kingston

Kofi flips him away to start but AJ snaps off some armdrags and poses a bit. The announcers speculate that the Club's breakup was staged to set Cena up, which is a better explanation than I would give it. Kofi takes him into the corner for a basement dropkick and that means it's time for a musical interlude. All six guys get in and it's a standoff until we take a break.

Back with Kofi elbowing Styles in the jaw and putting on an armbar. Styles is sent to the floor and it's a standoff between New Day and the Club, allowing AJ to post Kofi to take over. Woods starts running his mouth and apparently motivates Kofi to get in a jawbreaker, only to have Styles hit that strike rush of his to drop Kingston again. Kofi grabs a monkey flip of all things to put Styles down.

The Boom Drop makes a rare appearance and something like a knee drop to a standing AJ gets two. Styles is sent to the apron and Woods starts playing some trombone, causing AJ to miss the Phenomenal Forearm. The SOS gives Kofi two but the Club and New Day get into it at ringside. Kofi dives over the top to take out Gallows, only to have AJ score with the Pele coming back in. The Styles Clash gives AJ the pin at 13:35.

**Rating:** B+. For all his goofiness, I think it's often forgotten just how good Kofi can be in the ring. No he's not likely to ever become a World Champion but he's definitely someone who can wrestle a good to very good match against almost anyone. I miss watching Kofi in singles stuff and I'd love to see him as more of the solo act on the team.

**Overall Rating:** B-. This was a stronger show than usual as it feels like Smackdown is starting to mean something again heading into the Brand

Split. There was enough good wrestling here and Club vs. New Day got a strong focus to start what could be an entertaining feud going forward. I liked this show for a change and that's not something I can often say these days.

### Results

Becky Lynch b. Charlotte via DQ when Dana Brooke interfered

Dudley Boyz b. Golden Truth – Rollup to Goldust

Sami Zayn/Dean Ambrose b. Kevin Owens/Alberto Del Rio – Helluva Kick to Del Rio

Rusev b. Jack Swagger – Accolade

AJ Styles b. Kofi Kingston – Styles Clash

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## **New Column: Breaking Up Is Hard To Do**

Looking at some of the potential perils of the new Brand

Split.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-breaking-up-is-hard-to-do/>

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# Smackdown – May 26, 2016: The Wrestlemania Show Sequel

## Smackdown

Date: May 26, 2016

Location: Norfolk Scope Arena, Norfolk, Virginia

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Byron Saxton, Mauro Ranallo

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

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

Opening sequence.

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

Cue Sami Zayn (Lawler: "The man with the stupid hat.") to say this isn't a joke because he's going after everything at Money in the Bank. Now it's Alberto Del Rio (who hasn't qualified) to say he's cashed in before and

he'll do it again here tonight. Sami turns to yell at him and gets decked by Owens. The three in the ring start brawling and Sami vs. Dean is teased.

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

Beating Ryder is almost a running joke at this point. Alberto kicks him down and chokes on the ropes to start, only to get kicked into the barricade as we take an early break. Back with Del Rio working on a chinlock and a clip of Del Rio hitting the double stomp on the floor during the break. Ryder fights up but misses his middle rope dropkick.

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### US Title: Kalisto vs. Rusev

Rusev is defending after defeating Kalisto on Sunday. During Kalisto's entrance, Byron almost casually mentions the impending Brand Split. Kalisto goes right after him to start and sends Rusev to the ropes with a headscissors. A springboard is knocked out of the air though and we take a break about thirty seconds in. Back with Kalisto being sent hard into the corner and actually trying to slam the champion. This works as well as you would expect and Rusev stomps away to stay in control.

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

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

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

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

#### Natalya vs. Dana Brooke

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

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

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

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

#### Golden Truth vs. Breezango

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

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

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

#### Intercontinental Title: The Miz vs. Cesaro

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

Cesaro blocks the steel though and gets two off a small package. The Sharpshooter doesn't work either as Miz gets to the rope and tries to

leave with the title. Instead he eats the running European uppercut for two. The Swing is kicked away though and Cesaro goes shoulder first into the buckle. Miz grabs the Skull Crushing Finale for the pin to retain at 10:31.

**Rating:** B-. More 50/50 booking of course. This was ok but the lack of time didn't really help things. Unfortunately this is Cesaro 101 as he comes so close most of the time but can never have the trigger pulled. I'm fine with Miz as champion and thankfully they made sure that it wasn't a clean pin, but this was still a lot less entertaining than I was hoping for after Sunday.

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

### Results

Alberto Del Rio b. Zack Ryder – Cross armbreaker

Rusev b. Kalisto – Accolade

Natalya b. Dana Brooke via DQ when Charlotte interfered

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

The Miz b. Cesaro – Skull Crushing Finale

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# They're Really Doing Another Brand Split

And Smackdown is going live starting July 19.

<http://www.wwe.com/shows/smackdown/article/smackdown-live-usa-network-july-19>

This is uh.....well it's certainly something. For one thing it's going to prove that just having Smackdown live isn't going to change things, though with the announcement that a McMahon is going to be in charge of the show, maybe things get a little more interesting. Anything that makes WWE care about Smackdown and pay more attention to it is a good thing, but I'm going to need a lot more details before I consider this the saving grace for the blue show.

What I do consider my own saving grace though: Impact is screwed to the wall.

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## Smackdown – May 19, 2016: Please Let It End On Sunday

### Smackdown

Date: May 19, 2016

Location: Bon Secours Wellness Center, Greenville, South Carolina

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, Jerry Lawler, Byron Saxton

It's the final show before Extreme Rules and this past Monday wasn't exactly the strongest episode of Raw in recent memory. The stories are starting to run out of steam and Sunday can't get here soon enough. Odds are tonight is going to be about the Intercontinental and WWE World Title stories, which could go a few different ways each. Let's get to it.

The opening recap focuses on Monday's oddball tag match and makes sure to show Shane and Stephanie setting it up in case you're stupid enough to think these matches are just happening.

Opening sequence.

### Kevin Owens vs. Cesaro

Miz, Maryse and Sami Zayn are on commentary. Miz gets right to the point and says tonight's MizTV is canceled. It never ceases to amaze me that they feel the need to change plans from Monday to Tuesday. They slug it out to start as Miz and Sami bicker about Miz constantly getting beaten up. Since this is WWE, the camera keeps cutting to the announcers' table so we can see them arguing, completely defeating the point of them being on commentary.

Cesaro dropkicks him out to the floor, followed by some chops. Back inside and Cesaro stops for a quick Rumba. I mean of course that's just a guess as I can't see what he's doing because we're looking at the announcers' table again but it's my best guess. Owens bails from the threat of a European uppercut so Cesaro follows him out for the running version up against the barricade. Maryse offers a distraction and Owens knocks Cesaro into the table and then whips him into the steps for a bonus.

Owens mocks Miz's flapping arms and drops a backplash for two (Owens: "HOW IS MY CLOSEUP?"). Maryse yells at Sami in French, forgetting that he's from Montreal. Another backplash hits raised knees because you can't hit the same spot twice (makes sense in theory, though Cesaro should have known that the first one was coming given how Owens uses it in every match) but Owens sends him into the corner for the Cannonball.

Back from a break with another shot of the commentary team showing Miz and Maryse kissing. Cesaro fires in an uppercut to break up the frog splash and grabbing a gutwrench superplex to put both guys down. A high cross body gets two for Cesaro as the wrestlers on commentary actually start paying attention and breaking down the match. The Swing doesn't work though and Owens bails to the floor, only to have him blast Sami in the face.

Cesaro flips off the apron to take out Owens before punching Miz in the face. Back in and Cesaro's eats a superkick for two but Sami comes in, only to have Cesaro punch him in the face, either over the Helluva Kick last week or to prevent a DQ. The distraction lets Owens get in a rollup with a handful of trunks for the pin at 14:48.

**Rating:** B-. I'm really digging the idea they're going with here and it's actually turned into a four way feud instead of two guys feuding and the other two just being there on the side. I'm actually not sure who walks out with the title on Sunday and it would seem that there are multiple ways to go after the match is over. That's a hard thing to pull off but they've managed to do it with four talented guys doing what they're supposed to do.

Post match Sami gives Cesaro the Helluva Kick but takes the Skull Crushing Finale.

#### Paige vs. Dana Brooke

Becky Lynch is on commentary and says her eye injury is the worst thing she's ever had because the double vision means she has to see Dana twice. Paige knees her in the face to start as we hear about Becky fighting Paige's mom over in the UK. Dana trips Paige up though and we hit a leg scissors back inside. Becky thinks she should be named Becky Balboa because she keeps getting up like Rocky. Some kicks and knees stagger Dana but she grabs a Samoan Driver for the upset pin at 3:16.

**Rating:** D+. Dana looked better here but that might be due to how short the match was, which always helps things out a little bit. Brooke has a great look and a lot of potential but she just needs more time in the ring, preferably down in developmental. She's just been called up too

early to be on her own, which to be fair wasn't the plan until a few days ago. That being said, what the heck has happened to Paige? She's gone from the top of the division to absolutely nothing in no time. I really don't get it.

Lana, with that accent dying faster than Paige's push, says Kalisto is hiding behind his mask and that Rusev is the greatest champion of all time. Rusev says the chant will be MACHKA MACHKA MACHKA.

### Dolph Ziggler vs. Sheamus

It feels like we haven't seen Sheamus in a long time. Ziggler is shoved around to start before coming back with knees and right hands in the corner. A hard ax handle to the face drops Ziggler though and we take a break. Back with another ax handle blasting Dolph in the face before his superkick is countered with an elbow to the knee.

We hit the chinlock for a bit before Ziggler fights up and gets in a Fameasser for a near fall. The neckbreaker is broken up though and Sheamus gets two off the Irish Curse. Back up and the Zig Zag is countered but Sheamus misses a charge, setting up a superkick to give Dolph the fluke pin at 10:48.

**Rating:** C-. Sheamus has just died since the League split up. I had forgotten that he was around for a bit as he was only in the battle royal recently and then hadn't been seen since. Ziggler vs. Corbin isn't much better though as I have no idea why they're feuding, especially since Corbin should have won in the first place but we need to give Ziggler a fluke win instead.

Corbin comes out to say he'll hurt Ziggler on Sunday.

The Asylum cage is lowered and here's Chris Jericho for a chat. Jericho demands quiet by saying QUIET over and over before pointing out the cage hanging above us. Well to be fair no one noticed the cage hanging above the ring on Raw until Ambrose pointed it out so that was kind of necessary. Jericho lists off all of the matches that he's been in over the years and admits that he's never been in an Asylum match because there's never been one. However that means Ambrose hasn't been in one

either, meaning Jericho has the advantage because he's smarter and crazier.

Jericho asks that the cage be lowered as he talks about how he put Dean in the hospital with a twenty pound plant. Looking up, Jericho adds up the days he can put Dean in the hospital by using all of these weapons, which he sees as at least forty days. That's not counting all the mental anguish that goes with it, but above all else, Dean is receiving the Gift of Jericho. As the crowd drinks it in, a production worker comes in and of course it's Dean, who beats Jericho down with a kendo stick to send him running off. Guys in costumes are always an effective idea so this was fine.

And now, a life lesson with Bob Backlund. Bob talks about how Darren should be able to memorize these things and demands that he recite the Presidents of the United States in order. Young: "Coach no one can do that." Backlund: "Washington, Adams, Jefferson...." Young swears a bit and Backlund LOSES IT, saying that no one needs that kind of language and demands 200 jumping jacks because Young needs to be great in the ring. These are really funny bits and I'm sure that Young in front of a blue background and Backlund in front of a red one is coincidental.

### Big Cass/New Day vs. Dudley Boyz/Vaudevillains

The announcers are flat out saying that Cass has been doing better since Enzo has been gone. During the entrances, we see the Vaudevillains destroying the time machine, which messes up the announcers' audio for some reason. D-Von and Big E. get things going with the latter getting two off a belly to belly. Byron's audio is still barely audible as D-Von runs Kofi over and brings in Bubba, who misses a splash attempt. It's time for the Unicorn Stampede before a big staredown takes us to a break.

Back with Woods hammering on Bubba in the corner until Ray clotheslines him down. Byron's audio is back because we're just that lucky. The Vaudevillains starts taking over now with Gotch snapmaring Woods so English can drop a knee for two. The Dudleyz don't seem thrilled with their lack of ring time here as Bubba shouts at Gotch for tagging in English instead of D-Von.

Bubba comes in instead and punches away while shouting about Booty's. Woods finally gets away and makes the hot tag off to Cass for the house cleaning. Everything breaks down and Big E. suplexes Gotch before throwing Kofi over the top onto English. A pretty horrible looking East River Crossing (mostly botched as Bubba is a bit too big) sets up the Empire Elbow to give Cass the pin at 10:38.

**Rating:** C. I'd be really surprised if they don't give Cass a spot on Sunday's card in an added match. They certainly seem to be pushing him at this point and it's really cool to see someone this young and brand new on the roster getting such a shot. I don't know if he has everything to make it work but at least he's getting a good start.

John Cena is back on May 30.

Long video on Natalya vs. Charlotte on Sunday with Charlotte talking about how she'll be twice as good as her dad because she uses the Figure Eight instead of the Figure Four.

#### Luke Gallows vs. Roman Reigns

Non-title. Usos vs. Anderson/Gallows in a Texas Tornado match is official for Sunday. Sweet goodness just stop already. Anderson/Styles/Usos, the latter again without the Siva Tau, are at ringside here. They trade elbows to start but only Reigns goes down. A second elbow knocks him outside so Reigns comes back inside where his Samoan drop gets two. We take a break and come back with Reigns firing off kicks to the ribs until Gallows takes his head off with a clothesline for a near fall of his own.

We hit the chinlock for a bit before a corner splash crushes Reigns again. That's enough action so we hit the chinlock again. Roman gets up for a jumping clothesline but AJ's distraction lets Gallows get in a rollup for two. There's the Superman punch but AJ grabs Reigns' foot to break up the spear. Everything breaks down on the floor with Reigns kicking AJ in the face, only to walk into the Gallows' Pole (chokebomb) for a very close two. Anderson comes in and that's a DQ at 11:50, despite him not touching anything.

**Rating:** C+. Not a bad power brawl but you knew the ending was going to be

screwy. I have no idea why they couldn't just wait until Anderson actually did something before getting to the DQ but anything that lets these six brawl more is the right idea in WWE's eyes. That being said, it would be nice if Anderson and Gallows could actually, you know, WIN SOMETHING eventually.

Post match Anderson gives Reigns the Boot of Doom and the fight keeps going. AJ is the only man standing but he takes too long loading up the announcers' table. Reigns gets in a few shots but everyone else gets back in it to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C. Thank goodness it's over. This wasn't even a bad show or even a below average show. It was just incredibly boring for one simple reason: this is all padding instead of ANYTHING worthwhile (save for a decent Ambrose/Jericho segment). We've seen the opening match in various forms time after time, Dana doesn't have a match on Sunday, Ziggler vs. Corbin has been done multiple times, Big Cass vs. New Day isn't a match as far as I know and the main event stuff has been done to death.

I don't remember the last time a company just ran out of steam like this the week before a pay per view but it's been a rough two shows. Hopefully they don't try to stretch these stories out through June as I don't even want to imagine what we might have to sit through in that case. The quality was fine tonight but there's just nothing interesting going on here.

### Results

Kevin Owens b. Cesaro – Rollup with a handful of trunks

Dana Brooke b. Paige – Samoan Driver

Dolph Ziggler b. Sheamus – Superkick

Big Cass/New Day b. Dudley Boyz/Vaudevillains – Empire Elbow to Bubba Ray

Roman Reigns b. Luke Gallows via DQ when Karl Anderson interfered

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# Smackdown – May 12, 2016: Another One

## Smackdown

Date: May 12, 2016

Location: Wells Fargo Arena, Des Moines, Iowa

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, Byron Saxton, Jerry Lawler

It's kind of hard to say what to expect around here as the show has been bouncing back and forth between focusing on the Intercontinental Title feud and then the World Title situation. The former tends to be the more interesting and it should be a fun show tonight with all four people being thrown together in a tag match. Let's get to it.

Here's Dean Ambrose to get things going. Lawler thinks Jericho should press charges against Dean for destroying the jacket. Well, uh, YEAH probably but that's the kind of thing that doesn't happen in wrestling. Dean thinks they're even now because Jericho smashed Mitch over the back of his head to try and take away everything he has. This ring is all that he's got and as long as his heart is beating, no one is going to take it away. Now the question is what can Dean take away from Jericho and the

first thing that comes to his mind is Jericho's ego.

After Dean gets done with him, Jericho isn't even going to be sure if wrestling is for him anymore. The lights go out and Jericho's music comes on, only to have Jericho appear behind Dean and lay him out. That's not it though as he pulls out a straitjacket to tie Dean down. Ambrose wakes up as Jericho shouts that Dean needs to get crazy while beating him in the head. A Codebreaker stops Dean's comeback and a second one FINALLY has referees out here to break it up. Jericho does his Gift of Jericho pose on the announcers' table.

### Rusev vs. Sin Cara

Kalisto is on commentary and says helping Cara on Monday was just being a team. Rusev drops him with an early clothesline and stomps away as Kalisto stumbles over his battle plan for the pay per view. A kick to the chest puts Cara down again and we hear about Steph Curry for no good reason.

In your random insult of the week, Rusev has dubbed Kalisto the smelly boy who hides behind a mask. Cara starts kicking at the leg and scores with some right hands, followed by a top rope flip attack. As this is going on, Lana throws water on Kalisto for a distraction so Rusev can kick him in the head. Back in and the superkick sets up the Accolade to make Cara tap at 3:09.

**Rating:** D. SO WHAT WAS THE POINT OF MONDAY??? If you're just going to have Rusev squash Cara like he always should, why have him lose in the first place? As usual it comes off like WWE has no idea what they're doing from one show to another and just does stuff for the sake of doing it instead of with any kind of logical reasoning or planning behind it.

We look at Dana Brooke debuting and helping beat down Becky Lynch on Monday.

Emma introduces Dana, who is ready to destroy Becky tonight. People forget that Emma used to be on top of the NXT women's division but Dana has never forgotten and knows what Emma can do. This needed more patting on the head.

## Becky Lynch vs. Dana Brooke

Lynch forearms her to start and pats Dana on the head, only to be pulled down by the hair. Dana stomps her on the mat and cranks on an arm and leg at the same time. Becky starts her comeback with a clothesline and a leg lariat but Dana sends her throat first into the ropes so Emma can poke her in the eye. Dana grabs a jackknife cover for the pin at 2:52. This was really awkward, which I'm sure has nothing to do with Dana debuting in September 2014 and being injured for months but still being called up to the main roster anyway.

Video on the end of Monday's six man tag and the post match showdown between Reigns and Styles.

AJ gives Anderson and Gallows a pep talk for tonight but says he's banned from ringside. They seem to be officially going with The Club.

Here's New Day for their weekly chat. Big E. nearly swears about what happened on Monday, which Woods says was the Vaudevillians Kanye Westing them. By that he doesn't mean marrying someone who has a big.....I think you get the idea. Actually Woods means getting involved in something that was none of his business. They're stuck in the 1830s and at Extreme Rules they'll be knocked into the DeLorean and sent back to the future. Cue the Vaudevillians to sing about how they'll win the titles a week from Sunday. Soon the sun will set on the New Day and the night belongs to the Vaudevillians.

## Aiden English vs. Kofi Kingston

Kofi dropkicks him at the bell and stomps the heck out of him in the corner. English gets sent outside but catches a sliding Kofi and sends him face first into the post to take over. Big E. holds up the cereal to bring Kofi back to life (needs more Lion King), which actually seems to work as Kofi kicks English in the face and gets two off a high cross body. A top rope splash to the back gets two but everyone else gets ejected. Things settle down and Kofi grabs a sunset flip, only to have English drop down and put his hand on the ropes for the big upset at 3:52.

**Rating:** C. English is better in the ring than he's given credit for but it's pretty difficult to have a bad match against someone like Kofi Kingston. I still don't buy the Vaudevillians as taking the titles away from New Day as Anderson/Gallows should have that spot locked up but at least the build has been set up very well.

Reigns is also banned from ringside but he's ready to come out and deal with Styles if necessary.

#### Luke Gallows/Karl Anderson vs. Usos

Reigns and Styles are banned from ringside. Karl and Jey get things going with Jey in control before it's off to Jimmy for a running forearm. It's Gallows pulling Jimmy down by the hair and coming in for a slam. Anderson pounds away in the corner even more as Ranallo mentions Karl teaming with Giant Bernard, who Lawler says he hasn't heard from in a long time.

Anderson finally misses an elbow and it's off to Jey as things speed up. There's a powerslam to Karl but Gallows kicks Jey in the face and we take a break. Back with Anderson dropping a knee for two before it's back to Gallows for a chinlock. With that going nowhere, Gallows opts to just punch Jey in the corner. A superkick gets Jey out of trouble and the diving tag brings in Jimmy for the real house cleaning. Another superkick drops Anderson and sets up the Superfly Splash, only to have Gallows pull Jimmy to the floor. Gallows throws him over the announcers' table and that's a DQ at 11:39.

**Rating:** C-. The match was fine (albeit a bit slow paced) but the problem here is I'm sick of seeing them fight. This is the sixth time in three weeks that they've been in the same match. They're not bad or anything but it's the same problem WWE has so often: eventually people get sick of them and it's time for something fresh. Have the Hype Bros come up from NXT get squashed by Anderson and Gotch or put the Social Outcasts against the Usos or something but stop just doing the same thing and then expecting us to care when you put this on pay per view (which you know they will).

The beating continues post match as Anderson kicks Jey in the face and the twins are beaten down with a chair. You know, the match is over so

there's nothing keeping Reigns from coming out for the save.

R-Truth waters his selfie stick and gets his phone wet.

Here's our first Life Lesson With Coach Backlund. Bob asks Darren what time his watch says. Darren pulls out his phone to check the time but Backlund thinks he's making a phone call. His advice is to not call the operator and waste her time about the time. Young says no one wears watches anymore and he has everything on his desktop on his smart phone. Backlund: "I don't care if your phone is Einstein!" He wants the mail in a mailbox, a calendar on a wall and the desktop on top of a desk. Darren is told to do 200 squats and that's just fine with him. Again they weren't even in the same room, which makes this even better.

On a related sidenote: since when did wearing a watch become something so horrible? Yeah you can check your phone, or you can flick your eyes over to your wrist and see what time it is. You might even be able to do that without then needing to check 14 things on your phone and getting distracted by something. Since when did that become some arcane way of thinking?

### Goldango vs. Gorgeous Truth

Breeze and Fandango open things up but it's off to Goldust and Truth less than thirty seconds in. Neither of them want to fight though so Truth tags Breeze back in, only to have Tyler knock Truth off the apron. Fandango turns on Goldust as well and Breeze pins Goldust (off a single clothesline, the only move Goldust took all match) for the pin at 1:39.

The beatdown is on and Goldust tries to cover Truth. That's a nice gesture but if I'm Truth, I'd try to find a partner who can survive a clothesline.

Greetings From Puerto Rico. Their new name is the Shining Stars.

We look at Ric Flair being escorted out of the building in the way too complicated segment on Monday.

Charlotte calls that a travesty because Ric Flair deserves better treatment than that. Ric guarantees that Charlotte will retain the title

at Extreme Rules but Charlotte looks unsure. To recap, the idea here is that Charlotte is in trouble without Flair and Ric is the one who is confident. In other words: Flair looks good and Charlotte looks almost inept. As usual, advantage Flair.

### Cesaro/Sami Zayn vs. The Miz/Kevin Owens

This should be good. During Miz's entrance, Owens jumps on commentary to say he's allowing Miz one last chance to be a good partner before he takes the title at Extreme Rules. Miz and Cesaro get things going with the latter grabbing a headlock. A backbreaker gets two on Miz so Owens shouts about how he can do better. That's fine with Miz who brings Owens in, followed by Sami tagging himself in as well.

Zayn hammers away in the corner and Lawler correctly says the referee should be admonishing Sami for the punches. Miz comes in and bails to the floor but Owens won't let him leave. The good guys hit some dives to take the villains down and we take a break. Back with Sami slamming Miz and low bridging him out to the floor. Owens gets in a cheap shot though and it's time for Sami to be in trouble. A hard kick to the back sets up a camel clutch from Miz.

Owens to Byron: "YOU BETTER PRAISE ME!" The Reality Check gets two for Miz but Sami comes back with one of those clotheslines to drop the champ. There's the Blue Thunder Bomb (whose name confuses Lawler) to finally allow the tag off to Cesaro. Owens gets to eat some uppercuts and Cesaro runs to the floor for the uppercut against the barricade on Miz. The high cross body gets two on Owens but Sami's Helluva Kick hits Cesaro by mistake. Owens adds the frog splash for the pin on Cesaro at 12:45.

**Rating:** C+. Standard Smackdown main event tag with a nice bonus of having Sami and Cesaro screw up to add some tension there. They're actually pulling off the four way feud here as everyone wants to beat everyone else but it's all about the title (mostly) instead of personal feelings. Good match here though and the kind of thing you would expect on Smackdown.

Sami takes the Pop Up Powerbomb but Miz gives Owens the Skull Crushing Finale to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C-. This is what you come to know and expect from Smackdown with the watchable wrestling and meaningless storyline development as almost none of this will be brought up on Raw. You really have to take this show on a week to week basis as it really is just about whether or not the show happens to be good that particular week. Nothing much to see here though and that's Smackdown in a nutshell.

### Results

Rusev b. Sin Cara – Accolade

Dana Brooke b. Becky Lynch – Jackknife rollup

Aiden English b. Kofi Kingston – Rollup while grabbing the rope

Usos b. Karl Anderson/Luke Gallows via DQ when Gallows threw Jimmy over the table

Gorgeous Truth b. Goldango – Breeze pinned Goldust after a clothesline from Fandango

Miz/Kevin Owens b. Cesaro/Sami Zayn – Frog splash to Cesaro

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# Smackdown – May 5, 2016: Wholesome Smackdown Entertainment

## Smackdown

Date: May 5, 2016

Location: Sprint Center, Kansas City, Missouri

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, Jerry Lawler, Byron Saxton

We've hit the ground running on the way to Extreme Rules with a fairly action packed Raw earlier this week. The big story continues to be AJ Styles vs. Roman Reigns but now we also have the Usos and Karl Anderson/Luke Gallows much more closely involved. It should be interesting to see what they can throw in here before the pay per view in two and a half weeks. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

We open with the Highlight Reel but first we get a recap of the Ambrose Asylum being canceled and the ensuing brawl. Ranallo: "Payback is a Mitch!" Jericho brags about injuring Dean Ambrose and keeping him off the show tonight. That's about it for Dean though as here's Jericho's guest: Sami Zayn.

Before anything is said, we look at a clip of Cesaro vs. Owens on Monday with Sami and Miz getting involved and likely setting up a fourway for the title. Jericho says Sami isn't a decent human being for holding up the Intercontinental Title but Sami thinks the scarf makes Jericho look stupid. Sami certainly wasn't trying to steal the title but here are Miz and Maryse to interrupt.

This is Miz's Intercontinental Title so Sami better not lay a finger on her again, which is exactly what Sami does again. Jericho says he would freak out if anyone touched his \$15,000 jacket like that. Sami: "You paid \$15,000 to look like a walking Christmas tree?" That's enough for Jericho who walks out so Miz threatens Zayn for trying to go after the biggest

fish in WWE. Sami touches the title again and says he wants to go for a swim. Zayn wants to go right now but Miz bails to the floor.

### Sami Zayn vs. The Miz

Non-title with the bell ringing after a break. Feeling out process to start as they fight over wristlocks and armbars. Sami grinds him down with a headlock. Back up and Sami gets in one of those kind of awkward looking clotheslines of his to send Miz to the floor. A moonsault off the barricade drops Miz again but here's Kevin Owens for a distraction.

We take a break and come back with Owens on commentary and Miz dropping a top rope axhandle for no cover. Owens: "You should be very proud of yourself Miz. You jumped up to the top rope, jumped off the top and hit him with your fists. You're an athlete!" Sami low bridges him to the floor for the big flip dive and a staredown with Owens. Kevin runs in for the DQ at 8:39.

**Rating:** C. Not much to this one but it was there for the angle instead of the wrestling. They've got something here with this four way feud with the title on the line and the match at Extreme Rules should be a lot of fun. There really isn't a bad option for the title at this point and that's a very rare situation to have.

Post match Sami gets double teamed until Cesaro runs down for the save, ripping his suit off on the way down the ramp. Cesaro cleans house but accidentally takes out Sami in the process. This time it's Cesaro holding up the title.

We look back at the end of Raw with the big brawl between Styles/Gallows/Anderson and Reigns/Usos, capped off by Reigns powerbombing AJ through the table.

Anderson and Gallows are a bit disappointed in AJ for not blasting Reigns with the chair on Monday. AJ wanted to keep it clean though because he wants to win the title his own way. Anderson and Gallows respect that but Roman doesn't respect AJ. Styles likes their suggestions of going extreme and thinks it's time for a chat with Roman.

Greetings From Puerto Rico.

We look at Enzo Amore's injury on Sunday.

### Vaudevillains vs. Social Outcasts

Dallas/Axel here. Bo starts fast with a powerslam on English for two. Axel comes in to go after Gotch but gets backdropped out to the floor for the save. The Whirling Dervish ends Dallas at 1:51.

Post match Colin Cassady comes out to go after the Vaudevillains and cleans house before Axel gets in to call Gotch and English SAWFT. That earns him a much deserved East River Crossing and Cass shouts a lot.

We look back at Shane and Stephanie gaining power on Sunday and their first night of sharing power on Raw.

### Natalya/Becky Lynch vs. Charlotte/Emma

Natalya headlocks Charlotte to the mat to start and it's off to Becky with Lawler yelling about the cheating going on. This show has been so much easier to sit through with him as a heel like he always should be. It's already back to Natalya who charges into a boot in the corner and Emma comes in for some stomping. Emma slams her face first into the mat and it's Charlotte putting on a chinlock.

Natalya finally sends Charlotte into the corner and makes the hot tag to Becky for some armdrags and dropkicks. The comeback is shortlived though as Becky is sent to the floor for a crash, allowing Charlotte to do her headscissor faceplants. Back from a break with Becky getting two off a rollup until a big boot puts her down again.

We get the eternally painful standing on the hair before Charlotte drops a knee. An enziguri puts Emma down though and the hot tag brings in Natalya for the house cleaning. The stepover dropkick sets up the discus lariat (which Ranallo seems to dub Nattie By Nature) on Charlotte but Natalya gets sent into the corner for the Emma Sandwich. Emma takes too long though and it's the Sharpshooter to make Emma tap at 13:48.

**Rating:** B. I had a really good time with this one as the division really

has evolved to make the whole thing feel important. Perhaps above all else, one of the major reasons has been the ring time. Look at this mach. When is the last time you saw a women's match get almost fifteen minutes on a random Smackdown? That being said, it also helps that things have been entertaining with a well done tag formula to make everything work. It also helps that the wrestlers are all skilled enough to make the match that much better. Everything is working at this point and that hasn't been the case for years.

AJ comes in to see Roman Reigns and the Usos. He wants to know if Reigns will be at ringside tonight and Reigns says he'll be wherever he wants because he's the champ. In that case, AJ will be at ringside too.

Darren Young has asked Bob Backlund to be his life coach. That's fine with Backlund, if Young will put everything he has into this.

#### Zack Ryder vs. Rusev

This has become WWE's version of Goldberg vs. Jerry Flynn. Ryder gets in a few dropkicks before Rusev slams him down. The Accolade wraps it up at 1:15.

Rusev and Lana do the Kalisto dance until Kalisto runs in for a corkscrew cross body before running away.

Fandango teaches Goldust to dance when R-Truth and Tyler Breeze come in. Goldust is having some issues but Truth says Fandango is the one off beat. A danceoff ensues but Fandango would rather have a tag match next week.

#### Usos vs. Karl Anderson/Luke Gallows

AJ and Reigns are at ringside. Jey and Karl get things going with the former getting in an uppercut and crucifix for two. A dropkick puts Anderson down again but Karl knocks Jey out to the floor. Karl goes after Reigns though and it's a DQ at 2:20.

They brawl to a break and I think you know what's coming.

#### Roman Reigns/Usos vs. Karl Anderson/Luke Gallows/AJ Styles

Thankfully we don't miss anything during a break. I'm so glad that's becoming more of a trend. Styles and Reigns get things going with the champ getting in a quick shoulder and drawing quite a few boos. Reigns powers out of a sunset flip into a fireman's carry, followed by a hard uppercut for two. Anderson comes in for some right hands as we get those phantom dueling chants. A big boot to the face drops Karl with Ranallo's name drop of the mafia confusing Jerry. Jey comes in to face Gallows and a kick to Luke's face allows the tag off to Jimmy as the twins start taking over.

Gallows kicks Jey in the face and we get that awkward staredown in front of the ring. They actually don't take a break though as it's AJ coming in and taking a quick enziguri. Reigns comes in off the cold tag and starts cleaning house with a running clothesline to Anderson. The corner clotheslines set up the Superman punch but it takes Gallows off the apron, followed by a suicide dive from Jimmy. The second Superman punch hits Karl in the jaw but AJ takes Reigns out before the spear. Anderson's spinebuster gets two, only to have the spear put Karl away 7:30.

**Rating:** C+. Fine main event tag match here though I could have gone with some more time. It's good to have Reigns get a win to reestablish himself and the World Champion getting the pin on Anderson isn't going to hurt Karl in the slightest. I'm liking this feud so far and the rematch should be a lot of fun too.

AJ points at the title to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B-. This was a much more efficient show with everything working like it should have. They're not even hiding the fact that Smackdown is meaningless anymore as wrestlers make the matches and Shane/Stephanie never acknowledge that this show exists. All you can ask for is some good wrestling and storyline supplements which is exactly what we had tonight. Fun, easy show here with the women having a really nice match.

## Results

Sami Zayn b. The Miz via DQ when Kevin Owens interfered

Vaudevillains b. Social Outcasts – Whirling Dervish to Dallas

Natalya/Becky Lynch b. Charlotte/Emma – Sharpshooter to Emma

Rusev b. Zack Ryder – Accolade

Karl Anderson/Luke Gallows b. Usos via DQ when Roman Reigns interfered

Roman Reigns/Usos b. Karl Anderson/Luke Gallows/AJ Styles – Spear to Anderson

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