

# Smackdown – July 16, 2015: That Man Is Strong

I'll be back to the normal schedule next week so just one more early Smackdown, unless you like them early. I normally have them done before the show is on the air and could easily post them early if you prefer. Let me know which way you like me doing them.

## Smackdown

Date: July 16, 2015

Location: Legacy Arena, Birmingham, Alabama

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Jimmy Uso, Jerry Lawler

It's the go home show for Battleground and this past Monday's show saw the destruction of Kane at the hands of Brock Lesnar, meaning Seth Rollins is all alone on Sunday. My guess is that this week's show will focus on Wyatt vs. Reigns, which is all but set yet still needs a few more details. Like why Wyatt is doing anything and why he just dropped the stuff with Reigns' daughter. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's Reigns to open the show. This all started at Money in the Bank when Wyatt cost him the match, but Bray isn't in his head and Bray can't break his focus. Tonight we have Dean Ambrose/Roman Reigns vs. Big Show/Sheamus and it's time to start a fight, but here's Bray on screen to interrupt. He asks what gave Roman the right to go after him on Monday, but Wyatt knew Reigns was there. For a moment, Bray was just like these people. For once, he saw Reigns being exactly what he should have been.

Bray saw him as a stone monument, but at Battleground, he will be the hammer that breaks the monument down. Reigns is ready to fight but Bray says this is what true fear feels like. Collect your roses gladiator because none of them are real. What is real though is that Bray is back here with everyone Reigns cares about. He's capable of some very evil things and this game has just begun. Wyatt has been trying to bring the

fire out of Reigns and knows he'll get bitten by the big dog. One day though, he'll tell the dog to sit and the dog will obey. Roman needs to go kiss the people he cares about because anyone but him.

This helped and is probably as clear of a reason as we're going to get as to why Wyatt has targeted Reigns. I'm still not clear on why his daughter is involved, but maybe the idea is that Reigns isn't what he seems and Wyatt wants to expose him as a fraud? It all started with Reigns in an ad for being a great father so maybe Bray thinks that's not the real Reigns?

### New Day vs. Lucha Dragons

The champs are on commentary of course with Woods as the odd man out. Kofi flips over Cara to start but Cara does the exact same thing. Off to E. vs. Kalisto, with the latter hitting a nice springboard wristdrag/headscissors to take New Day down and we take an early break.

Back with New Day stomping in the corner and Titus thinking this would be a fun triple threat match on Sunday. Kofi hurricanranas Cara down and Kalisto gets knocked off the apron for not paying attention. The abdominal stretch keeps Cara in trouble but he finally dives over Big E. and makes the hot tag to Kalisto. Everything breaks down and the Salida Del Sol plants Big E., only to have Kofi break up Cara's swanton. The Midnight Hour ends Kalisto at 10:06.

**Rating:** C-. Phillips saying that the New Day is on a roll tells you how lame the division has become again in recent weeks. Assuming they win on Sunday, New Day is stuck sitting around waiting on the Usos to come back and then.....well then I have no idea where they're going. I see no reason to believe the Players keep the titles as the lame father of the year award "hype" is over so there's no reason to have Titus as a champion anymore.

New Day says they'll win on Sunday and change the chant up to "NEW! TAG CHAMPS!" The Players chase them off without violence. At least they made the match feel a little more important.

Reigns and Ambrose are ready to take care of Sheamus and Big Show because they both want to get rid of Wyatt. Dean says he hates everyone.

## King Barrett vs. Jack Swagger

This is how far Barrett has fallen. Swagger rides him to the mat to start but Barrett punches him in the face a few times. The announcers of course treat this match as a joke by talking about Barrett's nose, because that's what Barrett is these days. An attempt at the Vader Bomb doesn't get to launch so Swagger slams him into the apron, only to get kicked in the ribs. The Bullhammer ends Swagger at 2:35.

Post match Truth comes out so they can shout over each other. Barrett says this has gone on long enough (amen) because he's the real King of the Ring. Truth on the other hand is just another guy who lost in the same tournament, which really isn't helping me care about this feud. Barrett promises to make Truth bow on Sunday.

Recap of Lesnar vs. Rollins, focusing on various beatdowns of both Lesnar and the car.

Cesaro runs into Kevin Owens, who wishes him luck in his match.

## Rusev vs. Cesaro

This should be on pay per view but that's what Smackdown is for these days. They shove each other around to start with Cesaro getting the better of it, only to have Rusev punch him in the face to take over. Rusev loads up a suplex but Cesaro will have none of that as he reverses into one of his own. I could watch Cesaro throw people around all day.

A snap belly to back suplex drops Cesaro again but he rolls some quick Germans for a breather. Back from a break with Cesaro fighting out of a chinlock and a clip of the slam into the spinout Rock Bottom from Rusev during the commercial. The uppercuts stagger Rusev and a nice dropkick puts him on the floor. There isn't much to talk about here as this is quite the back and forth power brawl so far.

Back in and the spinwheel kick stops Cesaro cold but he comes right back with a Neutralizer attempt. Rusev backdrops him down though and nails a superkick. The Accolade doesn't work either though, setting up a USA chant. Jimmy: "I know what's about to happen King!" They head outside

again where Cesaro charges into another superkick. Jimmy: "I didn't know that was about to happen King!" Rusev goes up top but dives into an "uppercut" (barely connected and looked awkward), setting up the Neutralizer to give Cesaro the pin at 12:40. Cesaro is the second person to ever pin Rusev in WWE.

**Rating:** B. Now THAT is more like it. This was treated as a big deal and actually felt like one with the commentators pointing out that Rusev has never been pinned on Smackdown (or on TV ever I believe). Cesaro comes off like a big deal, but at the moment he isn't scheduled to be in action at the pay per view. It's a shame that another bald power guy who happens to hold a title isn't injured, leaving a spot open for a title match that Cesaro could say, win on Sunday, leaving him to do this every week on Smackdown like Daniel Bryan was scheduled to do.

Cesaro jumps into the crowd to celebrate.

Sheamus says Sunday is just another day at the office. Tonight he gets to team with a giant and he hopes Orton is watching the beating that Ambrose and Reigns receive. What is WWE's obsession with Sheamus vs. Orton? They've never had anything resembling a good match so they keep getting pushed because they look like a good match on paper? To be fair it wouldn't be the first time WWE has done something because it sounded good and continued to do so after it failed time after time.

### Stardust vs. Neville

Rematch from Raw where Neville lost in what is being billed as a battle of comic book characters, complete with comic page backgrounds on the recap. Stardust drops him with a quick forearm, only to be sent to the floor for the Asai moonsault. Back in and Stardust gets caught holding the ropes on a sunset flip, allowing to pop back up with a victory roll for the pin at 2:20. The good vs. evil concept works and I like Neville being treated as a superhero, but the matches aren't lighting anything on fire, let alone the world.

After a break, Neville says his strategy was just to wait for his window of opportunity to open and then strike. Stardust decks him and says prepare for turbulence during the Altitude Era.

Long recap of the Divas' segment from Raw. It still focuses on Stephanie and therefore it's still not as good as it could be. It's still great, but it shouldn't have been about her.

Sasha/Tamina/Naomi say it's finally fair because the odds are even. Sasha says it's their time to run this division. Naomi: "We bad." They're the trifecta and they're not here to make friends or play nice.

### Dean Ambrose/Roman Reigns vs. Big Show/Sheamus

Dean rides Sheamus to the mat to start but Sheamus knees him in the back to take over. That goes nowhere as Dean runs Sheamus over and knocks Show to the floor, setting up the standing elbow drop to both. We come back from a break with Reigns coming in to face off with Big Show because IT WILL NEVER DIE! It's quickly back to Dean to hammer on Big Show in the corner but Sheamus gets in a shot to take over as we're firmly in the Smackdown main event formula.

Show punches him in the ribs a few times, which the announcers equate to drowning. The Final Cut gets two and makes me remember that the Final Cut used to be a move. An elbow finally misses and it's a double tag to Reigns and Sheamus with the former cleaning house as you would expect. Big Show offers a distraction though, allowing Sheamus to get two off White Noise. Dean's suicide dive is caught by Big Show but the chokeslam through the table is countered into a DDT to put everyone down again. Reigns wins a slugout with Sheamus and hits the Superman Punch but Wyatt comes in for the DQ at 13:52.

**Rating:** C-. Dull but fine match here as we were just waiting for Bray to run in. I do however like that no one actually jobbed three days before a pay per view because there's no logical reason to have someone get pinned going into a major match. Also, how nice was it to see someone stay down from a DDT for a change? It was a big spot and they treated it like one for a change. That's a rare delicacy, as sad as that really is.

**Overall Rating:** C+. This is the kind of show they needed to shore things up before Battleground. The World Title match has long since been set so tonight was mostly about setting up everything else, but I'm curious to see where they go with the Intercontinental Title situation. You would

think Neville vs. Stardust would be added to the pre-show, but I can't accept the idea of Cesaro not being on the main card. He's earned a spot doing something there and if he's left off for something stupid, it's going to be a shame. The Divas have to get something in there too so Sunday could look very interesting.

### Results

New Day b. Lucha Dragons – Midnight Hour to Kalisto

King Barrett b. Jack Swagger – Bullhammer

Cesaro b. Rusev – Neutralizer

Neville b. Stardust – Victor roll

Roman Reigns/Dean Ambrose b. Sheamus/Big Show via DQ when Bray Wyatt interfered

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# **New Column: How Did I Live**

# Without You?

In other words, it's me raving about the Network again with some bonus history.

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## Smackdown – July 9, 2015: I'll Have The Special

Same as last week as I won't be able to post the full thing tonight so here it is in advance.

### Smackdown

Date: July 9, 2015

Location: Bradley Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Jimmy Uso, Jerry Lawler

We're back after this Monday's classic of Cena vs. Cesaro and Lesnar squashing a Cadillac with...maybe Cesaro and Rollins if we're lucky. My guess is we'll get more of a focus on Reigns vs. Wyatt, which is a far more interesting story than the World Title situation. Hopefully the wrestling will be good. Let's get to it.

The opening recap is a long video on Lesnar vs. Rollins, with Cena vs. Cesaro not warranting air time.

Here's Rollins to open things up by calling Lesnar a coward. Luckily we're treated to a JUSTIN BIEBER chant because that's a full time thing now. Rollins rants about the destroyed Cadillac but here's Paul Heyman with a tow truck hauling out the remnants. Heyman says you can't treat Lesnar like Rollins did and not expect to be taken to Suplex City.

Both say that the car is a metaphor for their opponent (or client's opponent) in a good exchange. Rollins brings up the whole destroying the

Shield thing but Heyman promises Lesnar putting his foot on Seth's chest as he holds up his new title. Seth cuts him off again and promises to keep the title. This was basic stuff but it's why they have Heyman with Lesnar though. If Brock can't be around, just throw Heyman out there to do the talking.

### Dean Ambrose vs. Bo Dallas

In case Monday's squash didn't do it for you I guess. Before the match, Bo takes credit for the success of Rock's new HBO series Ballers. Ambrose works on a hammerlock to start but Dallas sends him into the post three times in a row. Some choking with the ring skirt (that's something you don't see too often) sets up Bo's belly to belly (his old finisher) for two and we take a break. Back with Dean fighting out of a chinlock and firing away against the ropes. We get a big surprise as Bo runs the ropes for a belly to belly superplex, followed by a Downward Spiral for two. That goes nowhere so Dirty Deeds finishes Bo at 9:07.

**Rating:** C-. Bo surprised me here a bit and it's been cool to see him working extra hard lately, dating back to the match against Neville on pay per view. Ambrose is still looking for his next feud and you almost have to assume it's going to be against Reigns because, simply put, who else is there?

Big Show tells Rollins to take care of Lesnar and promises to take out Reigns tonight. Man I thought we were past that mess.

Recap of Rusev putting Ziggler out on Raw.

### Fandango vs. Rusev

Rusev has shoes now, which is a very smart mandate for him. Fandango scores with a headscissors to start as Jimmy brings up Rusev wearing boots after Tom and Jerry spent thirty seconds talking about it during Rusev's entrance. This is every Rusev match before he feuded with Cena: a nerve hold, no selling Fandango's comeback, the superkick and the Accolade for the submission at 3:15.

**Rating:** D. Hey, Rusev is back. I think that sums up the whole thing here



as it was just a quick squash with a bunch of shots of Summer Rae to make things a bit easier to sit through. Summer works fine as a gold digger, even if Rusev doesn't have a ton of gold at the moment. Make Rusev a monster again and he'll be fine.

### Roman Reigns vs. Big Show

Remember what I said about being fine? Forget all of that here. Show is now in a sleeveless black shirt instead of the singlet top. Reigns gets thrown around to start and Show shoves him out to the floor. The giant gets posted for an eight count and it's time for Reigns' clotheslines, because where would we be without a series of clotheslines? The Superman Punch is loaded up but we've got a fake Wyatt on the stage. The real one gets punched off the apron but pulls Reigns down for the DQ at 4:00.

**Rating:** D+. This was barely a match as a good chunk of it was spent on the fake Wyatt and waiting on Big Show to beat the count back in. Thankfully we didn't have to sit through a long Reigns vs. Big Show match which would have killed the crowd and been a big bore all match long. Wyatt vs. Reigns should be a really fun power brawl when we get there though.

Bray hits a pair of Sister Abigails.

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

E. takes over to start and hammers Titus into the corner to start. That's a very common way to open matches these days. We hit the early abdominal stretch complete with slaps but Titus tosses E. out to the floor. A belly to belly stops Titus' comeback and the partners all try to interfere, earning them a mass ejection. Clash of the Titus ends E. at 2:49.

Austin WWE2K16 video.

Video on the Cadillac being crushed earlier this week. So what wrecked car was brought out earlier???

After a recap of what happened between them on Monday, here's Orton to talk about what happened with Sheamus earlier this week. He keeps it simple by saying he's going to attempt to make Sheamus entertaining by

ripping off his mohawk, but here's the Ascension of all people for some reason. There was a time when this might have been interesting but instead it's RKO's all around.

Video on Cesaro vs. Cena from Raw. This deserved any attention it could get.

### Naomi/Tamina vs. Brie Bella/Alicia Fox

Brie shoves Naomi into the corner to start before it's off to Tamina, who takes some kicks to the ribs as well. All hail the Bellas right? Tamina makes a comeback so it's off to Alicia and Naomi with the latter still having no luck. Everything breaks down and a Nikki distraction lets Alicia hit the ax kick for the pin on Tamina at 2:55.

Ryback doesn't like how Seth Rollins has been acting as champion, including how he ran away on Monday. Tonight, Ryback will show Rollins how a champion acts because there is no running and hiding.

### Ryback vs. Seth Rollins

Non-title and both guys come out alone. Ryback shoves him out to the floor with ease to start and Rollins is already frustrated. Back in and some knees to the chest only earn Rollins a thirty second delayed vertical suplex. Seth kicks him off the apron though and nails a nice suicide dive, only to come back in using Brock's jump to the apron. Man this guy has some guts.

Seth's chinlock is quickly countered into a Backpack Stunner and the low superkick is countered into a powerbomb. It's Rollins' turn to counter though as he escapes Shell Shock and kicks Ryback in the head. Instead of covering though he walks out, but Ryback throws him onto the floor a few times. The threat of a Shell Shock on the floor is enough to make Seth run into the crowd for the countout at 8:11.

**Rating:** C-. I've seen worse. Ryback is really starting to find his groove as the upper midcard guy who can dabble in the main event when he needs to. He's already a solid Intercontinental Champion and a good power guy so why not see how far out he can swim? This was more about the story and

there's nothing wrong with that.

Post match here's Big Show to double team Ryback but Reigns makes the save to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** D+. I'm getting really tired of these not terrible yet still totally skippable shows. This is another example of a show that you do not need to watch but won't hate yourself if you sat through it. In other words, meh. That's Smackdown in a nutshell: it exists and mostly doesn't suck. That's hardly a ringing endorsement but what else is there to say about it?

### Results

Dean Ambrose b. Bo Dallas – Dirty Deeds

Rusev b. Fandango – Accolade

Roman Reigns b. Big Show via DQ when Bray Wyatt interfered

Titus O'Neil b. Big E. – Clash of the Titus

Alicia Fox/Brie Bella b. Naomi/Tamina – Ax kick to Tamina

Ryback b. Seth Rollins via countout

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# Smackdown – July 2, 2015: The Early Bird Catches The Same Old Smackdown

This is the full review as I watched the show already and did this in advance. There might be a few little bits here and there that I missed, but it would probably be Tough Enough stuff etc. If there's anything major, let me know.

## Smackdown

Date: July 2, 2015

Location: Giant Center, Hershey, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Jerry Lawler, Jimmy Uso

There isn't a lot to say at the moment as we're getting closer and closer to Battleground and the showdown between Lesnar and Rollins. Raw mainly focused on Wyatt vs. Reigns, which is coming off as a strong feud with Wyatt getting inside Reigns' head, but I can't imagine there being much of a challenge for Roman when they finally face off. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Rollins giving the Authority all their presents on Monday, leading to the Authority and Wyatt beating down Reigns to end the show.

Here are Rollins and the Stooges to open things up. Rollins keeps plugging the product placement but says it's time to talk about the present. One day, everyone is going to ask about what it was like when Seth Rollins destroyed the Roman Empire and burned Suplex City to the ground. After some clips of the beatdowns, Rollins brags about conquering the conqueror last week.

Then Roman couldn't hang with the power of the Stooges and Kane got on his flight to Tokyo, but before he left he made a few matches for

tonight: Dean Ambrose vs. Bray Wyatt and Roman Reigns vs. Seth Rollins, assuming Roman shows up. Cue Ambrose to come towards the ring but he walks back and comes out again with a kendo stick. Dean fights them off but is told his match with Wyatt starts RIGHT NOW.

### Dean Ambrose vs. Bray Wyatt

Dean chops and strikes away against the ropes to start but walks into the running body block to change control early on. We hit the chinlock way faster than we should before they head outside for Ambrose's 619 under the bottom rope and a big clothesline before it's off to a break. Maybe they can get out of this lame formula stuff during the commercial. Back with Dean fighting out of Sister Abigail and nailing a big suicide dive to the floor.

A tornado DDT gets two for Ambrose but Wyatt takes his head off with a clothesline and gets two of his own off the backsplash. Back up and Dean's rebound lariat and top rope elbow get two as well, meaning the wait for anything but signature moves continues. Dean dives off the apron and gets thrown into the barricade for his efforts. Well that was different. Sister Abigail is good for the pretty sudden pin at 9:00.

**Rating:** D+. It was watchable as these two have fought so many times before, but this felt a lot more like a house show match than anything else. Dean did his signature stuff, Bray did his signature stuff, and then Wyatt won. I've seen far worse matches, but I never got the slightest bit interested in this one, partially because I'm sick of seeing these guys fight.

Adam Rose and Rosa Mendes are in the ring to call the entire audience jealous of him, only to be interrupted by R-Truth.

### R-Truth vs. Adam Rose

Rose gets thrown around to start and Truth thrusts some pelvis at him. Phillips: "Truth is aware we don't have kings in this country right?" Lawler: "Are you kidding me?" Truth blocks some right hands and hits the Lie Detector for the pin at 1:58.

Video of Rock appearing at a house show over the weekend. Since this is WWE, they show it on the WWE Youtube channel.

Recap of Cena vs. Cesaro on Monday with Owens coming in for the DQ.

On WWE.com, Ryback promised to run through Mark Henry tonight on his way to Battleground, where he'll run over Big Show and Miz.

Mark Henry disagrees and says Ryback is disrespectful.

### Mark Henry vs. Ryback

Non-title again and Henry's signature entrance with the camera behind his back makes its return. Mark shoves him to the floor to start but Ryback just punches him in the face and tries Shell Shock, only to be thwarted by the powers of fat. The announcers say that if he can't get Henry up, he can't get Big Show up. Please forget that HE ALREADY DID THAT. Ryback gets one off a splash but can't get Henry up for a suplex. Henry: "FEED ME MORE!" How many times do you think that's been said in Mark's life?

The bearhug doesn't last long but Henry falls on Ryback's slam attempt for two. There's a double clothesline to put both guys down but Ryback is up first with the suplex. The World's Strongest Slam is countered into the spinebuster, followed by the Shell Shock for the pin at 7:00. Jimmy Uso is VERY excited over this.

**Rating:** C-. I liked this more than I was expecting to with Ryback building up to the suplex and then finally paying it off. No it's nothing mind blowing, but they built something up and then got to the point. That's basic storytelling and it's WAY more than you would expect to get out of something like this.

The Stooges show off some Apple Watch features.

### Brie Bella vs. Naomi

This is described as a match between the stars of Total Divas. Brie slaps her in the face to start and a chase on the floor lets Brie get in a clothesline to take over. Back in and the BRIE MODE minus obnoxiously shouting BRIE MODE knee to the face gets two but Naomi slaps her in the

face. Turnabout being fair play and all that jazz. Fox trips Naomi up though and the Bella Buster is good for the pin at 3:59.

**Rating:** D. Yeah this happened. It's a shame that Naomi's big push has been stopped for the sake of another Total Divas storyline because it's that time of the year again. There are some good elements in the division but the complete lack of any real motivation or logic to most of the characters cripples anything they could do.

Wyatt says he's the reason Reigns wasn't there to save Ambrose earlier tonight. Reigns must be hiding in some cave feeling sorry for himself. That isn't the Reigns that Bray knows though, because Reigns is all about fighting the world. Bray hasn't known anyone since he's been on this planet and that makes him stronger. Everything Roman loves in this world is going to be burned to the ground, leaving Wyatt and Reigns all alone. Then and only then will Wyatt finish Reigns, because it's anyone but you Reigns. Run.

#### Prime Time Players vs. Ascension

Non-title. Titus chops Viktor to start and the announcers cringe in stereo. Jimmy: "Geez Louise." Darren gets suplexed onto Viktor and gets two off the Earthquake splash. It's off to Konnor to run Darren over, followed by shrugging off a forearm and punching Young down. They head outside with Darren getting posted as we head to a break.

Back with Lawler updating us on Roman Reigns' status for tonight: he's still not here. And I'm sure he will NOT be here for the match they've basically spent the whole night advertising. Young finally sends the losers into each other for a hot tag off to Titus as house is cleaned. Jimmy: "BOO YEAH!" Everything breaks down and the Clash of the Titus ends Konnor at 9:41.

**Rating:** D+. The match was acceptable and the action was fine, even though there was never any doubt as to who was winning. The part I'm interested in though is who the Players are going to be facing. They keep hyping the idea that it isn't clear which members of the New Day are getting the shot, which makes me think Dallas might be brought in as a surprise. Why that would be imposing is anyone's guess.

Here are Rusev and Summer Rae (looking as good as she ever has in a white dress) for a chat. Summer wants to apologize for her actions at Raw as she stooped down to the gold digger's level when Lana isn't even a real woman. Rusev says Summer knows her place but almost calls her Lana by mistake. He's coming for Zigler and that's about it.

Rollins and the Stooges come out for the match with Reigns and it's time for the dreaded ten count. In case you've never watched wrestling before, Reigns shows up at nine and it's time to fight.

### Seth Rollins vs. Roman Reigns

Non-title of course. Roman starts fast and whips Rollins into the corner before taking FOREVER to powerbomb Mercury, allowing Seth to kick him in the ribs and take over. A top rope double stomp on the back makes Reigns' injuries (from Raw) even worse and a spinning kick to the ribs stops his comeback. Reigns shrugs it off again and plants Seth with a powerbomb, drawing in the Stooges for the DQ at 5:58.

**Rating:** D. I get that it was short, but there's no reason to have this match. Why burn through another edition of this match instead of having, say, Reigns vs. the Stooges? If you're only going to give it a few minutes then let Roman beat the two of them up and then have Rollins interfere. It's that simple and a way to save one of these matches from being done to death. Again, thinking can make the booking that much better but for some reason it almost never happens.

The beating is on but Ambrose comes out for the save, allowing for a big double beatdown on Mercury as the other two bail to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** D+. This one didn't work for me as it was mainly midcard stuff and then a really lame main event story that went nowhere. You can only have the Shield guys fight each other so many times before it stops being interesting and unfortunately we passed that back in like December. These matches should be major showdowns, not getting six minutes and a lame DQ finish on a random Smackdown. The show didn't do anything for me and there's no reason to see this.

### Results



Bray Wyatt b. Dean Ambrose – Sister Abigail

R-Truth b. Adam Rose – Lie Detector

Ryback b. Mark Henry – Shell Shock

Brie Bella b. Naomi – Bella Buster

Prime Time Players b. Ascension – Clash of the Titus to Konnor

Roman Reigns b. Seth Rollins via DQ when Joey Mercury and Jamie Noble interfered

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# Smackdown – June 25, 2015: This Match. Again.

## **Smackdown**

Date: June 25, 2015

Location: Huntington Center, Toledo, Ohio

Commentators: Jimmy Uso, Jerry Lawler, Tom Phillips

Well Lesnar is back and a full on hero now, complete with a knee injury and Kane attacking him. We're still a few weeks away from Battleground

though and Seth Rollins needs something to do before he has to face the Beast. Other than that we have Bray Wyatt being creepy about Roman Reigns' daughter. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Lesnar and Heyman promising to hurt Rollins on Monday, followed by Rollins trying to get the Authority to help him again. This led to the team reforming for no obvious reason and Lesnar being beaten down to end Raw.

Here are Rollins, Kane and Joey Mercury (Jamie Noble was injured at the end of Raw as Brock rammed him into the barricade) to open things up. What an odd looking trio. The band is back together and they took a little road trip to Suplex City on Monday, but they burned it to the ground. Good line.

Things change in this business, such as Rollins going from a member of the Shield to the WWE World Heavyweight Champion in just about a year. Here he is now with a genius like Joey Mercury (the grin on his face from that line is awesome), but unfortunately they're missing a member of their family due to Noble having three broken ribs from Lesnar ramming him into the barricade. Tonight's show is dedicated to Jamie, who would want the Authority to celebrate.

No one in the Authority has more to celebrate than Kane, who got to beat up both Lesnar and Dean Ambrose on Monday because he is forever the Devil's Favorite Demon. Off to a completely different subject, Kane blames Ryback for Big Show not being here tonight. After a clip of Ryback laying Big Show out, here's Ryback himself. He defends his actions but Rollins criticizes him for not acting as a champion is supposed to. Ryback calls Rollins a sellout, earning himself a match with Kane tonight. That's some punishment.

The music plays but Rollins says cut it. He's sick of the lack of respect he's receiving as World Champion, so Kane can take care of Ryback tonight. Rollins isn't happy with Dean Ambrose though, as Ambrose is still walking. Let's remedy that tonight with a one on one match tonight. Ambrose will learn that the Authority always wins.

Sheamus vs. Dolph Ziggler

Ziggler knocks him to the floor with an early dropkick but here comes Rusev. He begs Lana to come back to him because he'll "kiss her the right way." Lana, with her hair down in a ponytail, walks towards the ring, as the match just stopped so Rusev could talk. A big knee puts Ziggler on the floor and we take a break.

Back with Ziggler in a chinlock before Sheamus takes his sweet time going to the top, allowing Dolph to run the ropes for a faceplant. A superkick is blocked but Ziggler is able to crawl over Sheamus into a sunset flip for two. Back up and the superkick connects this time (Uso: "SUPERKICK PARTY!") for two, followed by a sleeper from Ziggler. Sheamus shrugs it off and puts Ziggler on the top rope, setting up the Brogue Kick for the pin at 9:26.

**Rating:** C. Run of the mill match between these two but it's nice to see Sheamus racking up some wins like this. They're actually treating him as something important instead of just letting him lose all the time so he can hold up the briefcase and beg us to believe that he still matters.

Rusev freaks out in the back until Summer Rae comes up and tells him that Lana isn't worth it.

Here's a clip of Rollins breaking up the Shield last year.

### Alicia Fox vs. Naomi

Fox has the Bellas with her and remember that Jimmy is married to Naomi. Alicia gets kicked in the head and taken down with a nice hurricanrana, followed by a legdrop for two. They fall out to the floor with Naomi yelling at the Bellas, allowing Tamina to superkick both of them. Back in and Fox hits her reverse Fameasser for the pin at 3:10.

**Rating:** D. This was just a way to set up I'm assuming Naomi as Paige's new partner against the Bellas, which is about as uninteresting an idea as you could have. The match was your standard Divas fair: no time to go anywhere and too much other than the wrestling being packed into just a few minutes.

Recap of Cena vs. Owens, including everything that happened on Monday.

New Day says you can't live a positive life if you focus on the individual losses. They'll overcome all of their trials and tribulations at Battleground, but here are the Prime Time Players to interrupt and do their version of the clap. They laugh at the idea that New Day will be down a man at Battleground but here's Bo Dallas for a pretty obvious pairing. Dallas has been allowed to join the New Day against the Players and any two other partners. New Day likes him but Dallas can't get the clap down. This has potential to be funny stuff.

### Kane vs. Ryback

Non-title. Not so fast though as Big Show attacks Ryback during his entrance and beats on him for a very long time. Show chops him, kicks him, whips him into the barricade, steps on his throat, and finally throws him in for the match against Kane. Somehow this is totally fine and the bell rings with Kane quickly covering for two. Ryback tries some shoulders in the corner but gets stomped back down with ease. Kane is sent shoulder first into the post and the Meat Hook connects, only to have Big Show come in for the DQ at 2:25.

Ryback gets beaten down and chokeslammed a few times but keeps trying to pull himself up. I like the idea they're going for here, but it still ends with Big Show and Kane dominating, just like they have for over fifteen years now.

Clip of Rollins vs. Ambrose from Elimination Chamber.

Recap of this week's Tough Enough.

### New Day/Bo Dallas vs. Lucha Dragons/Prime Time Players

Kofi and Titus get things going with O'Neil hitting some very loud chops in the corner. It's off to Young who doesn't do as well, with Kofi driving him into the corner for a tag to Dallas. I miss Jesse Ventura criticizing teams for tagging their normal partners and praising heels for tagging anyone on their team. Darren headlocks Bo to the mat but the threat of a Gutcheck has the heels on the floor as we take a break.

Back with Kofi dancing a bit before diving into a Sin Cara dropkick for

two. Woods has some better luck by stomping away, followed by all three of his partners getting turns. It always amuses me to see someone get stomped about forty times total and just stagger to their feet. Off to Big E. for his abdominal stretch before handing it off to Kofi for a superbomb, only to be countered into a hurricanrana. The hot tag brings in Kalisto for his hurricanrana DDT to Woods but everything breaks down. It's down to Kalisto vs. Woods again with the masked man hitting a handspring kick to the head and a springboard 450 for the pin at 10:30.

**Rating:** C. This was fine with the New Day losing again, though I'm not sure if I want to see them get a title shot after all these losses. That being said, you also don't want to have the champions lose so soon after winning the titles. In other words, it would have made sense here to have New Day just beat Lucha Dragons in a regular match, but why do that when you can have something like this?

Ambrose tells Reigns to not worry about Bray Wyatt because they can look through every inch of this building until they find him. Dean: "Cincinnati style!" Roman: "We're not even in Cincinnati." Reigns says he'll take care of Wyatt at Battleground and he'll have his back out there tonight. Dean leaves and Reigns finds a picture of himself in his jacket with the words ANYONE BUT YOU written in red.

After a break, Reigns searches for Wyatt but finds Kane instead. Kane won't tolerate Reigns yelling at a production guy so he's banned from the building tonight. Reigns was far more interesting here due to having something personal to deal with and I'm digging this feud a lot.

#### Dean Ambrose vs. Seth Rollins

Non-title. Dean starts with some armdrags into an armbar, followed by a clothesline to put Rollins on the floor. Back from a break with Rollins starting to go after the knee. Rollins puts on a complicated leg lock with Ambrose on his stomach but Seth laying like he's putting on a Figure Four. Either way Dean makes the ropes and Rollins is way too cocky. He's cocky enough to take forever getting to the top, allowing Dean to slam him down for a breather.

The tornado DDT is countered so Dean settles for a swinging neckbreaker

instead. Dean gets all fired up but opts for a suicide dive to take out Kane instead. Back in and the standing elbow looks to finish but Mercury offers a distraction to earn his paycheck for the night. Scratch that actually as the look he gave earlier was more than worth it. A DDT gets two on Seth but Dean can't follow up. The rebound clothesline is countered into a buckle bomb which is countered into a hurricanrana to put them both on the floor. Dean dives on everyone but gets distracted again, allowing Rollins to Pedigree him for the pin at 13:03.

**Rating:** B-. They accomplished the goal of showing that the reunited Authority is capable of beating anyone on the roster, but Lesnar isn't exactly the same as a guy that Rollins has drawn about even with over the last few weeks. That's the problem here: they've done this match so many times recently that they're running the risk of taking away its effectiveness. Reigns not being there to help Ambrose could lead somewhere, but I really, really hope it's not to an Ambrose heel turn.

**Overall Rating:** C. This was a totally fine show and the best part was it flew by. The show never dragged like so many Smackdowns have done over the last few years, but at least they had some decent matches and advanced a few stories, even though we're not likely to see those advancements until Monday. Totally acceptable show here but as usual, it's nothing you need to see.

### Results

Sheamus b. Dolph Ziggler – Brogue Kick

Alicia Fox b. Naomi – Reverse Fameasser

Ryback b. Kane via DQ when Big Show interfered

Lucha Dragons/Prime Time Players b. New Day/Bo Dallas – Springfield 450 to Woods

Seth Rollins b. Dean Ambrose – Pedigree

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# Smackdown – June 18, 2015: They're Getting A Handle On Things

## Smackdown

Date: June 18, 2015

Location: First Niagara Center, Buffalo, New York

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Byron Saxton, Jerry Lawler

The ending of Monday's show saw the return of Brock Lesnar as the Authority's big surprise to deal with Rollins, ignoring the history of Lesnar hurting HHH and then Stephanie freaking out on him the night after Wrestlemania when Lesnar destroyed everything and injured Cole, which hasn't been mentioned on TV yet. Let's get to it.

In memory of Dusty Rhodes.

Opening sequence.

Here's Sheamus to get things going. Sheamus holds up the briefcase and laughs at the fans for saying he looked stupid. He feels like a million dollars and promises to be the next WWE Champion. I know it's not a popular opinion but I wouldn't be opposed to that. Sheamus has been making plans to get around Seth Rollins and Brock Lesnar, which would leave everyone out of his way to make him champion.

This brings out Dean Ambrose to remind Sheamus that he pinned him on Monday. Why should that matter? Money in the Bank is a shortcut around silly things like wins and losses and just lets the company put whomever they want in the title scene without putting in the effort. Anyway, Ambrose says the briefcase belongs to Reigns and Dean would have no problem getting it back to its rightful owner. Sheamus wants to fight right now but Kane comes out to uneven the odds. The match is on.

### Kane/Sheamus vs. Dean Ambrose

Dean is smart enough to drop to the floor at the bell before he runs back in to low bridge Kane outside. The top rope elbow is broken up though and the double teaming begins. Reigns sneaks in from behind, because somehow he knew Sheamus would be waiting in the normal spot, for the DQ at 1:29.

After a break, the tag team main event is announced.

Roman wants Bray to know he never runs.

### Brie Bella vs. Paige

Paige gets a jobber entrance but we're lucky enough to get BRIE MODE. No Nikki here for a change. Brie goes after her to start but Paige drops down as you do when someone is running the ropes, only to have Brie trip over her. Paige's superplex is countered into a sunset bomb (good looking one too) for two as we take a break. Back with Brie putting on a chinlock with her knees in Paige's back before Paige takes her into the corner for some elbows to the jaw. Paige goes up top but Alicia Fox runs out to shove her down, setting up the Bella Buster for the pin and another BRIE MODE at 7:28.

**Rating:** C. Considering Brie was in there and can't seem to handle running the ropes, this was better than I was expecting. There's something interesting about the Divas going after Paige and her needing reinforcements (say from NXT?) and at least Alicia is 14% more competent than most of the other Divas.

The Bellas pose on the stage and Alicia is given Bella gear.

Stills of Cena vs. Owens II and then Owens attacking Machine Gun Kelly on Monday.

Owens mocks Renee Young for possibly being a Machine Gun Kelly fan but blames Kelly for putting his hands on Owens first and on Cena for not being there to save him. Kevin doesn't need to pander to the crowd and likes it when people earn title shots, meaning there will be no open challenge. This brings in Cesaro, with headphones around his neck, who would love to get in the ring with Owens tonight. He even puts his hands



on Owens' shoulder to make sure Owens gets the point.

### Dolph Ziggler vs. Bo Dallas

Before the match, Dallas calls Lana a rebound girl. She's broken Rusev's heart and is now with Ziggler, who definitely should have made her swipe left (online dating thing I guess). Ziggler dropkicks him at the bell but Bo grabs a cravate. Rusev is watching in the back as Ziggler ducks a right hand and hits the Zig Zag for the pin at 1:12.

Rusev freaks out over a post match kiss.

Tough Enough stuff.

### Xavier Woods vs. Neville

Woods takes over fast and stomps Neville about 20 times in a row. We're already in the cobra clutch for a bit before New Day tries to get involved, drawing out the Prime Time Players to even the odds. Back in and a kick to the head looks to set up the Red Arrow but Kofi offers a distraction to break it up. Everyone on the floor gets into it and a dropkick sets up the Red Arrow to give Neville the pin at 2:57. I'm getting into this six man feud.

Here's Seth Rollins with something to say. After looking at a clip of the end of Raw, Rollins brags about being the biggest star in WWE. However, he's under constant scrutiny and always being disrespected by these fans. That's what happened this Monday on Raw, as people are instantly thinking Lesnar will be the next WWE Champion. Rollins was shocked when he saw Brock but at Battleground, he's going to get to prove that he really is the diamond and he can't wait.

We recap Bray's promo on Reigns from Raw.

Ambrose asks Reigns how long it takes Sheamus to do his hair but Reigns is focused on Wyatt. Dean asks about Bray but Reigns doesn't want to talk about it. Just handle business tonight so he can get home to his family.

### Kevin Owens vs. Cesaro

Non-title and Owens pops Cesaro in the jaw to start. Cesaro does just the same to knock Kevin outside for a suicide dive. Back in and Cesaro can't get him up for a suplex so Owens sends him face first into the post as we take an early break from a promising power brawl. We come back to a chinlock of course because how else do you expect to come back from a break? Owens finds it boring as well as he jumps to the middle rope and spins into a tornado DDT for two.

Cesaro comes back with his reverse Angle Slam for two of his own. That earns him snake eyes (a move that hasn't been seen in a while) and the Cannonball for two, shocking Owens, because he's a good heel who can't believe that someone could kick out of any of his offense. A dropkick knocks Owens off the top and both guys are down again. Is there anything Cesaro can't do? I'd bet he's a world class knitter. Owens crotches him to break up the apron superplex and the Pop Up Powerbomb is good for the pin at 10:38.

**Rating:** B. Owens continues to master the power brawling style and hopefully this leads to a singles push for Cesaro. The guy is incredibly talented and the multiple languages should get WWE some international help if they let him go to some other countries for publicity. This was a fun, hard hitting match though as both guys got to throw each other around, which is always entertaining.

Time for Miz at the Movies where he talks about all the movies starring wrestlers this year. Tonight's movie: Vendetta, starring Dean Cain and Big Show. Apparently Big Show was a jerk and Miz should have had the role, as well as the Intercontinental Title. Miz rants about his resume and wants to know why he isn't being treated like a superstar.

Dusty Rhodes tribute video.

### Sheamus/Kane vs. Dean Ambrose/Roman Reigns

Ambrose and Sheamus get things going with the latter stomping away in the corner. Dean comes back with chops and punches as they've forgotten the whole wrestling thing so far. Everything breaks down for a bit and the Shield brethren clean house to take us to the early break. Back with Dean hitting the dropkick against the ropes on Kane but Sheamus pulls him

outside to take over.

Some knees get two for Sheamus back inside and it's off to Kane to work on the knee that was destroyed in the ladder match. Smart man that old giant. Sheamus slaps on a Brock Lock for a bit before it's back to Kane, who gently lifts Dean throat first into the bottom rope. It's called a catapult but that's being more generous than it is to call Kane interesting. Dean gets in some right hands and the top rope elbow, finally allowing for the hot tag despite the bad knee.

Reigns comes in off the hot tag and cleans house with a series of clotheslines to Kane and a Samoan drop to Sheamus. The Superman Punch is broken up by Kane grabbing both Shield guys by the throat but the rebound lariat breaks it up. Dean dives on Sheamus but here's Wyatt with the picture of Reigns and his daughter as he sings I'm A Little Teapot. The distraction lets a Brogue Kick connect for the pin on Reigns at 12:57.

**Rating:** C. This was fine for a long way to build up the Reigns vs. Wyatt story. There was little chance that Wyatt wasn't going to get involved somewhere in here and that wasn't the worst way in the world. I could go for a more sinister Wyatt who gets inside your head instead of just saying he's scary of whatever he meant in the last few months.

Bray says Happy Father's Day and the picture is next to Reigns to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. I liked this better than I was expecting to as they gave us a good match with Owens vs. Cesaro (no real surprise there) and nothing bad. That's a major key to a good show these days, especially with so much stuff packed in: nothing on here was really bad. Some stuff was better than others, but everything was either quick enough to not be bad or good enough to be acceptable. Solid show this week and it went by fast.

### Results

Kane/Sheamus b. Dean Ambrose via DQ when Roman Reigns interfered

Brie Bella b. Paige – Bella Buster

Dolph Ziggler b. Bo Dallas – Zig Zag

Neville b. Xavier Woods – Red Arrow

Kevin Owens b. Cesaro – Pop Up Powerbomb

Kane/Sheamus b. Roman Reigns/Dean Ambrose – Brogue Kick to Reigns

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## Some New Network Content Uploaded

And some stuff you might actually want to watch. In the last two days, the remainder of Hulk Hogan's Rock and Wrestling's first season has been uploaded. Now for those of you who aren't interested in something that awesome, we also have four Smackdowns from 2000. I'm all for additional content from the best year the company ever had so this could be a good sign going forward.

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# Smackdown – June 11, 2015: Ho-Freaking-Hum

## Smackdown

Date: June 11, 2015

Location: CajunDome, Lafayette, Louisiana

Commentators: Byron Saxton, Tom Phillips, Jerry Lawler

It's the last show before we get to Money in the Bank, meaning it's the last time we have to cram an entire pay per view build into two weeks for a very long time. The big story coming out of Monday is Ambrose using Instagram (just go with it) to warn Rollins that he was coming, only to lay Seth out again to end the show. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's Ambrose, wearing a ton of Mardi Gras beads, coming through the crowd to open things up. He holds up the title and says let the good times roll because he's been having a good time on Bourbon Street. Ambrose takes us through the Instagram pictures from Monday, thankfully pointing out that the ticket wasn't real and that Reigns just saved him a seat. After a clip of the main event from Raw, Ambrose promises to drop Seth on his head with Dirty Deeds and take the World Title for real this Sunday.

Cue Rollins who says Ambrose is just like all the other scum in this arena: not in his league. Rollins wants the title back and Dean drops it right in the middle of the ring. The champ picks it up but realizes it's just a replica because the title is somewhere between here and New Orleans. Dean: "It's been a blurry few days. It still feels like Tuesday to me." Kane comes out and brings up Mercury and Noble beating Rollins on Monday when he was all alone. Tonight he gets to be alone all over again against Dolph Ziggler. As usual, Ambrose and Rollins have a great promo when people just leave them alone.

## Ryback vs. Miz

Non-title. Miz bails to the floor to take off the sunglasses and has his sunset flip attempt countered by having his head slammed into the mat. A ridiculous 26 seconds vertical suplex sends Miz outside again but he throws Ryback over the announcers' table as we take a break. Back with Ryback fighting out of a chinlock and hitting a backpack Stunner. A powerslam gets two for the champ but Miz kicks him in the head to set up the Figure Four.

That goes nowhere (just like always because it's a horrible move for Miz to use) as Ryback powers out, only to take a short DDT for two more. The threat of a Meat Hook sends Miz to the floor but Ryback runs him down out there just as easily. Back in and Shell Shock is countered into the Skull Crushing Finale for two and Miz is stunned. Ever the genius, Miz tries a Meat Hook of his own but takes the real thing, setting up Shell Shock to give the champion the pin at 7:44.

**Rating:** C. This was fine for what it was and served the purpose of giving Ryback a nice win. Miz is settling into this midcard role as he loses his matches but is able to talk himself right back into being hated all over again due to pure delusion. Ryback vs. Big Show isn't going to be anything great but at least the Shell Shock at the end will be good. Assuming of course WWE doesn't feel the need to feed someone else to Big Show for reasons I'll never fathom.

Post match here's Big Show who says he doesn't impress easily with over twenty years of experience (not quite as he debuted in October 1995). The Shell Shock was fine on Monday but this Sunday ends with one of these right hands. He's holding up his left hand but close enough. Ryback says he'll have the fans in his corner on Sunday so bring it right now, little man. As expected, Show turns him down.

Tough Enough finalists, including former OVW TV Champion Michael Hayes (not that Michael Hayes. This one only has one leg).

## Jack Swagger vs. King Barrett

R-Truth is on commentary before his pre-show match with Barrett on Sunday

and has decided that he should be King after beating Barrett recently. He also thinks he's in the ladder match on Sunday. Barrett stomps Jack down in the corner to start as Truth puts on the robe. The distraction breaks up the Bullhammer and Jack nails a big clothesline on the floor followed by a Vader Bomb for two. The Patriot Lock is broken up and the Bullhammer gives Barrett the pin at 2:23.

Truth has disappeared.

More Tough Enough finalists.

We recap the Bellas' Twin Magic from a few weeks back and Paige being sick of the whole thing.

Alicia Fox yells at Paige and there's going to be a match later. I really wish WWE would mix up this kind of thing. We're long past the suspension of disbelief that a package on the Divas would air then there just happened to be a camera on Paige when Fox came up to challenge her. All you need is to say this happened earlier in the day.

This week's sitdown interview is with Lana, who says she and Dolph read books together and talk about things. Rusev comes in again and says don't ruin this. Ziggler has been with a bunch of other women but Rusev has only been with her. Lana says it's over and leaves so Rusev scares Cole away.

### Dolph Ziggler vs. Seth Rollins

Non-title and Seth is on his own. The champ takes it to the mat with a headlock but Ziggler counters into an armbar to send Seth to the ropes. Back to the headlock on Dolph for a bit before the threat of a superkick sends Rollins out to the floor. They're still in first gear here as Rollins takes a breather. Back in and Dolph hammers away in the corner, only to get caught in an electric chair for two. The standard chinlock kills some time as the fans want Lana. Speak for yourselves. I don't want her and Ziggler anywhere near each other.

Dolph fights up and a Cactus Clothesline puts both guys outside, where Rollins catapults him over the barricade as we take a break. We come back

with Ziggler slugging away until Rollins drops him with a Sling Blade for two. Well at least it wasn't another chinlock. Ziggler comes back with a backdrop to put Rollins on the floor, followed by the running DDT for two. The Buckle Bomb is countered into a rollup for two and the Fameasser gets the same. Dolph keeps speeding things up and goes to the top for a high cross body but Rollins rolls through and grabs the trunks for the pin at 13:53.

**Rating:** B-. Nice main event style match here with Rollins getting the kind of a win he should be getting. Ziggler doesn't lose anything either and everyone comes out looking fine. It's very nice to see them breaking from the same pattern that they've been having for months for Rollins as it was getting repetitive.

Remember the two times we've seen Tough Enough finalists already? Make it three.

#### Paige vs. Alicia Fox

Paige takes her down to start and cranks on a reverse chinlock for a bit before Fox takes her down and puts on a chinlock. They aren't exactly dishing out the creativity. At least Fox adds in some knees to the head to mix things up. A big boot to the face gets two on Paige but she snaps Fox's throat across the ropes. This is her house, which makes me wonder how much a Diva makes since Paige must have 40 houses around the country. The PT0 makes Fox tap at 4:46.

**Rating:** D. They did a good enough job of making Paige look good going into Sunday but I don't buy her as having a chance at taking the title because All Hail the Bellas. It didn't help that the match was nearly half chinlock. You really shouldn't need two of those in a match that doesn't last five minutes.

Long recap of Owens vs. Cena to set up the rematch on Sunday. The first match was great and I really hope Owens just walks out on the second because he has nothing to gain.

The Prime Time Players say they're like butter because they're on a roll. Whole wheat and gluten free that is. They incorporate the clap into the



Millions of Dollars dance and even Renee joins in.

Final batch of Tough Enough finalists, including the Big O.

### Roman Reigns/Randy Orton/Neville vs. Sheamus/Kane/Kofi Kingston

Those are quite the interesting teams. Reigns decks Kofi to start before Neville comes in and eats a right hand to the face. Neville flips over Sheamus and tags in Orton, because we haven't seen Orton vs. Sheamus enough lately. The good guy keeps control for a bit until a Kane distraction lets Sheamus nail a tilt-a-whirl powerslam to take over. Back from a break with Orton fighting out of Sheamus' chinlock.

The lukewarm tag brings in Neville to clean house with his variety of kicks but Kane breaks up the Red Arrow. Kane comes back in for some weak stomping and a big side slam for two as this isn't exactly inspiring stuff so far. Kofi comes back in to fire the New Day up again with Woods declaring him the greatest of all time. A dropkick gets two and Woods says he's getting annihilated right now. Sheamus gets two of his own off the Irish Curse and it's off to the chinlock.

Neville avoids a charge into the post though and it's a hot tag to Reigns, who runs Kofi over in a hurry. The New Day is easily dispatched but Kane counters a Superman Punch with a chokeslam, which earns Kane an RKO, followed by a Brogue Kick, followed by a dropkick from Neville, followed by Trouble in Paradise. Reigns is back up though and the Superman Punch connects to Kofi, only to have the New Day come in for the DQ at 13:25.

**Rating:** C-. This was boring. That's the best word I can come up with for it. We were sitting around and waiting on the big parade of finishers to close things out and it eventually came and went. It's not a terrible match or even bad but I never came close to being interested in what was going on.

Reigns takes a Midnight Hour and it's ladder time. Cue Dolph with a ladder of his own but Neville climbs the ladder and dives onto everyone who was nice enough to brawl right beneath him. Neville pulls down the briefcase to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C. Totally average show here as they talked up the pay per view a bit but didn't do much to make me care about what I was seeing. Money in the Bank is a show that sells itself with the big ladder match and it gets very difficult to build towards it as the singles matches and tags don't change anything. As for the rest, it was just a standard Smackdown: watchable wrestling, nothing important, two hours gone.

### Results

Ryback b. Miz – Shell Shock

King Barrett b. Jack Swagger – Bullhammer

Seth Rollins b. Dolph Ziggler – Rollins rolled through a cross body and held Ziggler's trunks

Paige b. Alicia Fox – PT0

Roman Reigns/Randy Orton/Neville b. Sheamus/Kane/Kofi Kingston via DQ when New Day interfered

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# Smackdown – June 4, 2015: Fighting All The Way To The Bank

## Smackdown

Date: June 4, 2015

Location: Toyota Center, Houston, Texas

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Byron Saxton, Jerry Lawler

In something I could get used to, the big story tonight continues to be Kevin Owens, who will be issuing an NXT Title Open Challenge in the same vein as John Cena's US Title Open Challenges. Owens has only had one match on the main roster so far so it's going to be interesting to see how they treat him here. Let's get to it.

We open with stills of Sunday's main event with Ambrose winning via DQ but leaving with the title anyway.

Here's Rollins to get things going, of course without the title but carrying a chair. A year ago to the day, he took a chair to Ambrose and Reigns to dismantle the Shield. Rollins sits down in the chair and talks about being asked "why" so many times over the last year. Why did he do what he did and destroy what he created? From the day he arrived, he said his goal was to be the very best in this industry.

After all the time in the Shield, he got tired of sharing the glory with two chumps beneath him. That led him to the Authority, who groomed him to be the future of the WWE. Then he won the Money in the Bank ladder match all by himself. Around the time of the Royal Rumble, he had a vision to defeat Brock Lesnar and Roman Reigns at the same time. To execute a plan like that took a genius (So people like Kane and Jack Swagger are geniuses?) because now the Beast is off licking his wounds and Reigns is living in Seth's shadow.

Rollins stands here as the greatest champion of all time but with no title around his waist. That brings him to Dean Ambrose, who wants all of

the fans to think that stealing a title makes you a champion. Well allegedly it made him the Intercontinental Champion so why not try it with the big belt too? Rollins can take care of Ambrose without any member of the Authority, including Stephanie or HHH. Cue Ambrose on the screen, standing under a ladder, to say Rollins either has a bad memory or is a liar.

The fans saw Ambrose pin him on Sunday and now he knows the Authority is going to send everyone that they can to keep this title from slipping through their fingers. At Elimination Chamber, Ambrose climbed to the top of the mountain and at Money in the Bank, he'll climb to the top of the ladder and claim the WWE World Heavyweight Championship that rightfully belongs to him or he'll die trying.

This right here was a great example of why the Authority really isn't needed most of the time. Yeah they helped set up the story, but this was one of the better promos these two have ever had, which happens to come off the heels of another of their best promos ever last week. The Authority bogs so much stuff down with HHH taking twice as long as any human to speak and Stephanie has to get in her buzz words because saying "WWE World Heavyweight Championship" and "Money in the Bank pay per view" is how you sell a show instead of letting the wrestlers who hate each other talk the fans into the building.

### Prime Time Players vs. Ascension vs. Lucha Dragons

#1 contenders match. Darren and Sin get things going with Cara being taken down to the mat but nipping up to his feet. Off to Kalisto who eats a clothesline for two as the fans are just silent here. Viktor tags himself in to stay on Kalisto as New Day is watching in the back. Kalisto kicks Konnor out to the floor and sends Viktor out to the floor as well, setting up a nice double suicide dive to get the fans into things a bit.

We take a break and come back with Ascension working over Kalisto, including Viktor dropping an elbow for two. Kalisto finally gets a boot up in the corner and takes Viktor down with a middle rope ankle scissors. Saxton: "Kalisto is like a real life Sonic the Hedgehog." No Byron, he isn't.

Ascension breaks up a hot tag attempt but Kalisto knees out of a delayed vertical suplex, allowing Titus to tag himself in and clean house. Everything breaks down with Titus kicking Konnor in the face and throwing Kalisto at him to put both guys on the floor. The pumphandle powerslam from Titus is enough to pin Viktor at 9:29.

**Rating:** C. Fun triple threat match here though the continued depush of Ascension makes my head hurt. They're a good power team and we even got a nice little tease of that on Sunday, so it's time for them to get pinned again here. To say they were in trouble coming out of the gates is an understatement, but WWE hasn't done them any favors.

Renee Young asks New Day about their future now that they know their #1 contenders. Woods continues to be amazing with a line of "Renee, our future is as bright as a morning sun.....rising over a new day." Their plan for the Prime Time Players: dispose of the Prime Time Players and their greed, clap and then watch Kofi Kingston win Money in the Bank. Kane comes in and makes Kofi vs. Neville for tonight.

Sonic auditions.

### Ryback vs. Stardust

Non-title. Ryback throws him into the corner to start but runs into a boot to the face. A reverse DDT gets two for Stardust and a running knee to the face gets the same. Off to the chinlock for a bit before it's the Meat Hook and Shell Shock to give Ryback the pin at 2:11. Nothing to see here.

We recap the Bellas using Twin Magic on Raw, which is still a horrible idea.

Renee Young brings Paige out for a chat. Paige says it feels like things are never going to change around here because the Twin Magic has been done for years. The Bellas come out here every week and talk about giving Divas a chance but they know it's all about them and they make sure to hold the rest of the Divas back. Their lives are all about being celebrities but Paige's life is consumed with what happens in that ring. She'll never buy into the idea of if you can't beat em, join em. Instead,

it's up to her to change the world she's in. Good stuff here but it's the same story AJ did before the Bellas took over the division.

Harper and Rowan say they're different because they're family.

Stills of Owens vs. Cena on Sunday.

Here's Kevin Owens for the NXT Title Open Challenge. Before the match, Owens talks about everyone knowing him after what he did this past Sunday. He's the man who defeated John Cena in his first match in WWE. However, Owens' son is still a John Cena fan because he's seven years old and doesn't know any better. On Monday, Owens heard the emotion in Cena's voice and learned something: John Cena is completely delusional.

Cena actually believes all the nonsense he spews out. Cena stood out here and said Owens isn't a real man, so there is no way Kevin can let his son be influenced like this anymore. The fairy tales that Cena force feeds kids around the world have to stop and Owens is glad to be the one to step up and do just that at Money in the Bank. That brings him to tonight and the NXT Title Open Challenge starts right....well he isn't wearing a watch so just get out here.

NXT Title: Kevin Owens vs. Zack Ryder

We even get big match intros. Owens is all over him to start but a single forearm sends him out to the floor. Ryder is right back on him but Owens knocks Zack into the barricade. Back in and Ryder scores with a middle rope dropkick but the Pop Up Powerbomb ends this in 1:12.

Owens gives him the Cannonball and another powerbomb post match.

Sheamus enjoyed giving Orton a beating on Monday and he's going to do it to everyone in the Money in the Bank ladder match in ten days before going on to become WWE Champion. Simple yet effective again.

Tough Enough videos.

Neville vs. Kofi Kingston

This has potential. Kofi kicks him down to start but Neville flips

forward into the cross body out of the corner. Lawler: "Neville has so many moves that when I try to call his matches, I'm more confused than a chameleon in a bag of Skittles." That's Lawler's one clever line all year. Kofi sends him to the floor for some cheap shots from the New Day and we take a break.

Back with Kofi getting two off a reverse suplex but Neville kicks him right back. A standing shooting star gets two on Kofi and Neville plants him with a tornado DDT. Big E. pulls Kofi away before the Red Arrow can launch, but Neville just dives on both of them with a big moonsault. Back in and Neville counters a rollup into one of his own for the surprise pin at 8:04.

**Rating:** C+. Neville continues to impress and it's cool to see him fight off all three guys and pick up a win with something other than the Red Arrow. You don't want to overuse the big spots and risk burning the fans out on them, because there comes a point where even Neville can't top himself with the high spots.

It's time for MizTV with special guest Lana, who has her own Titantron video. We look back at the breakup and Rusev being all devastated as a result. Lana says Rusev didn't respect him so he doesn't deserve her. This gets a standing ovation from Miz, who describes Lana as good. He calls it a good business decision, but Lana, with the accent melting word by word, says that it was purely personal. If Miz keeps suggesting otherwise, she'll either leave or Miz will get slapped.

That brings out the second guest: Rusev, who slowly limps to the ring. Rusev is here as a broken man and blames it on his upbringing. He didn't know what he had until it was gone and he knows Lana loves that song. Rusev asks for one more chance and would like her to be his crutch while he can't walk. Lana tells him where he can stick his crutch so Rusev erupts all over again and calls her stupid. Cue Ziggler to get Lana out before things get bad. Rusev as the crushed ex-boyfriend is perhaps the worst usage of someone with potential that WWE has had in years and it's just sad at this point.

Roman Reigns vs. Sheamus

This could be good. Sheamus goes right to the ribs to start and knees Reigns to the floor, only to eat a big clothesline. Sheamus keeps the power game going by driving him into the apron and throwing him over the announcers' table as we take a break. Back with Sheamus driving knees into the ribs and slapping on a chinlock. The Regal Roll gets two but Roman fights out of the ten forearms. Roman misses the apron kick (has he ever done that before?) and Sheamus takes over again, only to miss a charge into the post.

Back up and Roman fires off some clotheslines in the middle of the ring and in the corner but the Samoan drop is countered. They head outside again and this time the apron kick connects with Sheamus standing on the floor. Back in and here are Kane and the Stooges for a distraction, setting up the Irish Curse for two. The Brogue Kick misses and Reigns hits the Superman Punch, only to have Kane come in for the DQ at 10:40.

**Rating:** B-. I liked this as much as I expected to with both guys hitting each other over and over until we got to the obvious ending. It's getting really tiring to see Kane and the Stooges come in for the DQ or interference, especially when they barely have anything to do with the match in the first place. Fun power match here though.

Kane chokeslams Sheamus to shock the Stooges. He announces himself as the final entrant in the Money in the Bank ladder match and chokeslams Reigns to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. This show was one of the more entertaining episodes they've had in a good while as they let the stories progress naturally instead of forcing everything in. The wrestling was decent enough and the two hours went by very quickly. I can live with Smackdown like this, especially with such a good opening promo instead of the Authority droning on and on.

### Results

Prime Time Players b. Ascension and Lucha Dragons – Pumphandle powerslam to Viktor

Ryback b. Stardust – Shell Shock



Kevin Owens b. Zack Ryder – Pop Up Powerbomb

Neville b. Kofi Kingston – Rollup

Roman Reigns b. Sheamus via DQ when Kane interfered

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# Smackdown – May 28, 2015: Padding With A Good Match

## Smackdown

Date: May 28, 2015

Location: Mohegan Sun Arena, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Byron Saxton, Jerry Lawler

I've been saying this too often lately but it's the go home show for a pay per view. The big stories going into this Sunday are the two Elimination Chamber matches as well as the World Title match between champion Seth Rollins and challenger Dean Ambrose. They haven't really had time to put together a great story so I'm assuming tonight is going to have some hard selling. Or some lame matches that keep everything where it was coming out of Raw. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's Dean Ambrose to recap the arrest angle from Raw that magically ended right before the show went off the air because that's how wrestling works these days and the words "TUNE IN NEXT WEEK TO FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED!" are all four letters long now. Ambrose was sitting in his cell and thought he had one person to call: Roman Reigns. He asked Reigns to buy him some time so he could figure out a way out of the cell.

The help he needed came from WWE's Youtube channel because it was clear that Rollins shoved the cameraman into him. That was more than enough to clear his name and since he's been in a lot of metropolitan jails in this country, it only took some pictures and autographs to get a police escort to back to the arena on time. Tonight there's a rematch of Raw's tag match, but this Sunday there's going to be a fight for the finest prize in this industry. Stupid story on Monday aside, this was a good promo that got to the point for Sunday.

#### Tyson Kidd/Cesaro vs. Lucha Dragons

The other four teams in the Chamber match are lumberjacks. Cara and Kidd get things going with Tyson bouncing off the ropes (upside down that is) to counter a wristlock into an armdrag to send Cara to the floor. Cesaro comes in off a blind tag for a European uppercut into a German suplex from his partner followed by a half crab to slow Sin down. That goes about as far as a half crab can go so it's off to Kalisto, who is launched into the air for a hurricanrana, sending Cesaro outside.

Back in and Kalisto tries a springboard cross body, only to be caught in a vertical suplex. Cesaro doesn't put him down though as he walks Kalisto around the ring, tags Kidd in and points to him for about ten seconds as Kidd goes up top for a cross body. The announcers completely undersell this freakish display of strength but it was amazing to see. Sin is quickly tagged in to throw Kidd outside for a but Los Matadores throw him back in without doing anything.

Tyson tries a monkey flip but Kalisto dives through Kidd's legs, lands on his hands and backflips into a headscissors of his own. Dang this guy is good. We take a break and come back with Kalisto fighting out of Cesaro's

chinlock but being thrown to the floor. The Players don't get in any cheap shots before throwing him back in for a double tag to Kidd and Cara. Tyson makes a blind tag and tosses Sin into the corner for the running European uppercuts. Cara comes back with the La Mistica mat slam for two and Kalisto's corkscrew crossbody gets the same.

That's enough flipping for Cesaro as he just muscles Kalisto over with something like a belly to belly, setting up Kidd's springboard elbow for two more. Kalisto kicks Kidd in the head but Cesaro slides in with a headbutt for the save. That looked cool as he just slid in and let his head hit Kalisto.

Kidd reverses a hurricanrana into the Sharpshooter but Cara springboards in with a clothesline to break it up. Everything breaks down and Cesaro superkicks Kalisto, only to be backdropped onto a bunch of the lumberjacks. With his partner down, Kidd is distracted by Woods, setting up the Salida Del Sol to give Kalisto the pin at 13:19.

**Rating:** B+. I might be rating this a bit higher than some would but I had a blast watching this. Kalisto and Cara are so good as a high flying pair and maybe the best at that style since the Hardys. On the other hand you have Cesaro who is so freakishly strong it's unreal. The only issue here were the lumberjacks as they didn't really need to be there, but they hardly dragged the match down. Anyway this was a really, really fun match with both teams busting out some crazy spots. Check this out if you get the chance.

Rollins runs his mouth to Kane about Ambrose, prompting Noble to go into a story about his aunt hearing voices and being crazy, but her cobbler was good. The looks from everyone in the room are rather amusing. Kane is looking forward to having fun in the tag match tonight and promises a plan to make sure Rollins has nothing to worry about on Sunday.

### R-Truth vs. King Barrett

Barrett kicks him right in the face to start and slugs Truth in the face for two. We're already in the chinlock before Barrett's kick to the ribs in the corner gets two more. Back up and Truth ducks the Bull Hammer and hits Little Jimmy for the completely clean pin at 2:26. Such is the life

for someone like Barrett. I know the line is that no one remembers individual wins and losses (which I don't agree with for the most part) but they certainly do remember loss after loss after loss after loss.

Sheamus comes out and Brogue Kicks both guys.

We recap Lana and Rusev's big spat from Monday. The less said about this the better.

Lana seems sad about having to leave Rusev but she's happier with Dolph. Rusev comes up and says he doesn't need to throw another fit because he's already had his way with Ziggler. Whatever Lana and Dolph do, it doesn't bother him. If Ziggler has to suffer because of Lana, so be it. This was much better from Rusev as he was more condescending than pitiful.

### Rusev vs. Ryback

Well, it's a few months later but at least we get to see it. Ryback grabs a waistlock to start but Rusev counters into a headlock. The Bulgarian's shoulders have no effect so Ryback lifts him up for a delayed vertical suplex for two. Ryback pounds on him with some forearms but a big clothesline changes control. Rusev slowly kicks Ryback around the ring but he gets distracted by a WE WANT LANA chant. There's a decent story in there if they can find a better way of presenting it.

A backdrop sends Rusev to the floor (probably where he injured his leg) but he's still able to hit the fallaway slam as we go to a break. Back with Rusev limping around before putting on a chinlock. They slug it out and Rusev hobbles from rope to rope. He can put very little weight on it and falls down when trying to slide out of a powerslam. Rusev posts him a few times and that's a DQ at 11:56, which was probably going home quickly due to the injury.

**Rating:** C-. It's hard to grade this one as the injury clearly changed where the match was going. The rumor is that if Rusev can't go then he'll be replaced by Bray Wyatt, which is probably the best possible option. The injury didn't seem to be Ryback's fault but it happened so fast that it was hard to tell. Not a bad power match until the injury but they didn't have time to go very far with it.

Quick recap of Paige vs. Naomi.

### Paige vs. Naomi

Naomi throws some leg kicks to start so Paige shoves her into the corner for forearms to the jaw. Some knees to the chest send Naomi to the floor, because THIS IS MY HOUSE! From the floor, Naomi sends the arm into the post and starts working over the arm in the corner. Ignore the fact that it's not the arm she sent into the post but at least she's trying. Paige comes back with some clotheslines and a kick to Tamina before catching a cross body in midair and countering it into the Rampaige for the pin at 3:12.

**Rating:** D+. Nothing to see here but the time didn't let them go anywhere. That's the problem with so many of the Divas' stories: they're supposed to tell full stories in about a third of the amount of time that their male counterparts receive. That being said, there's only so much time you can give to them when the division's top heel can't remember right from left.

The Bellas come to the stage to pose.

Tough Enough package.

Michael Cole brings Kevin Owens to the ring for a chat. Owens cuts Cole off when he says that Kevin has been in WWE for two years because he's been around the world for fifteen years. Now he can be on the WWE Network for just \$9.99. He knows Cena's numbers: fifteen World Titles, two Royal Rumble, fifty seven different t-shirt designs and over a thousand ways to suck.

Cole asks about Cena saying Owens has to finish the fight on Sunday so Owens shows us a clip of him destroying Sami Zayn at Takeover last week. If he'll do that to his best friend, what will he do to John Cena? Just watch Sunday and you'll see it first hand. After you do that, you'll see that the champ is here.

### Dean Ambrose/Roman Reigns vs. Kane/Seth Rollins

Rematch from Raw. Ambrose passes by Owens on his way to the ring and

doesn't pay him a bit of attention. Rollins gets in a cheap shot on Reigns to start, allowing Kane to get the early advantage. Seth quickly comes in and stomps Roman down in the corner where he sits on his chest for an odd choice of offense. It's back to Kane who gets suplexed down for the tag to Ambrose as we're still in the first minute.

Reigns and Ambrose chases them to the floor and we take a break. Back with Rollins tagging in Kane to keep Ambrose in trouble. We hit the nerve hold on Ambrose for a bit before Kane pulls him off the middle rope for a big crash. Dean gets beaten down in the corner even more and Rollins hits a running back elbow for two. Back to the reverse chinlock for a bit until Dean fights back and takes out the Stooges, only to have to break up a Rollins superplex attempt.

A tornado DDT plants Kane and that's enough for the hot tag to Reigns. Kane blocks a Superman Punch like he always blocks a Superman Punch, but Dean takes him down with the standing top rope elbow. A rollup by Rollins is countered into a powerbomb but Seth slips out, only to eat the Superman Punch, drawing in the Stooges for the DQ at 12:03.

**Rating:** C-. There was nothing to talk about here because I saw almost this exact same match with a different ending on Monday. I'm not a fan of having these rematches so soon as this is exactly what happens: what are they supposed to do that they didn't do on Monday other than how the match ends? Not bad or anything but really dull.

Ambrose and Reigns clean house until the New Day of all people come out to beat on Ambrose, only to have Reigns hit his big over the top rope dive to take everyone out. Woods eats Dirty Deeds and Kofi gets Superman Punched out of the air. Kane and Rollins get back in though and Rollins Pedigrees Ambrose to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. Not a bad go home show but as usual, there's not much to see here other than a really good tag match to start things off. However, with that great match comes a headache inducing R-Truth win over King Barrett. I was sold on the Chamber from the minute the matches were announced though so this was really just padding with a good match included.

## Results

Lucha Dragons b. Cesaro/Tyson Kidd – Salida Del Sol to Kidd

R-Truth b. King Barrett – Little Jimmy

Ryback b. Rusev via DQ when Rusev sent Ryback into the post

Paige b. Naomi – Rampaige

Roman Reigns/Dean Ambrose b. Kane/Seth Rollins via DQ when Joey Mercury and Jamie Noble interfered

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