

Royal Rumble 2018: I Had Fun Again

Royal Rumble 2018

Date: January 28, 2018

Location: Wells Fargo Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton, Tom Phillips, Booker T.

The big night is finally here and for the first time ever we have two Royal Rumbles in one night. This time around we have a women's version to go with the standard men's version and that opens up the doors for a lot more surprise entrants. Of course it also opens the door for a lot more boring action if the last few Rumbles are any indication. Let's get to it.

Kickoff Show: Drew Gulak/TJP/Jack Gallagher vs. Kalisto/Gran Metalik/Lince Dorado

Drew takes Kalisto down by the arm to start as the announcers talk about the upcoming 205 Live General Manager. That just earns a few chants from the crowd, which Gulak of course can't stand. It's off to Gallagher vs. Metalik with Gran working on the knee until Lince and TJP come in to complete each trio's ring time.

The announcers discuss dabbing until the villains are all sent outside. The three masked men hit stereo moonsaults from the same turnbuckle (very cool) to the floor as we take a break. Back with TJP kicking Lince in the ribs and handing it off to Gulak, who drops Dorado's partners off the apron. Now the announcers speculate on the next General Manager, which is much more focused than you would expect from these guys.

Jack cranks on Dorado's leg as about half of the HUGE group of empty seats opposite the hard camera is filled in. But hey, at least we have a meaningless match going on an hour and a half before the rest show starts. Gallagher goes to the middle rope, pauses to listen to Gulak telling him not to jump, and then misses a dive anyway. The hot tag

brings in Metalik for the rope walk into the dropkick to put Gulak down. The rope walk elbow works just as well for two as everything breaks down. Stereo dives take Gallagher and Gulak down, leaving the Salida Del Sol to finish TJP at 13:13.

Rating: C. Take any match between some combination of these guys that you might have seen on 205 Live and add five minutes to get this match. I'm not sure how that's supposed to entice me to watch a pay per view but I'm sure WWE is smarter than I am on that front. Nothing special here, outside of that triple moonsault that is. This would have been fine as the only dark match but with two more, it could have been cut.

Kickoff Show: Revival vs. Anderson and Gallows

Rematch from Monday where Anderson and Gallows won, followed by the Revival getting destroyed by DX and Scott Hall. The Brian Pillman style trunks don't really suit Revival but anything is better than Monday. Dawson gets sent outside to start for a breather before it's Gallows tossing both of them around. Back from a break with Dawson working on Anderson's knee with a string of elbow drops.

Wilder comes in to crank the knee even more but Anderson keeps kicking him away. Therefore, in a good tag team idea, Revival double teams him to keep the advantage. Now why is that so hard to figure out? Of course the hot tag goes through a few seconds later but at least they were trying. Everything breaks down and Gallows scores with a splash for two. Everything breaks down and the Magic Killer is broken up. Dawson sidesteps a charge to post Gallows and Dash's chop block is good for the pin on Anderson at 9:11.

Rating: C. Well, it was better than Monday. I'm glad Revival won and now of course we're likely to have the rubber match tomorrow night because WWE loves their trilogies. The leg stuff was fine here but the break in the middle didn't do it many favors. At least the right team won though and that helps a lot.

Kickoff Show: Bobby Roode vs. ???

Roode is defending in an Open Challenge answered by...Mojo Rawley. The

fans think Mojo sucks as he sends Roode into the corner and actually hammers him down as we take a break. Back with Mojo driving knees in the corner and grabbing a chinlock. Roode fights up and hits a running forearm, followed by a neckbreaker for two. There's the Blockbuster but the Glorious DDT is countered into a spinebuster. Back up and another Glorious DDT is countered into a backdrop but the running punch is blocked. Instead it's a regular DDT to retain the title at 7:37.

Rating: D. This could have been on any house show and that's not good as the Kickoff Show main event. Roode doesn't have a ton of challengers and a lot of that is due to how so few people were treated as important for the sake of Jinder Mahal. They need some kind of a feud going here and Rawley isn't the kind of person to do that.

The opening video doesn't say much out of the ordinary but it does a very good job of setting up the big matches while treating the Rumble win as a big deal. It's very nice that they gave the match some shine for once because they haven't exactly treated it like it matters up to this point.

Smackdown World Title: AJ Styles vs. Kevin Owens/Sami Zayn

AJ is defending in a handicap match. The challengers do have to tag and it's Sami starting for the team. No contact and it's off to Owens, who hangs on the ropes instead of going after the champ. Sami is already back in as there's almost no contact in the first minute and a half. AJ wrestles Sami down but it's already back to Owens, who takes AJ down, runs to the floor and tags Sami back in.

That means a drop down into a dropkick for Zayn as Byron and Graves have ANOTHER stupid argument that completely ignores the match. There's a backdrop for two on AJ as the fans aren't sure who to cheer for. Owens comes back in and unloads with right hands before sending AJ into the barricade. Almost all challengers so far. Owens gets in a double stomp and brings AJ into the corner for more right hands. An electric chair faceplant is good for two more and it's off to the chinlock.

AJ fights up again and gets in a shot to Owens' ankle, which was banged up on Smackdown in the first place. The Pele is enough to bring Sami back in but the Helluva Kick is blocked with a raised boot. Everything breaks

down and Owens monkey flips Styles, who hurricanranas Zayn to the floor instead of crashing to the mat. The Calf Crusher has Owens ready to tap until Sami dives back in for the save.

Owens kicks AJ in the back of the head to knock him into the Blue Thunder Bomb, which of course only gets two (once in a lifetime you see). Another kick to the head puts Sami down this time and the springboard 450 is good for another near fall. They slug it out with AJ throwing Sami to the floor, only to eat a superkick from Owens. The Pop Up Powerbomb is countered into a rollup though and AJ retains (pinning the illegal man) at 16:08.

Rating: B. About what was expected here as there's only so much you can do when the participants have been treated as background characters. I'm glad Bryan and Shane were left out but the match has been booked to make them the stars, meaning this is likely to continue. Some good action here, but it wasn't the most thrilling match in the world.

Wrestlemania XXXIV ad.

Sami and Kevin ask Shane what he's going to do. They can't have another referee screw Owens out of another title. Shane says that yep, he did indeed see that. Nothing else is said.

Smackdown Tag Team Titles: Usos vs. Shelton Benjamin/Chad Gable

The Usos are defending and this is 2/3 falls after Gable pinned the wrong Uso a few weeks back. In other words, the same ending as the previous match, again showing the limited creative abilities of WWE. Gable can't hit a German suplex on Jimmy to start so it's some chops to the chest in the corner. A distraction lets Chad get in a chop block though and Jimmy is in trouble early on.

Benjamin drives knees into the bad knee as the challengers start cutting the ring off for an old NWA feel. Shelton stops to yell at the crowd though and it's an enziguri to cut him off. The hot tag brings in Jey, who dives through the ropes to take out both challengers in a row. Back in and Gable gets two off a tiger suplex (I haven't seen that one in years), followed by a powerbomb to send Jey into Jimmy.

Pay Dirt gives Shelton two and the bug eyed look on the kickout is funnier than it should be. It's back to Gable who moonsaults onto both champions on the floor but Gable can't pin the illegal Uso. That means a superkick into the Superfly Splash for two in a surprise near fall. The double Superfly Splash is broken up so Gable loads up Rolling Chaos Theory.

That's broken up as well and four straight superkicks end Gable at 12:21. Gable and Benjamin beat the heck out of both champs to start the second fall. A rolling Liger Kick hits Jey and Chad goes up, leaving Shelton to get small packaged to retain the titles in two straight falls at 13:47.

Rating: B-. That was kind of a surprising ending but it's not like it really matters. The Bludgeon Brothers (who have kind of disappeared in recent weeks) are pretty clearly the next challengers and it should be a fun match when we get to it. I'm not sure what happens to Benjamin and Gable at this point but they've proven to be a good team who deserve more time.

Rumble by the Numbers video.

Jerry Lawler joins commentary for the Rumble.

Men's Royal Rumble

90 second intervals this year. Rusev is #1 (with Aiden English singing him to the ring) and Finn Balor (in red here) is in at #2 to a very strong reaction. Balor gets sent to the apron early on but gets back in without too much effort. Rhyno is in at #3 and gets in a showdown with Rusev that doesn't go much of anywhere. Balor is back up and it's Baron Corbin in at #4 to quickly eliminate Rhyno.

Finn is right behind Corbin though and gets rid of him as well, sending Corbin into a rage. That means Balor is pulled to the floor for a whip into the barricade (shoulder first) and End of Days on the floor to Rusev. Heath Slater is in at #5 and gets run over on the ramp. Everyone is down and it's Elias in at #6, playing the guitar (and kicking Slater in the head) on the way to the ring.

It's time for a song about spitting in the Rocky statue's face but the countdown clock cuts him off. NXT Champion Andrade Cien Almas is in at #7 (running Slater over again as we have a running joke) and a running elbow puts Elias into the corner. The running knees rock Elias again but the hammerlock DDT is broken up. A hard clothesline drops Almas and it's Bray Wyatt in at #8.

Naturally Slater gets laid out again and there's a release Rock Bottom to Elias. Balor comes back in to break up Sister Abigail (again, thank goodness). Big E. is in at #9 and gives Slater some pancakes instead of beating him up. Bray is waiting on him with Cole saying Bray has been so dominating since entering. IT'S BEEN LIKE TWO MINUTES!

Rusev is back in but can't get rid of Almas. Tye Dillinger is in at #10 (again), giving us Balor, Rusev, Slater (still not in the ring), Elias, Almas, Wyatt, Big E. and Dillinger. Actually hang on a second as we cut to the back to see Dillinger getting beaten down by Owens and Zayn. Sami is taking his place and continues the tradition by jumping Slater.

Sheamus is in at #11 and throws Slater in...who immediately eliminates Sheamus (on his BIRTHDAY). Bray dumps Slater almost immediately and it's Xavier Woods in at #12. Woods and Big E. double team Sami and a wheelbarrow slam into a splash hits Elias. Rusev can't get rid of Big E. and it's Apollo Crews in at #13. Apollo gets in a good looking jumping enziguri on Bray as Byron is now anti-Zayn as he tries to show a personality.

Balor escapes Sister Abigail and it's Shinsuke Nakamura in at #14. Sami is waiting on him in a Takeover: Dallas flashback as the fans sing Nakamura's song. There are WAY too many people in there and some eliminations are needed. Nakamura fires off some kicks and it's Good Vibrations for Elias. The running knee in the corner gets rid of Sami and Cesaro is in at #15, giving us Balor, Rusev, Elias, Almas, Wyatt, Big E., Woods, Crews, Nakamura and Cesaro.

Uppercuts abound without much happening and it's Kofi Kingston in at #16 to put New Day at full strength. Cesaro cuts him off with an uppercut but Crews gorilla presses Cesaro...to the apron at least but he gets back in.

Instead a shot to the back gets rid of Crews to thin the ring out a bit. Jinder Mahal is in at #17 and goes after Woods, who dropkicks him into the corner. Woods is dumped a few seconds later though and Mahal gets rid of Big E. as well.

Seth Rollins is in at #18 (now with flames on his tights) and gets rid of Cesaro in short order. Mahal sends Kofi over the top but he lands on Xavier...and then on a plate of pancakes. Big E. and Woods launch him from the floor over the ropes and over Mahal, who gets caught with Trouble in Paradise for the elimination. As the rest of New Day throws pancakes at Mahal, Almas hits the hammerlock DDT and eliminates Kofi in a pretty big upset.

Matt Hardy is in at #19 for a standoff with Bray, which is broken up by Rusev. Bray and Matt actually start working together and get rid of Rusev (the fans are NOT pleased) before fighting each other. They eliminate each other and it's John Cena at #20, giving us Balor, Elias, Almas, Nakamura, Rollins and Cena.

Everyone jumps Cena at the same time in a smart move but then let him up, allowing him to AA Elias out. The Hurricane of all people is in at #22 (which Cole calls a superhero persona which was a huge hit with kids years ago) and tries a chokeslam but gets tossed out by Cena. Hurricane lands on the pancakes, nearly slips, and then does his pose over and over again on the way to the back. Aiden English is in at #22 and goes after Rollins before switching to Balor.

Adam Cole (with taped ribs) from NXT is in at #23 to a very nice reaction. Balor kicks English off the ropes for an elimination and it's Randy Orton in at #24. An RK0 drops Almas and there he goes after a strong performance. Things settle down a bit and it's Titus O'Neil in at #25. Cole gets sent to the apron but slides back in, leaving Titus to chop Nakamura in the corner. Miz is in at #26 and starts fast with the YES Kicks, followed by a Skull Crushing Finale on Cena.

Lucky #27 is the returning Rey Mysterio to get rid of Cole in a hurry. The Miz takes 619 and it's Roman Reigns in at #28. You can feel the pain from the booing. Reigns goes after Miz and hits the jumping clothesline,

followed by the clotheslines in the corner. Titus gets eliminated but the Miztourage saves Miz from the same fate. Rollins Curb Stomps Miz but gets into a showdown with Reigns. A DoubleBomb gets rid of Miz but Reigns turns on Rollins to get rid of him as well.

Goldust is in at #29 and hurts himself headbutting Reigns. Cena gets beaten up as well and it's Dolph Ziggler (POP) in at #30, giving us a final group of Balor, Nakamura, Cena, Orton, Mysterio, Reigns, Goldust and Ziggler. Goldust is out in a hurry and Balor kicks Ziggler out, making him one of the most inconsequential #30s in recent memory. Rey, Cena and Orton get together in one corner, Nakamura and Balor are in another and Reigns is on his own (how appropriate).

Balor takes a quick AA followed by the 619 to Reigns. There's an RKD to Nakamura but Cena blocks another attempt. A Superman Punch lets Reigns get rid of Orton and a double 619 hits Reigns and Cena (with Cena loudly talking to Reigns while they wait). Balor throws Mysterio out to get us down to four meaning everyone goes to a corner.

We get the big staredown as the fans are behind Nakamura. Cena throws a You Can't See Me at Balor and hammers on Nakamura while Reigns beats on Balor. That gives us the big showdown as the fans think they both suck. No one throws a punch as Balor and Nakamura get back up, giving us a much better received showdown. The running knees in the corner put Balor on the apron but he kicks a charging Nakamura in the head. Another kick to the head rocks Balor but he scores with a basement dropkick.

Reigns and Cena are back up again with Cena charging into a Samoa drop. The Superman Punch is countered with a ProtoBomb but the Shuffle is broken up with a Sling Blade. Balor hits the shotgun dropkick on Reigns but Nakamura kicks Balor in the face. Balor's standing double stomp cuts off Kinshasa and Cena tosses Balor to get us down to three. Reigns slips out of an AA and hits the Superman Punch on Cena. The spear is cut off by the AA and Nakamura puts Cena on the apron.

A running kick to the face gets rid of Cena and we're down to Nakamura vs. Reigns. That means COME ON and Reigns does so with a Superman Punch. Reigns sends him to the apron but gets kicked in the head but Nakamura

grabs a hanging triangle over the apron. A powerbomb brings Nakamura back in and they're both down again.

It's Reigns up first but the spear is cut off with a kick to the face. A middle rope knee to the face drops Reigns but Kinshasa is hit with a spear to put them both down again. Nakamura grabs the ropes to hang on and another running knee drops Roman, setting up the elimination to give Nakamura the win at 65:32.

Rating: A. Best Rumble in years, though that's not exactly saying much. The important thing here was they went with a popular name to win the Rumble, which has been lacking in recent years. Nakamura winning really surprised me as I never thought they would actually do it but I'll take what I can get.

They laid the match out nicely here as things took a little time to get going but the final ten to fifteen minutes were excellent with the final six all being solid options. I wasn't dreading this one at all and it made the match that much better. This was a lot of fun and the way the Rumble should go, with one of the best endings in a long time. Great match.

The Smackdown bosses are celebrating in the back when Stephanie McMahon and Kurt Angle come in to say Raw will win later. Daniel and Shane (buddies again) don't seem to care.

Post match Nakamura is asked who he wants to face at Wrestlemania. Fans: "PLEASE SAY STYLES!" Nakamura: "AJ STYLES!"

There was a Royal Rumble to determine the next Colonel Sanders with Ric Flair winning. He has the wrinkles for it.

Raw Tag Team Titles: The Bar vs. Jason Jordan/Seth Rollins

Rollins and Jordan are defending with Seth and Sheamus starting things off. Seth gets driven into the corner with Cesaro offering a distraction to keep Jordan away from interfering. Jordan is ready for the hot tag but Cesaro pulls him down (I thought that was the heel turn) and posts him into near unconsciousness. Back in and Sheamus' top rope clothesline gets

two as the double beatdown is on, made especially worse by Seth's long Rumble run.

Seth finally sends Sheamus into the post to get it back to even, followed by a Sling Blade and Blockbuster. Sheamus comes back in for the save but Rollins drops both of them for a double frog splash. As Seth gets up, Jordan is STILL sitting on the steps, leaving Sheamus to hit the Brogue Kick. The super White Noise gives us new champions at 13:03. Jordan was never in the match.

Rating: C-. This was an angle instead of a match and there's nothing wrong with that. For some reason we seem to be waiting on Jordan vs. Rollins at Wrestlemania, even though that doesn't quite blow my skirt up. The match was stuck in the cool down spot after the great Rumble and that was the right spot for it.

We recap the Raw World Title match. Basically you have three monsters fighting each other and breaking things to hurt each other, meaning it's time to get violent.

Raw World Title: Brock Lesnar vs. Kane vs. Braun Strowman

Brock is defending and it's one fall to a finish. Strowman wastes no time in cleaning house, including a hard knee to Brock's head. That's fine with Brock who starts throwing punches, only to have Kane score with a chokeslam. Brock grabs a chair but Braun punches it away and drops everyone.

Shots with the steps clean house and it's time for a pair of tables. Strowman chokeslams Kane for two with Brock making the save and it's time for Suplex City. Braun pops up like a daisy and powerslams Brock through a table with Kane making the save this time. Kane is tossed away again (it's almost like he's completely unnecessary in this match until the ending) and it's time for the announcers' table.

Braun takes too long though and it's an F5 to drive him through instead. Brock turns the other table over Braun (Corey: "I'm about to throw this German guy in front of me!") and F5's Kane through another. Braun gets up again and sends Brock into the steps, followed by the powerslam. Kane

makes the save and sends Braun outside, setting up an F5 onto the chair to retain Brock's title at 10:12.

Rating: B-. Well duh. The world knows that Braun is ready to be World Champion and should have been like six months ago but Vince McMahon and seemingly Vince McMahon alone wants to see Reigns take the title from Brock. Again, as has been the case many, many times: none of this is important because we're just sitting around waiting on Reigns to take the title like we've been waiting for for nearly a year now. After that, I have no idea where they go and I'm not sure WWE does either. This was fun, but exactly as expected.

Trailer for Andre the Giant's HBO documentary.

We get a video on the women's Royal Rumble with a focus on the Revolution (and Stephanie of course) with everyone talking about how important this is.

Maria Menunos is guest ring announcer and Stephanie McMahon is guest commentator, with Cole reading off her resume (and saying Stephanie will tell you about her trailblazing). Alexa Bliss and Charlotte come out to watch at ringside.

Women's Royal Rumble

Sasha Banks (in Wonder Woman gear) is in at #1 and Becky Lynch is in at #2 to give us a good start. Becky blocks an early elimination attempt and we talk about how nervous Stephanie is. The Bank Statement is broken up and it's a double clothesline as Sarah Logan is in at #3. Logan clotheslines Becky down but Sasha makes a questionable save. Becky gets stomped down in the corner and it's Mandy Rose in at #4. Mandy can't get rid of Sasha and it's LITA in at #5.

Sasha and Becky aren't sure what to do so they opt with kicking her in the stomach. Mandy jumps Lita from behind and gets placed on the apron, followed by a hard shot for the first elimination. Kairi Sane is in at #6 and chops Lita into the corner as Cole talks about her "yacht persona". She's not Ashley Remington (bet you didn't think I knew that one) because SHE'S A FREAKING PIRATE! Sane kicks Sasha down and drops the Insane

Elbow, followed by another to Becky as Tamina is in at #7.

Lita starts hitting the Twists of Fate and hits a double moonsault onto Sasha and Becky (more like her falling backwards instead of any kind of jump but give her a break). That means the YOU STILL GOT IT chant before she eliminates Tamina, only to get dumped by Becky. That's all this needed to be from Lita and it worked to perfection. Dana Brooke is in at #8 and actually dumps Kairi before stomping on Sasha in the corner.

Torrie Wilson is in at #9 (oh give me a break) and it's time to prove why she wasn't a wrestler. Logan dropkicks her down but Torrie pops up and eliminates Dana. Sonya Deville is in at #10, giving us Banks, Lynch, Logan, Wilson and Deville. Sonya starts firing off knees and gets rid of Torrie (thank goodness). Liv Morgan is in at #11 so the Squad can start getting together. No one is tossed though and it's Molly Holly in at #12.

Molly gets rid of Logan and hits the Molly Go Round on Sasha. Lana is in at #13 and is immediately taken down by Morgan and Deville. She actually gets fired up and slaps her way to freedom as Michelle McCool is in at #14. That means an UNDERTAKER chant as she gets rid of Logan, Morgan and Holly. Sasha and Becky are down on the floor (not eliminated) as Michelle gets rid of Lana as well. With Michelle alone, Becky and Sasha get back in and it's Ruby Riott at #15, giving us Michelle, Becky, Sasha and Ruby.

Vickie Guerrero is in at #16 and shouts EXCUSE ME over and over but everyone stares her down. She tries to bail and is tossed with ease (I guessed that as a comedy spot and it's as perfect as I thought it would be). Carmella is in at #17 but Vickie takes the Money in the Bank briefcase to knock her silly. Natalya is in at #18 and throws her gear on Carmella, who pulls Natalya off the apron. That's enough for Carmella to get in for some superkicks and it's Kelly Kelly in at #19. Kelly fends off an early elimination as Natalya gets rid of McCool.

Naomi is in at #20, giving us Banks, Lynch, Riott, Carmella, Natalya, Kelly and Naomi at the moment. Becky goes up for some reason and gets dumped by Riott. Jacqueline is in at #21 and goes after Kelly. Nia Jax is in at #22, meaning it's time to clear the ring. Jacqueline is out first, followed by Kelly with ease. Natalya is sent outside (through the ropes),

leaving Nia to press Riott onto the top turnbuckle and then out to the floor. Naomi goes after Nia's legs but tries a hurricanrana.

Nia knocks her off the apron but the pile catches her, allowing Naomi to land on the barricade. NXT Women's Champion (with a bad arm) is in at #23 with a springboard kick to Nia's face. Nia sends her flying as Naomi is walking across the barricade to steal Maria's chair on wheels. She then crawls across the floor using her hands and the wheels on the chair...only to have Nia catch her coming back in and toss her out. I smiled at the irony. Beth Phoenix is in at #24 and this could be a lot of fun.

Phoenix is a lot closer to Nia's size than I expected and manages a fireman's carry but can't eliminate Nia. Natalya's help doesn't work very well as they knock Nia through the ropes. That means a hug and of course Natalya turns on her and gets rid of Beth. Carmella (never eliminated) comes back in to jump Natalya from behind...and it's Asuka at #25. There's the hip attack to Carmella and it's time for the showdown with Ember Moon.

Ember actually hits a one armed Eclipse but Asuka goes after the bad arm and gets rid of her. Sasha (also never eliminated) gets back in and it's Mickie James in at #26. That goes nowhere and it's Nikki Bella getting lucky #27 (well duh). That means the JOHN CENA SUCKS song but Carmella takes Nikki into the corner for the Staten Island Shuffle (not the Moon Walk Stephanie). Nikki powers her up though and a neck snap across the top rope gets rid of Carmella.

Brie Bella is in at #28 to save her sister from a big beatdown. The Bellas get their big moment (their latest one for those of you who have lost track) and knock Nia off the apron. A double suplex puts Natalya down and it's Bayley in at #29. Asuka kicks Bayley in the head in short order but can't get rid of her. It's Trish Stratus in at #30 (not exactly shocking and that's not a bad thing) to give us a final group of Sasha, Natalya, Nia, Asuka, Mickie, Nikki, Brie, Bayley and Trish.

Stratus gets to clean house and hits a double Stratusfaction before getting into a showdown with Mickie. James misses a charge and gets tossed, meaning it's time for everyone to go after Nia. She shrugs them

all off but the Bellas choke her on the ropes, allowing everyone else to join in and get rid of Nia. Sasha of course turns on Bayley for the elimination and we're down to six.

Natalya puts Trish in the Sharpshooter for some reason and is broken up just as quickly. The Chick Kick eliminates Natalya but Trish mocks Sasha's Boss pose, meaning the Stratusfaction is broken up to get rid of Stratus. Sasha turns around to meet Asuka but they decide to get rid of the Bellas....for all of three seconds until Sasha decks Asuka from behind. Sasha calls the Bellas off so she can beat on Asuka in the corner but the Twins dump her out as she tries the double knees.

So we're down to the Bellas and Asuka and it's time for the YES Kicks to both Twins (there's a joke there that I'm not touching). Brie gets sent to the apron but Nikki decks Asuka, followed by the Rack Attack 2.0. Nikki decks Brie to get rid of her though and it's down to two. Asuka is on the apron and hits a missile dropkick but Nikki's spinning middle rope kick catches her in the face. Nikki puts her on the apron for the big forearm....which doesn't end it. Instead Asuka grabs a headscissors to put Nikki on the apron but Asuka kicks kicks her in the leg for the elimination to win at 58:47.

Rating: B. I know a lot of people are going to be annoyed about the amount of legends (and the amount of botches) in there but my goodness what else were you expecting? The women's division is about twenty people deep and I'd rather have people like McCool, Lita and Trish in there to give us either a good performance or appearances from people who are legitimate trailblazers (not McCool obviously but she did quite well). I was surprised by the lack of NXT names but what we got was fine, save for the Iconic Duo still not appearing.

The match itself was fine, albeit a bit predictable. You knew Asuka was the heavy favorite and really, it's not like there were many other solid options. Aside from Jax, who really else was there? Banks or Lynch? Well maybe, but Asuka getting the title needs to be a big deal and one of those two can take the other title. Either way....uh, back in a minute.

The champions get in the ring.....AND BAD REPUTATION HITS AS RONDA ROUSEY IS

HERE!!! Rousey, in a Roddy Piper shirt, points at the Wrestlemania sign and offers Asuka a handshake but Asuka slaps it away. Ronda also shakes Stephanie's hand and high fives fans to end the show.

Oh and Stephanie's commentary was annoying but acceptable. She didn't need to be there and added nothing at all but she could have been worse. Sounded very much like a fan who wasn't the most polished but it was fine.

Overall Rating: A-. I loved the heck out of this show as they made the Rumbles FUN. That's been sorely, sorely lacking in recent years and they made up for it tonight. The Rumbles are interesting by definition but above all else, these matches were a good time as I kept waiting to see who was coming out next. I was actually worried about Reigns and Nikki winning so well done on some false drama. This did everything it needed to do, including setting up a major Wrestlemania match. I had a great time with this show and that's what the Rumble is supposed to be. Well done all around and a great show.

Results

AJ Styles b. Sami Zayn/Kevin Owens – Rollup to Owens

Usos b. Chad Gable/Jason Jordan – Small package to Benjamin

Shinsuke Nakamura won the Royal Rumble last eliminating Roman Reigns

The Bar b. Seth Rollins/Jason Jordan – Super White Noise to Rollins

Brock Lesnar b. Kane and Braun Strowman – F5 to Kane

Asuka won the Royal Rumble last eliminating Nikki Bella

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the 2018 Updated Version of the History of the WWE Championship in e-book or paperback. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2018/01/26/new-book-kbs-history-of-the-wwe-championship-2018-updated-version/>

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

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

Monday Night Raw – December 9, 2002: Three Times! THREE TIMES!

Monday Night Raw

Date: December 9, 2002

Location: Thompson-Boling Arena, Knoxville, Tennessee

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

It's the go home show for Armageddon and that means it's time for the HHH vs. Shawn Michaels Show (as in the official version instead of the unofficial one we've seen for weeks now). Other than that, I really can't think of anything important that Raw has to offer on Sunday but it's not like Raw cares about anyone but these two anyway. Let's get to it.

Eric Bischoff and Chief Morely are in the ring with Shawn Michaels and HHH appearing on the screen. Bischoff gets right to the point: Sunday's match is going to be 2/3 falls. That's not all though as each fall will have a special stipulation. The first fall will be a street fight, the second will be held inside a cage and the third is a ladder match. HHH and Shawn didn't say a word. So to clarify, we're likely getting THREE Shawn vs. HHH matches and HHH will get to beat Shawn in his signature match to become the champion all over again. Oh joy.

Booker T./Goldust vs. William Regal/Lance Storm

During the entrances, a four way elimination match is confirmed for

Sunday with Chris Jericho/Christian defending against these two teams and the Dudley Boyz. Booker works on Storm's arm to start and let's hit the HHH talk. Goldust comes in for the yet to be named Rear View on Regal. A suplex drops Goldust though and it's off to a chinlock. That goes nowhere so it's already off to Booker as the announcers manage to talk about the match for a bit.

Booker's spinebuster gets two on Lance and it's already back to the HHH discussion. There's the ax kick for two more but Goldust tags himself in for a double clothesline. Shattered Dreams makes Regal cringe and something like a Hart Attack gets two on Storm. Lance comes right back with a Sharpshooter though and Goldust tape.

Rating: C-. This was all about the angle building but that doesn't mean much given how fast they're throwing together this weak link story for Goldust. I'm not sure why they couldn't just have Booker and Goldust go on a roll and beat some teams but why do that when you can have them lose over and over in the first place?

Goldust says he's the weak link and wants Booker to find a new partner.

Trish Stratus is reading Hulk Hogan's new book for no apparent reason when Chris Jericho comes in to read an excerpt. Apparently he made Hogan tap at one point but he'd rather talk about the sexual tension between himself and Trish. She thinks Vitamin C sounds very nu-Trish-ous. Then again she saw him without his clothes on two weeks ago and thinks it's Vitamin Wee. These two have great chemistry together.

Rob Van Dam is on the phone in Bischoff's office when the bosses come in to hang up the call. Bischoff needs to keep the line open for his call from Scott Steiner. Van Dam leaves but tells Bischoff that he just hung up on Steiner. I would pay so much money to see Steiner and Van Dam have a five minute chat about....well anything really.

Steven Richards vs. Jacqueline

Jacqueline is in a triple threat match with Trish and Victoria on Sunday, just in case you weren't over the card already. Steven easily powers her into the corner to start but gets armdragged down. Richards gets serious

and grabs a side slam for two with Jackie's foot on the ropes freaking him out. A DDT gives Jackie two more but she drops him throat first across the top rope. The StevieDT is good for the pin and I have no idea why this existed.

Victoria comes in to go after Jackie but Trish makes the save. Jackie wants nothing from Trish and the loser's music plays for some reason.

Jeff Hardy is honored to be compared to a young HBK but the real version comes in to say he's not dead. Shawn knows Jeff is going to take a beating tonight and says take advantage of HHH when he gets cocky. Jeff is grateful for the advice and says if Shawn needs help in the ladder match, let him know.

Rob Van Dam vs. Batista

Batista throws him around to start as JR gets in his regular mention of Rob's offense being "unorthodox". Choking underneath the ropes ensues until Rob gets in a few kicks to take over. Rolling Thunder gives Van Dam two but Flair grabs Rob's foot. Cue Kane for the fast DQ.

Kane and Van Dam clean house.

Morely yells at Kane, who doesn't know who Morely is. The Chief explains things so Kane does a Val Venis impression, earning himself a handicap match with 3 Minute Warning.

Christopher Nowinski/D'Lo Brown vs. Maven/Al Snow

And Brown is just a heel now. The good guys clean house to start with Snow armdragging Brown a few times. Maven comes in for some right hands of his own until Nowinski pulls him down from behind. The slow beatdown begins with the fans saying someone sucks. My guess would be the whole match but I'm too big of a Brown fan to say that. Nowinski gets dropkicked off the top and the hot tag brings in Snow. The trapping headbutts have Brown in trouble until Chris makes the save. The Sky High puts Snow away.

Rating: D. This is as low level of a feud as you can get and despite the pre-match video on the match, I have no idea why these guys are feuding.

I don't know if this is still supposed to hype up Tough Enough but it's really not interesting. Also, this gets nearly two minutes longer than Batista vs. Van Dam? Is Batista really that incapable of wrestling a longer match?

Booker tries to talk Goldust out of splitting up the team. The plea is enough and they'll be a team at the pay per view. So they set up and blew off the story in about forty minutes. That might be a record even for Raw. The story is fine but could we get a bit more time to let it set in? At least have the story go on longer than two weeks to let it have some impact.

HHH vs. Jeff Hardy

HHH pulls him off the ropes during the entrances but Jeff gets in the legdrop between the legs. That's enough trouble for HHH as he takes Hardy outside for some whips into the steps. Back in and a spinebuster sets up a side slam, followed by an over the shoulder backbreaker. Jeff's comeback consists of a running forearm before two Pedigrees (because HHH can't just have one of anything) give HHH the pin.

Rating: D. Well it's not like Jeff is doing anything at this point. You knew they were going to put HHH over someone very hard to make sure you know how awesome he is before Sunday's title match. Just in case you didn't realize how completely awesome HHH was you see. Hardy was treated like a jobber here, though to be fair it's not that far from the truth.

HHH loads up a chair but Shawn comes out for the staredown as we take a break. Back with Flair saying he'd like a word with Shawn. With Shawn holding the title, Flair talks about carrying that very belt around the airports (not quite) but then someone told him that Shawn was the new man.

Then one day Arn Anderson said Shawn was a tough act to follow and Flair had to take a look in the mirror. Ric realized that he wasn't the best in the world anymore and there was no way around it. As high as Shawn was on the pedestal though, there's a new man in town. That man's name is HHH and he's the best in the world. Shawn needs to concede the fact that he needs to pass the torch. If Shawn tries to keep going, HHH will kill him

on the way to taking the most coveted prize in this business. Shawn seems to buy into the idea and walks away as HHH reiterates what Flair just said.

Great stuff here from Flair but there's no way around the fact that we're looking at three Shawn vs. HHH matches on Sunday despite no one wanting to see it. The first match was great but their promos haven't done much since then. Couple that with the fact that I can't imagine their match is going to validate crushing everyone else in their paths to get there and it's hard to imagine this is worth all the effort.

The Raw Retro for the week is Mike Tyson debuting and Steve Austin getting in his face. You can hear WCW collapsing from here.

Kane vs. 3 Minute Warning

Rico offers an early distraction so the Samoans can jump Kane from behind. Double headbutts have Kane in trouble and Rosey gets two off a legdrop. The running DDT plants Jamal and Rosey splashes his partner by mistake. The chokeslam puts Jamal down for the pin in less than three minutes. We have four teams and the Samoans are jobbing in a handicap match?

Rico helps with a post match beatdown until Van Dam makes the save. Jamal even eats a Van Terminator.

Stacy is in a rather sexy Santa outfit and debuts the Test blue ball Christmas ornament. Yes, this really is the joke they're STILL going with. Just in case you didn't get the idea, Stacy sings a Christmas carol about the testicles roasting over an open fire.

RNN BREAKING NEWS shows Randy Orton at the New York Stock Exchange.

We run down the pay per view card with all four of its announced matches.

Chris Jericho wants to put Trish through a table in their six person tag. Oh and it's rather large in case you were wondering. Victoria comes up and says she'll be the one doing that.

Shawn tells Flair that he'll be waiting for HHH in the parking lot.

Trish Stratus/Dudley Boyz vs. Chris Jericho/Christian/Victoria

Tables match. D-Von hammers Christian into the corner before it's off to Bubba for the big elbows. Why they're tagging isn't clear but I'd assume it's because they need to fill in some extra time and don't have any more matches. It's off to Victoria, who takes What's Up. Trish hits one on Jericho to make Lawler a bit envious. D-Von brings in the first table but gets knocked off the apron. That's fine though as Bubba loads up a powerbomb on Victoria...and we take a break?

Back with Bubba in a chinlock and JR apologizing for the abrupt commercial. Victoria comes in to work on Bubba as we see a clip of Jericho breaking up the powerbomb before the commercial. The referee doesn't see a tag to D-Von, who can't come in despite, as JR has mentioned more than once, there being no disqualifications. Now the announcers discuss which version of Shawn will show up on Sunday (Shawn Michaels, HBK or the Showstopper).

The Lionsault hits knees and Bubba covers out of instinct as Christian slides in a table. That table is set up in the corner and Jericho bounces off of it as this just keeps going. Bubba dives over for the hot tag to D-Von and house is cleaned in a hurry. Jericho saves Christian from being suplexed through a table but takes 3D for his efforts.

The Dudleys load Victoria up for a powerbomb but Richards comes out for the save, only to have Spike Dudley get rid of him. Christian eats a good looking double flapjack but now Regal and Storm come in to jump Bubba and D-Von. Booker T. and Goldust make it SIX RUN-INS as they go after the champs.

Jericho takes the Stratusphere for some reason and since it's just a weak hurricanrana, Chris takes Trish's head off with a clothesline. Booker saves Trish and stops for a Spinarooni but gets dropped by Storm. That earns Lance a 3D and the Dudleys finally help Trish powerbomb Victoria through the table for the win.

Rating: D. Did I mention there isn't much on this show and they don't have enough to fill in two hours? This match ran over fifteen minutes with six people running in. The tagging stuff got old in a hurry,

especially with JR mentioning more than once that there were no disqualifications. Why he didn't mention the tags not being necessary isn't clear but it might have made too much sense.

HHH and Flair head to the parking lot where Shawn hits HHH in the head with a shovel. Flair takes a shot as well (at least wait for the bar) and a trashcan shot knocks HHH into a dumpster. As you might expect, Shawn climbs the highest thing he can find (the production truck) and dives onto HHH for the big crash. Shawn rants about having heart to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. Yeah this isn't working and it's very, very clear that the red side of Armageddon is a horrible show with EVERYTHING banked on Shawn vs. HHH. I'm not even sure why the Tag Team Title match needs to be a four way when you could easily have two tags to flesh things out a bit. The long matches and bad wrestling didn't help here but above all else, Raw needs something fresh instead of HHH vs. Shawn again.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the NXT: The Full Sail Years Volumes I and II, now in PAPERBACK. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/03/24/kbs-history-of-nxt-volumes-1-and-2-now-available-in-paperback/>

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

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

Super Tuesday 2002: We Didn't Forget About You Kane

Super Tuesday

Date: November 12, 2002

Location: FleetCenter, Boston, Massachusetts/Verizon Wireless Arena, Manchester, New Hampshire

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole, Tazz

This is a one off special that aired on UPN as a way to help hype up Survivor Series. Each show taped a bonus match so we have something from both sides, though odds are neither of them are going to be anything worth watching. As unimportant as these things are, there's nothing wrong with some bonus wrestling. Let's get to it.

The opening sequence is a fairly catchy mix of Beautiful People and Across the Nation.

Stephanie McMahon makes her big Survivor Series announcement: the Tag Team Title match is now a triple threat with Edge/Rey Mysterio defending against Los Guerreros and Kurt Angle/Chris Benoit. She'll hang onto the titles tonight, which is code for "this was taped before Edge and Mysterio won but airing after."

Edge vs. Chris Benoit vs. Eddie Guerrero

Ever the smart one, Eddie hides on the floor while Benoit stomps Edge down in the corner. Edge gets in a belly to back suplex for two on Benoit, drawing Eddie in for the save. All three are in the ring for the first time with Edge beating both of them down until Eddie gets in a shot from behind to take over again.

We take a break and come back with Benoit working over both guys, only to have Edge score with a double missile dropkick. Eddie misses the Frog splash and gets taken down by the half nelson faceplant, only to have Benoit Crossface Edge. That's not enough for Benoit so he grabs the same thing on Eddie with Edge making the save.

A spear gets two on Benoit but here's Chavo for a distraction, leading to a ref bump. Cue Rey to take Chavo out as Benoit Crossfaces Eddie for the unseen tap. Angle runs out and throws the referee in, breaking up the hold by mistake. Benoit yells at Angle and gets rolled up as Eddie steals the pin.

Rating: B-. Good but nowhere near as good of a match as you would expect from these guys. They're all very talented but they're a step higher up with their partners and there's nothing wrong with that. Guerrero winning is a good idea as he and Chavo are the only ones who haven't won the titles yet.

Long video on Big Show vs. Brock Lesnar.

Here's Big Show for a chat. He talks about hurting people and promises to win the title. Show wasn't even in the ring for 70 seconds.

Video on the Elimination Chamber, the same one from Raw.

It's time for a bikini contest between Torrie Wilson and Trish Stratus. Trish is in black, Torrie is in skin colored and Nidia is in the ring to interfere before the crowd has to win (Torrie's cheer was louder).

Time for the Raw half, starting with the Shawn vs. HHH video from Monday. Just like Monday, the other four people in the Chamber aren't even mentioned.

Shawn doesn't know who is winning on Sunday but knows it won't be HHH.

HHH/Chris Jericho/Christian/3 Minute Warning vs. Booker T./Kane/Rob Van Dam/Bubba Ray Dudley/Jeff Hardy

Thankfully a commercial eats up a lot of the entrances. Jeff and Jamal get things going with Hardy being tossed around like he's a small guy being tossed into the air by a large Samoan. Christian and Bubba come in with the Canadian taking a hard pounding in the corner. That means it's back to Jamal vs. Van Dam as they're certainly not wasting time here.

Rob dropkicks him down but HHH pulls Van Dam into the corner as the heels take over for the first time. Jericho gets in a few stomps but misses a

dropkick, allowing the hot tag to Kane so house can be cleaned. Kane destroys everyone, leaving seven or eight people to fight on the floor.

Chris gets the Walls on Van Dam but Booker makes the save with a superkick. That triggers the parade of finishers with Kane chokeslamming HHH but Christian makes a save. Van Dam dives onto a bunch of people, leaving Flair to hit Kane in the back with a chair. The Pedigree puts the monster away because HHH hasn't gotten rid of him yet.

Rating: D. This was dragged down due to the amount of people involved and there's not much of a way to fit ten people into less than nine minutes. Oh but rest assured there's ALWAYS time for HHH to pin someone. We didn't really have another choice either as Kane isn't Shawn and therefore there's no reason to have him win because he doesn't have a chance on Sunday.

Overall Rating: D+. Pretty big waste of time here with the main event being more insulting than anything else. The opener was fine and the women looked great but anything on here could have been done on TV. It wasn't so much bad as much as it was completely unnecessary, which is often worse. At least it was short though and you could fast forward through a lot of the recap videos.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the NXT: The Full Sail Years Volumes I and II, now in PAPERBACK. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/03/24/kbs-history-of-nxt-volumes-1-and-2-now-available-in-paperback/>

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

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

Monday Night Raw – July 8, 2002 (2016 Redo): Breaking Point

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 8, 2002

Location: First Union Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

Raw is actually picking up a bit at the moment as they're making some efforts to push the younger talent. Brock Lesnar is moving up the card and it's clear that Eddie Guerrero and Chris Benoit are becoming the top heels. Unfortunately that leaves the NWO, who are promising that HHH will be joining tonight. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Undertaker vs. Kurt Angle from Smackdown with the double finish.

Vince announces Undertaker vs. Rock vs. Angle for Vengeance. Undertaker is off tonight though and the fans are NOT pleased.

Opening sequence.

Here's Booker T. for an opening chat. He's used to fighting the NWO and wants X-Pac in particular because X-Pac looks like a rat. Booker quotes his dad, who apparently spoke to him in promos about challenging people to wrestling matches. Instead of X-Pac, here's Eddie Guerrero to answer. Eddie wants to fight someone so here we go.

Booker T. vs. Eddie Guerrero

Please give them some time. Eddie stomps him down in the corner to start and puts his feet on the ropes for two. A belly to back suplex sets up a running seated Blockbuster for two but Booker grabs his spinning sunset

flip out of the corner for the pin. For some reason the bell doesn't ring and Booker's music takes a second to come on so there isn't much of a reaction.

Rating: D+. So much for giving them time. I'm sure these two are capable of having a good match if you give them more than three minutes but then we wouldn't have time for all of the NWO promos tonight. At least Booker didn't have to do another unnecessary job here though and that's a good thing.

Post match Benoit comes in for the beatdown but Goldust makes the save. The Dudleyz come in and clean house with chairs.

Rey Mysterio video.

Goldust grabs Booker's hand for a celebratory dance. Booker isn't happy with that because the NWO is coming for them. This turns into a discussion of Jon Bon Jovi until Booker superkicks a pretzel vendor who looks like X-Pac. That probably does deserve a beating.

Jackie Gayda isn't happy about Trish Stratus interfering last week. Apparently Trish is jealous of the attention Jackie has been getting and can't handle it. Christopher Nowinski comes in to rip on Trish for wearing a cowboy hat and looking like Yosemite Sam. The result is a mixed tag with Bradshaw as Trish's partner. Of note here, Jackie had some of the worst acting skills I've ever seen here. She has almost no presence and is just reading her lines. Trish isn't great but at least she sounds natural.

Video of Rock asking if Lillian would like some strudel. Lillian: "More than anything in the world Rock."

Bubba Ray Dudley vs. Chris Benoit

Before the match, Goldust, dressed as Ben Franklin and talking like Santa Claus, suggests a partnership with the Dudleyz to fight the NWO. This turns into a discussion of wanting to punch Thomas Jefferson in the gonads. Benoit takes him down to start but gets suplexed. Eddie offers a distraction though and the middle rope backsplash misses. That's enough

for Benoit to snap off a German suplex but Bubba grabs one of his own. Eddie goes after Spike as the Bubba Bomb gets two. The Spike factor allows Benoit to grab the Crossface for the submission.

Rating: C. This is a good role for Bubba but I'm not clear on why Benoit and Guerrero aren't higher up the card. I mean, save for Undertaker STILL being champion for reasons that aren't clear. The match wasn't much to see but at least Benoit won, albeit after making sure Bubba stayed strong.

Guerrero and Benoit beat on the Dudleyz until Booker and Goldust make the save.

Video on Nowinski at Harvard. Ok then.

Recap of last week's ladder match.

Ric Flair praised Jeff Hardy's performance last week when, I kid you not, STEVEN RICHARDS interrupted and set up a match with Flair for later tonight. You bring Flair back to the ring, turn him face, and then give him a match with Richards? I mean, if Richards goes over (which he won't) it's one thing but a quick Flair win doesn't help anyone.

Jackie Gayda/Christopher Nowinski vs. Trish Stratus/Bradshaw

This is an infamous one. The guys start things off and Chris wants a little football, only to tag in Jackie when Bradshaw gets down in the three point stance. Trish gets two off a dropkick and shoulder, which pretty much ends the competent part of the match. Stratus charges at Jackie in what I think was supposed to be a toss over the top but Jackie completely misses her so Trish just bounced chest first off the ropes.

I think Trish calls for a drop toehold or maybe a small package but Jackie kind of lays on her instead. I've seen over 50,000 wrestling matches in my life and I honestly do not know what they were trying to do there. That's not good, nor is it acceptable. Jackie chokes on the mat and then the ropes before thankfully bringing Nowinski back in for some missed elbows.

Trish tags out, which brings up another issue. JR keeps talking about how

the women have to face the women and the men have to face the men, so why did Trish have to tag? Shouldn't Bradshaw be allowed to come in without the tag taking place to satisfy the match rules? A fall away slam sends Nowinski over for another tag and the men leave, because that's clearly the best idea.

Trish tries what looks to be Stratusfaction but Jackie goes to the mat, leaving Trish to force her over with a snapmare. Some chops in the corner allow Trish to desperately call spots as JR tries to say Jackie just needs ring time. Trish shoves her off the middle rope, waits for Jackie to turn around like she's supposed to, kicks her back into the middle of the ring, and hits something like a middle rope fist to the back of the head (supposed to be a bulldog and didn't make contact anyway).

The fist comes close to Jackie's head, Trish lands and turns around, and THEN Jackie goes down, allowing Trish to get the pin after the longest three minutes and fifteen seconds that I've ever seen in wrestling. Ignore Jackie kicking out at two and a half as the referee count anyway because they can't let this keep going.

Rating: U. For unacceptable. This is a perfect example of what happens when someone has no reason to be in the ring but is out there because they won some competition. Nowinski was nothing great at this point but he could wrestle an acceptable match. Jackie looked like she was in her first week or two of training, let alone being ready for a live match.

There's a difference between not being able to do much (see someone like Maven in his Raw debut) but being able to do that little amount at a watchable level. This was the polar opposite as Jackie couldn't even do basic stuff right and you could see Trish getting mad out there. Completely unacceptable here and one of the worst matches in history.

Benoit and Eddie are annoyed when the NWO comes in to say there's strength in numbers.

Montage of Rock impersonating various people.

Here's the NWO for a chat. We see the NWO offering their assistance to HHH at King of the Ring, which apparently means HHH is joining the team.

Shawn recaps the Kliq and then runs down HHH for sucking up to the fans too much. Just like the NWO, the Kliq is for life. That's why HHH has until Vengeance to make the biggest decision of his life. Nash has his own bombshell because he's coming off the injured list tonight. His idea for tonight: a ten man tag with Booker T./Goldust/Dudleyz/??? vs. the NWO/Benoit/Guerrero.

Ric Flair vs. Steven Richards

So is this really just taking place so a Philadelphia guy can wrestle? Flair stomps him down in the corner, followed by the standard chops and punches. A toss sends Steven outside, followed by a belly to back into the Figure Four for the submission.

Rating: D. What the heck was the point of that? This was an NWA style squash with Flair giving up nothing, hitting his usual stuff, and winning the match with his finisher. If this is the best they can do with Flair at this point, they'd be better off making him the boss again or just leaving him as a heel because this was a waste of time.

Here are Paul Heyman and Brock Lesnar for a chat. Lesnar vs. Rob Van Dam is now for the Intercontinental Title (Wasn't it already?) but Heyman would rather talk about making and exploiting everyone in ECW. Now Heyman wants to feed one of those people to the most dominant wrestler for the next ten years.

Tommy Dreamer comes out and threatens to innovate some violence and actually knocks Lesnar outside with a kendo stick. He makes the mistake of going after Heyman though and gets hit with the F5 on the floor. With Lesnar busy looking at Dreamer, Van Dam comes in and kicks Brock down. A Van Terminator knocks Paul silly. This was ALL for the live crowd, which is almost never a good idea for a TV show.

European Title: Jeff Hardy vs. William Regal

Regal is defending and gets punched in the face to start. The Whisper in the Wind barely makes contact but gets two anyway. A few knees to the face put Jeff down and the Regal Cutter gets two for the champ. Something like a Tazmission has Jeff in more trouble but Regal goes to unhook a

turnbuckle pad. This villainy goes badly for him though as Jeff dropkicks him into the corner and hits the Swanton for the pin and the title.

Rating: D. Well that happened. Regal was similar to British Bulldog as he only held the title because he was from Europe, meaning Jeff isn't likely the saving grace that the title needs. Hardy is basically getting the title as a consolation prize after last week, which doesn't mean anything because the title hasn't meant anything in years.

Video of This Is Your Life Rock.

Regal breaks down in tears over losing. Nowinski has to come in and help him up.

Bubba gives a rousing speech to get Van Dam to be the mystery partner.

Dudley Boyz/Rob Van Dam/Goldust/Booker T. vs. NWO/Chris Benoit/Eddie Guerrero

Remember earlier tonight when the Dudleyz didn't want to team with Goldust and Booker T? Well forget about that because Nash has decided they're partners here. There was no mention of Vince saying deal with it and team together and no scene of them agreeing to put issues aside and deal with a common enemy. Either of those things would have been fine and taken all of thirty seconds to do but instead we get neither, leaving it as a plot hole.

X-Pac and Van Dam start things off with Shawn shouting something from ringside. After the kicking exchange, it's off to Goldust for an atomic drop and a tag to Bubba. Even Spike gets to snap off a headscissors but Benoit comes in to turn things around. The beating doesn't last long as Van Dam is back in to monkey flip Eddie but the Canadian is back in to take over on Rob.

A superkick puts X-Pac down as the fans are trying so hard to care here. Unfortunately it's all for naught though as the NWO is just sucking the life out of this show. The hot tag brings in Bubba to clean house but Van Dam goes after Shawn and walks into the F5 onto the stage from an invading Lesnar.

Back in and Benoit keeps working over Bubba as this keeps going. The tag brings in Nash to give Booker the big boot but he goes over to the other corner and OW MY QUAD! That would be a torn muscle and Nash wouldn't wrestle again until April. Everything breaks down with Bubba checking on Nash and Shawn superkicking Booker. Show adds the chokeslam to put Booker away. JR: "IT'S AN NWO VICTORY!" Well to be fair, Benoit and Guerrero were just there anyway so it's truer than it sounds.

Rating: D+. I've seen worse but you can feel the tape and paperclips coming off in a hurry. Nash getting injured is one of those things that only happens when nothing else can go wrong, but to suggest that he was going to save the whole show was ridiculous in the first place. Oh and well done by having Booker take the fall and not, I don't know, SPIKE FREAKING DUDLEY. That's so great.

Shawn says that's what HHH is in for if he doesn't join the team.

Overall Rating: F. This is a show where the wrestling was bad but the bigger problem is how it felt like the final straw. Yes the angles are horrible and yes the matches are hit or miss at best but tonight we had one of the worst matches of all time and one of the big stars coming back into the ring and then being put on the shelf for several more months, meaning the NWO continues to be worthless. Raw just does not have the credibility to survive something like this and it's clear that they're in need of a major shakeup.

On top of that, this was half Raw and half ECW reunion show with people like Dreamer and Richards being put on the card for the sake of appealing to the live crowd. Like I said, that's fine for a show that has a lot of momentum but Raw had two decent shows in a row and that's about it. Something needs to be fixed around here and it needs to happen in a hurry.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book, KB's Complete Monday Nitro and Thunder Reviews Volume V at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01MQKDV50>

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

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

Daily News Update – December 5, 2016

Injured Name Returning to Road Next Week. December 3, 2016.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/injured-name-returning-to-the-road-next-week>

When Could Finn Balor Be Back in the Ring? December 5, 2016.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/when-could-finn-balor-be-back-in-the-ring/>

Former Champion Returning to WWE This Spring. December 5, 2016.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/former-champion-returning-to-wwe-this-spring/>

Rumor on the Wyatt Family Tag Team Title Reign. December 5, 2016.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/rumor-on-the-wyatt-familys-tag-team-title-reign/>

Two New Collections Added to WWE Network. December 5, 2016.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/two-new-collections-added-to-wwe-network/>

Monday Night Raw – June 10, 2002 (2016 Redo): A Missing Rattlesnake, An Owner and One Disgusting Promo

Monday Night Raw

Date: June 10, 2002

Location: Phillips Arena, Atlanta, Georgia

Attendance: 8,000

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

Steve Austin is gone and he's not coming back for a long time. Austin walked out of the company earlier in the day before this show due to not wanting to lose to Brock Lesnar in a King of the Ring qualifying match with no build. He had been unhappy for a long time and this was the breaking point, meaning most of the show had to be rewritten at the last minute. There's not much of a point in recapping most of what's going on because everything is changing here so let's get to it.

Before we get to the show, let's talk about Austin a little more. There are two major points to get out of the way here: Austin was completely unprofessional by leaving like he did but he was absolutely right with a lot of his complaints. Let's look at the second part first. Austin losing to Lesnar in a one off match on Raw would have been a very, very stupid move and a huge waste of money. While he wasn't the star he once was, Austin was the undisputed biggest name on Raw and a win over him, no matter how it was attained, would be a big deal.

Austin has said (albeit years later) that he had no problem putting Lesnar over but he had a problem with doing it on Raw with no build. Put this up on a pay per view with a regular build and it's going to draw money. Putting it on a nothing Raw in a qualifying match (Austin vs. Lesnar should have been a featured match, as in the tournament final and one of the show's main events) was very shortsighted and fairly insulting

to Austin at the same time.

On top of that, Austin had been doing some really stupid angles over the last few weeks. Whether it was the WAY too long feud with the NWO or relieving himself on Arn Anderson or probably making Ric Flair clean the toilets, Austin was a pretty long way away from his must see war against Vince McMahon and headlining Wrestlemania with the Rock. Austin deserved better than this and should have been in the World Title picture instead of taking care of all these people in Raw in a glorified midcard role.

All that being said, no one has the right to walk out on a show, especially when he was advertised as the big draw of the night. It's insulting to the company but more importantly to the fans who paid to see Austin that night. Maybe Austin was looking for an excuse to get out or he finally snapped but there's no excuse for what he did, especially with the way he was barely in contact for several months after walking out. Maybe this will be better for Raw in the long term, but give the company a way to write him off TV and not be forced into a bait and switch. It's a bad moment all around and no one looks great but Austin looks worse.

Anyway, on with the show.

Opening sequence.

Here's Ric Flair to open the show. As he makes his way to the ring, JR makes the first Austin reference by talking about the personal assistant story. Flair recaps the story and says he isn't happy about it but Austin isn't here tonight. Before he can elaborate further, here's Vince McMahon to interrupt. Vince talks about Austin walking out and you can tell the fans are rather taken aback by the news. As for Flair, he's driven Raw into the toilet and sucks as an owner. Flair: "I'm sorry."

Ric wants to know what Flair plans to do about it so we hear about Vince's career resume. Vince gets to the point (how nice of him): tonight, one match between the two of them, no holds barred, winner take all. Flair takes off the jacket and calls Vince a Nature Boy wannabe. The match is on and Flair has just completed one of the most rushed face turns in recorded history.

Earlier today Shawn Michaels wouldn't let the rest of the NWO into the locker room so they read the paper instead. Big Show has some stomach issues due to eating Mexican food. Booker winds up singing Shawn's theme song and wants to "collabroatize" with Shawn over the lyrics. That goes nowhere so Booker sings his own version of Shawn's song.

Spike Dudley/Shawn Stasiak/Tommy Dreamer vs. NWO

Booker/X-Pac/Show here and Christopher Nowitzki is sitting in the front row. X-Pac powerbombs Spike to start and fires off the kicks in the corner. Stasiak and Show come in for the expected dominance but we cut to Nash and Shawn watching in the back. It's off to Dreamer with his bucket and it's full of confetti. Booker takes the DDT and everything breaks down. The ax kick finishes Dreamer in a hurry.

Post match we get a big Spinarooni. That face turns needs to happen....oh I don't know, NOW perhaps?

After a break, Booker runs into Goldust (now in an afro as the Undercover Brother), who wants Booker to drop the team because, I kid you now, Shawn might be a racist.

Molly Holly doesn't like Terri because she's not a credible journalist due to some of her swimsuit photos and the Raw Sex column. Cue Trish Stratus, who says people don't like Molly because she's, shall we say, hippy. "You could show like a whole drive-in movie on that thing." Sweet goodness this is disturbing anymore. A match is agreed to and if Molly wins, she gets a title shot. If Trish wins, Molly has to wrestle in a thong. Naturally Trish reveals her own to make sure the fans ignore how evil she was here.

Chris Benoit and Eddie Guerrero try to talk Flair out of this and get nowhere.

European Title: William Regal vs. Bradshaw

Bradshaw is challenging and his Hardcore Title isn't on the line. Regal trips him to the mat to start but gets headlocked for his efforts. A good left hand puts Bradshaw down and it's time to slug away in the corner.

The Regal Cutter gets two (for Regal if that's not clear) but Bradshaw sends him flying with the fall away slam. With the champ in trouble, Nowitzki jumps the barricade and throws Regal the brass knuckles for the knockout shot to retain.

Rating: D. Well that happened. They need to just retire the title already because there hasn't been a real feud over the thing in months and I don't remember the last time a title match broke five minutes. Nowitzki joining Regal could be interesting but let them do anything other than be around such a worthless title.

GET THE F OUT!

Molly Holly vs. Trish Stratus

Non-title. Lawler makes jokes about Molly's figure and it's already uncomfortable. Trish's face is sent into the mat and there's the handspring elbow in the corner for two. Stratusfaction is broken up with a belly to back suplex and the Molly Go Round finishes Trish clean. So to recap: the champ just lost clean (second time a champion has lost in a row) and apparently Molly is rather large in various areas. You know, because Trish is such a stick figure.

Arn Anderson (thankfully in a clean shirt) tries to talk Vince out of this.

King of the Ring Qualifying Match: Eddie Guerrero vs. Rob Van Dam

Non-title of course. They trade armdrags to start until Eddie grabs a leglock on the mat. Back up and Eddie sends Van Dam into the corner as an ECW chant starts up. Van Dam goes sailing over the top rope for a big crash but he's right back up to kick Eddie down. They're certainly keeping things moving so far.

Back in and Eddie grabs a cross armbreaker of all things (JR gets it wrong by calling it a Fujiwara armbar) to keep Van Dam in trouble. A superplex plants Van Dam again but Eddie can't follow up. Instead it's Van Dam missing the split legged moonsault to keep both guys down again. They start trading rollups and Van Dam actually gets the pin, though it

looked like Eddie was supposed to kick out. It didn't look horribly botched but it didn't seem to be the planned finish.

Rating: B-. These two work very well together and I'm glad the champ won but they need to stop going back to this match over and over. Booker would be a good challenger for Van Dam and Eddie can go do something else, though I'm not entirely sure what at this point given the lack of top stories.

The replay shows that Eddie's shoulder was up at two but Van Dam went to a jackknife cover while the referee called for the bell. Definitely not how it was supposed to go.

Undertaker arrives.

Nash won't let Coach talk to Shawn.

Here's Undertaker for a talk. He's tired of people just not getting the fact that he's the Undisputed WWE Heavyweight Champion of the World. All he knows is that he deserves respect, which brings him to HHH. If HHH was so smart, why didn't he know Undertaker was waiting for him last week? The only hope that HHH has at King of the Ring is the hope that Undertaker doesn't kick his face in.

Moving on, Jeff Hardy dropkicked him into human vomit. JR: "Not any kind of vomit. HUMAN VOMIT!" Cue Matt Hardy with a ladder for a distraction so Jeff can get in a few shots. The beatdown is on but the brothers manage to drop him with the ladder before bailing. So they go from a big time tag team to getting squashed by Brock Lesnar to feuding with the World Champion in a side story while we wait on Undertaker vs. HHH?

Regal and Nowitzki leave together because they're both smart but Jeff runs in to say something remains unfulfilled before jumping into a jeep and driving off.

King of the Ring Qualifying Match: Brock Lesnar vs. Bubba Ray Dudley

Brock doesn't waste time by sending Bubba hard into the corner. That earns Brock a neckbreaker and it's already table time, only to have Heyman deck Bubba from behind. Heyman: "OH CENSORED!" The distraction

lets Brock grab a belly to belly on the floor, followed by a modified t-bone suplex back inside. The suplex spamming continues as JR calls this breathtaking. Bubba gets in a release German suplex of his own and a regular German suplex gets two. The middle rope backplash actually connects but Heyman's second distraction sets up the F5 for the pin.

Rating: D+. Watchable power match here with Lesnar looking a little better than usual. Granted that might be due to not having Van Dam and Guerrero around him to really show off how much better they are. Bubba is a good first feud for Lesnar but they really need to have good hands in there to walk Brock through these matches.

After a break, Heyman offers Brock to Vince. Once Vince gets total control, he should call Heyman, who has a great idea for King of the Ring.

We see Rock say he'll be back soon.

Here's Shawn Michaels for his first comments since returning. Shawn talks about how in the WWF, they had everything from garbage men to clowns but the only real thing was....him. Then Wrestlemania XIV came along and it was time to go with Attitude and Steve Austin, who stole his spotlight. He's not blaming Steve though (or a back injury, the ratings or reality apparently) because the fans determine where this company goes as an organization.

So why is he here? Certainly not to wrestle, because the fans killed HBK. However, the only man who stood by him no matter what was Kevin Nash. Cue the NWO with Shawn singing Nash's praises before giving the rest of the team some love as well. We get a group hug but Shawn superkicks Booker off the team, which now has as many active wrestlers as injured ones. The beatdown is on and Booker's shirt is ripped off.

Vince McMahon vs. Ric Flair

No holds barred and the winner owns the whole company. No robe for Flair for some reason. They slug it out on the floor to start and go into the crowd with Ric in control. Some chops send Vince inside for the first time so he can slam Flair and grab the ring bell. The bell off the head

busts Flair open and Vince kicks him in the cut. More shots to the head set up a low blow, only to have Ric kick the chair into Vince's face. A few kicks to the leg set up the Figure Four but here's Brock for the F5 to lay Flair out, giving Vince the easy pin and the company back.

Rating: D-. What else were you expecting here? They told you what you were getting before the back and it's not like you're going to get a face boss around here for more than about five minutes anyway. The match was the mess this was always destined to be as Vince can only do so much and Flair is limited with how hard he can go on him before it gets ridiculous.

Overall Rating: D. This was all over the place, though you have to give them a little bit of a break due to all the changes necessitated by Austin leaving. Vince getting power back is fine, assuming you ignore the fact that the brands should be reunited now as there's no reason for them splitting. Complete lack of logic behind the top story aside, at least we had Booker T. thrown out of the NWO (which he never should have been involved with in the first place) and a good Van Dam vs. Guerrero match. There's still more bad than good but a few things are starting to look up.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book, KB's Complete 2014 Raw and Smackdown Reviews Part I at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01LY6766K#nav-subnav>

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

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

Survivor Series Count-Up – 2005: It Worked Once

Survivor Series 2005

Date: November 27, 2005

Location: Joe Louis Arena, Detroit, Michigan

Attendance: 15,000

Commentators: Joey Styles, Jerry Lawler, Jonathan Coachman, Michael Cole, Tazz

The main change here is that we've seen the rise of Batista and Cena, with the latter defending against Angle and a crooked referee tonight. On top of that we've got Raw vs. Smackdown in a major Survivor Series match which actually feels kind of big for once. Other than that there's HHH vs. Flair in a Last Man Standing match which should be good. Let's get to it.

The announcers talk about the main event and bragging rights to start things off.

Booker T vs. Chris Benoit

This is the first match in a best of seven series for the US Title, which would go on until January and saw Randy Orton wrestling four of the matches in Booker's place. Benoit gets in Booker's face in the corner and they tie up for a bit. Booker hits an awkward kind of slam but Benoit pops right back up. Benoit sends him to the floor and that goes absolutely nowhere. Back in and Chris takes him to the mat with a leg hold.

After Booker grabs a rope, it's time for a test of strength with Booker (the heel here) kicking Benoit in the face to take over. When all else fails, kick the guy in the face. A suplex puts Booker down as does an elbow to the face. Booker hits a side slam for two and it's off to an arm hold followed by an abdominal stretch. After Benoit escapes, Booker kicks his head off for two. This is moving somewhat slowly so far but it's not bad.

Booker hits an arm trap neckbreaker (like Sandow's Terminus) for two and it's off to a reverse chinlock. Benoit escapes a vertical suplex and it's time to roll some Germans, but Booker escapes the third and kicks Benoit in the face again. Another attempt at a kick is caught in a legdrag but the Sharpshooter that follows it up doesn't quite work, giving Booker a cradle for two.

A snap suplex gets two for Chris and we roll some more Germans. Benoit loads up the Swan Dive but Sharmell's distraction lets Booker load up a superplex. Benoit goes psycho though and headbutts Booker to the mat, but the Swan Dive misses, allowing Booker to get a rollup with Sharmell holding Booker's feet on the ropes for the pin.

Rating: B-. These two are awesome together and both series they had (they did this in WCW for the TV Title) were entertaining stuff. At the end of the day, sometimes there's nothing wrong with throwing two people out there and letting them have a good match. This was a solid choice for an opener too as both guys got to show off and the fans were getting into it near the end.

Vince wishes Bischoff luck tonight and Montreal is referenced. Of course. Eric says he'll screw Cena. Cena pops up and says "so Eric Bischoff screws guys. Good luck with that." Vince then says to Cena, and I 100% quote, "keep it up my nigga." Booker and Sharmell don't seem pleased.

Women's Title: Trish Stratus vs. Melina

Trish is defending and Melina has MNM, the Smackdown tag champions, with him. This is interpromotional apparently. Melina and MNM had kidnapped Trish and held her captive until the match was agreed to. Well that's one way to do it. Trish and her psycho fan (the brand new Mickie James) come out fast with Trish sending Melina to the floor and diving on all three members of MNM. Trish is looking great here.

Melina gets thrown around by her hair, sending those furry boots flying. Trish headscissors her down and I think they botch a headscissors out of the corner with Trish kicking Melina in the face instead of getting the ankles around her head. Melina uses her basic abilities (meaning stretching to freakish angles to choke and kick a lot) before going to

the floor for a cat fight with Mickie.

As the brawl is going on, MNM tries the Snapshot (elevated double team DDT) on Trish, only to get caught and ejected. Things calm down a bit and Melina puts on a surfboard, which may or may not be an excuse to have Trish's chest shoved out while wearing tight leather. Trish fights back but Stratusfaction is countered into a face plant for two, drawing the primal screams from Melina.

Stratus comes back with some forearms but runs into a boot in the corner. The Stratusphere puts Melina down and there's a spinebuster of all things for two for Trish. Chick Kick and Stratusfaction miss and Trish is sent to the apron, but Mickie pulls her out of the way of a charging Melina. Trish goes up and misses about 95% of a top rope bulldog but it's good enough for the pin.

Rating: C-. This was much better than I was expecting given what level Melina was at here. Trish looked fine (and her wrestling was even good too) but she needed more to work with here. This would lead up to Mickie going totally psycho and evil, setting up an excellent match (other than the ending) at Mania between the two of them.

Watch Jake's DVD! It's full of lies but watch it!

Dmitri Young, a baseball payer, is here.

We recap HHH vs. Flair. HHH came back from injury and turned on Flair in their first match together. They fought in a cage match at Taboo Tuesday with Flair somehow pulling out one of the biggest upsets of his career. Tonight it's a rematch in a last man standing match.

Ric Flair vs. HHH

Last man standing. Oh and Flair is IC Champion but this is non-title. Like HHH would ever actively go after a midcard title. HHH jumps Flair as he comes to the ring and beats on him in the aisle for a bit before we head inside. It's chair time very quickly but Flair pokes HHH in the ribs with a kendo stick to block the shot. They head into the crowd with Flair chopping HHH through the fans. He swings one time too many though and HHH

backdrops him back to ringside.

A suplex puts Flair's back on the concrete and draws some loud swearing. HHH suplexes him back into the ring and Flair is in trouble. Some quick punches don't do much good for Flair and we head back to the outside. Flair gets posted, but if that's not enough to cut him open, HHH carves up his forehead with a freaking SCREWDRIVER. There is blood everywhere in just a matter of seconds, so HHH digs it in even more back in the ring.

HHH takes him down and the knee drop misses by about eight inches. The shot of the second one is even worse and they slug it out in the corner. We head outside again and Flair sends him into the steps to give Flair a breather. Flair pokes HHH in the eye but HHH hits a spinebuster to take him right back down on the concrete. HHH talks trash on the mic and Flair is like "boy Jack Brisco's tights were tougher than you" and he grabs HHH by the balls. Well when there's nothing else I guess that's all you can do. HHH blasts him with the mic to break the grip. I guess that's Stephanie only territory.

Flair is set for a Pedigree through the announce table but he backdrops HHH through the other table, drawing our first count of the match. That gets a nine and HHH grabs another chair. Back in and HHH has Flair dead to rights but instead of swinging the chair, HHH pounds away with punches instead. HHH pounds away in the corner, so Flair kicks him low again, followed by a chair shot for five. Flair is like YUM and bites at the cut on HHH's forehead. Flair is kind of a weird dude sometimes.

Ric wraps HHH's balls around the post and does the same to the leg, which is a smart move in a last man standing match. Then he crushes the balls FOUR MORE TIMES. DUDE FOR THE LOVE OF STEPHANIE GIVE IT A BREAK! Back in and Flair chop blocks HHH, before biting the guy's thigh. Flair is a pretty sick guy at times no? He goes back to the knee (with kicks this time instead of teeth) but the Figure Four is blocked twice, the second time having Flair knocked to the outside.

For the first time, Flair pulls out a weapon of his own and whacks the knee with a chair. Now the Figure Four goes on and Flair is perfectly allowed to grab the ropes. HHH taps but it doesn't mean anything here.

That draws an 8 with a shaky call from the referee that HHH was up at one point. A double clothesline puts both guys down and HHH rolls to the floor. The Game throws in some steps and clocks Flair in the face with them. Flair needs to scream less. Sometimes you should just be stunned and dazed you know?

HHH charges with the steps again but Flair hits a drop toehold to send HHH into the steps face first. That only gets a nine so they slug it out. Flair sends him into the ropes but ducks his head like an idiot, allowing HHH to hit the Pedigree.....which only gets eight. HHH Pedigrees him AGAIN, but Flair is up at 8 and flips off HHH. A THIRD Pedigree gets nine, so HHH "hits" (Get better directors already. This is ridiculous) him in the back with the sledgehammer to finally keep Flair down for ten.

Rating: B+. Bad direction and cuts aside, this was a very solid brawl. They beat the tar out of each other with Flair trying as hard as he could to have one last great moment, but not being evil enough anymore to hang with the new guy in HHH. This was good stuff and thankfully it more or less ended HHH and Flair's time on camera together.

Flair is taken out on a stretcher.

Buy the Bret Hart DVD! No really, this one is awesome.

Trish and Mickie do an online interview.

Orton gives Team Smackdown a pep talk but talks about Batista as the weak link. Batista shows up and the tune changes. He thinks that since he's world champion, he should be leader. JBL says it should be him. Batista glares at him and JBL stammers a lot.

Here are Edge and Lita with something to say. Edge is Mr. MITB at this point but doesn't have a match tonight. Edge talks about how his own talk show, called The Cutting Edge, is debuting soon. Now that we've got that covered, let's talk to Dmitri Young. Edge makes fun of the Tigers for not being able to win the World Series and calls everyone here fat. He makes fun of the Detroit sports teams and now they give Dmitri Young ("Come here Mark Henry. Oh wait...") a live mic. Young talks about Edge's balls and lists off all of Detroit's titles before saying Edge has none. This

took seven minutes somehow.

We recap Angle vs. Cena. Basically it's "I'm Kurt Angle and therefore better than you. NOW LET ME SHOUT EXACTLY WHAT I JUST SAID AGAIN!" Cena is like bring it man and whatever rhymes with man!

Raw World Title: John Cena vs. Kurt Angle

Daivari, Angle's crony, is the guest referee. The YOU SUCKS from the crowd are censored because of some Bischoff ruling. Daivari is rubbing Angle's shoulders during the intros. Oh and Cena is defending. The champ is here...right on the mat with Angle working on the leg. Cena comes back with an armdrag into an armbar and some shoulder blocks to send Kurt to the floor. Daivari won't let Cena go after Angle and Joey is way more excited about it than anyone else. Isn't Daivari doing what a referee is supposed to do anyway?

Back in and Cena hits some elbows and a release fisherman's suplex for no count from Daivari. Cena goes to yell at him and is immediately caught in the ankle lock. Cena finally gets to the rope but Daivari kicks his hand off. The hold is broken and Cena spinebusts Angle before slapping Daivari a few times. Angle won't let Daivari DQ Cena, so Cena knocks them both to the floor.

Kurt gets all fired up and slams Cena into the steps and hits an overhead belly to belly on the outside. A second referee comes out as Daivari is still down. Daivari would be a wrestler one day, so how did he get so much better at being able to take punishment? I've never gotten that. Anyway, Cena puts on a reverse waistlock but Cena comes back with a cross body for two. Angle comes back with a knee lift and Cena is in trouble.

The fans are ALL OVER Cena all of a sudden, with a huge Cena Sucks chant. Off to a chinlock with Angle holding the leg back as well. Cena finally comes back with a jawbreaker and a DDT to put both guys down. They slug it out with Cena taking over via some clotheslines. Cena initiates his finishing sequence and is set for the FU, but Angle clotheslines the replacement referee.

A low blow puts Cena down and Angle calls in another referee to count two

on the Angle Slam. Angle superplexes Cena down for two but the moonsault misses. Cena loads up another FU but Angle grabs the referee to escape. An uppercut puts the referee down AGAIN and Kurt throws Daivari back in, who is apparently STILL out cold after about ten minutes, breaking Davey Boy Smith's record from 1994. A Smackdown referee comes down but Angle yells at him, allowing Cena to DDT Daivari. Kurt comes in and walks into the FU for the pin.

Rating: C. This was WAY overbooked and Cena was in over his head with Angle, but it wasn't bad or anything. Angle vs. Cena was supposed to be a huge feud but it never felt like anything all that special. Cena wasn't ready for a real showdown with Angle yet but he would get a lot better over the next year or so though. The referee stuff was kind of stupid though, especially with Daivari being out cold for so long.

Eric Bischoff vs. Teddy Long

Yes this is real, yes it's happening on PPV, yes we're supposed to ignore Bischoff being a martial arts expert from WCW and thing Teddy might have a chance in a straight fight, and yes this is going to SUCK. Teddy has some network consultant with him named Palmer Cannon who never lasted long. They're both GM's if that wasn't clear. Teddy poses a lot on the corner and we haven't had any contact after a minute. Teddy dances a bit and Eric misses a kick. There's more dancing and no contact still.

We do the exact same thing AGAIN before Eric chokes Teddy with his sash. There are two referees in there for no apparent reason. Eric chokes away but Teddy takes off his shoe and whacks Eric in the head. Bischoff goes to the throat to stop Teddy again....and here's the Boogeyman. If you've never seen him, picture Darth Maul from the first Star Wars prequel if he ate worms. He sneaks up on Eric and lays him out with a pumphandle slam, giving Teddy the pin.

Rating: S. Six minutes. This match took SIX MINUTES. The WWE owes me six minutes of my life back. John Cena vs. Kurt Angle for the WWE Championship can only get thirteen minutes but this gets SIX? Who in the world thought this was a good idea? At least it went by....no actually it didn't go by fast. This won worst match of the year and I can't argue at

all.

Team Smackdown is coming to the ring and the Smackdown D-list guys cheer them on.

The Raw guys do the same thing.

We recap Raw vs. Smackdown. At a 3 hour special Raw called WWE Homecoming, there was going to be a Smackdown six man tag but Bischoff turned the lights out on them because he said they were inferior to Raw. This prompted a multiple PPV running feud where they kept invading each others' shows, setting up a battle for supremacy here.

Team Raw vs. Team Smackdown

Shawn Michaels, Carlito, Chris Masters, Kane, Big Show,

Batista, Randy Orton, Rey Mysterio, Bobby Lashley, John Bradshaw Layfield

Show and Kane are tag champions, Batista is world champion but is injured due to Big Show and Kane attacking him over and over, and Lashley is undefeated at this point. This hasn't been mentioned yet on the commentary for pretty obvious reasons, but Orton is replacing Eddie Guerrero who died about ten days before this. Shawn vs. Randy gets things going and it's a very slow opening with both guys feeling the other out.

Orton gets thing going by slapping Shawn so Shawn literally slaps Orton down to the mat. Three times in about 30 seconds, Shawn takes Orton to the mat with a headlock, Orton grabs a headscissors to counter, and Shawn escapes. Randy charges into a boot in the corner but slams Shawn down to take over again. The match is starting slow but the bickering from the commentators is funny stuff, as they're taking this rivalry personally.

Off to Masters who gets his eyes raked by Orton but the power game of Masters takes over. Lashley comes in to a reaction from the fans and they do the two power guys collide with each other. Bobby takes over with a slam but Masters clotheslines him down. Masters tries the Masterlock but Bobby easily blocks it. Carlito is pulled in and thrown around as well, culminating with a powerslam for two.

Off to Shawn to see what he can do with this monster, but Lashley slams him off the top. A suplex puts Shawn down so Carlito comes in sans tag and takes the Dominator. Shawn is about to take one as well, but Kane breaks it up and chokeslams Lashley to give Shawn the pin. Rey comes in next and Kane hits him in the back as well to give Shawn another advantage. Masters drops some elbows on Rey to keep him on the mat which is the right move.

A gorilla press drop puts Rey down again and here's Kane who misses an elbow. Mystério starts speeding things up and gets two off a standing moonsault. Kane comes up with a very easy counter by kicking a charging Rey in the face. Off to a bearhug as this is the longest segment of the match so far. Rey fights out of it and slides between Kane's legs to make the tag to Batista.

Big Dave gets in some shots but the bandages all over his arm and chest are a target for Kane. Kane gets in a shot and everything breaks down, allowing Batista to hit a spinebuster on Kane for the elimination. Big Show chokeslams Batista for a very close two but Kane and Big Show double chokeslam Batista to put him out. JBL immediately tries the Clothesline on Show but gets grabbed by the throat. JBL kicks Show low, but gets caught jumping off the middle rope. That's freaking SCARY power by Show. Show superkicks Orton down and LAUNCHES Rey into the corner.

Orton guillotines Show into the Clothesline from JBL who tags....Mystério? The 619 sets up the RKO which sets up another Clothesline which sets up a seated senton from Rey for the elimination. Cool sequence here as the team all went after Show to get rid of him. Show would DESTROY Rey on a special Smackdown to get revenge. Shawn goes after JBL on the floor and gets thrown away in a fallaway slam.

To recap, it's Mystério, JBL and Orton vs. Shawn, Carlito and Masters. It's Masters vs. Rey now with Masters getting two after sending Mystério into the corner. Off to Carlito for a legdrop and chinlock for a few moments. Mystério fights up and makes a blind tag to JBL who ENDS Carlito with a Clothesline to make it 3-2. Masters and JBL slug it out a bit but Rey tags himself in. JBL kicks Chris in the face to give his teammate an advantage, setting up a 619 and the springboard legdrop to take out

Masters.

So it's Shawn vs. Rey/Orton/JBL and Shawn is STILL down on the floor from the fallaway slam. Mysterio starts with Shawn and things go faster. Rey hits the 619 to send Shawn across the ring, but the West Coast Pop jumps right into the superkick ala Shelton Benjamin for the elimination. JBL comes in and tries the Clothesline but gets superkicked down AGAIN to make it Orton vs. Shawn. There were about fifteen seconds between the two pins.

The RKO and superkick both miss so Shawn dives on Orton on the floor to take him out. The fans want Taker who was promised to be here tonight. There are the forearm and superkick followed by some clotheslines. The top rope elbow hits Randy but Shawn can't cover. JBL is still at ringside for some reason and he grabs a chair. Shawn loads up the superkick again but JBL shoves down the outside referee and misses a chair shot. The distraction lets Orton hit the RKO for the final pin.

Rating: B. This was a direct copy of Team Austin vs. Team Bischoff from two years ago, even down to the final participants, but the results were a bit inverted. Here, the part before the solo Shawn part was better but Shawn's solo part wasn't as good. Also, Batista running in was better than JBL's chair stuff here. It's still probably a better match overall, mainly due to the better opening part.

The low level Smackdown guys come out to put Orton on their shoulders....and there's a gong. We've got lights, we've got chanting, we've got druids carrying a casket, and a Dead Man coming out of said casket. Taker walks into the ring and beats up some jobbers as the roster bails. Orton is scared to death to end the show. Hell in a Cell for these two next month.

Overall Rating: B. This show is pretty much never talked about other than occasionally the main event and that's a shame. This is an entertaining and solid show all around with the only bad match being a battle of the GM's, and even that only runs six minutes. You have a bloodbath in HHH vs. Flair, a fun main event with entertaining commentary and some solid wrestling all around. Nothing is great, but if you've got two hours and

forty five minutes to spare, check this out as it's quality stuff.

Ratings Comparison

Booker T vs. Chris Benoit

Original: B

Redo: B-

Trish Stratus vs. Melina

Original: B

Redo: C-

HHH vs. Ric Flair

Original: B-

Redo: B+

John Cena vs. Kurt Angle

Original: B+

Redo: C

Theodore Long vs. Eric Bischoff

Original: 0 (For Oh I can't think about this anymore)

Redo: S (For Six Minutes)

Team Smackdown vs. Team Raw

Original: B

Redo: B

Overall Rating

Original: B

Redo: B

I'm surprised by how much more I liked the girls and Cena vs. Angle. They're good but they're not that good. Still a solid show though.

Here's the original review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/11/14/history-of-survivor-series-count-up-2005-a-forgotten-almost-classic/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book, KB's Complete 2014 Raw and Smackdown Reviews Part I at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01LY6766K#nav-subnav>

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

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

Survivor Series Count-Up – 2004: That's a Weird Main Event

Survivor Series 2004

Date: November 14, 2004

Location: Gund Arena, Cleveland, Ohio

Attendance: 7,500

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole, Tazz

Aside from the matches mentioned already, there are two other major

matches. First up we have Team Kurt Angle vs. Team Eddie Guerrero to continue their rivalry which started back at Wrestlemania XX. Angle couldn't take the title from Eddie but became GM of Smackdown, vowing to make Eddie's life miserable. On top of that we have Undertaker (once again the Dead Man) facing off with Heidenreich, Paul Heyman's latest monster. Let's get to it.

We open with a video about the seventeen years this show has run already.

The set looks cool here as it's made of six screens which I guess will act as the Titantron tonight.

Cruiserweight Title: Spike Dudley vs. Rey Mysterio vs. Chavo Guerrero vs. Billy Kidman

Spike is defending and is a heel here. This is one fall to a finish. Kidman hurt Chavo on a Shooting Star Press and seemed to be proud of it, which resulted in a heel turn for him. The other good thing here is that they don't have to tag. As usual, this doesn't last long before things break down. Kidman and Spike form a quick alliance, only to have Kidman dropkick the champ out to the floor.

Rey sends Kidman to the floor and it's off to Rey vs. Chavo, who are still friends at this point. Rey spins Chavo around with a headscissors before Spike sends Rey into the corner and stomps away with some screaming thrown in. Chavo comes back in and a double clothesline puts he and Spike down. With Kidman on the apron, Rey hits a hurricanrana to send him out to the floor in a cool looking spot.

Back in and Rey tries the sitout bulldog on Chavo but Guerrero throws him onto Kidman in a seated senton. Chavo dives on both of them, leaving Spike standing ta...short actually. Anyway the champ dives on all of them but they step aside to let him crash. Chavo finally gets his hands on Billy back in the ring but Spike comes back in to break up a pinfall attempt.

Rey misses a moonsault over Spike's head and gets thrown to the floor as a result. We get a Tower of Doom with everyone minus Rey involved, so Rey comes in and tries to steal a pin. Rey charges at Kidman but gets caught

in a BK Bomb (Sky High) for two but Chavo breaks up the Shooting Star. Spike hits a running headbutt to Rey's ribs but the Dudley Dog is broken up. The 619 hits Spike but Billy breaks up the West Coast Pop. Chavo hits the Gory Bomb on Spike but Kidman hits a slingshot legdrop on Chavo. Rey takes out Kidman and Spike steals the pin on Chavo to retain.

Rating: B-. Not a great match or anything here but it was fine for an opener. Rey was insanely popular still but Spike keeping the title was a great way to tick off the fans. There's nothing wrong with a heel winning, as long as the opener fires up the crowd, which this did. Good choice.

Heidenreich is getting fired up by Heyman when Paul goes to get his jacket. Snitsky, another creepy heel of the day, comes in. He says he likes Heidenreich's poetry and Heidenreich likes what Snitsky does to babies (as in punting them into the crowd). There's WAY too much deep breathing here. This was almost who Undertaker and Kane fought at Wrestlemania before the company woke up and stuck Orton against Undertaker instead.

Intercontinental Title: Shelton Benjamin vs. Christian

Shelton, a young, very athletic guy who used to be in a tag team, is defending but the Waterproof Blonde version of Christian's theme makes him far more awesome. Shelton is at the point in his career when he's about to get on one of the biggest rolls in years but it never went anywhere past the Intercontinental Title. The champ cranks on the arm to start before they head to the mat. Keeping in mind that Shelton was a legit All-American wrestler, he's just fine being on the mat with Christian.

Christian cranks on the arm but Shelton drops to the mat and immediately nips up which looked great. It didn't do anything but it looked great. Christian talks trash and gets punched in the face for his efforts. Shelton skins the cat before hitting a great looking springboard clothesline for two. A HARD chop slows Benjamin down and Christian talks some more trash. Shelton counters a monkey flip by casually landing on his feet and grabs an Oklahoma Roll for two.

We head to the floor for a quick distraction by Tomko (Christian's bodyguard) but Christian gets punched in the face instead. Tomko tries to cheat again and this time the distraction is enough to let Christian get in a shot. Why that creepy little bas....never mind. A cross body gets two for Shelton but Christian immediately puts him back down with a neckbreaker. Off to a chinlock (Tomko: "BREAK HIS NECK!") by Christian and he launches Benjamin to the floor as he tries to break the hold.

Shelton comes back with a hard whip into the corner to put Christian down. A Russian legsweep gets two for the champ as does a slingshot reverse suplex (called a reverse fisherman's suplex by JR). Benjamin misses a Stinger Splash and gets caught in a reverse DDT for two. Tomko slides the belt in (hitting the referee in the foot in the process) but Shelton kicks Christian in the face.

The referee sees Christian holding the belt, which lets Benjamin hit a top rope clothesline for two. As the belt is being put out, Tomko kicks Benjamin in the face for two. The Exploder Suplex (Benjamin's finisher, a snap floatover T-Bone suplex) is countered but Benjamin kicks Tomko down. The Unprettier is countered into the Exploder for the pin to keep the title on Benjamin.

Rating: B. I really got into this match at the end even though Christian didn't have much of a chance at winning. The Tomko and belt stuff didn't help anything but they had to try to slow Shelton down a bit. Benjamin was in the beginning of a very long run with the belt that would last until June, which was the longest reign in about six years.

Really good match here as Christian put Shelton over strong. There's a reason this guy basically had the world title waiting for him on a plate whenever he stepped up enough to take it, but that never happened for various reasons. Namely he just stopped trying and coasted on his reputation, but that's another story.

Angle complains to Edge about something Edge wrote in his book about him. Kurt makes fun of Edge for never winning the World Title. They trade some insults before Kurt leaves and runs into Eugene, Eric Bischoff's mentally slow nephew who just happened to be a talented wrestler. Eugene lists off

(slowly) some of Angle's accomplishments before singing the You Suck version of his theme song.

Team Angle vs. Team Guerrero

Kurt Angle, Carlito Caribbean Cool, Luther Reigns, Mark Jindrak

Eddie Guerrero, John Cena, Rob Van Dam, Big Show

Eddie and Angle have been feuding since Wrestlemania. Carlito, the son of a Puerto Rican legend, debuted and beat Cena for the US Title before injuring Cena in a nightclub (or having someone do it. The attacker was never revealed but it might have been Carlito's buddy Jesus). Big Show is feuding with Reigns (an enforcer type character) and Jindrak (a very athletic guy who didn't do much in America) and Angle for shaving his head, and Van Dam is there as a warm body. Got all that?

Before the bell, Cena chases Carlito and Jesus to the back and gets in a brawl with them. Carlito and Jesus steal a car and speed away, which counts as an elimination. Back at ringside there's a big brawl until Show (on a bad ankle) pulls Jindrak into the ring. Here's Cena back to the ring to make it 4-3. Off to Van Dam who hits a spin kick before it's off to Eddie for the slingshot hilo, followed by Rolling Thunder from Van Dam.

Eddie suplexes Jindrak down and armdrags Reigns as he headscissors Jindrak in a cool move. Angle comes in to stop his team's bleeding but it's quickly back to Reigns for a bunch of backbreakers for two. Off to Jindrak for a full nelson but Eddie sends him into the buckle. Eddie dives for the corner but Angle literally tackles Guerrero to break it up. Kurt hits a belly to belly before bringing in Reigns for more stomping.

Off to a chinlock from Jindrak but Eddie eventually grabs a jawbreaker to escape. Angle again blocks the tag and puts on a front facelock. One thing to note here: the entire time the hold is on, Cena is reaching out for a tag and encouraging Eddie. It doesn't mean much, but it helps things from getting really boring. Little things like that can make a big difference. Watch guys like Rock and Hogan when they're on the apron in tag matches. They're ALWAYS doing something, even if it's minor like

clapping. It can make a difference.

Jindrak comes in but Eddie knocks him away and it's off to Van Dam. Rob goes off (Cole: "He's supple!") and hits an enziguri on Angle to set up the Five Star but Jindrak pulls him away. The Splash hits Jindrak, allowing Angle to roll up Rob (using the ropes) for the pin. Angle heads to the floor so Eddie rolls up the illegal Jindrak, using the ropes as well, for an elimination to make it 3-2 (Eddie/Show/Cena vs. Reigns/Angle).

Eddie tells Angle to bring it on and there go the straps. Eddie tags in Show, making Angle tag in Reigns. Reigns gets in one or two shots but a chokeslam beats him quickly. Kurt rolls through a chokeslam into the ankle lock but Show sends him through the ropes to escape. Angle starts to walk up the aisle but Van Dam is waiting on him. Kurt backs up while still looking at RVD, and backs into Show. He reaches up to see how tall what he backed into is and shakes his head. Show throws Kurt back in to face Cena (in for the first time legally) and it's an FU and Frog Splash for the final elimination.

Rating: C+. This wasn't a good match but it was entertaining, which is more than you got from almost all of last year's show. I'm guessing Cena and Carlito were injured as they didn't do anything for the most part. Angle was great here and the look on his face when he backed into Big Show always makes me chuckle. Fun match here, which is all you need sometimes.

Maven (the first Tough Enough winner and on Team Orton tonight in the biggest match of his career) offers to demonstrate his skills to Coach but Snitsky jumps Maven and busts him open. This would be how they would keep Maven out of a PPV main event for most of the match when they realized that he was in WAY over his head.

Video on Heidenreich vs. Undertaker, where Heidenreich is the latest guy to try to kill Undertaker at Paul Heyman's direction. This was one of those matches where they were trying to make it seem like Undertaker was in trouble but Heidenreich comes off like the villain in the fifth direct to video sequel in a horror series that has overstayed its welcome by two

movies.

Heidenreich vs. Undertaker

Heidenreich comes out in a straightjacket because he might attack more plants, as had been his custom in recent weeks. Undertaker does the big long entrance to get the crowd back into things. He stares at Heidenreich for a few moments before the beating begins. A charge in the corner runs into a Heidenreich elbow but the Dead Man will have none of this being on defense stuff. Undertaker works on the arm but a Heyman distraction lets Heidenreich crotch Undertaker to break up Old School. He crotches Undertaker against the post again and we head to the floor.

Heidenreich pounds away on Undertaker against the barricade while shouting that he can beat him. Undertaker shrugs that off again and hits the legdrop on the apron for two. Old School hits the second time followed by a modified Downward Spiral for two. A big boot misses Heidenreich in the corner and it's time for more punching on the floor. This isn't one of those matches where the fans are worried about Undertaker as I don't think anyone bought Heidenreich as a real threat.

A kick to Undertaker's face sets up a chinlock and a clothesline for two. Another clothesline stops Undertaker's comeback but a suplex stops the stopping of the comeback. Heidenreich sends him to the apron but Undertaker stuns him on the top rope. Undertaker channels his inner Kane (he had the name first) and hits a top rope clothesline for two. Back in and Snake Eyes/the big boot takes Heidenreich down again.

The chokeslam is broken up and Heidenreich gets two off a Boss Man Slam. Then like an idiot, Heidenreich punches away in the corner while Undertaker arms are down. The obvious Last Ride only gets two though as Heidenreich grabs the rope. Heidenreich tries a sleeper but Undertaker is like boy please and suplexes out of it almost immediately. The chokeslam and Tombstone finish this quick.

Rating: D. Like I said at the end of the day, did ANYONE buy Heidenreich as a real threat to Undertaker? The guy just wasn't that good and he came off as more silly than a serious threat. Not much to see here and Heidenreich never got higher than he did in this match. Undertaker would

move on to a much better feud with Orton soon enough to try and make people forget about this mess.

Bischoff says Maven is out of the main event and if he allows Orton to add a replacement, HHH will complain and Eric will lose his vacation, which is the point of the main event.

We recap Trish vs. Lita, which is happening because...well who else are they going to fight? Lita got pregnant with Kane's baby but lost it because of Snitsky. Trish made fun of Lita for being a sl**, having a dead baby, and of course for being fat.

Women's Title: Trish Stratus vs. Lita

Trish is defending. Lita is all ticked off and punches Trish, who is coming in with a broken nose, as soon as she gets in. Trish gets pounded even more and they head to the floor where Trish goes into a table and gets cracked with a chair 80 seconds into the match for the DQ. This wasn't much, but these two would main event Raw in a few weeks. I don't mean a match that went on last and then they had the promo that closed the show. I mean they spent the whole show hyping up Trish Stratus vs. Lita as the main event and Lita won the title and celebrated to end the show. It was quite the moment and a big deal.

Teddy comes in to congratulate Team Guerrero while Show is in a towel. Show hands the towel to Teddy and walks off. Cena: "THAT'S DISGUSTING!" Teddy makes Cena vs. Carlito for the title on Thursday. Why is Cena in his underwear?

We recap Booker T vs. JBL. Booker pinned JBL in a tag match but JBL says Booker isn't in his league. Booker beat up Orlando Jordan (JBL's lackey) and pinned him to earn the title shot. There really isn't much to this one.

Smackdown World Title: John Bradshaw Layfield vs. Booker T

JBL is defending and Booker's big yellow gloves don't really do him any favors. Feeling out process to start as they trade really basic stuff for the first minute and a half. Booker knocks him to the floor and JBL gets

the advantage coming back in. Back to the floor and Booker gets sent over the announce table. As they head back in, Jordan gets in a cheap shot to give JBL two. Still in first gear at best.

JBL hooks in a cobra clutch followed by an elbow drop and a chinlock. After that VICIOUS offense, Booker easily fights back and hits a superplex to put both guys down. Orlando gets in some more cheap shots on the floor but JBL walks into a Book End out there to give Booker his first real advantage. Back in and a missile dropkick gets two for Booker. They're into second gear now but it's just not an interesting match.

Booker goes up but another Jordan distraction lets JBL avoid a Houston Hangover (flip legdrop). Another sleeper by JBL is escaped but Jordan breaks up the ax kick. JBL hits a quick DDT for two and there goes the referee. Jordan comes in and pounds on Booker but Josh Matthews comes out to help Booker for reasons that aren't important enough to explain. JBL destroys Josh but there's the side kick to JBL. The ax kick takes him down as well but Jordan takes out the referee. Booker hits the Book End on Jordan but JBL clocks Booker with the belt to retain.

Rating: D. This just didn't work. Basically they were redoing the HHH/Flair run from 2003 with Jordan interfering every ten seconds and the matches sucking and the crowd groaning when JBL retains the title. JBL is a hilarious commentator and a solid main event jobber, but the guy was painfully boring as champion.

Batista and HHH are ready for the main event.

We recap the main event which is Team HHH vs. Team Orton. Team Orton has united to oppose HHH's tyranny and the winning team gets to run Raw for a week each. Snitsky has said that when Team HHH wins, he's coming for HHH's World Title, and Edge has said the same. Batista has been looking at the title too so HHH is rather nervous. This gets the music video treatment for the night. Maven and Snitsky stick out like two shattered thumbs in this whole thing.

Team HHH vs. Team Orton

HHH, Edge, Batista, Gene Snitsky

Randy Orton, Chris Jericho, Chris Benoit, Maven

HHH is World Champion and Maven isn't here due to the earlier attack. It's interesting to think that it would be Batista rather than Orton that would rise up out of this match as the real star. Not that Orton isn't a star, but Batista was without a doubt the biggest star in the company in 2005 and part of 2006. For some reason Edge comes out last. Benoit vs. Edge to start which is fine with me. Benoit destroys Edge and knocks him to the floor to start but it's off to Orton vs. Snitsky.

Orton pounds him down with ease before it's Jericho in off the tag. HHH comes in but Jericho immediately elbows him down and brings in Orton to no response. Orton can't challenge for the World Title because of some stipulation due to losing to Flair. What a great way to make sure the fans get behind him there right? It doesn't matter how awesome he is because he's not getting a shot at anything.

Batista comes in and has some better luck with Randy, firing off shoulders into the corner. Edge is in now and he mocks Orton's pose in an often done bit. Edge draws in Jericho for no apparent reason, but it allows Orton to clothesline Edge back down. Off to Benoit as the fans are dead for this match. It couldn't be because Orton is a lame duck and everyone knows it of course. Benoit cleans house and suplexes everyone in sight. Edge prevents a swan dive onto HHH, so HHH suplexes Edge onto HHH and swan dives both of them for two.

Everything breaks down even more and HHH gets caught in the Sharpshooter by Benoit. Snitsky makes the save and Edge gets caught in the Crossface. This time Batista saves, allowing HHH to Pedigree Benoit and give Edge the pin for the elimination. Jericho comes in to pound away on Edge but HHH and Snitsky get in an argument. Batista comes to HHH's defense but has to break up the Walls on HHH instead.

Flair trips up Jericho and gets ejected for his efforts. Flair walks up the aisle but comes back a second later to allow Batista to kill Orton and Jericho. There's the spinebuster to Jericho but Orton hits Big Dave with the belt, allowing Jericho to hit the enziguiri on Batista for the pin. Jericho hits the springboard dropkick to knock Snitsky onto HHH on

the floor but Batista kills Jericho with the clothesline before leaving.

It's Snitsky vs. Jericho with Snitsky choking away. Edge comes in and pounds on his fellow Canadian but gets caught in the sleeper drop to put both guys down. Orton gets shoved to the floor and Edge and HHH double team him for a bit. Jericho DDTs Snitsky down....and here comes Maven. He goes right after Snitsky and takes him down with a forearm as things seem to go into slow motion.

Maven bulldogs HHH down and is all fired up, but Snitsky kills him with a chair shot for a DQ. HHH covers the dead Maven for the easy elimination. Edge keeps covering Jericho but can't get more than a bunch of two's. It's Orton/Jericho vs. HHH/Edge now. A spear puts Jericho out and it's 2-1 (HHH/Edge vs. Orton) with Orton in trouble. Orton says bring it on and is promptly beaten down in the corner.

Edge suplexes Orton down and holds him while HHH pounds away. Orton punches at HHH but gets DDT'd down for two. Edge comes back in and gets slammed down before getting dropkicked into HHH on the apron. That gets two off a rollup from Orton but he walks into a HHH spinebuster. We get the required heel miscommunication as Edge spears HHH down and walks into an RKO for the pin. It's down to Orton vs. HHH with the champ hitting Orton low as Edge leaves. The Pedigree is countered into the RKO for the final pin.

Rating: B. The match was good stuff but as I said earlier, Orton pinning HHH doesn't mean anything. Somehow Orton would get a title match at the Rumble where HHH would destroy Orton once and for all. I think I'm the only person on the planet that liked Orton's first main event face run so I dug this at the time. It turned out they got lucky with Batista, but the Orton face run could have been more if HHH hadn't hacked its legs off.

Overall Rating: B-. There's some dull stuff here, but the good stuff really is solid as you can see the new generation ready to burst through. The main event was entertaining stuff and the fans did react to Orton pinning HHH clean. The Smackdown side of things was pretty lame but other than that, this was a solid show and I was digging it at the end. Good

show.

Ratings Comparison

Spike Dudley vs. Billy Kidman vs. Chavo Guerrero vs. Rey Mysterio

Original: C+

Redo: B-

Shelton Benjamin vs. Christian

Original: B

Redo: B

Team Guerrero vs. Team Angle

Original: D

Redo: C+

Undertaker vs. Heidenreich

Original: D

Redo: D

Trish Stratus vs. Lita

Original: N/A

Redo: N/A

John Bradshaw Layfield vs. Booker T

Original: F

Redo: D

Team Orton vs. Team HHH

Original: B-

Redo: B

Overall Rating

Original: C-

Redo: B-

In a rare instance, I liked this a lot better the second time around.

Here's the original review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/11/13/history-of-survivor-series-count-up-2004-eyebrows-huffman-main-events/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book, KB's Complete 2014 Raw and Smackdown Reviews Part I at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01LY6766K#nav-subnav>

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

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

KB's Review: Out Of Many, One

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-out-of-many-one/>

Taking a look at what Sunday's main event meant and some of the matches it replaced.

Monday Night Raw – May 6, 2002: Beyond Free Fall

Monday Night Raw

Date: May 6, 2002

Location: Hartford Civic Center, Hartford, Connecticut

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

Maybe a new month will help things out a little bit. I know I say this every week but it almost can't get worse than last week with Undertaker very slowly beating Hulk Hogan down because Hogan can barely move at this point in his career. The pay per view really can't get here soon enough as I can't imagine they'll keep the title on Hogan any longer. Let's get to it.

Oh and as of today: it's WWE. I'll put the over/under on mentions of the new name at 5000.

We open with....gardening? An older woman chops up her bushes to get them into a perfect WWE logo, which she then lights on fire. The new tagline: Get the F Out. I actually like that as it gets straight to the point.

Women's Title: Trish Stratus vs. Jazz

Jazz is defending, there are no disqualifications and Steven Richards is in the champ's corner. The fans want puppies as Jazz sends Trish into the corner to start, only to miss a splash. Richards offers a distraction though and Trish's rollup goes nowhere. JR says this is for the World Wrestling Entertainment Women's Title and I think we're all glad that name didn't last.

Jazz throws her around with some butterfly suplexes for two, followed by the double chickenwing facebuster to send Lawler into hysterics. A Chick Kick and Stratusfaction has the champ beaten but Richards makes another

save by superkicking Trish down to give Jazz the pin.

Rating: D. Was there a point to this that I don't get? The No DQ stuff could have been forgotten with a simple referee distraction but to be fair I'd probably call that stupid. It might be easier to just have them do a regular match and scrap Richards as a whole but then we couldn't do the following.

Bubba Ray Dudley with a Bubba Bomb, Raven with the Raven Effect, Justin Credible with a superkick, Crash Holly with a missile dropkick, Bubba with a trashcan shot and Trish stealing the title and a blinded Bubba (fire extinguisher) powerbombing Trish through a table so Richards can steal the pin gives us six Hardcore Title changes in about two minutes because old jokes are funnier when you do them for the third time in less than two months. Bubba takes Trish to the back because that makes up for powerbombing her through a table.

Here's the NWO for a chat due to reasons of WE'RE TELLING YOU THEY WERE A GOOD IDEA AND YOU CAN JUST DEAL WITH IT! Show lets us see him turning heel and joining the team in a big moment. Two years ago, he was in the main event of Wrestlemania while Austin was hurt. Now it's 2002 and he spent Wrestlemania in a restaurant pretending to have a good time instead of being on the show. Last month he was in a preliminary match on Heat while Austin had a #1 contenders match. Show is a monster that no one can stop and now the NWO is even bigger.

This brings out Ric Flair to say he wishes he could have Big Show's natural gifts but he's a sixteen time World Champion because he didn't whine and cry. It's really more about when Flair didn't cry but we're not quite to that point yet. Flair tells Show to deal with it and announces the NWO vs. Bradshaw/Austin/Flair, which he already announced last week. Hall promises a history changing announcement for later tonight.

European Title: William Regal vs. Spike Dudley

Spike is defending and is coming in with a bad ankle due to Regal attacking him over the weekend. He's ready to fight anyway and jumps on Regal's back, earning himself a stomp to the foot and a slam onto the ropes. A simple leglock makes Spike tap in about 35 seconds. That would

be two title changes in 40 seconds combined for this belt.

Regal beats Spike up even more after the match. D'Lo Brown of all people comes out for the save.

Flair rants to Arn Anderson in a nothing segment.

Booker T. goes to 7-11 for a Slurpee and is annoyed that there's no Booker T. cup. He runs into Goldust in a Latrell Sprewell jersey with headphones around his neck. Goldust has followed him from his hotel (Booker: "YOU BEEN FOLLOWING ME???") and wants to talk strategy for their match tonight. Booker seems to agree but has to go. Goldust: "If you'll let me have a drink of your Slurpee, I'll let you have a bite of my weiner." Booker responds as you would expect anyone to if he's offered a bite of a hot dog. Funny stuff as always.

We look at Planet Stasiak costing Brock Lesnar and himself a tag match at Insurrextion over the weekend.

Flair finds an APA hat in the NWO dressing room. Bradshaw doesn't seem like one to just leave his hat laying around.

Undertaker arrives and assigns someone to watch his bike.

The NWO is standing near the entrance, seemingly waiting on somebody.

Planet Stasiak vs. Brock Lesnar

Brock fires off the shoulders in the corner to start as we get the GOLDBERG chants. The spinebuster looks to finish but Heyman wants an example made. An F5 and a boot on the chest is enough for the easy pin. Another squash.

Hulk Hogan has stolen Undertaker's motorcycle because Undertaker left the keys in the ignition.

GET THE F OUT! It's the same thing as earlier as the company is still WWE about an hour later.

Here's Hogan on the motorcycle to Undertaker's music. I really could have gone my whole life without seeing Hulk Hogan coming out to Limp Bizkit.

Hulk gets right to the point by calling Undertaker out for a fight and threatening his motorcycle to sweeten the pot a bit. Undertaker comes out and tells Hogan not to mess with the bike. Hogan isn't impressed and swears a bit before turning the bike on. It moves a whole three feet before the engine stalls, leaving Undertaker to....stand right there and not do a thing.

Hogan finally leaves the bike on the ramp and runs (work with me here) after Undertaker as we cut to the commentators. You can hear the engine revving as Hogan is apparently still out there trying to get the thing to work. Well done by JR and King to not die of laughter here. The chase is FINALLY on with Hogan driving the bike around backstage (had to do it as the pre-tape shows him on the bike backstage). He changes pace a bit by driving around even more, all while shouting for Undertaker.

Hogan eventually parks it in front of a semi truck and gets inside as we go to a break. Back with Hogan crushing the bike. You know, a month and a half ago he used a similar truck to crush an ambulance with Rock inside so this is real progress for him. This was WAY too long and I'm amazed that both guys didn't just walk off the show when the bike stalled. What a sign indeed.

Rob Van Dam/Jeff Hardy vs. Booker T./Eddie Guerrero

Van Dam and Guerrero hit the mat to start with Rob monkey flipping him down but missing a kick to the face. Instead a faceplant out of an electric chair sends Eddie crawling over to the corner for the tag to Booker. More kicks have Mr. T. in trouble and it's off to Jeff as things speed up again.

Booker finally gets in a shot on Hardy and it's time for a face to be in peril. An elbow to the jaw sets up the Spinaroooni for two (Lawler: "Dagnabbit.") but Jeff comes back with a dropkick (totally missed) and the real hot tag brings in Van Dam. Everything breaks down again and Rolling Thunder gets two on Eddie. Cue Goldust for a failed distraction so a Swanton from Jeff and the Five Star from Rob can put Eddie away.

Rating: C+. These guys are becoming the lone bright spots on this show and it's a bit disappointing to have them all in the same match. At least

it was one of the better segments so far this week with a good looking ending. You certainly can't fault Eddie for losing when he takes back to back finishers so he was even a bit protected in the loss.

Terri has challenged Molly to a swimsuit contest later tonight with a contest between pure and wholesome or what's under her robe.

Flair and Anderson think Bradshaw has joined the NWO, guaranteeing that he hasn't.

It's time for the swimsuit contest and of course Lawler is in charge. Terri comes out and Lawler is praying for a thong. Molly brings a pair of flippers for more proper swimming attire (JR: "The Hilary Clinton of the WWF."). Molly decides she's going first and, after putting on her swimming cap, reveals a conservative one piece with a skirt. It looks like a figure skating costume, meaning it looks like what a lot of run of the mill women would wear to a pool every day.

Naturally Lawler and the crowd think it's horrible and treat Molly like she's wearing a full body suit with only her ankles showing. Terri reveals exactly what you would expect and wins because fans go for the orange skin with countable ribs look. Molly lays her out with a flipper in the only heelish thing she's done in the entire segment.

Flair goes to Bradshaw's locker room (Bradshaw has his own locker room?) and finds Kane's mask, which X-Pac stole weeks ago.

After a break, Flair runs into Bradshaw and demands an explanation. Bradshaw says he'll see Flair in the ring.

Undertaker finds his bike. Where in the world has he been for the last half hour? He tries to pull the bike out from under the truck and then stomps on the bike, likely thinking that floating out of the top of a casket after cutting a promo to a camera hanging from the lid wasn't so bad after all. Undertaker leaves and Kevin Nash arrives for the surprise.

NWO vs. Ric Flair/Bradshaw/Steve Austin

Austin and X-Pac start and it's a spinebuster each for X-Pac and Hall. Steve cleans house with right hands but can't get a Stunner on Hall.

Instead it's off to the Big Show for some choking in the corner and a backdrop that sends Austin flying. You don't see Austin in the air that often. Bradshaw tags himself in for the fall away slam on Hall as JR thinks there's only one Kane mask in existence. You know, because they're not sold at the merchandise stands.

Show comes back in and throws Bradshaw around "like a double cheeseburger." Who throws double cheeseburgers around? I've never been to Oklahoma but are things really that different there? The bloody (thanks to some Big Show headbutts) Bradshaw is beaten down by all three NWOites with Show headbutting him into the bad corner. A big boot finally drops X-Pac and it's Flair coming in with the chops.

Everything breaks down and Bradshaw's Clotheslines lays out X-Pac but Big Show pulls him outside for a chokeslam through the announcers' table. Austin finally goes after Show (which is the point of this whole thing) but has to Stun Hall and X-Pac at the same time. Some Big Show chops have Austin in trouble and he falls out to the floor. Austin actually goes aerial again with a middle rope Thesz press to put Show down but the Stunner is easily blocked and we get a ref bump.

A low blow sets up the Stunner but there's no referee. Of course there isn't because this hasn't gone on long enough. Flair hits Austin with a chair to go full heel and destroys the knee to make things even worse. With Austin down, Flair makes himself and Big Show vs. Austin at the pay per view. Ric grabs a Figure Four as the match is a no contest.

Rating: D-. The length here is the big problem as this went on for over fifteen minutes and set up the most obvious ending they could have gone with after eliminating every other possible option. Taking out the fact that Nash was just a decoy and what else could it have been other than Flair turning heel? It makes sense, but it was really tiresome having to sit through the APA hat/Kane mask stuff earlier. Just WAY too long here though and it really dragged things down even further than they were before.

Overall Rating: F+. Raw is now beyond free fall and has hit the ground, exploding on impact. Other than the same four midcard guys having their

regularly good matches (less than six minutes this week), I can't think of a single thing on this show that isn't either too short, boring, offensive or the pit of torture that is the main event.

Raw has had six shows since the Brand Split. Here are the main event matches/segments which go along with Hogan/HHH as World Champion:

Kane vs. X-Pac/Austin contract signing

Austin vs. Hall

Austin/Bradshaw vs. NWO/Undertaker

Austin/Big Show vs. NWO

Hogan vs. Regal/Undertaker beats Hogan down

Austin/Bradshaw/Flair vs. NWO

Here's the thing: other than two major pops for Hogan, is there any reason that Austin isn't in Hogan's spot? Hogan has a long history with Hall, Nash and Flair while Austin has a long history with HHH and Undertaker. Much more importantly though, Austin may be a shell of his glory days but he's WAY ahead of Hogan at this point. Hogan's matches so far have been embarrassing while you could at least pencil in Austin for watchable at worst. Couple that with swapping the NWO out for ANYTHING else and this show is instantly better.

Raw is a disaster right now with two major angles being huge wastes of everyone's time and it's turned into one of the biggest messes I've seen in a long time. I know people would get sick of the upcoming HHH and Shawn Michaels dominance but it puts this nonsense to shame. At least you could get a decent main event, which we haven't gotten so far in six weeks.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book, KB's Complete 2014 Raw and Smackdown Reviews Part I at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01LY6766K#nav-subnav>

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

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