

# Reviewing the Review: Night of Champions 2015

So here's the thing: it's pretty clear to me that there's no point in doing one of these things for every Raw. Far more often than not on the TV shows I'll have to stretch to come up with something to talk about and I can't stand it when someone writes just to fill in space. I don't want that to be the case here and I'm not going to do a Reviewing the Review for each week of Raw.

If there's a major point or two that I don't touch on in the weekly column I'll do a separate post for it, but I'm not going to waste my own or far more importantly your time with stuff like "Rusev and Ziggler did this to build to their next match. It's not great but I've seen worse," seven times a week with one or two in depth topics. I'll do one for every pay per view and major Raw's (like this week's) but it's stupid to sit around typing and not saying anything if there's nothing important.

As for Night of Champions, the show was built up very well given what they had to work with. Sting vs. Rollins was destined to be a mess instead a coherent match and that's best for everyone involved. Other than that we have Cena vs. Rollins, which will be good but nothing we haven't seen before. That being said, this looked good on paper and that's more than you can say about most B shows.

The pre-show match was a six man tag where Stardust/Ascension beat Neville/Lucha Dragons in a totally standard match that did nothing for me. Neville and the Dragons did their dives and high spots but Neville tried one too many and got taken out by the Queen's Crossbow. The match didn't advance the story but they did a rematch the next night (another reason not to do these things every week: so many rematches without anything significantly changing).

Kevin Owens won the Intercontinental Title from Ryback by raking the eyes. This sets up a nice story going forward as Ryback knows he can beat Owens in a straight up fight but Kevin spends weeks ducking him. Well as

many weeks as there are until we get to Hell in a Cell because WWE doesn't get the idea that you can have another match in between title matches and not everything has to be linear. It's cool to see Owens getting something after his feud with Cena ended and this is better than nothing. They'll screw up his reign of course but you have to expect that in WWE.

Ziggler and Rusev had a long match that ended when Summer threw a shoe and hit Rusev by mistake, setting up the Zig Zag for the pin. These two had a good story going but then Lana's wrist injury crippled whatever they had going. Now it's just the two of them running around in circles having lame matches without Lana being around to make things more interesting. People complain about Lana being weaker without Rusev, but could it have anything to do with her being a side player to Ziggler's repetitive antics. I'm sure the solution is to put her back with Rusev so it can start all over again right?

New Day retained the Tag Team Titles over the Dudleyz via DQ in a hilariously entertaining match. This was all about Xavier Woods at ringside being the most annoying pest he could do whatever things came to his mind. This is how comedy acts are supposed to go. Notice how much more entertaining Woods has been because he mixes things up.

That's what got on my nerves about people like Santino and Eric Young: they would do the exact same stuff over and over again and almost never added anything new. Woods is doing the trombone thing every week but he changes what he plays and shouts enough different stuff to keep it from getting boring. New Day is an absolute blast and I haven't had this much fun with an act in a long time.

Charlotte finally won the Divas Title from Nikki Bella in a rather strange match. Charlotte tweaked her knee early on and didn't get in any offense until the very end when she hit a spear and hoked the Figure Eight for the win. Now this can be looked in a few different ways. First of all, there's the idea that Nikki had to keep the pressure on Charlotte but as soon as Charlotte got in a single shot she had Nikki beat. On the other hand, it might have been a way to keep Nikki from having to do any actual wrestling and to just let her do stuff to Charlotte's leg.

On the third hand, maybe it was a legitimate injury and Nikki had to carry things. Either way, it was an entertaining match and Charlotte took the title after Nikki got the all important record. By all important I mean important to WWE alone but I'm sure they think the fans are thrilled. You know, all 800,000 of them that watch Total Divas, none of whom watch WWE already and all of whom I'm sure worship Nikki Bella. Either way, this might actually lead somewhere with the Divas Revolution, even though it died a month ago. Also of note: Ric Flair came out to celebrate and looked happier than he has in years. That's nice to see.

The Shield boys' mystery partner was Chris Jericho. This is the ham sandwich of choices: it's fine, but nothing that is going to blow the roof off the place. The live crowd seemed to like it though and that's always a big help. It's pretty clear that this feud is likely going on for a long time until Ambrose and Reigns realize the only way to stop the Wyatts is to do the unthinkable and reunite the Shield. That's fine for an idea and the response when it finally happens, even if it's clear where they're going, is going to be incredible.

The match itself was fine as Jericho, though older now, is at least still able to work a one off match like this. Strowman looked like a monster out there and that's all he needed to be. Notice that Reigns and Ambrose got to stagger him and even knock him off his feet but not much more. Eventually Strowman is going to lose and most of his character will change, but they're taking their time getting there to make it feel like a big deal.

John Cena got the US Title back from Rollins with a clean pin in easily the match of the night. These two work well together but like so many other things in WWE, the match has been run into the ground so badly that it's almost impossible to get fired up for it again. They did the trading big shots formula by skipping the buildup part, which made for a much more entertaining match. I don't need to see it again, which is why we saw it again the following night on Raw. I'm also not wild on the World Champion losing a clean fall, but that's apparently par for the course these days.

Cena gave Rollins an AA on the floor before Sting came out to make things

a bit more realistic. Yeah the deck was stacked against Rollins, but at the end of the day there's almost no way you can have Sting beat Rollins when he's nearly thirty years older and barely ever wrestles. Sting did everything he could here and pulled off an entertaining match which is all you can ask for. The story here was Sting's neck/spine getting jacked up by the buckle bomb, which hopefully doesn't end his career. Rollins retained with a rollup and that's about as good as they were going to be able to do. Fun match and as good as they could do it.

Sheamus tried to cash in but was foiled by the returning Demon Kane, which we'll get more into later. I knew they weren't doing the real cash-in here because this was the annual cash-in tease that doesn't go anywhere at this time of year because the briefcase has only been hanging over our heads for three months now.

Night of Champions was quite the entertaining show with almost nothing bad and a really fun match between Rollins and Cena. They've got some momentum heading into Hell in a Cell with Undertaker vs. Lesnar being a good choice to headline a B level show. Unfortunately no one is going to be watching because of Monday Night Football but at least the people who are sticking around are getting some good shows.

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# Night of Champions 2015: Night Of People Really Overachieving

## Night of Champions 2015

Date: September 20, 2015

Location: Toyota Center, Houston, Texas

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

This is the definition of a B level pay per view but there are some interesting stories to bolster things up between Summerslam and Survivor Series. The big story tonight is Seth Rollins defending both the United States and WWE World Titles against John Cena and Sting respectfully. Other than that we'll get to find out who Roman Reigns and Dean Ambrose's partner is against the Wyatt Family. Let's get to it.

## Pre-Show: Stardust/Ascension vs. Lucha Dragons/Neville

Stardust and Neville have been feuding for a few weeks now and the teams were brought in to make the battle even bigger. Konor easily counters Cara's sunset flip with some choking but Cara comes back with a spinning cross...headbutt to the arm. Off to Stardust vs. Kalisto with Konor getting in a cheap shot to help his partner. With the announcers debating whether the Ascension are Stardust's henchmen, Kalisto headscissors Stardust down and all six come in for a standoff. The bad guys are sent to the floor with the Dragons hitting stereo suicide dives and Neville adding an Asai moonsault as we take an early break.

Back with Viktor shouldering Kalisto into the corner to take over. Stardust comes in and works on the arm before it's back to Viktor, who puts Kalisto on top. You don't put a luchador on the top rope though as he hits a great looking hurricanrana and makes the tag off to Neville. We hit the series of kicks and a middle rope Phoenix splash gets two. Stardust's Disaster Kick misses and Neville goes up top, only to have Stardust shove Viktor into the corner. Neville staggers into the Queen's Crossbow for the pin at 9:46.

**Rating:** C-. Fine enough match here as Neville got to come in and clean house while the feud gets to keep going for another month or so. They're letting this one fly under the radar a bit and it's giving everyone involved something to do. Above all else it lets them do something unique instead of wasting time on a nowhere feud.

Opening video: "Tonight is a night of champions." Dang you mean they canceled Jackpot Bowling with Milton Berle? The main people on the roster tonight talk about how big the show is before going into a video on Rollins' two challengers.

#### Intercontinental Title: Ryback vs. Kevin Owens

Ryback is defending and this could go either way. Owens just decided he wanted the title one night and has been messing with Ryback ever since. The champion comes out second which never sits well with me. Ryback starts fast and wants Owens to bring it on. Kevin charges at him but gets gorilla pressed out to the floor. Back up and Owens sends Ryback arm first into the post, which takes away a lot of Ryback's power game. Owens, the big crowd favorite here, slowly pounds Ryback down before sending the bad arm into the buckle again.

We hit the armbar on the champ for a bit before he fights up with a powerslam. A spinebuster gets two for Ryback and he scores with the Meathook, which Cole identifies as a regular clothesline. Well to be fair it was off the ropes instead of from the corner. The Shell Shock doesn't work as the arm gives out and Ryback goes arm first into the post again. Owens' armbar doesn't work as Ryback powers him up into the Shell Shock again, only to have Kevin rake the eyes and roll him up for the pin and the title at 9:30.

**Rating:** C+. Set the injury up, pay the injury off in the ending, give a young guy a title. I have no complaints off this one and the match was fun in the process. Owens winning with an old school cheating tactic makes it even better. This was more fun than I was expecting and I'm very pleased with the result.

Undertaker vs. Brock Lesnar is announced for Hell in a Cell. Well that's quite the main event.

We recap Dolph Ziggler vs. Rusev. These two had been feuding along with Lana and Summer Rae respectfully, but now that Lana is on the shelf, Ziggler bought Summer some earrings and wasn't clear on what his intentions were.

Rusev is livid at Summer.

### Rusev vs. Dolph Ziggler

Dolph has long tights now. Ziggler scores with a quick dropkick to knock Rusev to the floor but he comes back in for a shot to the ribs and a chinlock. As this is going on, we get a nice discussion of the Divas keeping diaries. Ziggler's sleeper doesn't work as Rusev throws him outside for a ram into the apron. An ugly small package gets two for Dolph but Rusev slams him back down, followed by a chinlock.

A WE WANT LANA chant fires Dolph up and he's able to avoid a charge, sending Rusev into the buckle. Ziggler's Fameasser attempt doesn't work and Rusev's swinging Rock Bottom gets two. Rusev's knee hits the buckle as well, setting up the Fameasser for two more. A kick to the head has Ziggler in even more trouble but he comes back with the sleeper as this match just keeps going.

Now the superkick gets two for Rusev and he can't believe it was just a near fall. The Accolade doesn't work and Ziggler comes up with a mostly missed superkick for two of his own. Summer gets on the apron and is accidentally knocked into the ring, earning her an ejection. She throws in a shoe and hits Rusev by mistake, setting up the Zig Zag for the pin at 13:38.

**Rating:** D+. WAY too long here and I lost interest about halfway through at best. This feud is all about the drama and not the in ring action because we were supposed to have the mixed tag until Lana's wrist injury screwed everything up. Rusev getting pinned used to be a huge deal and now it's happened twice in a week.

Summer looks terrified.

### Tag Team Titles: New Day vs. Dudley Boyz

New Day is defending and already lost to the Dudleyz in a non-title match. Before the match, New Day declares that our furniture is in danger. After praising their mentor (Jake from State Farm) it's time for a SAVE...THE TABLES chant until the Dudleyz cut them off. I love the Dudleyz but I could watch New Day for hours. D-Von and Kofi get things going as Woods starts a trombone recital.

The Dudleyz scare the champs out to the floor until it's time for Bubba vs. Big E., the latter of whom tells the old man to go home. Big E. takes over and goes up top, only to get superplexed down for two. Woods: "BUBBA! DO NOT DO THIS!" The distraction works as Kofi is able to dropkick Bubba in the back to take over. We hit the rotating stomps (complete with more tromboning), followed by a splash on the apron to give E. two.

New Day starts some double teaming with Kofi firing off rights and lefts, meaning Woods plays Gonna Fly Now (theme from Rocky). I haven't been this entertained in a long time. Kofi springboards into a Bubba Bomb, setting up the hot tag to D-Von. House is quickly cleaned and the reverse 3D drops Big E. The regular 3D looks to finish Kofi but Woods comes in for the DQ at 10:16.

**Rating:** B. The wrestling may not have been the best in the world but Xavier Woods and that trombone is as pure gold as anything I've seen around this company in YEARS. The entire group is one of the funniest ideas in a long time and goes to show you what can happen when you find a hot act. Great stuff here and the rematch should be fun.

Post match Big E. loads up a table, only to have the Dudleyz fight back and 3D Woods through the table. JBL: "It's the night the music died."

We recap Nikki Bella's title reign and breaking the record on Monday.

Divas Title: Nikki Bella vs. Charlotte

Nikki is defending and can lose the title via DQ or countout. Charlotte takes her into the corner to start but a shoulder to the ribs puts Charlotte on the floor. She tweaks her knee on the landing though and Nikki has a target. A kick to the knee staggers Charlotte again and Nikki



powerbombs her off the apron for a big thud. Back in and Nikki puts on a leg lock as the announcers thankfully acknowledge that the Women's Title and the Divas Title are two different titles with two different lineages.

A snap suplex sends the knee into the ropes again and Nikki does some pushups. Nikki slams the knee into the mat a few more times for two each and wraps it around the post. Brie and Alicia try to help on a half crab but Nikki yells at them for almost getting her disqualified. Makes sense. Charlotte comes back with a neckbreaker but the knee gives out again. There's a spear though and the Figure Eight ends Nikki's reign at 13:42.

**Rating:** B-. Uh well um ok then. They were getting somewhere with that knee and then Charlotte just popped up and won the title. I'm glad the title reign is finally over but it was such a strange way to get to the ending. Still though, really good match here and the best WWE Divas match in a very long time.

Ric Flair comes out to cry his eyes out over the title win.

Owens denies cheating and is happy to finally have a prize. It's no secret how great he really is. Nice line there.

The kickoff panel chats for a bit.

Team PCB asks Ric if he knows a place to party in Houston. You know, he just might. Ric looks so genuinely proud here and it's really cool to see.

We recap the Wyatt Family vs. Roman Reigns/Dean Ambrose. These teams have been fighting on and off for over a year and now the Wyatts have the monster Braun Strowman with them. Reigns and Ambrose have a mystery partner to help fight Strowman.

Wyatt Family vs. Roman Reigns/Dean Ambrose/???

A fan tries to run in and Wyatt asks if that's their guy. The mystery partner is.....CHRIS JERICH0. Well it's not Rowan or Kane so this is totally acceptable. Ambrose and Harper get things going with the good guy taking over before it's off to Jericho for the required YOU STILL GOT IT chant. Reigns and Ambrose come in to try their luck on Strowman but he shoulders

both of them down.

Jericho tries to dive onto Braun but the glorified cruiserweight is caught and thrown out to the floor for his efforts. Strowman throws Ambrose in for a beating before tagging off to Bray. This works a bit better for Dean as he grabs a neckbreaker, allowing for the tag off to Reigns. Harper comes in with his right hands and sitout powerbomb, only to have Roman fire off his corner clotheslines. Strowman offers a distraction though and Harper scores with a superkick for two.

The Wyatts take turns on Roman with Bray sending him to the floor for a suicide dive. Reigns finally gets in an elbow to the jaw, allowing the tag off to Jericho. Chris dropkicks Braun off the apron in a smart move and slaps the Walls on Bray until Harper makes the save. Dean comes in and both Dirty Deeds and Sister Abigail are countered.

A double clothesline puts both guys down and it's off to Reigns vs. Strowman with the Superman Punch FINALLY connecting. It takes three of them to stagger Braun but Dean's top rope elbow puts him down. Jericho tags himself in for a Lionsault for two with Braun launching him off the cover. Everyone else brawls at ringside so it's that spinning Big Ending from Strowman, followed by the choke to knock Jericho out at 13:36.

**Rating:** C+. This felt like a way to keep the feud going and there's nothing wrong with that. I love the idea of two teams feuding because that's what they do no matter what. Jericho coming in there to lose is fine and it's a cool idea to build up to Roman finally knocking off the giant. Good stuff here and a fun match.

Jericho intentionally bumps into Ambrose as he leaves. Dean seems pleased with Jericho's moxie.

The Authority gives Rollins a pep talk. Sheamus comes in and says he's ready too.

We recap Seth Rollins' road to tonight, starting with winning the World Title at Wrestlemania (in case you haven't had that beaten into your head enough yet), being the Authority's attention starved child, and then winning a second title from John Cena at Summerslam. Oh and his statue

was destroyed in a very novel move.

### US Title: John Cena vs. Seth Rollins

Seth is defending of course. We get the big match intros here and Rollins is in the white attire again. The fans are all over Cena to start and things get even worse with Rollins charging into an elbow for two. Rollins comes back with a kick to the ribs and some trash talk as he seems to be trying to conserve energy.

We hit an early sleeper on Cena before Cena is put in the Tree of Woe for a top rope double stomp in an awesome looking spot. Cena's rollup gets two and he sidesteps a splash (which looked very Stingy) in the corner. He takes too long setting up the Shuffle, allowing Rollins to try a kick to the head, only to have Cena pull him to his feet into a sunset bomb for two. The AA is countered but Cena hurricanranas his way out of the buckle bomb to send Seth into the corner instead.

Seth flips out of the AA again and the low superkick gets two for the champ. They've skipped the opening part of the match here and have went straight to the back and forth bombs. Seth misses the frog splash and the Eddie chants pipe up, even though it was more like a Five Star Frog Splash. Cena comes back with the tornado DDT for two and goes up top, only to have Rollins run the ropes into a superplex.

That's not enough though as he floats over into a regular suplex for two, leaving both guys spent. Another AA is countered into a rollup but Seth muscles Cena up into a buckle bomb for two. Back up and Rollins rolls through a cross body to try an AA on Cena. Thankfully they only tease the finisher stealing as Cena counters into a reverse suplex, followed by the AA for the pin and the title at 15:43.

**Rating:** A-. As repetitive as these two have become, this was one of their better matches because they just went straight for the big spot trading instead of trying to do anything slow paced. Rollins wanting to end it fast made the most sense and it was a better match as a result. Cena getting the US Title back makes the most sense and we might even get the Open Challenge back as a result. Good stuff.

Rollins tries to bail but Cena gives him another AA on the floor and here's Sting.

### WWE World Heavyweight Title: Sting vs. Seth Rollins

Sting goes right after him to start and quickly sends the champ out to the floor. They're pretty clearly going for the brawl here as Sting sends him into the barricade. Rollins tries to get away over the barricade but sting pulls him back to the table. Seth gets in his first offense by shoving Sting through the table before grabbing his title. He changes his mind about leaving though and comes back to slam Sting onto the broken table.

Back in and a falcon's arrow gets two on Sting and Seth is starting to get frustrated. There's a buckle bomb for two. The Pedigree is countered and Sting breaks up a springboard by shoving Seth into the barricade for the second time. Two Stinger Splashes crush Rollins so he heads outside, only to have Sting dive off the top with a cross body. Back in and the Death Drop gets two out of nowhere with Rollins having to put his foot on the bottom rope.

Another Stinger Splash sets up right hands in the corner but Seth counters into another buckle bomb. Seth tries a clothesline but Sting collapses to the mat. The doctor checks on Sting as he gets back up and it's going to continue. Sting counters the Pedigree into a weak Deathlock. Thankfully Seth is quickly in the ropes and comes back with an enziguri to the bald spot. The Pedigree is countered into another Scorpion attempt but Seth rolls him up to retain at 15:13.

**Rating:** B+. This was WAY better than it had any right to be with the ending making enough sense. I really didn't need to have Sting as the World Champion because, whether WWE wants to admit it or not, he's one of the biggest stars ever and doesn't need this title to validate himself. Good match though as Sting pulls another rabbit out of his hat. Though hopefully not by the ears because that's just cruel.

Sheamus comes out immediately and it's on! Rollins misses a belt shot and Sheamus hits the Brogue Kick but here's Kane in the mask to chokeslam Rollins. Sheamus wants Kane to give him one more but Kane chokeslams

Sheamus instead. A tombstone to Rollins ends the show. Yes seriously, it ends with Kane standing tall and likely setting up the title match inside the Cell.

**Overall Rating:** A. Well that worked. This was another show that completely overachieved and had no business being nearly as good as it was. This goes up another notch if they somehow got rid of that stupid briefcase and weren't setting up Kane inside the Cell for the title, but that match had to happen at some point. Rollins is ready to be the star of tomorrow and it's going to happen one day soon. Really fun show here with only the Rusev vs. Ziggler match not being good to awesome.

### Results

Kevin Owens b. Ryback – Rollup

Dolph Ziggler b. Rusev – Zig Zag

Dudley Boyz b. New Day via DQ when Xavier Woods interfered

Charlotte b. Nikki Bella – Figure Eight

Wyatt Family b. Roman Reigns/Dean Ambrose/Chris Jericho – Choke to Jericho

John Cena b. Seth Rollins – Attitude Adjustment

Seth Rollins b. Sting – Small package

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# Night of Champions 2015 Preview

I've been very impressed by this year's build. Night of Champions is one of those shows that I don't care about most of the time but this year they've managed to make me want to see where it's going. I don't think it's going to be a classic or anything but it's better than most of the stuff this show has done in the last few years. Let's get to it.

As usual we'll start on the pre-show where I'll take Neville/Lucha Dragons over Ascension/Stardust. Since this isn't Smackdown, WWE will have to do everything they can to destroy the Ascension, who they keep giving pushes to, only to snatch them back away. It should be a fun match and I'm always a fan of throwing a six man tag on a show, especially when it makes sense like this one does. It's a solid choice for an opener and this should be fun.

Now we get to the main draw of the show with Seth Rollins defending two titles in one night. This is another interesting idea and Rollins is the kind of guy who could pull off something like this. By something like this, I mean dancing around like the Authority's puppet while they talk about their charities and try to be fun parents for the fans because it's another month, meaning they've turned face again without ever actually doing anything to make us like them.

First up we'll look at the big main event with Sting challenging for the World Title. For the life of me I can't imagine him taking the belt here. When you consider that just six months ago, this same company was jobbing Sting in a one night rehash of the Monday Night Wars, I can't imagine that they're going to put the title on him here, even if it's for a month or even five minutes before Sheamus cashes in. Rollins retains here.

And no cash-in. We get this teasing of a cash-in every fall and then it normally happens in the winter/spring. It's the same repetitive idea that

they do every year and if this company is one thing, it's not likely to change an idea that they like.

As for the other title, I'm thinking Cena takes it back. There's no real reason to keep both belts on Rollins and it opens the door for the Authority to look down on him because that's how they treat everyone. This should be their usual classic, and by usual I mean it's their ninth TV/PPV match since last summer. Oh and if Cena wins here, we could have a rematch! But yeah Cena gets the belt back, softening Seth up for Sting's failed World Title attempt.

I'll take the Dudleyz to win the titles for one last nostalgia run, only to lose them back by TLC at the latest, probably in a tables match. This has been a great feud so far with the SAVE THE TABLES stuff being hysterical. It should be a fun match but I think Bubba and D-Von get number 10 in WWE and number like 384 or whatever it is now.

Ziggler over Rusev, likely with Summer helping him. Now if they wanted to do something smart, they would have Ziggler dump Summer as soon as she tries to side with him. However, I doubt they're that clever and we probably get Ziggler's latest hot girlfriend, which fits him SO much better than being Lana's knight in shining trunks.

Nikki retains the title. Why? Because that makes the least sense. Nikki has already gotten everything there is to get, so now it's time to let her keep it even longer because she's a STAR. Like, she's on THREE shows a week instead of the rest of WWE who are only on two. Well except for the people who are still in NXT but why worry about them when we can see the Bellas as Kardashian wannabes? Oh and the rest of the cast being horrible people and such too. There's always that.

I'm split on this so I'll flip a coin to decide Ryback vs. Owens. Then I'll flip it again because I forgot to pick heads or tails for either side. I'll take Ryback to win the title but this really could go either way. Owens is starting to pick up steam again but Ryback has been the best champion in a LONG time. I could see this going either way but I'll say Ryback retains. This definitely isn't over with just one match though.

Finally, Kane is the mystery partner and the Wyatts win anyway. It's been too long since we've seen Kane in the ring and that means it's time for him to come back for another run where he gets the spot that could go to someone who actually needs a rub. Having Kane under the mask again would work well enough but it's going to feel like a letdown if/when it's him all over again.

Overall I'm cautiously excited for this show, which looked like nothing coming in but has turned into a pretty solid card. I'm not seeing a masterpiece coming or anything but I'll take a totally watchable show over some of the drek WWE is capable of producing. Rollins is in an interesting spot and there are a few combinations that could come out of this for him, making this all the more interesting. This should be fun, which is almost all you can ask for out of a B PPV.

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# Monday Nitro – April 24, 2000: He's A Man! Such A Man!

**Monday Nitro #237**

Date: April 24, 2000

Location: Blue Cross Arena, Rochester, New York



Attendance: 7,713

Commentators: Scott Hudson, Tony Schiavone, Mark Madden

I'm not sure where they're supposed to go from here but something needs to change. Last week's show was another mess to sit through as this era is starting off as a combination of boring and horrible with the bosses and Hogan being the featured attractions. Slamboree is in two weeks and the main event will be DDP vs. Jeff Jarrett in the triple cage. Let's get to it.

We recap last week. When you cut this down to a minute, it actually makes sense. It's really bad writing and not a good show, but you can tell what's going on.

Sting and Vampiro are brawling in the back with Sting getting the better of it until Vampiro hits him with a pipe.

Hardcore Title: Bam Bam Bigelow vs. Terry Funk

Funk is defending but Bigelow attacks in the aisle with a trashcan. The Cat comes out for revenge after Bigelow beat him up at Spring Stampede but Bigelow is able to put Funk in a trashcan and beat on it with a chair. Cat comes in and kicks the chair into Bigelow's face, allowing Funk to cover him to retain in less than two minutes.

Cat dances a bit as Madden sums up how stupid this was.

We recap Hogan being a psycho last week, leading to the end of the show where Bret was about to hit either him or Kidman. The announcers should have seen who Bret hit but they won't actually say who it was.

Here are Kidman and Torrie with the former having taped ribs. Kidman is here tonight to show that no one wants to see the yellow and red anymore. He'll finish this at Slamboree if Terry is there.

Bischoff and Kimberly aren't pleased with what Kidman did.

Norman Smiley begs Russo for a chance to get the Hardcore Title back. Russo agrees, if Smiley can find a partner to make it a handicap match at Slamboree.

Here are Kimberly, Bischoff and Jarrett with something to say. David Arquette is in the front row because that is our fate. Jarrett promises to hurt Page in the triple cage at Slamboree and shows us clips of the cage from Ready to Rumble. He'll beat Page and neglect him, just like Page did to his wife. Bischoff, on a wireless mic, says Kimberly has a gift for Page. She has some papers for him, but here's Page in an Albert Einstein shirt of all things. Kimberly says she's in the driver's seat for the first time and talks about Eric opening her eyes to these stupid wrestling marks.

The papers are for a divorce but Page thinks she's out of her mind. Page says no way but calls Kimberly some insulting names instead. He goes after Bischoff and gets a guitar to the back for his efforts. Arquette jumps the barricade to go after Bischoff and Kanyon runs in to save Arquette from Jarrett. Bischoff freaks out and says he'll fight Arquette tonight. David agrees, but if he wins, Page gets a World Title match against Jarrett in the cage tonight.

In case it wasn't clear enough already, this segment showed that Jeff Jarrett, the World Heavyweight Champion, is a supporting character on this show. He's beneath the writers and Hogan, plus probably Sting vs. Vampiro. Now he's beneath Page and David Arquette, putting the World Heavyweight Champion as the eighth most important character on this show.

Kronik demands a title shot from Vince Russo, who of course stands up to them and asks if they know who he is. They'll get their shot if they do him a favor. This segment existed for no other reason than to remind you that Vince Russo is a MAN.

Bischoff sends Jarrett to go find Billy Kidman. The World Champion is officially an errand boy.

#### Chris Candido/Tammy vs. The Artist/Paisley

This could be a really long night. Tammy says she's here to show Paisley what men want. The guys start and knock each other down in about fifteen seconds. It's off to the women for a double cover, followed by the required catfight. Everything breaks down and Tammy dives off the top to take Paisley and Artist down. That's the most physical she's ever gotten

and she didn't terrible at it. Back inside and Candido clotheslines Paisley giving Tammy the pin.

Sting comes out with a Death Drop to Candido. He wants Vampiro out here tonight and why not just make it first blood.

Kanyon and Page give Arquette a pep talk.

#### Team Package vs. Kronik

It's a brawl to start and here's Miss Hancock in case you're already bored. In case the match and Hancock aren't enough, Buff Bagwell runs in less than thirty seconds in, allowing Shane Douglas to hit Flair with a ball bat. High Time gives Adams the pin in just over a minute.

Buff and Douglas beat down Team Package a bit more until Buff hands Adams the bat, leading to Kronik beating them down as well.

Vampiro wants to make Sting bleed from the eyes so I guess the match is on.

Bischoff gives Kidman Mike Awesome for protection against Hogan tonight. Hogan is welcome to find a tag partner if he can. Also, Bischoff is guest referee for Kidman vs. Hogan at Slamboree. So after weeks of running scared from Hogan, Bischoff is totally fine with putting himself in the same ring with him. Makes as much sense as anything else here.

#### Mike Awesome/Kidman vs. Hulk Hogan

Kidman comes out in a Hogan shirt. Hulk comes out alone, in black pants and a black vest with F.U.N.B. on the back. Hogan hammers away at both guys to start and gives Awesome a whipping with the belt. A big boot and belly to back put Awesome down as Hogan is completely dominating him because that's what Hogan does to someone young and full of potential. Hogan stops Mike's comeback with a low blow so Kidman comes in to double team Hogan down.

As you might expect, Hogan fights back and we cut to a WWF Wrestling Buddy in the crowd. Awesome clotheslines Hogan down and drops a splash for two as Madden complains about the impending Hulk Up. There's the

second big boot to Awesome but Hogan drops elbows instead of going for the leg. They head outside with Hogan shoving Awesome into Madden's face for no apparent reason. Kidman comes in with a chair to bust Hogan open as this match is getting a shocking amount of time.

It's table time which feels as awkward and out of place in a Hogan match as wrestling does on a Russo show. Right after the powerbomb through the table, we cut to the back to see Nash coming in. Awesome puts Hogan on a second table and Kidman adds a top rope splash, followed by a legdrop for the pin.

**Rating:** D+. The match sucked from a technical standpoint (I'm as shocked as you are), but I'll give them points for having the young guys win and for giving it some time. This is the kind of thing they need to do to actually get some people over, but unfortunately this is going to happen on an episode of Nitro, not at Slamboree where Hogan needs to put Kidman over. Also, at just under 11 minutes, I believe this is the second longest match of Russo and Bischoff's tenure so far.

Nash hits the ring to clean house but Torrie hits him low, allowing Kidman and Awesome to get in their stompings.

#### Eric Bischoff vs. David Arquette

Again, remember that Bischoff is a karate expert and should be able to knock Arquette out in about ten seconds. Bischoff kicks him into the corner to start but David comes back with a spear, followed by the Worm for one of the loudest reactions of the night. Jarrett pulls the referee out at two and hits Page with the belt. Bischoff gets in a low blow on Arquette but Jeff guitars Eric by mistake, giving Arquette the pin.

The lights go out and Sting is watching from the rafters. This of course has nothing to do with what you're currently watching.

One of the former NWO girls is now an interviewer (in a swimsuit of course) but can't get in a word over Arquette's celebrating.

Jarrett is livid.

Here are Scott Steiner and assorted women with something to say. He lists

off all of the things he did last night (in rhyme because why not) and promises to floss Booker's teeth with his shoelaces tonight. Booker comes out to explain that he only did what he did last week to make things up to Bischoff. Steiner just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. The girls come up to Booker for the most obvious distraction in the history of obvious distractions. The guys brawl until it's time for a break.

Russo tells Bagwell and Douglas that "we" have to go fight Kronik.

#### Tag Team Titles: Buff Bagwell/Shane Douglas vs. Kronik

The champs are in street clothes here as Kronik cleans house. Shane drops Clark face first with a suplex and the fans start the boring chant. Adams helps Clark drop Shane throat first across the top rope. It's off to Adams to clean house but Buff throws the referee over the top. Hudson: "THAT'S BULL"....and the rest isn't censored, freaking Madden out. Buff takes High Times but that manly man Vince Russo comes in and hits Clark with a ball bat. Shane hits Adams with it as well. Nick Patrick goes to ring the bell but Russo hits him with a bat as well. Russo counts the pin on Adams to retain the titles.

**Rating:** D. As we've firmly established over the last few weeks and tonight in particular: Nitro exists to prove that Vince Russo is the toughest and most awesome man that has ever lived and he can beat up big goons like Kronik because he's a real man from New York and a thousand times smarter than all these stupid wrestling marks. It also proves that the real money in WCW is manufacturing baseball bats because every body has one these days.

Here's Tank Abbott for his weekly insulting of Goldberg. Madden panicking over Abbott wanting to hurt someone tonight is some of the only funny stuff he's ever done. Tank throws WCW.com writer Bob Ryder into the ring and Jeremy Borash (who looks identical to how he looks now) fails at making a save. Tank finally leaves.

#### WCW World Title: Jeff Jarrett vs. Diamond Dallas Page

Jarrett is defending and this is supposed to be inside a cage (complete

with roof), which is why they're already fighting in the crowd. Page hits him in the back with a trashcan but gets dropped onto a barricade. They finally get inside so Jarrett can stomp away, only to have Page whip him into the cage. Jarrett sends Page face first into the buckle and then into the cage twice in a row.

Page slugs away in the corner before the discus lariat puts Jarrett down. Cue Mike Awesome as Jarrett escapes the Diamond Cutter and counters with a DDT. There's the Diamond Cutter but Awesome breaks into the cage. He breaks up the pin at two but Canyon comes in and decks Awesome, allowing the referee to count the three about five seconds after the two, giving Page the title.

**Rating:** D. The WCW World Champion, who was crowned the chosen one eight days earlier, just lost the title in a cage match that didn't last five minutes. Of that time, less than three minutes of were spent inside the cage. This was in addition to the two people interfering in the match, making the cage completely unnecessary. The gimmick overkill on this show astounds me more and more every single week.

Oh yeah that's not the main event.

### Vampiro vs. Sting

First blood. Sting takes too long getting unhooked from his repelling gear and Vampiro attacks, only to fight him off with ease because Vampiro is New Blood and therefore unable to win a fair fight with any old guy. Right hands and a suplex put Vampiro back on the floor. He gets on the announcers' table and does a throat slit, causing a red liquid to fall on Sting (ripping off the Brood's Bloodbath). Some of the New Blood comes out to beat Sting down as the fans really aren't pleased.

The New Blood attaches the soaked Sting to the cable and hangs him from the ceiling to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** D-. This took me most of the day to sit through on and off because it really is cringe worthy. The wrestling ranges from bad to very bad, the stories are all about Russo and Bischoff, and the World Title feud is now featuring David Arquette and three title changes in two

weeks. The worst part is things are going to go downhill from here, making the entire show an even bigger disaster. This show is all about Russo/Bischoff/Hogan and it's been easy to see that since the day the new stories started. It's getting harder to sit through these things and the worst has just begun.

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<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B011T13PV4>

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## **Raw Ratings Aren't Great And It Shouldn't Be A Surprise**

<http://www.f4wonline.com/more/more-top-stories/96-wwe-news/44533-raw-ratings-still-at-low-levels>

I'm surprised Raw did as well as it did. Here's why.

The decline in ratings really isn't surprising for a few major reasons.

1. Monday Night Football. Raw in the Attitude Era didn't come close to Monday Night Football's numbers and that's never going to change. Monday Night Football is a juggernaut and always will be. There's no way to get around this.

2. The Network. Raw is made available a month later. If I wanted to, I could watch every episode of Raw leading up to a pay per view and skip over the parts I don't want to see. It's quick, it's easy, and WWE hypes the heck out of the Network every chance they can.

3. Did you know [WWE.com](http://WWE.com) does it's own live Raw results? As in they say what's going on during the show, making it easy to get a quick recap instead of watching the full show? This is in addition to the dozens of other sites that do the same.

4. It's three hours a week. That's WAY too much for most people and it's overload. Consider Summerslam weekend. You had Takeover running two and a half hours plus a half hour pre-show, you had a four hour Summerslam plus a one hour pre-show, and then you had Raw, which was three hours plus a half hour pre-show. That's eleven and a half hours of content in three days. Two shows are pay per views and one is fallout. Which are you most likely to cut out from your schedule?

5. As for last night, it's hard to blame this on Sting. Yeah he was the main event, and we knew that a total of two and a half hours in advance. Instead the advertised matches featured Nikki Bella (with her crossover appeal from Total Divas of course, which has about a million viewers a week, a good percentage of which are probably already watching Raw) and the Prime Time Players, the latter of which was a title match with the winners getting to face the Dudleyz. Sting was announced as a last minute match and if you weren't watching the show at some point, you didn't know about it.

6. A lot of people don't watch cable TV anymore, and why should they? With Netflix, Hulu and the WWE Network, there's a ton of good material out there for way cheaper. For the people who still do have cable, there are roughly 1.38457 million channels to pick from these days. Couple that with DVR and people watching parts of the shows and the ratings shrinking really isn't a big surprise.



I know they're still the most common means of examining how well a show did, but is there a reason we're still using the same measuring stick for the show that we used seventeen years ago? A lot has changed since then and of course there are going to be fewer people watching the same show. I'm stunned that it's still as high as it is.

Oh and despite the ratings: the stock is at about \$19 a share, or \$4 higher than it was a year ago at this time. There might be something more to the company's success than just the TV ratings, but again that's all most people seem to care about.

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# Monday Night Raw – September 14, 2015: Dance Fever And Scorpion Double Shots

## Monday Night Raw

Date: September 14, 2015

Location FedEx Forum, Memphis, Tennessee

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, John Bradshaw Layfield

Tonight is the season premier, as WWE throws whatever it can at Monday Night Football to try and not get completely decimated in the ratings. The big match tonight is Charlotte challenging Nikki Bella for the Divas Title in Nikki's first televised title defense in about two and a half months. Let's get to it.

We open with a full recap of the statue story because just having Cole explain it in fifteen seconds would be too complicated.

Here's the Authority walking down the ramp, which now has a Connor's Cure logo. HHH and Stephanie talk about all the new talent that have showed up

in the last year and a half. That group will lead the WWE into the new generation, which will be lead by Seth Rollins. HHH explains the double title defense on Sunday and that's about it for Seth right now.

Stephanie explains the Divas Title situation and talks about how the Revolution has rocked everything. HHH has a major announcement for tonight: Sting will be wrestling his first match ever on Raw as he faces the Big Show. Stephanie introduces New Day for their title defense and the Authority dances with them.

So wait. They announced New Day vs. the Prime Time Players and the Divas Title in advance, but STING wrestling on Raw is announced with a few hours notice? These decisions continue to amaze me every single week, but at least they made sure to get Stephanie dancing to New Day's entrance because she's fun and cool that way. HHH dances a bit too.

#### Tag Team Titles: New Day vs. Prime Time Players

New Day is defending with Woods on the floor as usual. Darren rolls Kofi up for a quick two before it's off to Titus for a slam on Big E. We see the Dudleyz looking on as E. comes back with a belly to belly, meaning it's time for some trombone playing. Back to the starters with Darren escaping the SOS and loading up the Gut Check, only to have Kofi tag out to Big E. The big guy sends Young into the post and it's time for the rotating stomps, accompanied by more tromboning as we take a break.

Back with New Day still in control and Woods tormenting him with the trombone. Titus comes after them but gets called back by the referee. Woods: "DO NOT TOUCH MY TROMBONE!" Back in and Kofi snaps Darren's throat across the top rope but he dives into some raised boots. Titus comes in off the tag to clean house and gives Kofi three straight backbreakers. A powerslam gets two on Big E. but Kofi gives Darren Trouble in Paradise on the floor. Woods offers a distraction and gets his trombone broken up, allowing the Midnight Hour to take Titus out for

the pin at 12:15.

**Rating:** C. This was fine and a good way to set up New Day vs. the Dudleyz on Sunday. The Players have had their moment in the sun and it's time to move on to a more interesting team. Darren and Titus are fine for a midcard team, but I don't think anyone really bought them as a long term threat, which means they're left as a nice role team.

New Day celebrates but the Dudleyz come out for a staredown.

Video of Sting at Starrcade 1988, part of a series of clips of his career. Pay no attention to the fact that that was a pretty worthless match.

Seth Rollins comes in to see the Authority and after praising the dance moves, he's told to worry about Sunday. They do the New Day clap and that's about it. This is another good example of a segment that didn't need to be there.

We recap Charlotte making Nikki tap in a brawl last week.

Charlotte and Ric Flair are ready for the title match tonight and Ric praises the Divas division. They're doing a great job of making this feel like a big deal.

### Paige vs. Sasha Banks

It's just Becky at ringside while Naomi and Tamina are out with Banks. Sasha snaps Paige's arm across the middle rope to start and bends it around to put Paige in early trouble. Banks stomps on the arm in the corner instead of dropping the double knees before putting on an armbar.

Paige comes back with a knee in the corner and some kicks to the face for two as the announcers debate women's tennis in an attempt to tie it into the Divas Revolution. A wicked German suplex sends Sasha down onto the back of her head and out to the floor in a heap. Paige tries to dive off the apron but Tamina pulls Sasha away, sending Paige crashing down as well. Back in and the Bank Statement puts Paige away at 5:15.

**Rating:** C. The potential for a Paige heel turn would seem to make sense

and there's nothing wrong with a story that might be this obvious. Once this team thing is done they can actually get on to something else instead of just running around in circles like they have been for weeks. The match was fine with that German suplex looking awesome, but I've lost interest in seeing them fight four times in two weeks. As usual, the word overkill doesn't exist in WWE's world.

We recap the Wyatt Family taking out Jimmy Uso and Randy Orton last week.

Video on Connor's Cure.

It's time for MizTV with special guests the Wyatt Family. Miz tells them to sit down but Bray tells Miz to not sit because he's not safe here. After assuring Bray that he's not the partner at Hell in a Cell (yes Hell in a Cell), Miz tries to talk to Strowman but Braun doesn't say a word. Bray gets right in Miz's face and says they're coming to Night of Champions to show that no matter who comes at them, they all fall down. Cue Reigns and Ambrose in the crowd with Dean beating up Miz for trying to talk. Bray sits down as the other four stare at each other. Reigns calls Wyatt out for the attacks last week and promises to make him pay.

If Wyatt really was the man, he could have beaten Roman one on one but he just can't do it. A real man wouldn't have to surround himself with monsters. Reigns and Ambrose have found a third man for Night of Champions and they're ready to win. Everyone stares each other down and the camera cuts out. This would be much better if they didn't go to the announcers, meaning they're sitting there talking while the guys are still in the ring.

Clip of Sting winning his first World Title at Great American Bash 1990.

### John Cena vs. Sheamus

Sheamus' headlock doesn't get that far so he elbows Cena in the face instead. John is thrown to the floor and we take an early break. Back with Sheamus dropping a top rope knee for two before slapping on a sleeper. Cena pops up and hits the ProtoBomb followed by the Shuffle. A tornado DDT gets two on Sheamus but he comes back with an Edgeucator.

Cena grabs the ropes so Sheamus busts out the ten forearms instead. We get the same sequence with Cena using the STF and hitting some forearms of his own. The AA is blocked and Sheamus ax handles Cena in the face to take over again. Cena breaks up the Brogue Kick with a hard clothesline but can't follow up. A powerslam drops Cena again but he sidesteps the top rope shoulder. Sheamus charges but Cena powers him up into a powerbomb position, only to flip him over into an electric chair drop. Back up and Sheamus tries the Regal roll, only to have Cena roll over into the AA for the pin at 14:49.

**Rating:** B. Good match here and I believe the first time Cena has pinned Sheamus in a singles match on TV. This was harkening back to the days of the US Open Challenge (you know, all those weeks ago) and continues to show that Cena can work a very good match with anyone you throw out there against him. Good stuff here.

Here's Ryback with something to say. It's appropriate that we're in Memphis because Kevin Owens seems to have him all shook up. Ryback does a little Elvis and the silence is so deafening that he has to acknowledge it. As he starts to talk about Kevin Owens not being a real man, Owens cuts him off. Owens comes out with a copy of *The Secret*, which Ryback has credited with his rise to success.

He calls the book a joke and throws it to the floor while calling it a travesty that Ryback is the Intercontinental Champion. Ryback talks about how positive he is and how he fell on his face after rocketing to the top of the company. Owens says he'd take the title the first chance he got, so Ryback offers him a shot at Night of Champions. Kevin leaves without accepting. I really like the idea of these two fighting, but Ryback crediting his success to a book really doesn't hold up for me.

The next Sting clip is Starrcade 1997, which is possibly the bullet that they never could recover from.

### Stardust vs. Neville

The Lucha Dragons come out with Neville to counteract the Ascension. It's a huge brawl to start with the Dragons diving through the ropes to take Ascension out. Neville hurricanranas Stardust to the floor but Ascension

drags him away before Neville can dive. No match.

Nikki Bella video where she takes credit for the Divas Revolution. This was....bad. Yeah that's the only way to put it. It was bad.

### Divas Title: Charlotte vs. Nikki Bella

Nikki is defending in case that's not really clear. Charlotte takes her down to the mat and drops some knees. The figure four neck lock lets Charlotte rolls Nikki around the ring and tell her to bring it on. Nikki comes back by snapping Charlotte's arm across the top rope and wringing it down onto the apron as we take a break.

Back with Nikki staying on the arm but Charlotte lifts her out of an armbar into a powerbomb to break it up. A big boot gets two for Charlotte but a dropkick to the shoulder gets the same for the champ. Charlotte scores with the spear but Alicia gets on the apron for a distraction. It's Twin Magic time and Charlotte rolls Brie up for the pin at 10:02.

I'm not even going to bother rating it yet because here's Stephanie to say that doesn't count and Charlotte wins by DQ. Charlotte gets her rematch on Sunday and the title can change hands by any means.

**Rating:** C-. Well that happened. The match was nothing special but I'm sure we'll hear for weeks about how awesome it was as the NXT fans point to Sasha vs. Bayley. You had to know they were going with the record because this is all about making the Bellas into some kind of pop culture icon in WWE's mind and they just had to get her the record, which is totally better than Trish holding the Women's Title for over a year because reasons.

Sting was at Survivor Series 2014.

### Cesaro vs. Rusev

Rusev grabs a wristlock to start but Cesaro does four or five nips in a row to escape. A headscissors drops Rusev again and the delayed vertical suplex gets one. Rusev's spinwheel kick gets two but here's Dolph Ziggler with a present for Summer. The distraction lets Cesaro small package Rusev for the pin at 4:04.

**Rating:** C-. The booking here was a lot better as you had Cesaro get a win while Ziggler gets to cost Rusev a match. Everyone comes out looking the way they're supposed to look and Sunday's match gets some build. That's the kind of smart booking that WWE lacks so often and it's a nice touch.

Ziggler superkicks Rusev and Summer sneaks the present with her as they leave.

WWE was at a children's hospital earlier today.

Post break Rusev is livid and goes into his dressing room. Summer opens the present and it's.....something we can't see.

Recap of the Tag Team Title match and we run down the Night of Champions card. Owens vs. Ryback for the Intercontinental Title is confirmed, as is Neville/Lucha Dragons vs. Stardust/Ascension on the preshow.

Big Show promises the Authority that he'll knock Sting out.

#### Sting vs. Big Show

These two headlined Slamboree 1996 nearly twenty years ago. The Authority is ringside to watch. Sting hammers away to start and gets in ten right hands in the corner. Show tries a chokeslam out of the corner but gets DDT'd down instead. There's the Stinger Splash but Rollins runs in for the DQ at 1:45.

Cena comes out for the save and HHH makes it a tag match.

#### Sting/John Cena vs. Seth Rollins/Big Show

This is joined in progress after a break with Cena's shoulder block bouncing off Big Show. It's off to Rollins for some stomping but Cena backdrops him over the top to the floor for a big crash. Back in and Cena tries the AA but can't flip Show over, meaning the beating continues. Rollins and Big Show take turns beating on Cena while they both break up the tag attempts. The slow motion Vader Bomb gets two.

Cena turns Rollins inside out with a running clothesline but Show breaks up another hot tag attempt. Show misses the second Vader Bomb though and

Cena dives over for the hot tag to Sting. It's showtime as Sting cleans house, only to be run over by Big Show. The giant takes the AA and Sting breaks up the Pedigree with a Scorpion Death Drop. The Scorpion Deathlock makes Rollins tap at 11:58.

**Rating:** C-. I don't like the ending but I get the idea. Sting isn't going to win the title on Sunday but it's still cool to see him in the ring on Raw, just for the novelty of it if nothing else. This could be another stake in HHH and Rollins' relationship as Rollins couldn't beat the man that HHH could, but they've been teasing the split for months now so I'll believe it when I see it.

**Overall Rating:** C+. This was FAR better than last week as you could feel an energy instead of the same boring show they did last week. It was also a good go home show for Night of Champions, which is looking like a pretty fun card on paper. I'm curious to see where some of the stuff goes and that's exactly what this show was supposed to accomplish. You had some big moments and a good match here so what else more can you ask for out of a TV show? Well done this week.

## Results

New Day b. Prime Time Players – Midnight Hour to O'Neil

Sasha Banks b. Paige – Bank Statement

John Cena b. Sheamus – Attitude Adjustment

Charlotte b. Nikki Bella via DQ when Brie Bella interfered

Cesaro b. Rusev – Small package

Sting b. Big Show via DQ when Seth Rollins interfered

Sting/John Cena b. Big Show/Seth Rollins – Scorpion Deathlock to Rollins

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## **Reviewing the Review – Monday Night Raw: September 7, 2015**

Alas it's a holiday show and that means they're really not going to be putting in much effort. I get the idea behind it, but it gets really tiring watching them out there on a show that means nothing and clearly just filling in time before next week's special episode where for some reason they try to fight off a Monday Night Football doubleheader instead of having a nothing show that night and then doing a major show after Night of Champions and starting the build from there. Then again, when has WWE ever done something that makes sense? Let's get to it.

Rollins opened the show with his weekly address where he talks to the fans like they've never seen an episode of Raw before by recapping his entire title reign. I'm always of the mindset that each episode is someone's first time watching, but recapping the fact that you beat Brock Lesnar really doesn't mean anything when you're fighting Sting and John Cena while Lesnar is nowhere in sight. It's recapping for the sake of filling in time and for the sake of WWE thinking its fans are stupid which gets old fast.

This brought him to Sting and the statue, which needs to get destroyed already and be done with it. Sting had the statue with him in front of a dark background, which is certainly just a corner of the arena somewhere and not in front of something that will be a big surprise later on.

Sheamus came out as well to tease the Money in the Bank cash-in at Night

of Champions because it's the fall and therefore time to start teasing the cash-in like they do EVERY SINGLE YEAR BECAUSE THAT'S THE STORY THEY CAME UP WITH AND IT HAS TO BE THE SAME STUPID THING EVERY TIME SINCE WE JUST HAVE TO HAVE THAT STUPID BRIEFCASE FLOATING AROUND ALL THE FREAKING TIME! Just cash it in, let Sheamus lose or have a month long title reign and be done with it already so we can have a break before the whole thing starts over again in July.

After a break, Rollins came in to see Mama and Papa Helmsley, who have the whole thing covered because Seth can't handle an old man without them. Of course no one ever says "hey, let's go find the cameraman and ask him where he was. Like, there has to be a cable leading to his camera somewhere right?" That's heresy in WWE though, because we need to praise HHH and Stephanie in their cameo while they're not really in the arena because not even they watch Raw on Labor Day. Rollins gets two wrestle twice tonight because the Authority treats like like a child.

Paige and Sasha had their same decent match that ended with Naomi distracting Paige so Sasha could get a small package pin. I think this leads to a Paige heel turn, which could be interesting once we get done with the never ending team feuds.

Now we get to the part of the show that actually got on my nerves, which almost never happens: Ambrose and Reigns squashed the Ascension, who had been put together with Stardust in a group on Smackdown. However, since the people who put Raw together don't seem to watch Smackdown, none of that mattered because Reigns and Ambrose needed opponents for a squash.

I have no problem with Ambrose and Reigns beating someone up, but if they're trying to do something with Ascension, don't put them out there to get squashed. You could put any two goofs out there and have them lose in three minutes. You have how many people who haven't done anything important in months (Heath Slater, Curtis Axel, Damien Sandow, Adam Rose, Fandango etc) but why use any of them?

Instead you put out a team that needs to be rebuilt in the worst way after WWE screwed them up in the first place by having Booker and JBL treat them like idiots and then having the Outlaws and APA, two mostly

retired teams, attack them for a nostalgia segment. I've said this many times before, but WWE has no idea how to use its roster. They focus on a handful of people and forget everyone else. Put up a big board of everyone on your roster and label it "PEOPLE WE CAN USE" or something, but stop wasting a team that could go somewhere for a spot that any two jobbers could use.

Oh and again, this is what NXT fans are always afraid of: why bother bringing people up if they're going to be completely wasted for the sake of whatever stupid idea the main show has for them? What does that develop and how is it a good use of the system they have in place? It's because the people who put together the main show can't stop and pay attention for five seconds, because the match was less than three minutes long. Any two warm bodies could have done this job as well as Konor/Viktor, but that's who we get and we're just supposed to go with it on Smackdown when they're featured again. Thank you WWE.

Ryback and Owens continue to stare at each other and their feud (is it even a feud yet? Don't you have to do more than look at and insult each other to constitute a feud?) is still intriguing.

We get a long recap of Ziggler/Summer/Lana and it's so cheesy that it's getting awesome. Embrace the fact that it's a soap opera and it's a lot easier to bear.

Ryback beat Rollins in the first long match of the night. I still really like Ryback at the moment and it's cool to see him get a big win, even if it was due to a Sting distraction. They're building a good Intercontinental Champion with Ryback, and above all else there's one key: he's treating the title like it matters. Couple that with actually defending the thing and he's one of the better champions in a long time.

Rollins (who I'm sick of from this show alone) runs into New Day, who he's teaming with later. The Dudleyz come in, as do Edge and Christian for a cameo. This turns into the trombone vs. the kazoo, which are both totally awesome. This was great.

Summer Rae/Rusev/Ziggler did some stuff, with only Summer referring to Rusev as Ru Ru being noteworthy.

Orton, Sheamus, RKO, sixteen minutes. I need to get away from this match before I nod off.

The Wyatts beat up Orton for hanging out with Reigns/Ambrose earlier. I like this idea the more I think about it and they're setting the stage for an outsider to be there to save the Shield boys.

The Dudleyz squashed Los Matadores so they could turn on El Torito. Didn't they do this before and nothing came of it?

Big Show caused Miz vs. Cesaro to go to a double countout. I guess they're just swapping Cesaro for Ryback in this feud? That's their best idea?

The Bellas and PCB had your standard build to next week's title match where Nikki tapped to the Figure Eight.

John Cena, with the Prime Time Players, beat New Day. This was nothing special and was really just there to fill in some time.

Sting threw the statue into a garbage truck to end the show. He did a little dance around it, which was actually cool because I've always loved how Sting moves. It's different enough from everyone else to make it look cool.

This show wasn't the worst they've ever done but there was a distinct lack of energy to the show all night. The only major thing was the destruction of the statue, which we've been waiting weeks for now. It was clear that they were trying to fill in time though, which has to happen every week but it's a lot harder to sit through when they're being so blatant with it. The "season premiere" next week should be better, but a bit of energy is all it would take.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of NXT Reviews: The Full Sail Years Volume I at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

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## **Reviewing the Review – Monday Night Raw: August 31, 2015**

So....yeah I've missed these for a few weeks. I know I missed the week before this but it's a stretch to do one of these for this show and going back another week would be even worse. Anyway, it's eight days after Summerslam and Sting is back to go after Seth Rollins, despite having losing his only match in the company. Let's get to it.

We opened with Sting and that still doesn't feel right in WWE. Sting was out there to talk about Rollins, but this somehow turned into a love fest for HHH. His speech was about how losing to HHH (who hit him in the head with a sledgehammer) earned his respect and Rollins will never be half the man that HHH is. Sting is going to prove that Rollins hasn't earned the respect that he's claiming, which is Sting's entire character in a nutshell.

In other words, this feud is now going to be about HHH, because it sets up the feud with HHH vs. Rollins, which has been coming for months now it seems. I like the idea, but it would be a bit nicer if these were shades of gray instead of just making it clear that this is where the feud is going. I'm still not sure if Sting wins the title or not, though they seem to be making it a bit too clear that Sheamus is cashing in. I know WWE likes to beat things over our heads because they think we're idiots, but this is almost too obvious. Therefore, I'm thinking Rollins retains over Sting, which almost guarantees that Sting gets the belt.

Rollins wanted his statue so Stephanie made sure to praise HHH a bit

(made sense here for a change) before telling him to go ask Sting. This would be another segment that really didn't change anything but why bother with something like that?

Rusev and Ziggler had a long match that ended in a DQ because this is destined to end in a mixed tag. Well at least it was. Now the interesting part here was where this went for the rest of the night, as Summer would be seen sneaking into Ziggler locker room before then running off screaming as Ziggler came out mostly sans clothing.

This got us into a soap opera which has been going ever since and I hate to admit the fact that I'm kind of loving it. Above all else: they've given me a reason to care. There's a story here that is so over the top and ridiculous that it's hard not to get sucked in, even though I know it's bad. It helps that Rusev is left playing the role of muscle while everyone else does the drama, which is a much better fit for him. Well done all around Well that and Lana's new outfit. That's kind of a big plus too.

The best thing about this story though is I'm not sure if Ziggler cheated on Lana or not. Granted it's about as low stake as you can get, but there's always something good about not knowing where a story is going. It could be either ending here, though hopefully it ends with Ziggler going full on heel again because Dolph being noble and loyal to Lana doesn't fit him in the slightest.

One of the other big stories of the night was Team PCB having a Beat the Clock Challenge for the right to face Nikki Bella for the title at Night of Champions. Charlotte wound up winning in something not really surprising, but I lost almost all interest in the Divas division (yeah it's not a revolution, no matter how many times they've hammered it into our head that it's a revolution) after the last month wasting our time. The matches were nothing special because of how short the time was, but at least we're FINALLY getting to the title hunt, even if it means we have to listen to Nikki talk about being some empowered woman or whatever.

Ryback beat Big Show in a short match thanks to Miz, which seems to be

the blowoff for this feud. I can't say I'm complaining as I really didn't need to see these three fight any longer. Big Show still seems to want to go after Miz, but at least they can't be fighting over a title anytime soon. The match was short and a way for Ryback to show off his power, which he's done about a dozen times on Big Show, which is why the company thinks it's so impressive.

Kevin Owens beat Cesaro in a really good Summerslam rematch where Owens knocked him ribs first into the announcers' table to injure Cesaro's ribs. This was a good win for Owens and wraps up their feud, unfortunately with Cesaro getting swept but fortunately with no rubber match that WWE loves to put on. Owens seems primed for a shot at the Intercontinental Title and that's a great spot for him right now, whether he wins the title or not.

Braun Strowman squashed Dean Ambrose, which is the best thing that he could have done for his first official match. The guy is a monster and he can tear a path of destruction for a few months until someone finally knocks him off. Just don't make it obvious that he's going to eventually be knocked off and everything will be fine.

The Dudleyz beat New Day in a non-title match because they have to have a champion lose once every few weeks, just to keep them interesting you see. Also because they don't have any other teams to beat down besides the ones with the titles. More on that next week.

The big segment to end the show had Rollins demanding his statue back but being told by the Authority that he has to defend both titles at Night of Champions. Stephanie talked a lot but I usually get lost when she talks because all I can hear are buzzwords and charities that I'll never hear of again because Stephanie has moved on to something else for her cause of the month. She does quite a few charity bits no?

Overall, Raw was a really solid show this week with almost everything serving a purpose or at least being good. Night of Champions is looking like an awesome show instead of the filler show that it so often is. We're still waiting on that statue to be destroyed but I'm sure it's going down soon enough. Good week this time though as they're actually

hot right now.

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# **Kurt Angle Taking A Break From Wrestling, Will Not Re-Sign With TNA In January**

## [Source](#)

Good. For two reasons.

1. Most importantly, Angle's health. His body is a wreck and he needs to just go sit at home and relax. There's no need to destroy yourself over and over in a wrestling ring. Go train Olympic wrestlers or something, but stay out of the ring.

2. TNA relies WAY too much on Angle. I get that he's awesome and one of the best ever, but one of the major things holding TNA back over the years has been going back to Sting and/or Angle instead of building up many new talents. With Angle gone (and assuming the company survives), they have to put it on someone new. Or Jeff Hardy because he has star power. Not that



the star power does much for them but he does in fact have it.

Angle has said he'll be at Bound For Glory, though not wrestling.

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# Monday Night Raw – September 7, 2015: They Certainly Got The Labor Part Right

## Monday Night Raw

Date: September 7, 2015

Location: Royal Farms Arena, Baltimore, Maryland

Commentators: John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton, Michael Cole

It's a holiday show, which means we might not be in for the most action packed episode this week. Coming out of this weekend, the question is what does John Cena's potential injury mean for Seth Rollins and his double title defenses? WWE has said Cena isn't injured, but there's always a chance it's going to be addressed. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Seth Rollins gets things going this week and tells us about how special he is. Until he cashed in Money in the Bank at Wrestlemania, everyone believed Brock Lesnar was invincible. Then he knocked John Cena off the pedestal and became the first man to hold both the US and World Titles at the same time. Yes Seth we know. Much like everyone else in WWE, you feel the need to repeat the same lines over and over because it gets them talking on Facebook or something.

Anyway, he had a statue, Sting stole it, and now Rollins wants to crush Sting's legacy as a result. Seth can do that by beating Sting at Night of Champions, but then he has to deal with Cena, who has politicked his way

into the title scene again. That presented a problem but then Rollins remembered who he was. This has been his year so he'll solve this problem just like any other.

Rollins wants his statue back so here's Sting on screen, standing next to the statue. Come and get it he says, so Rollins says he's not afraid. Cue Sheamus instead who asks if Seth is worried about Sunday. Seth is worried about his statue instead but he makes sure to call Sheamus Ronald McDonald with a bad haircut. Sheamus: "Leave my family out of this." Sheamus teases cashing in at Night of Champions.

Post break Seth goes to see Stephanie to ask if HHH has a plan. After Stephanie gets annoyed at Seth for not thinking she can handle this (you have to get that Stephanie praise in there you see), HHH comes in and Rollins is relieved. HHH makes things even worse though as he makes Rollins vs. Ryback and Rollins/New Day vs. Prime Time Players/John Cena. Stephanie says she thought Rollins should go after Sting but Rollins wanted to hear HHH's idea.

### Paige vs. Sasha Banks

Rematch from last week where Paige only had about a minute and a half to beat Sasha, meaning she came up short. Paige throws Sasha around to start and elbows her in the corner, only to have her kick caught, setting up Sasha's double knees in the corner for two. Back from a break with Sasha getting another near fall and throwing on a chinlock.

Paige quickly fights out but gets pulled off the middle rope to give Sasha another near fall. Sasha's cross body is nearly countered into the Rampaige but Banks gets to the floor. Back in and a quick wheelbarrow suplex gives Paige two but Naomi comes in for a distraction, allowing Paige to grab a small package for the pin at 9:56.

**Rating:** C+. It's a nice match but the commentary suggests that the Divas Title match will indeed be at Night of Champions rather than next week as was hinted at on Smackdown. Therefore, this was another match that is meant to fill in time until we can get the big Nikki Bella moment that we've all been waiting for, meaning this has been another ten minutes of your time wasted.

## Ascension vs. Roman Reigns/Dean Ambrose

Now, on Smackdown, Ascension was made to look tough again when they beat up Neville. I'm sure WWE wouldn't totally waste that by having them get squashed here and act like Smackdown meant nothing. Dean beats Viktor up to start before it's off to Roman for more of the same. That's fine with Reigns who punches out both Ascension members with ease before Dean comes in with a suicide dive. The apron boot to Viktor sets up the Superman Punch and a Doomsday Device of all things, which sets up the spear. Dirty Deeds puts Viktor away at 2:53.

Post match the Wyatts come on screen to say the apocalypse is at Night of Champions.

That being said, SCREW YOU WWE! You set something up on Smackdown and you can't send out Los freaking Matadores do job here? No of course not, because why do that when Ascension is there? Geez they make Smackdown worthless by their own actions.

Ryback says Rollins whines a lot and is an architect but tonight, Ryback's plans are a Meathook and Shell Shock. Kevin Owens comes up to wish Ryback good luck and warns him not to bite off more than he can chew.

We recap Lana/Dolph Ziggler/Rusev/Summer Rae. There's even a narrator for this.

## Ryback vs. Seth Rollins

Non-title and in a VERY cool thing, Ryback lets a kid hold the Intercontinental Title. The announcers are too busy getting in their talking points to notice of course. Rollins bails outside and hits the stall button to start. A shoulder sends Rollins right back to the floor but Ryback is patient enough to stay inside. Rollins gets rammed into the corner as the announcers argue over whether or not Sting stole the statue. As in the thing he doesn't own that he took.

Ryback stays on the arm before chopping Seth down with ease. The delayed vertical suplex, with Ryback walking around the ring, gets two on Seth.

Rollins gets Ryback out to the floor and tries a suicide dive, only to have Ryback catch him in midair. Ryback is whipped into various metal objects and it's time for another break. Back with Seth getting two off a neckbreaker and putting on a chinlock.

Ryback punches him in the face and sends Seth flying with a backdrop. A powerbomb and the low superkick are both countered but the second attempt at the powerbomb connects for two. For some reason Ryback goes to the top but has to break up Seth's superplex attempt. The top rope splash misses and Rollins baseball slides Ryback outside.

There's the suicide dive but Ryback is still able to beat the count. Back in and Seth charges into a spinebuster but he escapes Shell Shock and nails an enziguri. This brings up Sting to say the statue is waiting for Rollins, allowing Ryback to grab a small package for the pin at 18:45, good for the second distraction into a small package finish of the night.

**Rating:** B-. This a better finish, this is a much higher grade. It's a bad sign when they're already reusing a finish less than an hour and twenty minutes into the show but you can't expect them to think of that much on their own. Ryback getting the pin is a nice surprise though as he's one of the best Intercontinental Champions in years.

Sting pops up again and puts a Sting mask on the statue.

Rollins (yes again with Rollins) is looking for his statue but here's New Day to interrupt with a trombone recital. Seth yells at them but runs into Edge and Christian who are here for the Steve Austin Show. Edge brings up Rollins threatening to kill him to get the Authority back and wants a fight right now. Rollins bails so Woods wants a musical battle. This means the return of the KAZOO!

Edge thinks New Day sucks but Big E. eats the kazoo. Well he stuck it in his mouth and threw it out but we'll say he ate it. The Dudleyz come up and tell New Day that the Prime Time Players get a title shot next week. The winners of that face the Dudleyz at Night of Champions. New Day freaks out but Bubba says now they can leave. Oh and the Dudleyz have a new song: GET! THE TABLES! GET! THE TABLES! With rhythmic clapping of course. Well that was awesome.

Here's Summer Rae, who is sad over everything that happened last week. We get the recap again, with Cole saying it "gripped the world." No Cole, it didn't. Also, Ziggler and Lana are WWE's power couple. Yes, he said power couple. Summer wants to apologize to the person who has been hurt so much in all this: Rusev.

This brings Rusev out so Summer can thank him for all of his inspiration. Last week when Ziggler invited her into his locker room, everything was just too much for her and she temporarily betrayed him. Rusev forgives her so Lana says "thank you Ru Ru." Rusev rips on Ziggler a bit, so here's Dolph with a message from Lana (who is out with a broken wrist) in the form of a superkick. I hate myself for starting to love this story.

### Randy Orton vs. Sheamus

Yes, AGAIN. Orton quickly takes him down in an armbar, likely because he's so bored by this pairing that he needs a rest. Back up and they're still in the feeling out process until a shoulder puts Sheamus on the floor. Sheamus gets back in and heads outside almost immediately (same idea as Rollins earlier). He yells at the fans on the mic but catches Orton coming out with the Irish Curse as we take a break.

Back with Sheamus holding a chinlock, followed by the Regal Roll. He demands that everyone respect the hawk and snaps Orton's throat across the top. The battering ram from the top gets two and the fans are really not interested here. The Cloverleaf doesn't work so Sheamus resurrects the Edgeucator (a Sharpshooter but with Sheamus pushing on the legs instead of pulling). Orton makes the ropes and comes back with the hanging DDT, only to charge into White Noise for two. The Brogue Kick misses though and the RKO ends Sheamus at 15:49.

**Rating:** C-. Not only was it boring but it wasn't even that good. These two just do not have chemistry and they've bored the crowd so many times now that I'm sick of both of them. I'm a fan of both guys but it's not an interesting match. Never let these two fight again and the show will be a lot more entertaining.

Post match the Wyatts surround Orton, who was seen talking to Reigns and Orton earlier. Orton gets destroyed by all three monsters and

Reigns/Ambrose aren't even nice enough to come out for a save.

Cole calls next week the season premiere, which of course is taking place on the show before a pay per view because THEY CAN'T EVEN GET A SCHEDULE RIGHT WHEN THEY MAKE UP THESE ARBITRARY DATES IN THE FIRST PLACE!!!

#### Los Matadores vs. Dudley Boyz

Diego takes Bubba down to start and the masked men get in some quick fast paced offense. That's the extent of the good for them though as D-Von comes in to clean house and 3D ends Fernando at 1:38.

Post match Los Matadores blame El Torito so the Dudleyz make the save. Fernando goes through a table.

#### Cesaro vs. The Miz

This is fallout from earlier tonight when Cesaro turned down Miz's offer to help publicize the Cesaro Section. Cesaro takes him down to start and easily throws Miz to the floor for some more of the beating. The fans are behind Cesaro as you might expect but Miz kicks Cesaro in the still banged up ribs to take over. Cesaro flips over the top rope because he's athletic like that, only to get dropped ribs first onto the top rope. Miz kicks him to the floor and sends Cesaro into the barricade a few times but here's Big Show to chase Miz around, causing a double countout at 4:17.

**Rating:** D-. So now we're doing Miz vs. Big Show vs. Cesaro? As in they're doing the same story they just did but with Cesaro instead of Ryback? This show has been a mess so far and it's not getting any better as it goes on. Can we please get something interesting instead of this lame stuff all over again?

Back from a break and it's Bella time. Nikki shows off the Bellatron and invites us all to the Bellabration next week when she breaks the record. This brings out PCB, with Charlotte making the announcement that she'll be challenging Nikki for the title next week instead of at Night of Champions. A brawl ensues and Nikki taps to the Figure Eight.

#### John Cena/Prime Time Players vs. New Day/Seth Rollins

A fan tries to follow Rollins to the ring but he's quickly stopped by security. Cena and Rollins get things going but it's off to Big E. before anything can happen. The NEW DAY SUCKS headlock goes on as Woods plays the trombone. Woods: "Cena's gonna learn today what some tricep meat feels like!" E. shoves Cena around as JBL does his best JR impression by making some football analogy that doesn't go anywhere. The belly to belly gets two on Cena and it's off to Rollins for some stomps. Big E. tags himself back in for the rotating stomps and Seth doesn't get the idea.

Back from a break with Kofi getting two on Cena off a high cross body. The SOS gets two more and Rollins breaks up a hot tag attempt. It's back to Big E. as Woods sits on the steps for some tromboning. E. misses the Warrior Splash and Titus finally gets the tag to clean house. Everything breaks down and Darren gives Woods the Gut Check, only to have Big E. suplexes Titus down. Cena and Rollins get tags and the Pedigree is countered into the STF, only to have Rollins get to the corner for the tag to Kofi. The second high cross body is rolled through into the AA to put Kofi down at 13:08.

**Rating:** C. Yeah fine. It's one of the better things on the show and that's a nice improvement after everything else we've had to go through tonight. Cena pinning Kofi is fine as New Day is firmly in a spot where they can get their heat back with one set of antics and a loss means little.

Cena does the Millions of Dollars dance before leaving Rollins alone in the ring. Sting appears on screen in front of the statue. The lights come up and the statue is in front of a garbage truck. I think you can guess what happens. Rollins grabs his titles to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** D. This was one of those shows where you were punished for being a fan. They didn't put in any effort on this one because no one. The worst part about this show is that it could have been good but they were clearly not trying. It was one of those shows where they were just here to fill in time before the real stuff starts up again next week on the season premiere, which can't be after Night of Champions because of reasons.

This show felt like it went on for about eight hours, but that's what you have to expect on a holiday. Of course they can't do something special here because they don't want to waste it, even though they never actually use these special ideas that they're allegedly saving. Not the worst show ever this week, but it was a LONG sit that would have been far better at two hours. I didn't say good, but at least better.

## Results

Sasha Banks b. Paige – Small package

Dean Ambrose/Roman Reigns b. Ascension – Dirty Deeds to Viktor

Ryback b. Seth Rollins – Small package

Randy Orton b. Sheamus – RK0

Dudley Boyz b. Los Matadores – 3D to Fernando

Cesaro vs. The Miz went to a double countout

John Cena/Prime Time Players b. New Day/Seth Rollins – Attitude Adjustment to Kingston

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