

Hell in a Cell 2016 Preview

It's time, once again, for that Halloween spectacle where WWE takes one of their biggest concepts and does it three times in one night before wondering why the thrill and mystique left so very long ago. It's time for "Hell in a Cell 2016" with three matches taking place inside the Cell, plus a handful of other matches that don't mean quite as much. Let's get to it.

We'll start on the Kickoff Show with Lince Dorado/Cedric Alexander/Sin Cara vs. Tony Nese/Ariya Daivari/Drew Gulak in a rematch from this week's "Superstars". Yeah the Kickoff Show is now copying the D show that only airs on the Network. The first match was something that indeed happened and I can't seem to remember anything else about it despite watching the match yesterday. My guess is that's due to the lack of personalities, characters or almost anything interesting about any of the six. I'll take Alexander and company to win on the grounds of a coin flip as there's not much to care about here.

We might as well get rid of the cruiserweights here with Cruiserweight Champion TJ Perkins defending against Brian Kendrick in the third match in a series that I don't think most people needed to see go to a second match. They've traded wins to set up Kendrick's second shot at the title, which is becoming less and less important every single week. I'll go with Kendrick getting the belt here as he already lost to Rich Swann, which would seem to set up Swann as the first challenger to the new champion. That makes enough sense, assuming you think having the cruiserweights around on the main roster still makes sense.

Let's go to something a little more fun as Enzo Amore/Big Cass face Anderson and Gallows. This is an interesting one as you have the highly entertaining and incredibly popular Amore and Cass, who have yet to actually win a regular tag match on pay per view while Anderson and Gallows came in hot and have floundered since the Draft. The question here is which one actually breaks through and

wins something.

I think I'll take Anderson and Gallows winning here as the whole idea of Anderson and Gallows wanting to crush the silliness out of the division makes sense if you're building towards Amore and Cass winning the titles at "Wrestlemania XXXIII". However, the idea of giving a team a new gimmick has never stopped WWE from having them lose on pay per view right out of the gate.

Anderson and Gallows seem to be more gatekeepers than contenders, which is kind of a shame on one hand but at the same time Amore and Cass eventually winning the titles is a better story. I'll go with the bald guys here with the promise of a bigger payoff for the popular guys later.

Let's go to one of the biggest matches as we step inside of the Cell for the first time with Roman Reigns defending the United States Title against Rusev. Once you get past the idea that Reigns has been the heel for most of this feud by doing stuff like attacking Rusev's wife and beating on a defenseless Rusev with a chair, there's been a very physical feud in there with both guys beating the heck out of each other.

I don't know why, but I think Rusev wins here. It's nothing but pure instinct, but I think they'll give the title back to the Bulgarian here and let Reigns move on up to the World Title scene again. Keeping in mind that my gut instincts are almost never right, take this one with a barrel or two of salt. However, I'm going to stick with that idea and say Rusev actually gets the belt back here, despite how little sense it would make in either the small or grand scheme of things.

Next up we'll look at something a bit less intense as Dana Brooke faces Bayley. This is another confusing one as Brooke won their most recent match, though it seemed to be a somewhat botched ending. Aside from that, Bayley hasn't exactly been on fire since she debuted on the main roster as the crowd is still behind her but there's not much of a spark to her.

I'll still take Bayley to win though as she has more potential as a

challenger to whoever walks out of the Women's Title match with the belt. Brooke isn't the most interesting thing in the world and is a good obstacle for Bayley to overcome. I really can't imagine a scenario of Brooke challenging for the title and unless Nia Jax is reappearing on "Monday Night Raw" to go after the title, this is Bayley's match to lose and there's no real reason to go any other direction.

We'll clear out the last non-Cell match with New Day defending the Tag Team Titles against Cesaro and Sheamus. Several people, including myself, have gone on several rants about how stupid it is to just throw Cesaro and Sheamus together after all those weeks of them fighting each other but ok, whatever. They're getting the title shot here.

That being said, there isn't the greatest case for new champions here. Sure New Day has gotten a little more stale over the last month or so, but they've held the titles for well over a year and are about six weeks away from setting the all time record. If WWE just MUST go with Cesaro and Sheamus as a team and wants them in the title picture, let New Day break the record and then go with the new champions sometime around Christmas. New Day should keep the belts here, not defend them at "Survivor Series 2016", and then lose them at some point in the future.

Now we'll move on to the two major matches, starting with Sasha Banks defending the Women's Title against Charlotte inside the Cell. This is the first time any women have participated in this particular match and on top of that it's in Banks' hometown of Boston. Why they didn't just wait until this show to do the title change isn't clear but the match being inside the Cell is a huge milestone for women's wrestling. If this match closes the show (more on that later), it's the biggest match in the women's wrestling history.

This is where I get scared of WWE as there's always a chance that they'll have the biggest layup imaginable and screw it up. Banks retaining here should be an easy concept but WWE seems to have no

problem crippling their stars' hometown fans. If Banks loses and this doesn't go on last, I have no idea how they expect the fans to care about the main event.

But yeah, Banks wins here and goes on to feud with either Bayley or Jax in the first part of the new year as we somehow get to the Four Horsewomen in a match at "Wrestlemania XXXIII". Charlotte will be fine as she regroups and fights someone else (I'm not sure who though.) but Banks should go over here.

That leaves us with the Raw World Title match as Kevin Owens defends against Seth Rollins. Where do you even start with this one? Owens is being overshadowed by Chris Jericho who doesn't have a role on this show and Rollins is being overshadowed by HHH, who may or may not show up tomorrow night for the sake of a slight advancement in this glacial paced story which seems to be setting up Rollins vs. HHH because that's the rub Rollins needs.

Rollins has even come close to saying that winning the title isn't the point here because it's all about impressing or showing up the Authority, which is the real title on this brand. Owens has been completely forgotten as champion as he was handed the belt as part of the HHH vs. Rollins feud and has since been turned into a glorified Jericho lackey. But somehow, this is one of the pay per view's main events.

I'll go with Owens retaining via HHH interference because you have to have some kind of cheating in a major match like this because that's how pay per view main events work. Rollins can go on to feud with HHH while Owens and Jericho probably get into it over the title, assuming Jericho is going to be sticking around and not going on tour with Fozzy instead. Owens wins here and is probably a lot worse off as a result because the title means that little anymore.

That leaves us with the big question: what goes on last? There have been stories all over the place about whether Rollins vs. Owens or Banks vs. Charlotte is the main event with "Monday Night Raw" General Manager Mick Foley officially saying it would be the women but then backtracking with the lame excuse of there can be multiple

main events.

Here's the thing: Banks vs. Charlotte main eventing is a major story and a first time ever moment that makes WWE look like they're trying to do something special. If Owens vs. Rollins goes on last, it's just not that interesting. They're in a lame feud and it's not going to matter to have them go on last. Just let the women, in Banks' hometown, do something historic for a change so the fans can have some fun.

Overall, this is a moderately interesting show on paper but I'm much more interested in the upcoming "Survivor Series 2016", which has left this one feeling pretty unimportant. Having three Cell matches waters the concept down but at least there's going to be a big feeling with something this big taking place...at least the first time they do it.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/heres-latest-whether-sashacharlotte-will-main-event-hell-cell/>

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NXT – October 26, 2016: My

Kind of Show

NXT

Date: October 26, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

It's the final night for the first round of the Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic. We're also less than a month away from Takeover: Toronto and that means it's time to start firming up a lot of the card. We already know a few of the matches so there won't be many surprises but NXT is great at putting pepper on the steak. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic: DIY vs. Hoho Lun/Tian Bing

Bing is the recently signed Chinese wrestler Bin Wang. Ciampa and Bing get things going with Wang looking good as he runs Ciampa over to start. A PSYCHO KILLER chant breaks out but switches to a Johnny Wrestling version as Gargano comes in to kick Lun in the head. Hoho gets in a dropkick and brings Tian back in for some strikes to the chest. A chinlock doesn't last long as Gargano kicks Bing's head off and brings Ciampa right back in. Johnny tags himself back in though and cuts Lun in half with the spear through the ropes. The double strike puts Lun away at 4:15.

Rating: B-. Lun and Bing were just speed bumps on the way to DIY (I really hope that doesn't catch on) vs. Revival III and that's the kind of thing that makes this tournament awesome. Bing looked good here and certainly has some experience. I don't know if he's ready for a full NXT run but I've seen far worse.

Kota Ibushi and TJ Perkins are ready for their first round match. Perkins says if this was high school, the cool table would be Ibushi times five. Ibushi thinks his overall rating is a 99. I don't understand what Ibushi just said. Can I get that translated to stars?

Recap of Samoa Joe vs. Shinsuke Nakamura.

Joe sees a scared man in Nakamura because he knows Joe could knock him out at any time. Nakamura knows the next NXT Champion is coming for him.

Aliyah vs. Billie Kay

Kay goes right after her to start and Aliyah's early jawbreaker has almost no effect. A seated Blockbuster works a bit better though and an enziguri staggers Billie. Kay comes right back with a discus forearm but here's Liv Morgan for a distraction, allowing Aliyah to grab a rollup for the pin at 1:48.

Post match the brawl is on and the Aussies leave both of them laying.

Tye Dillinger vs. Noah Potjes

Tye snapmares him down to start and that's a ten. That's not cool with Noah, who takes Tye into the corner for some kicks to the ribs. Tye turns it on and stomps Noah down, setting up the Tyebreaker for the pin at 1:38.

Post match, Tye says his opportunity is to get his hands on Bobby Roode, who jumps him from behind. The inverted DDT sends Tye head first into the stage.

TM61 is ready for their match with Austin Aries/Roderick Strong because they trust each other. They're also mighty and the mighty don't kneel.

Asuka vs. Thea Trinidad

Non-title. Asuka doesn't waste time and starts kicking at the legs before stopping for a little dance. Thea makes the mistake of hitting Asuka with a forearm and the champ is ticked off. A kick to the chest is easily caught and a German suplex into a Fujiwara armbar makes Trinidad tap at 1:45.

William Regal comes out post match and says he's found Asuka's latest opponent: MICKIE JAMES! You can hear the fans gasp when she comes on screen to cut a fairly lame promo about coming to face the

next star in the Women's Revolution. Asuka is very pleased with this announcement. Mickie was a last minute replacement for Trish Stratus, who had to back out due to announcing she was pregnant, hence why Mickie wasn't in the building.

Paul Ellering and the Authors of Pain think No Way Jose and Rich Swann will have fine futures in NXT but those futures will have to wait until after their destruction in the second round of the Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic. That match is next week.

Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic First Round: Mustafa Ali/Lince Dorado vs. TJ Perkins/Kota Ibushi

The winners face Sanity in the second round. Perkins is announced as the Cruiserweight Champion but doesn't have his belt for some reason. Dorado and Perkins kick us off and it's time to flip around the ring without making much contact. A standoff gets us nowhere as Graves offers the following Michael Cole style gem: "Most of the teams that have been successful so far have been tag teams."

Ibushi and Ali come in and the fans give Kota the kind of welcome you would expect. Ali is taken down in a test of strength but Kota can't break his bridge. They trade some kicks to the face with Ibushi getting the better of it as we take a break. Back with Perkins rolling suplexes on Ali and grabbing the kneebar. As is custom though, the first kneebar only results in the grabbing of a rope.

Perkins heads outside and that means a big flip dive from Dorado. Back in and Ali gets two off a neckbreaker but a faceplant allows the tag off to Ibushi so things can speed up. A moonsault from Kota and a frog splash from TJ combine for two. TJ dropkicks Dorado into the ropes to set up the Wrecking Ball dropkick. The kneebar makes Ali tap at 11:39.

Rating: B. This is the kind of match that you don't see on Raw because they have to cram in so much other stuff that there's no time for the cruiserweights to do their thing. Well that and the Raw crowds don't care for this stuff like the NXT fans do (just a different style of audience). Kota and Perkins are good for a dream

team but I'm not sure they're getting by Sanity.

Overall Rating: B. Of everything NXT does, this is my favorite kind of show: an hour of getting things done. This wrapped up the first round of the tournament, advanced some stories and set up some matches for next week. There's no wasted time and everything goes so smoothly from one segment to the next. Good show here and Toronto is looking better every week.

Results

DIY b. Hoho Lun/Tian Bing – Superkick/running knee combination to Lun

Aliyah b. Billie Kay – Rollup

Tye Dillinger b. Noah Potjes – Tyebreaker

Asuka b. Thea Trinidad – Fujiwara armbar

Kota Ibushi/TJ Perkins b. Mustafa Ali/Lince Dorado – Kneebar to Ali

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Monday Night Raw – October 24, 2016: Who Needs Sunday

and a Cell?

Monday Night Raw

Date: October 24, 2016

Location: Target Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, Corey Graves

The Beast is back tonight as Brock Lesnar is here for his first comments about his upcoming match with Goldberg. In addition to that we have two big matches including Sheamus and Cesaro vs. New Day in a non-title match and Chris Jericho vs. Seth Rollins vs. Kevin Owens in a triple threat. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's Jericho to open things up with some terrible news: tonight's triple threat match has been canceled until further notice. The fans aren't happy with that one but Jericho says it's because SOMEONE HAS STOLEN THE LIST OF JERICHO. Fans: "NO! NO! NO!" Jericho isn't leaving until the List is returned but here's Owens to interrupt. Owens doesn't care who has the List but he'll help Jericho find it once they get rid of Rollins.

Jericho says there's no triple threat match tonight but here's Stephanie McMahon to interrupt. She explains the idea of the triple threat (because Stephanie thinks all fans are idiots) and here's Rollins with the List. Jericho freaks out and Stephanie goes all screechy to say give it back.

Seth sees Stephanie mentioned as a stupid idiot but at the very bottom is Jericho's former best friend, Kevin Owens. Rollins wants to start a new list about Owens, who has no idea how it is inside the Cell. He'll also kick Owens' teeth down his throat and break his face with a Pedigree so he can teach HHH and Stephanie a lesson (because that's what really matters in this whole thing).

This segment showed how horribly uninteresting this whole thing is when Jericho isn't talking. Owens barely got to say anything and Rollins wants to win the title to show up HHH and Stephanie. Some

main event feud. Also, did Stephanie need to be here? Like at all? She came out, told Jericho to do the main event (which Owens had already done) and was insulted that she was on the list (like Owens a few seconds later).

Post break Stephanie tells Rollins to give the List back because the fans were promised a triple threat. Rollins vents about Stephanie's real intentions and says the List is in the locker room.

Enzo Amore vs. Karl Anderson

Anderson and Gallows have cut off Enzo's mic so he and the crowd do it with pure vocal power. Enzo fires off rights and lefts in the corner but dives into a spinebuster as we take an early break. Back with Enzo getting kicked in the face but stopping a charge in the corner. A rollup is broken up but Cass kicks Karl in the face to give Enzo the pin at 7:39.

Rating: D+. I almost had this whole match written from the opening bell because this was exactly what you would have expected these two to do. It's fine to set up the tag match and thank goodness we didn't hear any of Anderson and Gallows trying to be funny. Enzo and Cass need to win on Sunday as it's not like Anderson and Gallows can go much further into the hole.

Rusev says he slept like a baby last night because he gets his hands on Roman Reigns inside the Cell this Sunday. Reigns has done a lot of horrible things but now it's Rusev's chance to crush him for good. Simple and to the point here, as it should be.

New Day vs. Cesaro/Sheamus

Non-title. Before the match, New Day praises Cesaro but says Sheamus shames us because no one wants to see him. Woods is the odd man out here, which is kind of surprising as they're normally defending the titles. Cesaro's backbreaker gets two on Kofi and a double back elbows shows that Cesaro and Sheamus can actually work together. New Day quickly gets it together and takes Sheamus into the corner for the Unicorn Stampede.

Back from a break with Kofi in trouble and taking the ten forearms

to the chest. Cesaro misses a charge into the post and the hot tag brings in Big E. to deal with Sheamus. The Irish Curse gets two on Big E. and Cesaro's vertical suplex gets the same. The Midnight Hour is broken up but Kofi is launched straight into the uppercut. Sheamus Brogue Kicks Big E. for the pin at 11:45.

Rating: C+. Let's see. Yeah I'm checking here. Maybe...almost...nah I still don't care about Sheamus and Cesaro. They're still the same uninteresting pair that have been around since before Summerslam and still are little more than a rehash of the League of Nations having problems against New Day back in the spring. New Day needs to roll over them and give us the record in December. If you just have to give these two the belts after that then so be it but don't mess with the year plus run for this stupid idea.

We look back at Goldberg's return.

Jericho frantically looks for the List but runs into Titus O'Neil, the Shining Stars and Jinder Mahal, all of whom have something for him other than the List (Titus Brand, travel brochures and a breathing exercise).

Bayley vs. Dana Brooke

Bayley has a taped up shoulder after last week. Dana says not so fast because she doesn't like the idea of last week's win being called an upset. Tonight there's going to be another match but this time it's arm wrestling. Dana easily wins so Bayley offers to go left handed. Bayley starts to win and of course Dana decks her and turns the table over for the beatdown. A Bayley to Belly sends Dana running and thankfully cuts off the BORING chants. Can you blame the fans for not being impressed here?

Jericho is freaking out over the List when he runs into Stephanie, who isn't interested in helping him. Stephanie lists off everything she has going on and says Jericho is in the match, List or not. Chris says no List and no match, ya dig? That's not cool with the boss, who says Jericho wrestles or gets suspended.

Curtis Axel vs. Bo Dallas

Before the match, Axel does a really good speech about his Minnesota roots and being Curt Hennig's son. Bo starts fast but the Roll of the Dice is countered into a PerfectPlex for two. I bought that for a second. A running forearm drops Curtis and we hit the chinlock. Axel fights out and hits the running neck snap for two and that's it for his offense as Dallas grabs a rollup for the pin at 2:58. I've said Axel should be pushed as a face for years and this was more evidence that I'm right. It's also more evidence that WWE gets way too much pleasure out of having people lose in their hometown.

Video on Rich Swann.

Jericho is about to leave when a guy comes up to say he saw the List. Chris finds....Braun Strowman looking at it and asks for it back. Braun: "Say please." Strowman doesn't see Sami Zayn's name on the List but gives it back anyway. Jericho says it's on page four and since Braun touched his personal property, HE JUST MADE THE LIST!

Roman Reigns talks about being in the Cell, which Rusev hasn't experienced. Reigns takes this personally and is ready to do anything to keep the title on Sunday.

We run down the card for Sunday's show.

Golden Truth vs. Shining Stars

Mark Henry is with Golden Truth and Titus is with the Stars, which makes me feel a bit better about their earlier segment. It's really nice to have them actually have a reason to be in the back instead of just showing up for a cameo. I love little things like that. Corey is reading a brochure as the Stars come out to the ring as he needs to get his mom a birthday gift.

Primo is dropped by Goldust to start but some double teaming puts him down. The snap powerslam puts Epico down and everything breaks down with Titus low bridging Truth to the floor. Henry shoves Titus into the ropes to crotch Epico, setting up a flapjack into Little Jimmy for the pin at 4:02.

Rating: D. Can someone take this show behind the barn and shoot it

already? I'll actually give this match a little credit: they're trying to build something out of nothing and it could be a lot worse. I mean, there's at least something there and a moderate attempt to be interesting. It's not really working and the match feels like a nacho break but I'll take what I can get.

Mick Foley is in the ring for the contract signing between Sasha Banks and Charlotte. They talk about how big of a moment this is going to be, only to have Foley go into his annual rant about how evil the Cell is. Charlotte calls Sasha an entitled second rate talent who will learn respect from the Queen this Sunday. Sasha is ready to crawl up the ramp broken and bloodied as long as she has the Women's Title. They trade insults but Foley cuts them both off to say he's their future. Dude if the Cell is going to turn them into 6'4men with long beards, maybe we should cancel the match.

As expected, the fans chant for Foley, thereby completely missing the point of this segment. Foley met Charlotte as a child and his kids gave Sasha their signed photo of Eddie Guerrero. More insults and a double signing FINALLY wrap this up. Charlotte vs. Sasha in a major gimmick match is fine but no one, like NO ONE, buys that the match is going to be all violent and career threatening like Foley is pushing and that kills the idea.

Emmalina video.

Brian Kendrick vs. Rich Swann

TJ Perkins is on commentary. As Kendrick makes his entrance, we see clips of his run from seven to ten years ago. It's very sad that the #1 contender to a title doesn't even have enough video from his current run for a highlight reel. In case you didn't know, Perkins runs down his history with Kendrick (Brian was his mentor) for the millionth or so time.

Swann flips over Brian and hits a good looking dropkick. A spinning dive to the floor takes Kendrick down and we head to a break. Back with Swann fighting out of a chinlock and snapping off a top rope hurricanrana. What looks like a victory roll is broken up but Swann slips out of the Captain's Hook and grabs a cradle for the pin at

9:14.

Rating: C. So Swann, who looked a lot better here, pins the #1 contender for a title that has no heat going into a pay per view title match. I get that Swann is likely the next challenger but they're ruining this division more week by week. I'll spare you another list of problems and just say Swann looked good here and go on.

Owens promises violence on Sunday but he's the only one coming back.

Braun Strowman vs. Sami Zayn

This has the potential to be good so let's see how they can screw it up. Before the bell, Strowman says he wants competition but he doesn't see that in front of him. Strowman shoves him away but Sami low bridges him to the floor. This goes badly for Sami as he dives at Braun, only to get thrown into the barricade. Strowman walks away and there's no match.

Kendrick comes in to see Perkins and says the clock is ticking on his career. If TJ loses on Sunday, he'll bounce back. If Brian loses, that's it for feeding his family. TJ walks away.

Here are Brock Lesnar and Paul Heyman with something to say. Heyman does his usual schtick about how Lesnar will smash Goldberg, only to have the Goldberg chants cut him off. Heyman calls out the fan that started them and says they're getting on Brock's nerves. After their match, all of the chants in the world won't be able to put Goldberg back together again. Suplexes are promised and the fans go back and forth with SUPLEX CITY/GOLDBERG chants. Heyman rips on them and the chant turns into GOLDBERG SUCKS....to wrap this up. Ok then. There was NOTHING here and it didn't need Brock at all.

Owens and Jericho have a meeting before the triple threat with Chris asking if their friendship means as much as the title. Kevin smiles it off and doesn't really answer. Jericho says they'll still be best friends no matter what but Kevin looks concerned.

Seth Rollins vs. Chris Jericho vs. Kevin Owens

Non-title. They play keep away to start until Owens gets kicked out

to the floor. A Blockbuster gets two on Jericho but Owens pulls Seth outside. The champ is sent into the barricade but Jericho throws Seth into the crowd. Back in and Owens scores with a clothesline, only to have Rollins avoid the Cannonball. The Pedigree doesn't work on either Canadian but the Lionsault hits Seth's knees.

Owens saves his buddy from a Pedigree and it's time for the double teaming. The handicap portion continues until Owens is low bridged to the floor. Jericho eats the low superkick and Rollins dives onto Kevin. Seth misses the frog splash and eats a Codebreaker for two. Owens comes back in and slaps Rollins a lot as the STUPID IDIOT chants kick in. Rollins escapes a double superplex and pins both guys at the same time with a double rollup at 10:00.

Rating: C+. The match was fun but it's WAY too late in the night to really matter. Rollins pinning the champ is appropriate as Owens has been a huge afterthought in this entire story. That also makes four straight times that Rollins has pinned Jericho so you certainly can't say he's getting too many wins.

Post match Owens and Jericho destroy Rollins by sending him hard into the steps. We're still not done though as Rollins runs up the ramp and dives at Owens, only to get beaten down again. Owens gives him the Apron Bomb and walks back up the ramp to get his title so some posing can end the show.

Overall Rating: D-. What a dog of a show this was. There was no effort here and their best idea was to say "Raw Exclusive Pay Per View" over and over as many times as they could. This was every lame idea they could come up with in three hours with almost no one really trying and the show feeling even longer than usual. The worst part is the show wasn't even the worst. What it was was lacking energy and that's as bad as it's going to get. Horrible stuff here and little more than making me want to get to Survivor Series instead of caring about Sunday.

Results

Enzo Amore b. Karl Anderson – Rollup

Cesaro and Sheamus b. New Day – Brogue Kick to Big E.

Bo Dallas b. Curtis Axel – Rollup

Golden Truth b. Shining Stars – Flapjack into Little Jimmy to Epico

Rich Swann b. Brian Kendrick – Oklahoma Roll

Seth Rollins b. Kevin Owens and Chris Jericho – Double rollup

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News and Notes – October 14, 2016

I don't normally do this but there was so much news yesterday that I had to take a quick look at some of it.

1. TJ Perkins Replaces Hideo Itami in Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic.

Itami is out for awhile with a neck injury so Kota Ibushi needed a new partner. In this case, there really isn't a better option than Perkins. I'm very glad they didn't go with a random Japanese wrestler for the sake of having a Japanese team. Instead it's two guys with a history together and something like a dream team.

2. Mickie James to Face Asuka at Takeover: Toronto.

This is a very smart idea and the best thing NXT could have done. It's no secret that the rest of the women in NXT aren't ready to

challenge Asuka and it would have been a waste of a Takeover match to have her squash one of them. James can come in and give Asuka a good match while the other women get ready. I know I say this a lot but it show thinking, which is where NXT specializes.

3. Roderick Strong Debuts in NXT.

Strong is one of my favorites in ROH so again I have few complaints here. He's teaming with Austin Aries in the Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic, which means it's possible they'll feud in the future. They've got history together so why not put them in the tournament and see where it goes from there? It's worth a shot and there's nothing wrong with having another veteran on the roster.

Monday Night Raw – October 10, 2016: What's The Story?

Monday Night Raw

Date: October 10, 2016

Location: Oracle Arena, Oakland, California

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

We're less than three weeks away from Hell in a Cell and only one of the namesake matches has been set up so far. The interesting question is what will be the second (if not the third): Seth Rollins vs. Kevin Owens or Charlotte vs. Sasha Banks. Both have been announced for the show but neither has officially been announced as taking place inside the Cell. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's Sasha Banks to get things going. Sasha says she's on top of the world right now and wishes Eddie Guerrero a happy birthday. She spent years watching Eddie lie, cheat and steal his way to the top. Last week she was in the main event of Raw, just like Trish Stratus and Lita were all those years ago. Sasha knows the rematch is coming

at Hell in a Cell so let's put it inside the Cell for the first time ever.

Cue Charlotte but Rusev (now with sideburns) and Lana of all people come out to interrupt. Rusev says no one cares about this women's revolution but Charlotte takes the mic from him and, with Stephanie style tones, asks Rusev who he thinks he is. The match with Sasha is on inside the Cell.

Rusev takes the mic back and says good for you but he wasn't done. This time it's Sasha taking the mic away and throwing it to the mat. Lana says Sasha and Charlotte need to learn their place because they're whining like little girls. That earns Lana a shove down and Rusev gets dropkicked out to the floor. Roman Reigns comes out to prevent the male on female violence. The match really doesn't need to be inside the Cell from a storyline perspective but this is the next logical step for the women being treated as equals and there's nothing wrong with that.

Here's New Day to talk about the history of sports in Oakland, including the Splash Brothers and the Bash Brothers. That brings them to the most famous friends though: Danny Tanner and Uncle Jesse. See, there's about to be a full house because New Day is three of a kind and they're about to deal with a pair in Cesaro and Sheamus. Kofi has a hot garbage sign to describe Sheamus and Woods says the title match at the pay per view will prove that New Day rocks.

Cesaro vs. Kofi Kingston

Cesaro shoulders him down to start as we hear about Demolition's record again. Apparently Sheamus is on Facebook while he's sitting on the steps, not watching the match. They head outside for a staredown as we take a break. Back with Kofi getting two off a middle rope crossbody as Sheamus is still on Facebook. Trouble in Paradise misses and it's time for the Uppercut Train. Kofi escapes a Sharpshooter attempt but tweaks his leg on a springboard attempt. Sheamus decides to go after Francesca and the distraction lets Kofi small package Cesaro for the pin at 7:45.

Rating: C. This was more about advancing the story than the match itself and that worries me. The announcers kept talking about how Cesaro and Sheamus have no chance to win the titles, making me think that's exactly what's going to happen. New Day has gone on WAY too long to let this thrown together team beat them for the belts two months before they break a nearly thirty year old record.

Tonight it's Charlotte/Rusev vs. Reigns/Banks. Am I missing something or did Charlotte dropkick Rusev earlier tonight?

We see Goldberg's comments on "Sportscenter", where he said he'd love to face Brock Lesnar again.

Bayley vs. Cami Fields

Cami starts fast with some shoulders in the corner and stomps her way out of a sunset flip attempt. That's about it though as the Bayley to Belly finishes Fields at 2:19.

Dana Brooke jumps Bayley post match.

Chris Jericho is on the phone with someone and says he wants a pay day. R-Truth comes up and offers him a Payday candy bar. I'll take it if Jericho doesn't want it.

Drew Gulak/Tony Nese vs. Sin Cara/Lince Dorado

You knew Cara would be involved in this sometime. Gulak and Dorado start things off but an early headscissors means it's off to Nese. Dorado gets taken into the wrong corner as the fans are dying by the second. A Gory Special has Dorado in trouble and it's back to Nese for a chinlock. It's back to Cara for a moonsault to both villains and a springboard crossbody for two on Gulak. Everything breaks down and Cara suicide dives onto Nese. Dorado hits a shooting star press to pin Gulak at 3:17.

Rating: C+. The best thing they could do here is get them out of the ring quickly. This division isn't working and there's really no hiding that anymore. Would it really kill them to let some of these guys talk about something other than being athletes and wanting to prove that they're the best in the world? Like, giving them some characters etc?

Stephanie McMahon invites herself to join Mick Foley's Cell address. Here are the bosses with Stephanie making fun of Foley's red flannel suit. In what sounds like a Home Shopping Network ad, Foley and Stephanie talk about the Women's Title match being inside the Cell and confirm it for a second time tonight. But wait: there's more. In a THIRD Cell match, Seth Rollins will be challenging for Kevin Owens' Raw World Title as well.

This brings out Chris Jericho and Kevin Owens to say Mick has outdone himself this week. Owens doesn't want to be in the Cell because he doesn't want to be an old, broken down man like Foley. Jericho wants to know if he and Kevin can have their own private jet if Mick is just throwing out presents. The recklessness involved in putting Owens in the Cell means FOLEY JUST MADE THE LIST! Foley: "I started the List." Jericho: "YOU JUST MADE THE LIST AGAIN!"

Stephanie tells Jericho to show Foley respect (MAKE UP YOUR FREAKING MIND ALREADY STEPHANIE!!! TWO WEEKS AGO YOU TREATED FOLEY LIKE A THREE YEAR OLD AND NOW JERICHO NEEDS TO RESPECT HIM???) so she has an idea: if Jericho can beat Rollins tonight, he's in the title match as a triple threat. Because Raw needs to top Smackdown's triple threat!

Rollins says Stephanie loves to pull strings and is always five moves ahead. Tonight though, he's going to ruin those plans by beating Jericho. Rollins wants to know what Owens is thinking though because Jericho might go into business for himself.

Curtis Axel/Bo Dallas vs. Enzo Amore/Big Cass

And never mind as Anderson and Gallows jump Enzo and Cass from behind before the match starts. No match.

After a break, Axel and Dallas say they want a tag match.

Curtis Axel/Bo Dallas vs. Sami Zayn/Neville

Bo beats on Sami in the corner to start as we hear about Foley making three Cell matches. Well given that they were all challenges issues by wrestlers, that's not the most impressive things in the world. Axel takes over on Sami and hits a good looking dropkick. Not

that it matters as an exploder suplex sets up the Helluva Kick and the Red Arrow for the easy pin on Axel at 2:28.

Lana comes into Charlotte's locker room and snipe at each other a bit.

R-Truth vs. Titus O'Neil

Apparently Titus is mad about Truth getting the commercial for Payday earlier tonight. Titus throws Truth around to start as Graves plugs the Titus Brand. Goldust gets on the steps for a distraction and Truth grabs a rollup (with Titus' feet in the ropes) for the pin at 2:12. That's the second distraction finish tonight.

TJ Perkins comes in to see Brian Kendrick and talks about how Kendrick deserves another shot at the title. They shake hands but Kendrick goes after him, earning a right hand from the champ.

Braun Strowman vs. Splash Brothers

The Brothers are Steven and Clay. Strowman treats them like you would expect and splashes Steven while Clay is on Braun's back. A double dropkick puts the Brothers down and it's a running powerslam for Clay. Steven is reversed chokeslammed onto his brother for the pin at 59 seconds.

Braun still wants better competition. In other words: nothing changed this week and the writers get to stretch it out even more.

Roman Reigns and Sasha talk strategy.

Of all things, we get the Rumble by the Numbers video. Tickets go on sale soon it seems.

Charlotte/Rusev vs. Roman Reigns/Sasha Banks

The genders have to match so we start with multiple tags before any contact. Rusev punches Reigns to start and a clothesline gets two. Reigns starts a comeback as the fans want Sasha. The villains are knocked to the floor and we take a break. Back with Reigns caught in a chinlock and more WE WANT SASHA chants. A Superman Punch allows the tag to Charlotte, meaning it's off to Sasha to clean house. Wouldn't it have been smarter to not have Rusev tag so the advantage

isn't lost? The double knees in the corner get two on Charlotte and the Bank Statement makes her tap at 9:48.

Rating: D+. Well that happened and it was nowhere near as amazing as the announcers tried to make it seem. The fans really didn't seem to care about Rusev vs. Reigns as there's almost no way Rusev is getting the title back and everyone knows it. There was nothing to the match anyway and the sudden ending didn't help things.

Tom Phillips asks Jericho and Owens about the possible change to the title match at the pay per view. Jericho: "That's a stupid idiom." Jericho says if one of them is champion, both of them are champion. Owens throws Phillips out but since Tom doesn't get out fast enough, HE MAKES THE LIST, under the name Felipe Thomastein.

We see the Goldberg clip again.

Here's Paul Heyman to discuss said Goldberg comments but first we get another WWE2K17 video, this time of Lesnar vs. Goldberg. Heyman has heard people whispering about Goldberg returning for years now because they want one more spear and Jackhammer. You still hear the chants today and there they go again.

Everyone that got in the same ring as Goldberg was conquered while he was running parallel to Brock Lesnar. It keeps Heyman up at night that Goldberg is one up on Brock so as of tonight, Goldberg is officially challenged to a fight any place anytime. Goldberg can either live in the past or step in this ring and be conquered. In Suplex City, Goldberg is next.

Emmalina video.

TJ Perkins vs. Ariya Daivari

Non-title with Brian Kendrick on commentary. Daivari has to go to the ropes to get out of an early kneebar and we hit the chinlock on Perkins. A neckbreaker gets two on TJ but he comes right back with one of his own. The slingshot dropkick sets up the kneebar to make Daivari tap at 5:14.

Rating: D+. This might have been my breaking point for the division. These matches aren't interesting and having random people who

happened to be in the tournament job to Perkins isn't helping things. It's just a total misfit on this show and nothing they're doing is making it any better. Either make it interesting or scrap the thing already.

Jericho and Stephanie run into each other with Chris saying he thought about putting her on the list. Stephanie is cool with that though, as long as the Raw triple threat beats Smackdown's triple threat. Jericho needs to remember that Stephanie can't help him inside the Cell. Not that Jericho asked about it but Stephanie seems to think everyone needs her help. Owens comes up and asks what that was about but Jericho just says friendship.

Hispanic Heritage Month video on Tito Santana. It's nice to have it be about a wrestler again.

A Tweet from Goldberg says he'll be on Raw next week.

Seth Rollins vs. Chris Jericho

If Jericho wins, the Universal Title match becomes a triple threat. Rollins doesn't care for having a toothpick thrown in his face so he smacks Jericho around. A Blockbuster gets two for Seth and Jericho bails to the floor, only to get caught by a slingshot dropkick. Cue Owens for a distraction so Jericho can take over and we take a break.

Back with Jericho kicking Rollins off the top and slapping on an abdominal stretch. Rollins sends him face first into the middle turnbuckle and gets two off a Sling Blade (which Jericho called loudly). Seth goes up top and slams Jericho off, only to have his crossbody dropkicked out of the air. The low superkick gets two on Jericho but Owens offers a distraction, allowing Jericho to grab the Walls.

A belt shot from Owens gets the same and Rollins takes him down with a suicide dive. The springboard knee to the head gets two on Jericho but he avoids the frog splash. A Lionsault gives Jericho a near fall of his own but he misses a high crossbody. Jericho reverses the Pedigree into another Walls attempt, only to get small packaged for

the pin at 19:14.

Rating: B-. The ending was more of a relief than anything else as I really, really didn't need to sit through another triple threat title match, especially inside the Cell. Rollins vs. Owens isn't the most interesting thing in the world but Jericho can go and do something else instead of trying to salvage this upper midcard feud. Post match Owens and Jericho beat on Seth but Rollins fights back and gives Jericho a Pedigree as Owens bails to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. What is the top story on Raw right now? Is it the Lesnar vs. Goldberg? Jericho/Owens vs. Rollins? One half of Raw vs. Smackdown? Charlotte vs. Sasha? The problem is nothing is standing out right now and it's hard to care about a bunch of stories that feel like they belong in the upper midcard. I can't even blame it on Stephanie this week (though her defending Foley had my jaw dropping) because it's a recurring problem. Owens has had his legs cut off as he's really just an afterthought at the moment in what feels like multiple feuds.

There's too much stuff going on near the top and the LONG list of midcard and lower card feuds and stories don't help things. Tonight you had two cruiserweight matches, that stupid Titus Brand stuff, the random tag feuds and Braun Strowman and I'm probably forgetting some. They need to trim some of this stuff down and stop trying to throw so much bad, unfocused stuff at us at the same time.

Results

Kofi Kingston b. Cesaro – Small package

Bayley b. Cami Fields – Bayley to Belly

Sin Cara/Lince Dorado b. Drew Gulak/Tony Nese – Shooting star press to Nese

Sami Zayn/Neville b. Curtis Axel/Bo Dallas – Red Arrow to Axel

R-Truth b. Titus O'Neil – Rollup

Braun Strowman b. Splash Brothers – Reverse chokeslam to Steven

Sasha Banks/Roman Reigns b. Rusev/Charlotte – Bank Statement to

Charlotte

TJ Perkins b. Ariya Daivari – Kneebar

Seth Rollins b. Chris Jericho – Small package

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Monday Night Raw – September 26, 2016: I Didn't Want It To Be This Way

Monday Night Raw

Date: September 26, 2016

Location: US Bank Arena, Cincinnati, Ohio

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

We're past Clash of Champions and this is going to be an interesting show. The key here is Raw's competition as they're up against Monday Night Football and a Presidential debate that is likely going to break a lot of viewership records. Kevin Owens is still Raw World Champion and Roman Reigns picked up the US Title from Rusev last night it's time to start looking towards the Cell. Let's get to it.

One more note: I was in the arena for the show last night so this is

my second time seeing this.

There's no intro as we're heading straight for the opening match. Translation: PLEASE DON'T CHANGE THE CHANNEL YET! I can completely accept this.

US Title: Roman Reigns vs. Rusev

Rematch from last night with Reigns defending. The fans want Lana as Rusev takes him down with a front facelock. That's going to keep the people from watching the debate. Reigns is cheered quite strongly as he kips out of a headscissors but gets double legged back to the mat.

Rusev gets one off a suplex and starts in on Reigns' back. The nine corner clotheslines get Reigns out of trouble but he can't lift Rusev up for the powerbomb because of the back injury. We take a break and come back with Rusev putting on a bearhug to keep up the simple psychology. A dropkick hits Reigns in the mouth and some gutwrench suplexes get two. Back to the waistlock as the match slows down again.

Reigns fights up with more clotheslines and a big boot but the Superman Punch is countered, sending them both falling out to the floor. We come back from another break with Reigns headbutting him off the top and hitting a middle rope clothesline. Geez man enough with the Lex Luger style offense.

Reigns still can't powerbomb him so Rusev gets in a spinwheel kick. More headbutts and another kick to the head give Rusev another two. Reigns' latest comeback is stopped with a superkick and the fans are really getting into this in a way you almost never hear for a Reigns match. The Accolade is broken up but Lana offers a distraction to break up the Superman Punch. The apron kick staggers Rusev (and gets a great reaction from the crowd) and they fight into the crowd for a double countout at 25:38.

Rating: B. The match was another good outing for the two of them and the ending sets up a rematch in the Cell, which is going to receive a divided reception depending on your taste in Cell matches. Maybe it was just the Cincinnati crowd or maybe it's because he's in the midcard instead of the main event but Reigns was getting a great reaction here. This is the kind of role he's made for: an athletic freak who can take a beating and give out one of his own. Good match here.

Post match Rusev gets a chair and hits Reigns over the back. They get inside and Reigns gets in a spear to put Rusev down. Reigns sits in the chair and poses with the belt before hitting Rusev with the chair to even things up.

WWE2K17 ad with Ambrose's appearance getting a huge pop.

Here's Mick Foley for a chat about last night's Cesaro vs. Sheamus match. The thought of the series ending in a draw seemed to be a mathematical impossibility (not really) but that's what's happened. Foley brings out Sheamus and Cesaro with Sheamus almost immediately cutting him off to say this was about physical dominance.

Cesaro talks about doctors holding Sheamus back last night and an argument breaks out over who was more dominant. Foley cuts them off to say they're both right and they're both getting a championship opportunity....which they're getting together as they're fighting for the Tag Team Titles. Cesaro: "SAY WHAT???" Foley tells them to get over it and just team together because that's his decision.

I had a very bad feeling that this was where they were going and while it's not the worst idea in the world (Raw is dying for tag teams at the moment), it feels like the TNA way of getting here: a bunch of matches that did nothing but fill time until we get to the end result. Sheamus and Cesaro had some good matches (even one very good one) but they drove the feud into the ground to the point where I didn't care how good the matches were since I had absolutely no desire to watch them.

And now, none of that matters because they're basically saying the whole thing was a tie and we're just going to do something different. It comes off as lazy booking and a way to fill in time, which is one of the worst things you can do in wrestling. I'm sure they'll be a decent team but they better not cut New Day's title reign off this close to the record.

Tag Team Titles: New Day vs. Anderson and Gallows

New Day is defending in a rematch from last night after Xavier Woods used Francesca II. The match starts fast with Kofi having to dodge a diving Anderson. It's off to Big E. for the Unicorn Stampede with Woods blowing the trombone in time with the stomps. Gallows, apparently not a music fan, pulls Big E. out to the floor and superkicks him in the face.

Anderson adds a running kick to the face for two and the champs are in quick trouble. Gallows gets in a chokeslam and we take a break. Anderson's powerbomb gets two and we hear about Demolition's title reign being in reach. A kick to the head finally allows the hot tag to Big E. for the suplexes. Big E. misses a charge into the post though and a running boot to the face gets two.

That's enough of being on defense for Big E. so he spears Anderson through the ropes, setting up the Midnight Hour for two with Gallows making the save. Kofi is sent shoulder first into the steps and the Magic Killer gets a very close two on Big E. They had me on that near fall. A VERY bloody Kofi comes back in and hits Trouble in Paradise to pin Anderson and retain the titles at 11:03.

Rating: C+. They're doing really well at making me buy into the title changes here and that's hard to do when it comes to a regular TV title defense. Anderson and Gallows are done as challengers now and I'm really not sure where they go from here. Sheamus and Cesaro are fine for placeholder challengers but New Day really should break the record when they're this close. It would be a waste of time not to.

We look at Kevin Owens injuring Seth Rollins' ribs in their match at Clash of Champions. Stephanie McMahon sent a second referee down for the count, seconds after Rollins would have had the title won. After the show ended, HHH arrived and asked Stephanie how it went ("Great.").

Sheamus and Cesaro (back in his suit) are bickering when Foley comes in. Mick starts yelling about how much potential these two have together because they could shake up the tag division. He'll even give them a chance tonight in a tag match. Foley showed a lot of fire here, as is his custom. Remember that.

Bayley vs. Anna Fields

Fields chokes her on the ropes to start and we hit an early chinlock. Bayley comes back with her elbows and clotheslines, setting up a quick Bayley to Belly for the pin at 2:04.

Post match Bayley says she's not done with Sasha and Charlotte after that triple threat because she wants to hug that Women's Title.

And now, the bad part of the show. Foley goes in to see Stephanie and asks about the referee issue in last night's main event and

telling HHH it was great. Stephanie ERUPTS on Foley, talking about how it should have been his responsibility to get a new referee out there. Instead, he was probably with Sheamus and Cesaro because he thinks with his heart instead of his head. She hired him because of his mind as a businessman (Huh?) and wants him to be more like her. Instead of showing the fire he had earlier, Foley just stands there and takes this because she's Stephanie.

This is every problem with Stephanie rolled into one promo. Not only is it part of a story that is taking WAY too long to go anywhere (I'd be shocked if we get any real resolution before the Royal Rumble) but this is Mick Foley, a three time WWE World Champion and a WWE Hall of Famer. He's one of the best talkers with some of the best fire of all time but he's standing here cowering in front of Stephanie because that's what happens to people around her.

Brock Lesnar, Charlotte, Sting, Roman Reigns and now Mick Foley all have nothing to say back to her because she's Stephanie and the most intimidating presence of all time. Oh except for when she's fun Stephanie who dances with kids and is just a regular soccer mom. This has been going on for years now (keep in mind that Stephanie debuted SEVENTEEN YEARS AGO and first became an authority figure in 2000) and if we're lucky she gets one bit of comeuppance a year. Other than that it's all Stephanie browbeating everyone else and if you don't like it, deal with it because she's Stephanie.

Rich Swann/Cedric Alexander vs. Drew Gulak/Lince Dorado

Swann and Alexander get an inset promo talking about how they're here to have fun but they're not underestimating their opponents. This didn't air in the arena and it would have helped quite a bit. Gulak and Dorado get their Cruiserweight Classic videos and again they're better than nothing. We get the big handshake to start for a compliment to the purple ropes, which take forever to set up and take down.

Dorado and Swann trade headscissors to start and nip into a stalemate. Everything breaks down and Dorado moonsaults onto all three as we take an early break. Back with Drew holding Swann in a chinlock before it's back to Dorado for some chops. The hot tag bring in Alexander for some forearms and a running kick to Gulak's head. A Lumbar Check sends Dorado to the floor and Swann sunset flips Gulak for the pin at 8:25.

Rating: C. This was the big popcorn break match of the night and it's still not hard to see why. Again, the wrestling is fine but the whole division is being wedged into a show that is already bloated. Swann and Alexander have some personality but Dorado and Gulak are just warm bodies in the eyes of the fans. It's better than last week but they still need some adjustments to make people care.

Cesaro/Sheamus vs. Nick Cutler/Willis Williams

Cesaro takes Cutler over with a one armed delayed vertical suplex but Sheamus drops to the floor instead of tagging in. For some reason he gets on the apron with his back to the ring so Cesaro can tag him in with a slap. The ten forearms make it even worse for Cutler and it's off to Williams, who is taken down with a hard clothesline. The jobbers actually start working on Cesaro's arm for a few seconds before Sheamus Brogue Kicks both guys. Cesaro pins the unconscious Williams at 3:33.

Rating: D+. This was exactly what it needed to be, though it's still forced and something that should have come months ago without the long feud in the first place. We haven't had a wacky partnership that went somewhere important since Kane and Daniel Bryan so this is as good as anything else they have.

Video on TJ Perkins.

TJ talks about wanting to be here for eighteen years but here's Brian Kendrick to interrupt. Kendrick says it's his title to win because Perkins owes him for his career. A brawl is teased and they'll fight at some point in the future.

Here are Charlotte and Dana Brooke for a chat. Charlotte says last night was another chance for everyone to be disappointed because that's what she does time after time. She's not the huggable Bayley or the internet darling Sasha Banks. Cue Sasha to say that's her title because Charlotte didn't beat her last night. Sasha is owed a one on one match and she wants it right now. Charlotte tells the YESing fans to be quiet so she can tell Sasha that she'll get her rematch....next week. Sasha cleans house and the villains leave.

Rollins is on his way to the ring to interrupt the upcoming Highlight Reel but Foley cuts him off because Seth isn't medically cleared. All Rollins can hear are Stephanie's words coming out of Mick's mouth.

TJ Perkins vs. Tony Nese

Non-title with both guys being TNA castoffs because they're dumb that way. The much stronger Nese throws Perkins around to start and he cartwheels out of TJ's ankle scissors to show off. An early kneebar attempt doesn't work for TJ as Nese sends him outside for a superkick and a big dive to take us to a break. Back with Perkins grabbing a Black Widow but getting planted with a reverse gutwrench suplex.

The fans chant for Harambe (the gorilla who was shot at the Cincinnati Zoo, which was a recurring trend all night long) and CM Punk as TJ fights back with uppercuts and a jumping neckbreaker out of the corner. A gutbuster looks to set up a tornado DDT but Perkins is draped over the top rope instead. TJ is right back up with the fireman's carry into an enziguri (Fans: "RANDY SAVAGE!") and the kneebar makes Nese tap at 8:50.

Rating: C+. I know the fans don't care but this was entertaining stuff, partially because we have a reason to care about Perkins. Something as simple as being the champion tells us more about him than we know about anyone else and the announcers did a good job of building Nese up as the perfect athlete who could take down the champ. Good little match here, though the fans really didn't care.

Hispanic Heritage Month video on Pedro Morales.

Sasha vs. Charlotte and Perkins vs. Kendrick for the respective titles next week.

Ashton Kutcher and Danny Masterson are going to be in Los Angeles next week to take care of Chris Jericho and Kevin Owens.

It's time for the Highlight Reel. Jericho tells us to be quiet about a dozen times because this is the most anticipated Highlight Reel in WWE history. Before Owens comes out here though, Jericho has a bone to pick with Masterson and Kutchner, who have the nerve to claim that they're better friends. Jericho: "THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!" That's so unthinkable that they're both about to make the List of Jericho.

It's almost time for Owens to come out but Jericho yells at the cameraman for shooting him from the wrong side, which means HE MADE THE LIST! Rollins is on there too because he got hurt again last night. Owens comes out and praises the Jeritron 5000 but says he's not about to wear a suit for a place like Cincinnati, Ohio. What

kind of town can this be when it created Dean Ambrose? Jericho: "HE STILL OWES ME \$17,000!"

Owens moves on to Rollins and says the rib injury is karma after all the people Seth injured over the last year and a half. Cue Rollins but security and Foley pull him back. Instead here are Enzo Amore and Big Cass to interrupt and ask Jericho how they're doing. Jericho says they're just fine but Enzo and Cass ARE ON THE LIST.

After Owens corrects Jericho's spelling, Cass accuses Jericho of being Santa Claus. Jericho: "Maybe I am Santa Claus! Maybe I'll come down there and sit on your lap!" Cass points out that people sit on Santa's lap but Jericho said he was going to punch Cass in the face. A fan poll makes Jericho even angrier but as it turns out, Foley just made a match between these four.

Enzo Amore/Big Cass vs. Chris Jericho/Kevin Owens

Jericho and Enzo start us off but first we need to pause for the scarf removal. An armdrag has Jericho so frustrated that he crawls over for a hug from Owens. Kevin comes in and gets dropped by Cass so it's time to launch another human being over the top rope as a projectile. Sidewalk slams have the Canadians in trouble but Jericho sidesteps a charge to send Cass outside as we take a break.

Back with Enzo pounding on Jericho in the corner and getting two off a high crossbody. Owens offers a quick distraction though and it's time for the villains to take over. Thankfully that means Owens doing Enzo's dance across the apron because he knows how to mock a crowd. Jericho and Owens take turns beating on Enzo with Owens handling the trash talking ("THAT'S THE LEAD SINGER OF FOZZY!").

Enzo blocks a superplex but dives into a dropkick, setting up Owens' backsplash for two. Owens to the referee: "I'm the Universal Champion!" Referee: "It was two!" Owens: "But he shouldn't even be out of NXT yet!" Enzo finally gets in a right hand to make the tag off to Cass for the house cleaning. For some reason Jericho decides to slap Cass, earning himself a boot to the face. The two of them head outside and it's Enzo hitting his middle rope DDT for two on Owens. The powerbomb puts Amore away at 16:37.

Rating: C. Owens' trash talking aside, this was just your standard main event tag. Enzo and Cass are fine for this role and it's already more entertaining than seeing them talk about buying a timeshare in Puerto Rico. They're still making sure to protect Cass

and it's way too early to even think about a split so this is about as good as it's going to get for them at the moment.

The show wraps up just after the match ends. Post show, Owens and Jericho kept beating on Enzo until Sami Zayn came out for the save. Posing ensued to close out the night.

Overall Rating: D+. This show suffered had the same problem as so many others: burnout. The first half hour was a good, hard hitting match, followed by an entertaining Tag Team Title match. Then it was Stephanie treating Foley like a dog who tracked mud into her house and a cruiserweight tag match that didn't need to be on the show.

The main event was a nice pick up but they really need something to fire the crowd up in the middle. Maybe a Sami Zayn match instead of putting him on Superstars? At the end of the day, three hours is too much on TV and it's even worse when you're watching it live. The show has good stuff on it but that good stuff is dragged down by so many other things, the biggest of which is just time itself. It wasn't a horrible show but you could tell when the debate came on because the show just gave up.

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Clash of Champions 2016:

Champions Clashing At A Champion's Level

Clash of Champions 2016

Date: September 25, 2016

Location: Bankers Life Fieldhouse, Indianapolis, Indiana

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

It's the first Raw only pay per view and things are starting to get interesting around here. Tonight's main event is Seth Rollins challenging Kevin Owens for the WWE Universal Championship but the big question is what role HHH will play in the whole thing. Other than that we have Roman Reigns challenging Rusev for the US Title and New Day defending the Raw Tag Team Titles against Anderson and Gallows. Let's get to it.

Pre-Show: Alicia Fox vs. Nia Jax

Rematch from Raw when Jax mauled Alicia in a no contest. Fox runs right at her with a dropkick but gets rammed hard into the buckle for her efforts. Something like a half nelson chinlock keeps Fox in trouble and her kicks to the head have no effect. Back up and Nia misses a charge in the corner, allowing Fox to get in a few dropkicks to little avail. A high crossbody sets up the scissors kick for two and that's probably it for Alicia. Nia runs her over and hits her Samoan drop for the pin at 4:56.

Rating: D+. That's exactly what this should have been as Fox gave her just a little more challenge than usual but there was little doubt about what was going to happen here. Nia should be one of the next challengers to the Women's Title and it would be cool to see her against some of the top stars in the division soon. Alicia was fine here and looked as good as she always does.

The opening video focuses completely on the titles and what it means to be champion. It's exactly what you would expect here and nothing out of the box whatsoever.

Raw Tag Team Titles: New Day vs. Anderson and Gallows

New Day is defending but first they have to talk about two guys trying to split them from their titles like Brangelina. Of course, Anderson and Gallows are the kind of guys who give out raisins at

Halloween and wear tube socks with flip flops. Anderson and Gallows start fast by taking out Big E. on the floor and Liger Bombing Kofi for a close two in the first thirty seconds. Even Woods takes a beating on the floor and has Francesca II thrown at his feet.

Kofi can't get a sunset flip so he dropkicks Gallows instead and makes the diving tag off to Big E. The Warrior Splash crushes Anderson but he knees Big E. in the face to block the spear through the ropes. Gallows comes in off another tag and the Boot of Doom gets two with Kofi having to dive in for a save. It's back to Kofi, who dives right into a spinebuster for two more.

Anderson and Gallows are a step ahead of them here and it's working really well. A chokeslam plants Kofi but he gets out of the Magic Killer. Big E. tags himself back in and it's Trouble in Paradise into the Big Ending but Gallows pulls Big E. out at the last second. Kofi dives onto Gallows and Woods gets in a Francesca shot, setting up the Midnight Hour to retain the titles at 6:38.

Rating: B+. Where in the world have they been hiding this? They rocked this one throughout and it's one of the fastest paced opening matches I've seen in a very long time. That win should give New Day Demolition's record (which they would get in the middle of December) and that's going to be a big deal. I'm not sure who challenges them next, unless they go with the Sheamus/Cesaro nightmare I've been thinking of for a few weeks now. I loved this though and it was giving me flashbacks to Damien Sandow vs. John Cena: not the most technically classic stuff but I was WAY into the near falls.

WWE Network ad, including Hulk Hogan.

We recap the Cruiserweight Title match which doesn't have much of a story. TJ Perkins won the title in the Cruiserweight Classic and Brian Kendrick won a four way on Monday to get the shot.

Perkins says he's nervous but knows what it takes to get here. Kendrick knows the same thing but TJ is confident he's keeping his title. WHY WAS THIS NOT ON RAW????

Cruiserweight Title: TJ Perkins vs. Brian Kendrick

Kendrick is challenging. Perkins comes out to a video game style theme as we hear about Kendrick driving Perkins to wrestling lessons because TJ didn't have a driver's license yet. They trade waistlock takedowns to start and Kendrick slows it down with a headlock. The

threat of a kneebar sends Kendrick bailing to the ropes and the floor.

TJ goes after the veteran and gets caught in a veteran move as Kendrick ties him up in the ring skirt. Back in and TJ grabs a Muta Lock but Kendrick drops him throat first across the top rope to start in on the neck. Kendrick stretches on the neck and kicks at the head, only to have TJ come back with a double chickenwing into an atomic drop.

Three Amigos look to set up something on top but Kendrick breaks it up. That's fine with TJ as he dives off the top with a hurricanrana to take Brian from the apron to the floor. Back in again and the Captain's Hook is countered into the kneebar but Brian gets out and grabs Sliced Bread #2. Perkins pops back up and hits a modified enziguri to set up the kneebar to retain at 10:32.

Rating: C+. Who is TJ Perkins, who is Brian Kendrick and why should I care? Neither guy has a character, neither guy is overly interesting and I only saw one of them on Raw. What was supposed to be interesting here and who was I even supposed to cheer for? They've got a LONG way to go with this match and letting them have a pretty standard match on pay per view with no story isn't going to get them anywhere.

Post match Perkins gets interview time but Kendrick comes in for a handshake, which turns into a headbutt to the champ.

Cesaro is ready for the final match in the best of seven series. Aren't we all.

We look back at matches 1-6.

Sheamus vs. Cesaro

It's the final match in the best of seven series and the winner gets a championship opportunity, whatever that's going to mean. Sheamus starts fast with some right hands but gets uppercut off the apron. The uppercut train makes things worse for Sheamus so he goes for the bad shoulder to take over. A top rope clothesline gets two on Cesaro but he stops a charging Sheamus by raising a boot.

Cesaro's DDT gets two and he actually follows it up with a 619 of all things. Well that's fresh. Three straight Irish Curses get two for Sheamus and we hit the Cloverleaf. The Brogue Kick is countered into the Swing which sets up the Sharpshooter to make Sheamus

scream. Unfortunately it doesn't make him tap (meaning the feud would be over) so Cesaro kicks him out to the floor instead.

There's a suicide dive and both guys are down with Cesaro LANDING ON HIS HEAD. He's all shaken up (understandably so) but the Brogue Kick still only gets two. The Neutralizer gets the same so they do the big slugout with Cesaro getting the better of it, only to have Sheamus pull himself to the top.

Cesaro is right there with a dropkick and they head to the top with Cesaro falling off but catching a diving Sheamus with an uppercut. White Noise on the floor has Cesaro in even more trouble but he posts Sheamus and sends him over the barricade. Both guys are stunned and somehow this isn't a countout yet. Cesaro's arm is banged up and the match is a no contest at 16:49.

Rating: B. I WAS KIDDING ABOUT THIS THING CONTINUING!!! Geez man why can't they follow my good ideas? It was entertaining stuff for a power brawl but sweet goodness I stopped caring at least a month ago. We've seen them do this stuff so many times that it just isn't fun to watch anymore. Good match but REALLY tired story.

Sheamus has to be carried to the back as Cesaro wants to keep fighting.

Charlotte laughs at Bayley for thinking she belongs here when Bayley can't even beat Sasha.

Sami Zayn vs. Chris Jericho

Not much of a story to this one other than Sami wanting to fight Jericho, who is Owens' friend. Sami gets going a bit too fast with a right hand in the corner but gets punched in the face for his efforts. They head outside with Sami hitting the moonsault off the barricade but the referee accidentally blocks Sami from getting back in, allowing Jericho to get in the springboard dropkick.

Another quick beating on the floor sets up a chinlock on Sami but he fights up and hits his big flip dive to the floor. Back in and a Michinoku Driver gets two for Sami, only to have Jericho score with a step up enziguri. The Lionsault hits knees so Sami sends him outside for the diving DDT. Sami misses a Helluva Kick though and has to counter the Walls into a small package. The Blue Thunder Bomb gets another near fall so Jericho grabs a Codebreaker for the quick pin at 15:19.

Rating: B-. How in the world did that go fifteen minutes? Maybe I'm still trying to get over Cesaro and Sheamus continuing but this was hard to get into. Jericho winning the first match is fine as Sami is much better when he's fighting from behind so I'm hoping this doesn't wrap up immediately.

Stephanie McMahon and Mick Foley give Owens a pep talk. Owens is going to do what matters tonight: try to impress HHH. Oh and show that Rollins is the mistake instead of the man.

We recap the Women's Title match with Charlotte defending against Bayley and Sasha Banks. Charlotte injured Sasha and took the title at Summerslam but Bayley debuted and pinned the champ. A triple threat #1 contenders match was inconclusive so here's another triple threat for the title.

Raw Women's Title: Charlotte vs. Sasha Banks vs. Bayley

Charlotte, with Dana Brooke in her corner, is defending and Sasha takes her straight to the floor to take over. Back in and the challengers knock Charlotte outside so it's time for a big standoff. Charlotte gets inside again and is chopped right back down, allowing Sasha to tie her in the Tree of Woe.

Some running knees to the chest have Charlotte in trouble but Bayley takes her down and drops the running knee on Charlotte's chest. Dana finally does something by pulling Bayley to the floor with Charlotte and Sasha quickly following. A hard shot to Sasha's face has Charlotte in control but Sasha comes back with a headscissors and forearms. Bayley comes back in with a crossbody and running shoulders/knees in the corner. A miss sets up Sasha's knees to both of them in the corner with Bayley getting the worst of it.

Sasha gets all serious with the forearms but takes too much time going after Dana, allowing Charlotte to hit an STO of all things. Some near falls are exchanged and all three are down despite only Charlotte taking a big shot in the form of a Bayley to Belly. Charlotte gets double teamed for a bit but is still able to slam both of them down. A great looking double moonsault gets two on each and Natural Selection has Bayley in trouble.

Banks makes the save with the Bank Statement but Dana makes the save, leaving Bayley to grab a rollup for two more. Bayley has to break up another Bank Statement on Charlotte so Sasha puts her in the same hold. This time it's Charlotte with the save and she throws

Sasha into the barricade to make it worse. Back in and Charlotte kicks Bayley into Sasha, setting up a big boot to retain the title at 15:32.

Rating: B+. They're nailing the wrestling tonight and the women have another awesome match because they just can. This was all kinds of fun with Charlotte looking great (especially with that moonsault), Sasha being her usual tough self and Bayley looking more than capable of hanging with either of them. If you give these women the chance to do something special, they're going to knock it out of the park one day.

Kickoff show recap.

We recap Roman Reigns vs. Rusev. Reigns started going after US Champion Rusev and even ruined his wedding celebration by shoving Lana into a cake. Now normally that would be a heel act but it's Roman Reigns so we'll go with it. The match was scheduled to take place last month but Reigns attacked Rusev before the match. Again: acts of a hero.

US Title: Rusev vs. Roman Reigns

Rusev is defending. They strike it out to start with Rusev being knocked out to the floor. Back in and Rusev gets two off a spinwheel kick as the fans go with LET'S GO RUSEV/RUSEV SUCKS. That's certainly a new one. Now they switch over to the same thing for Reigns which fits a bit better. Some kicks to the ribs have Reigns in trouble but he comes back with clotheslines like any good face would. I mean, Reigns isn't a good face but that's what they do.

Reigns goes shoulder first into the post and the fans chant for CM Punk. Oh come on. We're seven minutes in. There's no way Punk can last that long. Back in and Rusev grabs a waistlock so we get a DELETE chant. A Samoan drop puts Rusev on the floor and Reigns hammers away but realizes this has to be back inside.

Rusev kicks him in the head for two but Reigns comes right back with a Superman Punch. The spear hits so Lana pulls the referee out and gets ejected as a result. Reigns gets in some apron kicks but gets caught in the Accolade. As you might expect, Reigns powers out and hits the spear to win the title at 17:11.

Rating: C+. As usual this was good but I have no reason to cheer Roman after any of this. Reigns is still a jerk and a horrible face

in the vein of Diesel (who, also like Reigns, was screwed up by poor booking). He's fine in between the bells but the setup is always lousy and I have no reason to cheer for him because he barely has a character.

Rollins tells Stephanie and Mick that he's going to prove them wrong.

We recap the main event. Owens won the vacant Universal Title and Rollins was granted a rematch by Mick Foley. The real story here though is which of these two can impress HHH as Owens wants to prove him right but Rollins wants to prove him wrong. In other words: the wrestlers are here for the sake of impressing the bosses because that's how WWE works.

Raw World Title: Seth Rollins vs. Kevin Owens

Rollins is challenging and has to go after Owens as he heads to the floor early on. The champ is dropped in a heap so Rollins throws him back inside for some chops in the corner. A Blockbuster gets two but it's too early for the Pedigree or the springboard knee. The champ gets smart by kicking Rollins in the knee and hitting a great looking spike DDT. Some kicks to the back get two more and Owens stays on the knee.

A big backdrop over the top sends Rollins down hard onto the knee and Owens follows with a Cactus Elbow. We hit the chinlock and Owens promises to make Rollins fade to black. Owens: "FADE TO BLACK! GET IT???" After some shouting about being the foundation, Owens gets turned inside out with a clothesline. A quick backbreaker gets two for Seth and it's time for the Spanish announce table.

That's for later apparently as Rollins takes him back inside for a Pedigree attempt, only to have Kevin superkick him in the leg. Rollins hits the jumping knee to the head but gets superkicked again. Seth gets in an enziguri before going down though and both guys are stunned. The springboard knee is countered into the pumphandle backbreaker for two on Seth so Owens goes up.

A super gutbuster (ala Dean Malenko) sets up a quick frog splash for two more and both guys are down. Owens takes it back to the floor and sets up the other table. A quick SUCK IT to the referee and another to Rollins sets up a missed backsplash. Back in and Seth gets in a frog splash of his own for a near fall of his own.

Rollins throws in his own SUCK IT and the Pedigree gets two with Chris Jericho coming out to put Owens' foot on the ropes. A chase scene gives us the obvious ref bump and of course Rollins gets the Pedigree a few seconds later. Jericho interferes again but gets sent outside, allowing Seth to hit a suicide dive. Owens takes one as well but here's another referee as Owens hits the Pop Up Powerbomb to retain at 25:09.

Rating: B. They really couldn't have HHH come out there so the feud could actually go somewhere? Owens winning is the right call as it's too early for him to lose yet (you know, aside from losing to Reigns on Monday) and Rollins can claim a screwjob to keep the feud going. By feud of course I mean with HHH and Stephanie, who are the top villains on the show. Still.

Jericho: "WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS!"

Overall Rating: A-. I had a great time here and there wasn't a single bad match on the show. Unfortunately, as they ALWAYS DO, Raw went on too long and started to kill some of the mood. That would be the part that wasn't killed by Sheamus vs. Cesaro continuing for reasons far beyond the mental capabilities of normal humans. It's a really good show but trim off a match or so (and redo the Cruiserweight stuff from the start) and it's a much better show.

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Monday Night Raw – October 3, 2016: One Of Those Shows... . Maybe?

Monday Night Raw

Date: October 3, 2016

Location: Staples Center, Los Angeles, California

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

We've got a packed show tonight with two big matches. First up Cruiserweight Champion TJ Perkins has the first title defense on Raw as he puts the title on the line against Brian Kendrick in a Clash of Champions rematch. In the bigger title match, we have Sasha Banks challenging Charlotte for the Raw Women's Title in her first one on one rematch. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's Roman Reigns to open the show and MY GOODNESS they're booing him out of the building. WWE is asking for this one as Reigns just isn't the kind of person who can go out there and talk full time. He goes into the guy line but here's Lana to interrupt. Fans: "THANK YOU LANA!" With the accent slipping, Lana rips into Reigns for everything he's done in recent weeks but Reigns just tells her to bring her husband out here if he wants that rematch.

Rusev comes out and the brawl is on again with the Bulgarian getting the better of it and knocking Reigns into the crowd. Rusev takes the belt and starts to walk up the ramp but Reigns sneaks up from behind him with a Superman Punch. Reigns grabs the mic and says they can have the rematch but it's going to be inside the Cell.

We recap Brian Kendrick vs. TJ Perkins, which is over Kendrick thinking he deserves the title more than TJ. Perkins had talked about being homeless while pursuing his dream (Sidebar: allegedly this got Perkins heat because other wrestlers have done the same thing. Uh, are any of them Cruiserweight Champion and wrestling on

Raw? No? Then shut up with your jealous complaining.) but Kendrick has worked harder and longer. Perkins beat him at Clash of Champions and tonight is a rematch because...well because no one knows anyone other than these two.

TJ Perkins vs. Brian Kendrick

Non-title (Wasn't this announced as a title match last week?) and both guys are basically the hometown boys. A dropkick puts Kendrick on the floor to start and a slingshot dropkick makes it even worse. Back in and Brian boots him in the face before putting Perkins hand inside the clamp that attaches the turnbuckle to the post.

We take a break and come back with TJ hitting his double chicken wing into the gutbuster but the kneebar sends Kendrick to the ropes. A quick Sliced Bread #2 gets two on TJ and there's the Captain's Hook but Perkins rolls Kendrick up for two. The slingshot dropkick looks to set up the fireman's carry enziguri, only to have Kendrick rake the eyes. Another Captain's Hook gives Kendrick the title at 9:00.

Rating: C. Well ok. Perkins wins the whole tournament and is basically unbeatable but a single rake to the eyes is enough to beat him in less than ten minutes? The best thing here though is having a clear heel and a clear face so we can actually have a story. At the end of the day though, this is likely setting up a third match at the pay per view, despite neither match really warranting a third one.

Earlier today, Seth Rollins sat down with Michael Cole to say he's been medically cleared. Rollins talks about gaining enemies due to being HHH's friend. He and Kevin Owens are both hard workers but HHH handed Owens the title. No one handed the title to Rollins at Wrestlemania XXXI (which we're still talking about) and Owens is going to be another piece in HHH's big plans. Rollins is going to get the title back no matter what Owens or Chris Jericho have to say about it.

Braun Strowman vs. Chase Silver

Before the match, Silver says he's in Hollywood because dreams come true here. Strowman runs him over and shouts that this is the best WWE can offer. A running shoulder sends Silver flying into the corner and the powerslam (Cole: "Hi ho Silver, away) is enough for the pin at 1:45.

Post match Strowman says WWE is wasting his talents on these weak fools week in and week out. If he doesn't get better competition next week, there might not be a next week. Good, as they need to advance this story and character at some point.

Bayley comes up to Sasha Banks and congratulates her for being in the main event of Raw. Sasha knows Charlotte is great but she's destined to be champion.

Here are Kevin Owens and Chris Jericho to respond to Rollins' comments earlier. Owens asks Jericho what he's done to deserve a rematch because the truth is that Seth lost at Clash of Champions. Rollins has been complaining about the referee but he's only got himself to blame.

After laughing at the fans for chanting STUPID IDIOTS (because it makes them stupid idiots), Owens suggests that Jericho should be the guest referee. Jericho suggests that he get a title shot of his own but of course he means the two of them getting the Raw Tag Team Titles. Owens isn't sure about it because that's a bit too much work for him so Jericho suggests a Universal Title shot. Owens: "Yeah! Let's do it! Let's go after New Day!"

Cue New Day to say they're the best friends in WWE. That earns them a spot on Jericho's list but Big E. cuts him off to say they'll have to have a champion's huddle. This excludes Jericho so BIG E. MAKES THE LIST. Woods laughs and you know where that lands him. Owens yells at New Day for feeding kids questionable cereal and says they jumped the shark about seven months ago. Woods: "Look at yourself. When is the last time you jumped over anything?" Owens: "PUT WOODS ON THE LIST AGAIN!" A match seems to be made for later.

Sheamus and Cesaro arrived earlier and threw each other's bags out of the car.

Sami Zayn vs. Titus O'Neil

Titus says this is the debut of the Titus Brand. Some forearms to the back have Sami in trouble and a bearhug makes it even worse. Sami comes right back with a clothesline, the exploder suplex in the corner and the Helluva Kick for the pin at 2:48.

Sheamus and Cesaro argue over whose fault it was that they were late. Mick Foley comes in and says they're doing this to become as amazing of a team as they can. The arguing continues.

Anderson and Gallows vs. Golden Truth

Oh yeah Golden Truth is still a thing. Earlier today, Anderson and Gallows blamed New Day for ruining the tag team division. Truth and Anderson start things off and it's time for dancing and gyrating. Goldust comes in for a neckbreaker but it's quickly off to Gallows with a boot to the face and a chinlock. Back up and the hot tag brings in Truth for the house cleaning, including an ax kick to Anderson. Everything breaks down and the Magic Killer puts Truth away at 3:22.

Rating: D. If this was supposed to start building Anderson and Gallows back up, it might have been a good idea to not have them get beaten up for so much of the match. Having Golden Truth out there as jobbers is fine but it's still not exactly thrilling stuff outside of the top of the division. Of course by division I mean the three or four teams running around at the moment.

Jericho and Owens are on the way to the ring when they run into Ashton Kutcher and Danny Masterson. The List is discussed with Masterson reading off a few items: people who don't appreciate a good scarf and superstars who lose to Fandango at Wrestlemania. Owens goes off to get ready and the celebrities say they'll be at ringside for the match against New Day. Jericho threatens to give them.....hang on as he goes off camera to the left and comes back in on the other side to say they'll get IT.

Jericho is the perfect example of why natural charisma is so much more important than writing. The stuff he's doing is so stupid but

he knows how to time things so well that there's almost nothing he can't get over. If any rookie came up with this same material, odds are they would be fired. Jericho has such natural presence though that it works like little else on the show. You can't teach that and it's one of the most important things in wrestling.

Enzo Amore and Big Cass are in the ring with three breast cancer survivors for the annual Susan G. Komen segment. The three women are given replica WWE Title belts.

Chris Jericho/Kevin Owens vs. New Day

Non-title. Masterson and Kutcher are on commentary as Owens runs Woods over to start. Owens makes sure to jump over Xavier in the kind of funny bit that most people just don't think to do. Woods gets taken into the corner for the double teaming as Kutcher talks about their new show. It's off to Big E. to face Owens for some hip swiveling.

Graves says Saxton would be the Fez (character on That 70s Show, on which Masterson and Kutcher starred) of the commentary table, which sounds like a good insult, assuming you find dating Mila Kunis' character to be a bad thing. Big E. gets beaten down even more as the announcers discuss middle names and scarves.

Back from a break with Owens and Big E. colliding off a double clothesline. Woods comes in and gets chinlocked before it's back to Jericho for a running clothesline in the corner. A superplex is broken up and Woods gets two off a high crossbody. Owens breaks up a hot tag attempt and gets two off a DDT.

Cue Seth Rollins to the stage for a distraction though and Woods gets in an enziguri. The hot tag brings in Big E. to clean house (and swivel the hips of course) but Owens superkicks him down. Big E. and Owens go to the floor and Jericho gets the Liontamer on Woods, only to have Rollins offer a distraction. A quick Midnight Hour puts Jericho away at 16:25.

Rating: C-. This was much longer than it needed to be and served little more purpose than to have Kutcher and Masterson there to plug

their new show. It's a really bad sign that this is what the World Champion is being used for: a second hour tag match with little to gain other than helping set up a Netflix show. Well done WWE. It's good to see what you think of what should be your flagship star. Masterson and Kutcher were both fine and seemed to be having a lot of fun, which is much better than you're going to get out of most guest stars.

Rollins gives Jericho a Pedigree to really get under Owens' skin.

We look back at the opening sequence.

Charlotte says she's the only reasons Sasha is in the main event and she'll rise to the occasion as she always does.

Video on Rich Swann.

Stephanie McMahon comes up to yell at Rollins because he's just as replaceable as anyone else. Rollins says getting rid of him was the second worst decision HHH has ever made. The worst: marrying Stephanie. Seth promises to burn Raw to the ground and take Owens and Jericho with him.

Rich Swann vs. Tony Nese

Nese says Swann has a dance with the best athlete in the division. Swann tries to dance early on but gets taken down with hard forearms. A bodyscissors and chinlock don't get Nese very far as Rich pops up with some dropkicks. That's about it for Swann though as Nese stun guns him into a sitout pumphandle powerslam for the pin at 4:13.

Rating: C-. Yeah fine. I'm assuming they're building Nese up as the next challenger (for Perkins, whose match earlier apparently wasn't for the title, which WWE didn't exactly go out of their way to make clear last week) which is better than nothing. This division still has a long way to go though and this didn't do it many favors.

Mil Mascaras video as WWE is celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month for the second month in a row.

We see a bunch of pictures of Emma in swimsuits. Coming soon: the transformation of Emma into Emmalina. I've heard of worse.

Cesaro/Sheamus vs. Raul White/Mark Carradine

White and Cesaro start things off with Raul being sent into the corner for alternating shots to the ribs from both guys. White's partner comes in and walks into an Irish Curse. Sheamus loads up the Cloverleaf but Cesaro jumps over him for a DDT onto White. The Brogue Kick is good for the pin on at 1:55.

Long recap of Charlotte vs. Sasha, going all the way back to the BFF's days in NXT. They've both been fighting to prove themselves as the best in the world and have traded the title over the last few months.

Charlotte and Dana Brooke are on the way to the ring when they run into Bayley. Charlotte laughs at Bayley for thinking she could be in this place someday but says she has to leave so she can go main event the show. Dana laughs at Bayley too.

Raw Women's Title: Sasha Banks vs. Charlotte

Charlotte is defending and we get Big Match Intros. Sasha kicks her outside and hits a suicide dive, setting up a break less than thirty seconds in. Back with Charlotte in control and working on the back with a backbreaker (makes sense) and a hard shove into the corner. Sasha blocks the big boot and gets two off the double knees. The champ is sent outside but is still able to drop Sasha's back onto the apron.

Sasha tries to go up top but gets knocked onto the ropes for a nasty crash. Charlotte's superplex is shoved off and double knees from the top get two. It's too early for the Bank Statement though so Charlotte sends her outside, setting up a CORKSCREW MOONSAULT TO THE FLOOR! I mean it made almost no contact but it looked awesome. Natural Selection gets two back inside and Charlotte is frustrated. A headscissors sets up the Bank Statement and Charlotte taps in a hurry to give Sasha the title at 14:17.

Rating: B. Good match but they felt out of sync at the end. That missed moonsault didn't help things and the ending felt like it was out of nowhere. Sasha winning makes the most sense and, dare I say,

sets up a rematch inside the Cell? They'll have a rematch one way or another and it needs a little something more than just a regular match.

A long celebration ends the show.

Overall Rating: C. There wasn't anything horrible about the show (meaning Stephanie was only in one segment) but I barely remember most of this show. It's like the main event started and I couldn't think of anything that happened in the previous two hours and forty five minutes. The show was just there for the most part as they've actually got time to set up the next pay per view for a change. Not a bad show but really just there, which is often worse.

Results

Brian Kendrick b. TJ Perkins – Captain's Hook

Braun Strowman b. Chase Silver – Powerslam

Sami Zayn b. Titus O'Neil – Helluva Kick

Anderson and Gallows b. Golden Truth – Magic Killer to R-Truth

New Day b. Kevin Owens/Chris Jericho – Midnight Hour to Jericho

Tony Nese b. Rich Swann – Sitout pumphandle powerslam

Cesaro/Sheamus b. Raul White/Mark Carradine – Brogue Kick to Carradine

Sasha Banks b. Charlotte – Bank Statement

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Cruiserweight Classic – September 14, 2016: Grand Finale

Cruiserweight Classic

Date: September 14, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Daniel Bryan, Mauro Ranallo

It's already the grand finale as we're live tonight for two hours. We have three tournament matches to go tonight and at least one other as Johnny Gargano/Tommaso Ciampa vs. two cruiserweights to be named tonight. There's always the chance that they'll add in another match, as well as the potential of something involving the Cruiserweight Title. Let's get to it.

We open with a look back at the tournament, narrated by HHH.

Opening sequence.

The announcers talk about the show a bit.

Preview of the first semifinal match.

Video on all four semifinalists.

Semifinals: Gran Metalik vs. Zack Sabre Jr.

Mexico vs. England. Metalik dropkicks him at the bell to put Zack on the floor for a flip dive. A springboard Swanton Bomb gets a VERY close two but Sabre ties him in the ropes for some kicks and knees to the back. Sabre starts in on the neck to slow things down and puts Metalik's head between his legs to crank on a leg.

Back up and Zack fires off more uppercuts but gets caught in a weird standing leglock until Sabre dives over to the ropes. Zack comes back with a dragon sleeper with his leg pulling Metalik's arm back

as he stays on the neck. They fight over a double arm crank until Sabre just kicks him in the face. Metalik does the same and gets two off a running shooting star press. Both guys get near falls off some rollups until Metalik gets something like an octopus hold.

Sabre reverses into a guillotine which is reversed into a Boston crab which is reversed into a rollup for two on Sabre. A slugout goes to Sabre so Metalik takes his head off with a clothesline for two more. Sabre's running PK gets another near fall but Metalik kicks him in the face again. Something like an octopus hold has Metalik in more trouble but it breaks down so Metalik can survive. Sabre goes to the ropes but gets crotched and hurricanranaed down for a very close two. Metalik gets caught in a triangle until he flips over into a rollup for two more. Back up and a quick Metalik Driver eliminates Sabre at 13:14.

Rating: B. The ending surprised me a bit as Metalik has been pretty quiet throughout the whole tournament but is somehow in the finals. He's very much your standard luchador and that's the kind of wrestler who is always going to have a spot around here. Sabre might not be coming to WWE but he'll be a big star around the world with the skills that he has.

William Regal comes out and gives Metalik a big medal for winning. With the help of a translator, Metalik thanks the fans and says he's going to win the tournament.

Johnny Gargano and Tommaso Ciampa are out to prove something tonight against Noam Dar and Cedric Alexander. All that matters to them is a rematch with the Revival.

Semifinals: Kota Ibushi vs. TJ Perkins

Japan vs. Philipines. Feeling out process to start with Perkins actually checking one of Ibushi's kicks. The fans are mostly split as Perkins works on an armbar but tries to pull Ibushi in for the kneebar. Ibushi sprints over to the ropes so Perkins gets him on the mat in a headscissors. A running kick to the chest drops Perkins and a springboard missile dropkick makes it even worse.

Ibushi tries a running springboard moonsault but gets kicked to the floor for a nasty looking crash. Back in and a double underhook crank stays on Ibushi's neck for a bit until a good looking dropkick hits Perkins in the mouth. Now the springboard moonsault to the floor works just fine and Ibushi follows up with a springboard missile dropkick. A running powerslam sets up a middle rope moonsault but Perkins gets the knees up.

The kneebar goes on and sends Ibushi over to the ropes for the save. Ibushi is right back with a snap German suplex for two and it's time for the hard kicks to Perkins' chest. TJ breaks up the middle rope German deadlift suplex and counters the Golden Star Bomb into a DDT. That's only good for two (Mauro: "CONJOINED TWINS CLOSE!") and it's off to the kneebar in the middle of the ring.

Ibushi flips out of that too and the Golden Star Bomb plants TJ for one of the hottest near falls I've seen in a long time. Perkins rolls away from a Phoenix splash but gets caught in a wheelbarrow slam driver. Yet another Golden Star Bomb attempt is countered into the kneebar and Perkins even leans up to pull back on the neck for the huge upset at 13:51.

Rating: A. I was losing my mind on those near falls and that just does not happen to me very often. Perkins is someone that I never saw much in but this match here more than won me over. He had a logical game plan here and he stuck with it until the ending while Ibushi was throwing everything he could. I had a blast with this match and it never stopped being a blast.

Perkins says he's won one and now he needs to win one more.

Sasha Banks, Bayley, Kalisto, Jack Gallagher and Rich Swann are in the crowd.

Noam Dar/Cedric Alexander vs. Johnny Gargano/Tommaso Ciampa

Just an exhibition match. After some handshakes all around, it's Alexander throwing Ciampa around in a bit of a surprise to start. It's quickly off to Gargano for a knee to Dar's jaw. They already tag off again so Cedric flip dives over the top to take Ciampa out.

Everything breaks down and Gargano superkicks Dar before spearing Alexander through the ropes for two. A wicked Michinoku Driver gets two on Gargano and we settle down to Ciampa kneeling Dar in the face until Cedric springboards in with a clothesline.

Everything breaks down again and a series of clotheslines and superkicks puts all four down. Dar reverses a kick and grabs an ankle lock on Johnny, only to have Ciampa go all psycho while stomping to break up the hold. Dar dives onto Johnny and Alexander hits a very hard brainbuster for what looked like three but the referee says keep going. Gargano comes back in with his superkicks to both guys, setting up the running knee/superkick combo for the pin on Dar at 9:42.

Rating: B. Totally wild match here to give us a little change of pace from the tournament matches. These guys beat the heck out of each other and there were some great near falls even though there was little doubt that Gargano/Ciampa were going to win due to their upcoming match with the Revival. Still though, this was a very entertaining match and a good idea after the two great matches we saw earlier.

Regal talks about helping to put the tournament together and trying to find people who weren't as well known but could handle the rigors of this competition.

Corey Graves comes in to talk a bit as we fill in time before the main event.

We recap the semifinals.

Quick look at the trophy.

Cruiserweight Classic Final: Gran Metalik vs. TJ Perkins

Mexico vs. Philippines. Wait a second though as HHH comes out to say this is going to be for the new Cruiserweight Title. That's quite the jump up though it was the only logical way to introduce the title.

Cruiserweight Title: Gran Metalik vs. TJ Perkins

The title is vacant coming in of course. They trade some early

rollups before Perkins grabs a modified octopus hold. Metalik rolls out and sends Perkins outside for a suicide dive with their heads crashing together. Back in and we hit a surfboard with Metalik's boot in TJ's back for extra pressure. Perkins gets over to the ropes and tries a suplex, only to have Metalik get a running start and hurricanrana Perkins off the apron for an awesome spot.

Metalik follows him out with a big springboard flip dive to keep Perkins in trouble. The running shooting star misses though and Perkins grabs the kneebar, sending Metalik over to the ropes again. A dropkick to the knee looks to set up the Metalik Driver but instead it's a DDT for two on Perkins.

The reverse Backstabber sets up another kneebar and Perkins pulls him back to the middle. He can't get the leg crossed though and Metalik counters into a rollup for a close two. The Metalik Driver plants Perkins but the knee gives out again and it's only good for two more. Perkins takes too long going up top and gets caught in a super Metalik Driver but that's reversed into a full on kneebar to make Metalik tap at 17:45.

Rating: A-. Just like before, Perkins won me over here. He really has no business being in there with names like this and he's more than shown he belongs at the top of this division. I had a blast watching him through and you can add him to the list of names that TNA managed to screw up and let go over to WWE. Another great match here to cap off a great night.

Perkins is presented with the trophy and title but he needs to see someone about his chest, which is terribly, terribly bruised. He talks about how this trophy is for everyone and he can't believe he's here. Perkins celebrates to end the show.

Overall Rating: A+. You think this one needs an explanation? This tournament was absolutely incredible and one of the best displays of wrestling I've seen in a long time. For me, the whole thing works for how simple they kept things. This started two months ago yesterday and we're DONE. No three months of round robin before we get to the actual tournament, no waiting around with people who had

no chance being teased and nothing that was ever boring.

This tournament flew by and was so much fun that I started looking forward to watching it every week. I don't think it's something that would work all the time but it's going to be a great addition to Raw for a match or two a week and that's all it needs to be. Excellent tournament and an outstanding finale.

Results

Gran Metalik b. Zack Sabre Jr. – Metalik Driver

TJ Perkins b. Kota Ibushi – Kneebar

Johnny Gargano/Tommaso Ciampa b. Noam Dar/Cedric Alexander – Running knee/superkick combo to Dar

TJ Perkins b. Gran Metalik – Kneebar

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

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Cruiserweight Classic – September 7, 2016: That's Not Fandango

Cruiserweight Classic

Date: September 7, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Daniel Bryan, Maruo Ranallo

It's the second half of the semifinals tonight with the other two names getting set for next week's live two hour finale. This show somehow keeps getting better despite already being one of the most entertaining hours of wrestling every week. Tonight we get to see Zack Sabre Jr. in action again and there's nothing wrong with that. Let's get to it.

Preview of tonight's matches.

Opening sequence.

Zack Sabre Jr. isn't worried about the billions of people he's performing in front of because there's only one opponent in the ring with him at a time.

Noam Dar is the youngest entrant in the tournament but he's fought around the world and knows how to adapt.

Quarterfinals: Zack Sabre Jr. vs. Noam Dar

England vs. Scotland. Sabre rides him on the mat to start and grabs a rather rough looking headlock. A dropkick to the knee has Zack in a bit of trouble as Mauro tells us about Dar being a bit jealous of Zack's success and the publicity that comes with it. Dar goes after the leg a bit too much and it's Zack getting in a stomp to the arm to take over. The standing armbar doesn't work yet and it's a pinfall reversal sequence for some near falls.

Zack gets punched in the face so he grabs a half nelson suplex for another near fall. Dar goes after the leg again but gets kicked in the arm, only to have the Penalty Kick mess up Sabre's leg even worse. Dar gets two more off a running dropkick to the back and there's the kneebar to put Sabre in trouble. That's reversed into a cross armbreaker and a rollup for two on Dar.

They strike it out again until Dar gets caught in the armbreaker, sending him straight to the ropes. Sabre shows off his lack of common sense by trying a top rope knee drop, only to bang it up again. Dar comes off the top with a double stomp to the leg and there's the kneebar. Sabre can't reach the ropes so he rolls outside

to put both guys down in a crash. Zack has to dive back in at nine but he seems to have injured his shoulder. A bunch of stomps to the arm have Zack in trouble but he pulls Dar down and puts on the Rings of Saturn with his legs, bending Dar's arms so far back that I cringe as Dar gives up at 15:48.

Rating: B+. Really good chess match here as they spent the whole time working on the limbs until one of them had to give up. There's a story in the end with Dar switching gears to go after the arm instead of the already injured leg but Sabre stuck with his guns to win with what he had set up all night. This was great stuff and that's all you can expect from Sabre. Dar more than held his own though and that's a positive sign for his future on Raw.

Dar can barely stand for the official decision so they hug from the mat.

TJ Perkins knows he's one of the best in the world because you have to think that in this business.

Rich Swann says you'll see the best of him when the pressure is on.

Quarterfinals: TJ Perkins vs. Rich Swann

Philippines vs. America. The fans sing Rich's theme song in the ultimate sign of respect. They trade near falls to start and it's an early standoff. It's off to the battle over the wristlock as we hear about how Eddie Guerrero both influenced them. Perkins dances out of a headscissors and does that bicep kissing thing (yes I know what it's called). Mauro talks about rap lyrics until Swann stops to dance. Mauro: "It's a dab duel at the Cruiserweight Classic."

Rich sends him outside but tweaks his knee on a moonsault attempt. Perkins isn't about to let that go and dropkicks him down before going with a belly to back suplex. There's a chance he didn't see the knee injury so this isn't necessarily bad psychology. Perkins starts in on the leg until Rich hits him in the face a few times. Simple yet effective. A jumping DDT gets two on TJ but Rich's leg gives out on a hurricanrana attempt.

The second attempt works a bit better though as Perkins is put down,

setting up a kick to the head for two. Perkins grabs a quick kneebar but Rich is right next to the ropes. A tiger driver out of nowhere gets two on Perkins and Rich kicks him square in the head. Perkins comes right back with a fireman's carry into a kick to the head (think a GTS but with a kick instead of a knee), followed by the kneebar to make Swann submit at 17:01.

Rating: B-. This got better once they cut out the dancing stuff and got down to a serious match. Swann is really growing on me and I'm very surprised that they went with Perkins here. That being said, I can't imagine they'll go with him over Ibushi next week. Still though, good match here and it got a lot better as they started getting serious.

Perkins immediately checks on Swann and seems almost sad that he had to beat him.

A video on next week's final three matches wrap us up.

Overall Rating: A-. Yeah what else were you expecting here? Of course this was awesome as the Cruiserweight division has the potential to be something great once they finally get to Raw, though I have a bad feeling they're going to just have random matches without the storylines to make everything work. Still though, really good show here as the quality wrestling continues.

Results

Zack Sabre Jr. b. Noam Dar – Rings of Saturn

TJ Perkins b. Rich Swann – Kneebar

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