

# Smackdown – September 6, 2016: This One Is A Little Different

## Smackdown

Date: September 6, 2016

Location: Pinnacle Bank Arena, Lincoln, Nebraska

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, John Bradshaw Layfield, David Otunga

I'm not sure how but we're already at the go home show for Backlash. At this point there are five announced matches (assuming you count a tournament final as an announced match) which means we're going to get a lot more stuff announced tonight or Sunday's matches are going to be very long. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Daniel Bryan is in the ring with the Smackdown Women's Title. Sunday's Six Pack Challenge will be an elimination match (there's how they fill in some time) but before we get there, we'll be having a six women tag match. First though, we're going to have a forum with all six getting some time to talk. We'll start with Becky Lynch but before she can say anything, Daniel has to plug Total Bellas.

The fans clearly aren't interested so Bryan lets Becky talk about being the #1 female Smackdown draft pick. Her journey has brought her here but Natalya cuts her off. Natalya says the Draft was the worst night of her career because Smackdown was supposed to be her kingdom but now she has to put up with Becky and the unnatural hair.

Cue Alexa Bliss to say they're both whiners and calls Bryan a Bella trophy husband. Now it's Carmella cutting them because women in WWE can't let anyone else get more than a few words out. Everyone gets catty about nicknames and the villains accuse Becky of turning them all against each other. Naomi and Nikki run out for the save and the villains leave. This was fine for a quick build but as usual, the women almost all have

characters that can be summed up in six words or less and you have to stretch to get that far. If you want the division to go anywhere, give us some development and a reason to care about them.

Dean Ambrose pours most of a bottle of sugar into his coffee.

The bosses are talking about the women's match when Miz comes in. He's not happy about having to defend the Intercontinental Title against Dolph Ziggler at Backlash and thinks it's because of what he said to Bryan a few weeks ago. Bryan says Miz can either fight Ziggler or just hand over the title right now. Miz walks away with the title intact. So much for Bryan and Miz not being on screen at the same time, which is a good thing.

### The Miz vs. Apollo Crews

Non-title with Ziggler on commentary. What does it say that I knew this was going to be Crews because he's the designated midcard jobber? Crews runs him over to start and blocks a headlock with raw power. A shot to the face puts Miz on the floor and Crews moonsaults onto him as we go to a break.

Back with Miz choking in the corner as Ziggler keeps talking about how winning and losing doesn't matter as long as he tries his best. You know, two weeks after talking about how winning was all that mattered. No wait, it was winning the title and then defending it which mattered because that's the story they were going with this week. Miz's running corner clothesline has Crews in trouble but he sends Miz outside. That means it's time to get in Dolph's face and slap him in the jaw, only to have Miz shove Crews into him. A quick posting stuns Crews and the Skull Crushing Finale ends Apollo at 10:12.

**Rating:** D+. I have no idea what they're trying for with Miz and Ziggler at this point but it seems to be YET ANOTHER attempt to make Ziggler seem important after years of failing to live up to expectations. I'll be very, very disappointed if they put the title on him Sunday as Miz vs. Bryan still has a lot of potential as they're trying to make Miz look like something special for a change. Ziggler would be the same nothing champion who would likely lose every non-title match but it doesn't

matter because he tried his best.

Post match Ziggler chases Miz off and has the title in front of him. Ziggler invites Miz in to get the belt but he sends Maryse in instead. See, that's the kind of thing that shows character rather than "well golly I didn't win the match that I said I absolutely had to win but I sure tried and that's what matters" before saying that he has to win the big one (because winning the Intercontinental Title, a title he's held four times already, now counts as the big one).

AJ Styles is livid about video of him getting crotched last week. He yells at the production assistant who provided the video and that's about it.

American Alpha video.

The Usos say they still run this tag team division. The division has been around for about three weeks and they've already had to affirm their dominance? That's not a good sign.

Bray Wyatt talks about men having to fight to survive. They had to learn to deal with predators, who only knew how to hunt and kill. The predator didn't know how to create and one day they became a play thing. History repeats itself and Orton is no longer the predator he once was. Bray is the evolution of man and at Backlash, predator becomes prey.

#### Nikki Bella/Becky Lynch/Naomi vs. Alexa Bliss/Natalya/Carmella

Nikki makes her entrance before a break so we come back with.....the other five entrances. Bliss and Naomi start things off and it's time for the dancing kicks, which still look horrible. As a bonus this time, Naomi's kick to the head completely misses but it's off to Carmella (now in tights instead of the shorts in a smart move for the heel turn) vs. Becky anyway. A backslide gets two on Carmella, who didn't seem like she kicked out in time. Nikki comes in and again the fans seem to care for reasons that I don't understand. The villains are chased to the floor and we take a break.

Back with Becky in trouble as Natalya sends her into the apron and grabs

a chinlock. Bliss comes in and grabs a chinlock of her own before Natalya hits a Michinoku Driver for two. Becky finally dives over for the hot tag to Nikki and a Disaster kick gets two on Bliss. The TKO gets two on Carmella with Bliss making the save as everything breaks down. Bliss misses her moonsault knees to the ribs and Carmella's Code of Silence makes Nikki tap at 12:53.

**Rating:** D. This was bad and there's really no way around it. Between Naomi focusing on looking athletic without having the ability to pull it off, Carmella having all of one good looking move, Bliss not being able to take a move or hit one of her own and Nikki being in the match for two minutes because they're trying to keep her safe, there's only so much Natalya and Becky can do. This division just does not have the depth to work right now and it's showing more and more when there's so little to praise in a match with the whole division.

#### Tag Team Title Tournament Semifinals: Usos vs. American Alpha

We get a handshake to start but the Usos jump Alpha from behind in what feels like a heel turn. Not that it matters as Alpha comes right back and the Grand Amplitude ends Jimmy at 27 seconds.

Post match (with the replay clipping the thing) the Usos beat Alpha down by sending Jordan shoulder first into the post and superkicking Gable in the knee. Jey puts on a Tequila Sunrise and Jimmy adds a Superfly splash to Gable's other leg for a good looking beatdown. The heel turn is a really good idea for the Usos as they've been the exact same team for years now. At least this gives them a little freshening up.

Orton tells a story about a dying man killing a rabbit but getting caught by a snake who wanted the rabbit for himself. The snake didn't attack until after the man had picked up the rabbit because he knew he could have them both. At Backlash, Bray won't know what hit him.

Here's Fandango to say that Tyler Breeze is out finding fabric for their upcoming fashion line. Instead he's found a woman to tango with Fandango but she's a bit too wild for him and he throws her out. Fandango asks for anyone else so here's Kane to chokeslam him. Fans: "GO BIG RED!" (University of Nebraska football chant).

AJ breaks a guy's phone for not showing him enough respect.

Children with cancer awareness video.

Curt Hawkins video. He's here next week.

### Tag Team Title Tournament Semifinals: Hype Bros vs. Heath Slater/Rhyno

The Slater Family is in the front row as Slater and Ryder start things off. Zack's middle rope dropkick gets an early two and it's off to Rawley to send Heath outside. Rawley runs Rhyno down and we take an early break. Back with Slater avoiding a splash in the corner but the fans want Rhyno. The hot tag brings in Ryder and Rhyno but Slater tags himself in and gets rolled up for two. Rhyno saves Heath from the Broski Boot and a Gore ends Ryder at 7:18.

**Rating:** D+. This was an interesting one as Rhyno was WAY over and the fans are already into Slater but Ryder and Rawley are popular enough that it's hard to have them be heels. Either way, Slater and Rhyno were the best possible option and could get the belts, especially given Gable's knee injury.

We look at the knee injury earlier.

Renee Young doesn't have much of an update on Gable's condition but the Usos come in to say they were letting out their bottled up aggression. They've been putting their bodies on the line for years and the fans turned on them but love American Alpha the second they saw them.

Here are Dean Ambrose and AJ Styles for a face to face meeting to end the show. Dean has a gift for AJ: a bowling trophy for participation, which is the only trophy Dean will ever give him. We see clips of AJ getting crotched last week and AJ isn't happy. Styles talks about how he beat John Cena but Dean points out that this Sunday, AJ isn't fighting Cena. On top of that, AJ beat Cena in a wrestling match and Sunday it's going to be a fight. They don't give out trophies for second place so AJ kicks Dean low and breaks the trophy to end the show. They kept this short and that's probably best given how the feud has gone so far.

**Overall Rating:** C. This show was very different than usual and that's a

good thing as they head into a rather weak pay per view. There are only five matches for the show and tonight focused on the matches to crown new champions. The wrestling really wasn't the focus here and it's a good idea to spend this show focusing on everything other than the main event, which has gotten a lot of time already. I really don't see a three hour pay per view based on this card but they've stretched stuff out in other ways before.

## Results

The Miz b. Apollo Crews – Skull Crushing Finale

Alexa Bliss/Natalya/Carmella b. Nikki Bella/Naomi/Becky Lynch – Code of Silence to Bella

American Alpha b. Usos – Grand Amplitude to Jimmy

Heath Slater/Rhyno b. Hype Bros – Gore to Ryder

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

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01IH70904>

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

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

---

# New Column: Two For The Gold

WWE wants to add more Tag Team Titles when there's barely enough of a division for one set of belts.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-two-for-the-gold/>

---

# New Column: Breaking Up Is Hard To Do

Looking at some of the potential perils of the new Brand Split.

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

---

# Extreme Rules 2016 Preview

It really feels like we just got done with Payback and now it's already time for the next show. In this case that's not a good thing as the stories were only so strong in the first place and now it's clear that the stories don't have enough steam to keep going beyond this show. I'm genuinely not that thrilled to watch this show but maybe I'll be surprised. Let's get to it.

Starting on the pre-show, we have Dolph Ziggler vs. Baron Corbin in a No DQ match. We're getting this one because someone felt that the best way to get Corbin over was to have him lose a big match before beating

Ziggler in a rematch. Now it's the always useful rubber match with a gimmick attached, even though I don't know how many people even wanted the second match in the first place.

Now in theory you have Corbin go over here but that's what everyone would have said going into their first match. Ziggler is a guy who can take loss after loss and be just fine so there shouldn't be any other option here aside from Corbin hitting a chair shot or two and End of Days for the pin, thankfully ending this mess of a feud in the process. More than once I've forgotten that they're even feuding and there's really no excuse for that.

Next up we'll go with Kalisto defending the US Title against Rusev. This is another match where the ending should be obvious, especially if you look at things for more than all of eighteen seconds. Kalisto was beaten down on Raw and Rusev is an absolute monster, so why in the world would you not switch the title here? I'm sure John Cena returning on Memorial Day is just a coincidence as well.

There's a new gimmick match on the show as well, assuming you consider a weapons based cage match to be a new gimmick. This time we have Dean Ambrose vs. Chris Jericho in an Asylum match, meaning we have a cage with weapons on top. In this case the feud is over talk shows and a potted plant named Mitch, which is probably why I'm not very interested in this one. Ambrose should go over, unless it's decided that these two need to have a third match instead of being in Money in the Bank next month. Yeah Dean wins, but I wouldn't be surprised if Jericho got a surprise win for the sake of being illogical.

New Day is defending the Tag Team Titles against the Vaudevillains and I can't shake the feeling that we're getting new champions here. New Day has held the belts since Summerslam (a stat we're reminded of every few minutes, which is rarely a good omen for a title reign) and it should be near time for someone new to get the titles.

However, I can't exactly imagine the Vaudevillains actually taking them from New Day. It isn't going to hurt New Day if they lose them, especially if they get them back in a big moment. That being said, I

think New Day retains but the Vaudevillains have been treated as someone beneath the champs, which makes them much more dangerous challengers. New Day should retain though and then drop them to Anderson/Gallows, who we'll cover next.

What have I done to deserve this? Anderson and Gallows debuted about a month ago and we're closing in on ten TV matches (counting six mans) where they've fought the Usos. If you can come up with a match that has been pounded into the ground any worse than this one, I'd beg of you to not tell me about it.

This time it's under Texas Tornado rules because it makes sense to just have them go to the big brawling segment that ends all of their matches. I'll take Anderson and Gallows for the win here as they've been beaten enough times now that it's ok to let them win, just in case people started thinking something of the Usos while making sure no one thought anything of Anderson and Gallows. I'm thoroughly sick of this match but I'm sure we'll see it again because that's how WWE does things.

Now we have a match that is actually being treated as one of the biggest on the card as Charlotte defends the Women's Title against Natalya in a submission match with Ric Flair barred from ringside. The thing here though is that we have a classic Ric Flair formula: how can Charlotte possibly survive this one?

In this case, it's probably going to be due to some other form of shenanigans and then winning with the Figure Eight. Natalya just isn't going to win the title because she isn't that interesting and (in theory at least), it should be setting up a showdown with Sasha for the big title change down the line. The stipulation here comes off as a smoke screen though, which isn't the most interesting. The build has been good though and Ric not being around should help things a bit.

Next to last we have probably the second biggest match on the card and the one that I'm looking forward to the most as Miz defends the Intercontinental Title against Sami Zayn, Cesaro and Kevin Owens. They've put together one heck of a feud here as all four could conceivably walk out with the title and there's an actual reason to care about each of

them fighting the other.

As for the winner.....I think it's going to be Miz. I know the logical move would be to move the title onto any of the other three but Miz hanging onto it can set up a one on one match for the title, perhaps for Sami, before they move on to the next big Zayn vs. Owens match. It also helps that Miz is quite the champion and could give someone a good rub in a title loss. Anyone could win here but I'd actually like to see Miz retain.

Finally we have the main event and please let this be the final match in the feud. Roman Reigns is defending the WWE World Title against AJ Styles in an Extreme Rules rematch after retaining under some shenanigans last time. The idea here is basically welcoming a bunch of violence and interference, which doesn't really make me want to see the match again. I mean, it was awesome the first time but the Usos/Anderson/Gallows interfering has destroyed any interest I have in this match.

The question here is who interferes as a surprise to cost either guy the title. Of course there's always the Finn Balor option and it would make sense but I'm still not sure they'll pull the trigger here. Of course we'll have Reigns retaining the title but my goodness I'm not really looking forward to this one. I can't imagine Styles stays in the title hunt after this as he'll likely do Money in the Bank and then move on to another feud. Either way I'm not as excited for this one than I was for the previous one and most of that is due to this story being hammered into the ground without anything being added to it.

Overall Extrem Rules really doesn't feel that extreme. We have a nine match card (counting the pre-show) and there's an Extreme Rules match, a No DQ match, a cage match and a Texas Tornado match. Unless you could submissions and a four way as extreme, this feels like something just a step or two above a regular pay per view card.

Normally the violence and gimmicks can carry this show on its back without too much effort but this last week has killed any interest I had. It's just not a show that feels like it needs to exist and is only happening because the PPV schedule had Extreme Rules listed. There's

definitely some stuff I'm interested in seeing but nothing that really blows me away. I'm almost sure things will be fine but the stories need to move on after this one.

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

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01FWZZ2UA>

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

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

---

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

### **Smackdown**

Date: May 19, 2016

Location: Bon Secours Wellness Center, Greenville, South Carolina

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, Jerry Lawler, Byron Saxton

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

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

Opening sequence.

### Kevin Owens vs. Cesaro

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

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

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

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

Cesaro flips off the apron to take out Owens before punching Miz in the face. Back in and Cesaro's eats a superkick for two but Sami comes in, only to have Cesaro punch him in the face, either over the Helluva Kick

last week or to prevent a DQ. The distraction lets Owens get in a rollup with a handful of trunks for the pin at 14:48.

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

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

### Paige vs. Dana Brooke

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

**Rating:** D+. Dana looked better here but that might be due to how short the match was, which always helps things out a little bit. Brooke has a great look and a lot of potential but she just needs more time in the ring, preferably down in developmental. She's just been called up too early to be on her own, which to be fair wasn't the plan until a few days ago. That being said, what the heck has happened to Paige? She's gone from the top of the division to absolutely nothing in no time. I really don't get it.

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

### Dolph Ziggler vs. Sheamus

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

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

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

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

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

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

him running off. Guys in costumes are always an effective idea so this was fine.

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

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

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

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

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

**Rating:** C. I'd be really surprised if they don't give Cass a spot on Sunday's card in an added match. They certainly seem to be pushing him at this point and it's really cool to see someone this young and brand new

on the roster getting such a shot. I don't know if he has everything to make it work but at least he's getting a good start.

John Cena is back on May 30.

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

### Luke Gallows vs. Roman Reigns

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Results

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

Dana Brooke b. Paige – Samoan Driver

Dolph Ziggler b. Sheamus – Superkick

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

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

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of the History of the Intercontinental Title at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B01D4D3EGQ>

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

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

---

# Monday Night Raw – May 16, 2016: New Day Has A Time Machine

## Monday Night Raw

Date: May 16, 2016

Location: Greensboro Coliseum Complex, Greensboro, Coliseum

Commentators; John Bradshaw Layfield, Michael Cole, Byron Saxton

It's the go home show for Extreme Rules 2016 and the only match announced for tonight is the Usos vs. Karl Anderson/Luke Gallows. For those of you not counting, this is the seventh time these teams have been in a match together since April 25, or once for ever Raw/Smackdown in that span. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's AJ Styles to open things up. AJ is tired of Roman Reigns lying about him and he shows us TWEETS to prove that Reigns is saying AJ is in league with Anderson and Gallows. Apparently this is getting to him because it's a new era and he's tired of the same old stuff. He didn't need anyone's help to get to the top spot in the Tokyo Dome in front of 60,000 people and he doesn't need anyone's help to get where he'll be on Sunday. Cue Reigns to interrupt to say AJ is indeed phenomenal.

Reigns gets annoyed with a WE WANT ROLLINS chant and says he'll be in the Usos' corner tonight. AJ will be in his buddies' corner and cuts Roman's "the guy" speech off. Reigns is indeed the guy....that AJ is going to beat on Sunday. Roman shrugs it off and says he can do everything he wants to on Sunday. That's going to prove that the bloodline (might be the new name for Reigns and the Usos) is stronger than the Club. Cue Gallows and Anderson but the Usos run in as well, only to have Reigns blast AJ in the face to send the Club away.

## Cesaro vs. Sami Zayn

Miz and Owens are on commentary for the always brilliant FIVE MAN BOOTH. This is the aftermath of Zayn accidentally kicking Cesaro, his partner at the time, in the face on Smackdown to cost them a match. Cesaro starts fast and powerslams Sami for two but gets sent to the floor, allowing Sami to tease the dive. Instead it's the springboard moonsault back inside as Owens walks off commentary because he "doesn't care about this match". Instead Owens goes after Miz and walks off with the Intercontinental Title. Miz goes after Owens to start a brawl and they get inside to draw the no contest at 1:47.

Cue Shane to make it a tag match which they completely couldn't have done in the first place. Oh wait we're not done though as Stephanie comes out to say it would be more interesting if the teams were Miz/Cesaro vs. Sami/Owens and if Owens walks out, he's not in the title match on Sunday.

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

Joined in progress with Cesaro escaping Kevin's headlock and trying the Swing. Owens slaps Sami to bring him in to face Miz but Sami and Owens keep yelling at each other. One such argument results in Sami being knocked off the apron and into the barricade, which seems to bang up his shoulder as we take a break. Back with Miz hitting the running corner clothesline on Sami and bringing in Cesaro to pick the bones with a running clothesline of his own (not a splash Cole, you dingbat).

Miz comes back in and punches Sami into the corner for the tag off to Owens for the big face comeback. There is money in a face run from Owens with him destroying everyone in sight and being built up for a big match. Cesaro comes in for the running uppercuts as everything breaks down. Miz sends Cesaro out to the floor to try his own Swing, only to have Cesaro give Miz the Skull Crushing Finale. The Helluva Kick puts Miz away at 10:47.

**Rating:** C+. I liked this more than I was expecting to after we spent five minutes watching Stephanie and Shane have a board meeting to set up a match. The idea of the guys doing each others' moves was a bit of a surprise and a different idea and you had Owens being amazing to carry

the thing. Also I'm fine with the champion losing in a tag match, especially after his own partner turned on him.

Owens lays Sami out post match and insists that his hand be raised because he won too.

Chris Jericho is furious at Dean for destroying a jacket more iconic to the WWE than Andre the Giant. He should call the cops but he'll deal with this himself.

Video on Apollo Crews.

### Shining Stars vs. Scott Jackson/Brian Kennedy

The jobbers are Corey Hollis/John Skyler from NXT. The Shining Stars are Primo/Epico as wrestling travelogues from Puerto Rico. JBL: "THEY'RE FINALLY HERE!" Primo says the ring is their paradise and they welcome tourists like these people from right here in North Carolina. Primo grabs Jackson to start before it's off to Epico for two suplexes into a brainbuster. A hard shot to the face drops Kennedy and a butterfly suplex into a gutbuster makes things even worse. The Shining Star (Total Elimination) puts Kennedy away at 1:35.

The Shining Stars invite us to Puerto Rico.

Here's Dean Ambrose, sporting a black eye, to call out Jericho. Chris is right there to tell Dean to shut his mouth. Jericho demands an apology to go with fifteen grand but first Chris has to tell the fans to be quiet. The apology isn't happening because Dean wants a match at Extreme Rules. Jericho: "Just as I expected." The match is on but Dean doesn't know if Jericho is up to getting extreme anymore.

Jericho lists off his resume and accepts, so Dean has a cage lowered. BOY, IT'S A GOOD THING THAT WAS READY AND COMPLETELY NOT NOTICED ALL NIGHT LONG. There are weapons attached to the cage (including a mop and a potted plant), which Dean has dubbed the Asylum. Dean gives a long speech about how violent this is going to be while the announcers act like there has never been a match like this before. Yeah a weapons cage match is such an insane idea, though to be fair I'd try to forget the Extreme

Elimination Chamber as well.

We recap the opening sequence.

Dana Brooke insults some people for not being in good enough shape.

### Dana Brooke vs. Becky Lynch

In case their match on Smackdown wasn't bad enough for you. No Emma here as she's legitimately injured, which the announcers actually acknowledge. Becky kicks her out to the floor but Dana sends her head first into the barricade. A modified seated abdominal stretch has Becky in trouble but she comes back with the Bexploder. Dana counters a sunset flip out of the corner and sits down for the pin at 3:45.

**Rating:** D+. Dana is in a very weird place right now as she was brought up to team with Emma but the injury has completely derailed that idea. The problem is that Dana isn't anywhere near ready for this level on her own and needs a lot more time down in NXT. They would be smart to pull the plug on this and send her back down but WWE isn't normally that smart.

We get the same Life Lesson with Bob Backlund from Smackdown with Backlund not understanding smartphones and telling Darren to put his desktop on the desk and his mail in the mailbox. In other words, there's still no reason to watch Smackdown.

Shane and Stephanie are watching the Backlund ad when Stephanie gets annoyed at him for not bringing up the Asylum match. The Dudley Boyz come in to mention the Attitude Era, which gets one of them a match with Colin Cassady.

Video on Golden Truth FINALLY getting together after five months, capped off by this past Thursday when Fandango and Tyler Breeze turned on them.

### Golden Truth vs. Breezango

Truth goes after Breeze to start but gets knocked down in the corner, allowing Fandango to come in and smash him in the face. A double clothesline puts both guys down so it's off to Goldust vs. Breeze. Goldust starts cleaning house and everything breaks down, only to have

Truth kick Goldust by mistake, allowing Breeze to get the pin at 1:58. For some reason the loss was very entertaining.

Post break Goldust doesn't think the team has any future. Truth thinks they need to get the creative juices flowing and that they need to get their "fing shooie" in line. Everyone wants the Golden Truth but here are Breeze and Fandango to say the new era is passing them by. That's enough to convince Goldust to stick with it.

Here's New Day for a chat and there's something under a curtain behind them. They're not sure what's up with the Vaudevillains being from a new era...so Woods has built a time machine. Big E: "That's clearly an old refrigerator box." Woods: "IT'S THE NEW DAYLOREAN!" Big E. thinks the keyboard is from Woods' parents house. Big E.: "WHY IS IT STICKY???"

They get inside and Kofi comes out to his SOS theme with a Jamaican accent. Woods pulls him back in, despite Kofi's protests that 2009 was his best year. They come back out (after a lot of whirring noises and the camera going wonky) in black and white with a box of Derriere Squares and broken smart phones. Woods realizes this means there are no video games so Big E. shouts that they shouldn't be here. Cue the Vaudevillains to beat them down, ending a hilarious segment WAY too early.

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

Reigns and AJ are at ringside. No Siva Tao for the Usos which is really odd to see. Jimmy superkicks Anderson to start and Gallows is knocked to the floor as well, giving us a meeting on the floor but not a break. Anderson takes over on Jimmy back inside, setting up a legdrop and chinlock for two. Something resembling a Whisper in the Wind puts Gallows down on the floor and Jimmy dives off the steps to drop him again. Anderson decks Jimmy and we get a lot of shouting to take us to a break.

Back with Luke crotching himself on the top rope and Anderson getting backdropped to the floor. Jey gets the tag and dives onto both of them, followed by the running Umaga Attack for two. Anderson breaks up a superplex attempt but charges into a spinebuster for two. Karl tries to run the ropes but eats a superkick with Gallows making the save. Gallows eats another superkick, followed by back to back double superkicks. The

Superfly Splash ends Gallows at 12:48.

**Rating:** C+. I would say to never have them fight again but at this point they'll probably have it again on Smackdown or at the pay per view. I'm really not sure why we needed the Usos to win here but I'm sure it's something to do with teaching Gallows and Anderson their place in the company. It's not like they can go anywhere else and be stars.

Post match the brawl keeps going with the tag teams being sent out to the floor. AJ picks up the chair but Reigns punches it out of his hands. Gallows and Anderson interfere but Roman drops them, allowing AJ to beat on Reigns with the chair, including a Styles Clash onto the chair.

### Big Cass vs. D-Von Dudley

Before the match, Cass implies that D-Von is Steve Urkel. Bubba loads up an early table but gets on the apron for some near heel miscommunication. The East River Crossing puts D-Von away at 58 seconds.

Cass does S-A-W-F-T post match and you can see Enzo's value deteriorating every second.

John Cena return video.

### Kalisto vs. Alberto Del Rio

Non-title and Kalisto slips on the way to the ring. Del Rio goes after the mask to start before sending Kalisto outside. Kalisto comes back and tries a hurricanrana off the apron, only to get caught and swung into the barricade as we take a break. Back with Kalisto taking a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker so Del Rio can show off the biceps. We see Sin Cara watching in the back as Rusev blasts him in the back with a stick.

Del Rio forces Kalisto to watch the beating on the screen before going HARD into the post off a missed charge. Alberto takes way too long for the top rope double stomp though and Kalisto comes back with a top rope hurricanrana. Cue Rusev kicking Cara down the aisle as Kalisto springboards into a seated senton. The hurricanrana driver gets two but the Rusev distraction lets Del Rio get in a Backstabber for the pin at 11:12.

**Rating:** D. Another champion loses because that's how you build a title match. I'm so glad we got this mini League of Nations reunion after all that time they spent tearing them apart. If there's a reason that Kalisto is being destroyed like this it's not being made clear enough and this loss really didn't need to happen. I'm sure this is going to mean the world to Del Rio too, because a pin over a champion isn't something that's going to be forgotten a week later, right D-Von and Paige?

Rusev kicks Kalisto in the back of the head and gives him a PAINFUL look Accolade post match.

Here are Shane and Stephanie to moderate the Women's Title contract signing in the closing segment. They introduce Charlotte but Ric Flair comes out for the big hyped up introduction. Charlotte thanks her dad for the speech and wants to sign but Shane brings out Natalya. Getting her history wrong, Natalya says Charlotte beat her before without Ric in her corner (Ric and Bret were at ringside for that match).

Charlotte goes on a rant about how this is her city and how everyone loves her because her last name is Flair. Ric starts WOOing but Charlotte actually cuts her off. The champ goes to sign the contract but there's a clause saying that Charlotte forfeits the title if Ric takes one step down the aisle.

Cue security to drag Ric away and if he doesn't leave, the title is forfeited right now. Ric yells at Stephanie and calls her the worst businesswoman of all time. It's time to fight Shane and the fans go nuts, only to have Stephanie slap Ric instead. Now security takes him out but Natalya has to save Stephanie from Charlotte. The champ is put in the Sharpshooter and taps out to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** D. This was a long, hard show to sit through. It really feels like they ran out of ideas before we got to Extreme Rules and this was what we were stuck with instead. There's very little that has my interest for Sunday and this show made that interest go down even further. I don't know what they need to change at this point but a go home show with the Colons in a new gimmick and Breezango vs. Golden Truth really isn't a good sign.

## Results

Cesaro vs. Sami Zayn went to a no contest when Kevin Owens and Miz interfered

Sami Zayn/Kevin Owens b. Cesaro/The Miz – Helluva Kick to Miz

Shining Stars b. Scott Jackson/Brian Kennedy – Shining Star to Kennedy

Dana Brooke b. Becky Lynch – Rollup

Breezango b. Golden Truth – Breeze pinned Goldust after R-Truth accidentally kicked him

Usos b. Luke Gallows/Karl Anderson – Superfly Splash to Gallows

Alberto Del Rio b. Kalisto – Backstabber

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of the History of the Intercontinental Title at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B01D4D3EGQ>

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

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

---

# **Monday Night Raw – May 9, 2016: It's Hard Out There For**

# A Champ

## Monday Night Raw

Date: May 9, 2016

Location: CenturyLink Center Omaha, Omaha, Nebraska

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

Things are still on a bit of a roll in WWE as we're getting closer and closer to Extreme Rules in thirteen days. Last week saw Roman Reigns and the Usos trade six man tag team wins against AJ Styles/Karl Anderson/Luke Gallows but it's not clear how closely affiliated Styles is with his New Japan buddies. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of the six man tag and post match issues with Styles refusing to hit Reigns with a chair and getting powerbombed through the announcers' table. The rematch on Smackdown isn't mentioned whatsoever, as is usually the case.

Tonight we'll see the same six man, albeit with elimination rules.

Here's Chris Jericho to kick things off with the Highlight Reel. Dean Ambrose was supposed to be his guest but he's still in the hospital. Jericho has a replacement though as he unveils the remains of Mitch the plant. They're not all that dissimilar because they're both in pieces and could be entertaining at times.

Jericho finds it amusing that the fans were more concerned about Mitch than Dean after last week. Ambrose has no value on his own but Jericho is the Haley's comet of WWE: a once in a lifetime talent so drink him in. This brings out Colin Cassady of all people to say that if this is the gift of Jericho, you better give him the receipt with it. Cass talks about the new era and says Jericho is standing in his way.

Jericho thinks Cass should go visit his buddy Enzo Annoying in the hospital but that's not cool with Cass, who wants to fight right now. Jericho tries to call himself the best in the world but Cass covers the microphone, leaving Jericho looking stunned. The jacket comes off but Jericho leaves. Cass calls him SAWFT to draw Jericho back in, earning

himself a great looking boot to the face. This was a well done exchange, even though I can't imagine Cass pinning Jericho in a match.

Post break Jericho goes to Stephanie to say Shane is trying to ruin this new era (that's probably the eighth time they've used that word in about 22 minutes) but Stephanie likes everyone getting a new chance. Therefore tonight, Jericho is facing Big Cass (complete with Stephanie doing the catchphrases because this is the wacky, fun loving Stephanie) in the main event. Oh and Jericho should never, EVER, try to drive a wedge between Stephanie and her brother Shane again. I'm so glad she pointed out which brother it was in that totally natural way of speaking of hers.

### Baron Corbin vs. Dolph Ziggler

Before the match, Corbin says he's the force in this new era. They start brawling early with Ziggler sending him outside and into the barricade as we take a break. Back with Ziggler caught in a chinlock before Corbin just lays in with heavy right hands. Corbin ducks his head though and eats a Fameasser for two. The Zig Zag is countered into a big old Deep Six for two but Corbin stops to pose too much. Ziggler tries the same rollup he beat Corbin with the first time out but Corbin kicks out and plants him with the End of Days for the pin at 8:28.

**Rating:** C-. The match was fine but more importantly it's the match that should have happened at Payback. However, why have Corbin destroy Ziggler on pay per view when you can have more 50/50 booking, likely setting up a third match? My guess is because Corbin needed to be taught some kind of lesson or whatever their latest reason is, or perhaps because the writers have no idea how to book new talent aside from trading wins with an established name.

We look back at Stephanie making Charlotte vs. Natalya at Extreme Rules in a submission match with Ric Flair banned from ringside.

Charlotte and Ric Flair come in to see Shane, who they think should reverse Stephanie's decision. Shane thinks otherwise and bans Ric from ringside tonight as well.

Karl Anderson/Luke Gallows/AJ Styles regret not going after Reigns last

week. Tonight the Club is back together.

### Fandango vs. R-Truth

This is a preview match for Gorgeous Truth vs. Goldango on Smackdown. Of course it's a danceoff to start with Truth (complete with gold hair tips) doing a spinning bunny hop. Fandango dropkicks him down and dances, drawing Goldust up to the apron for some swiveling of his own. Breeze gets up as well but gets knocked right back down, setting up the Lie Detector for the pin at 2:11. You know, this is a stupid feud but I'll give them points for actually sticking with the thing. It's harmless enough so let them get a story told.

Miz, Cesaro and Kevin Owens are with the McMahons and Stephanie makes a triple threat match for the Intercontinental Title at Extreme Rules. Sami Zayn comes in to ask about making it a triple threat. He wants to be involved but Shane says he has to earn it, which he can by beating Miz tonight. Otherwise, Sami goes to the back of the line.

### Paige vs. Charlotte

Non-title with Natalya on commentary. Paige quickly takes it to the floor and starts slugging away with forearms as Natalya talks about it being a beautiful day in Omaha. A big boot gets two for Charlotte, followed by some knees to the chest. Paige kicks her in the head for two more, followed by a good looking superplex for the same. Charlotte gets out of the PTO and grabs a rollup with her feet on the ropes, only to have Natalya break it up. Cue Ric Flair, allowing Charlotte to get in a backbreaker....and here's Shane to interrupt. Referees get Flair out of there and Paige grabs a rollup for the pin at 7:45.

**Rating:** C+. Yet again WWE manages to overbook things. This could have been the exact same match with Paige winning off a regular rollup and Ric not being involved. It even gives you a better story with Charlotte not being able to win on her own. I mean, it's not like this is going to lead anywhere for Paige so why not go with the simpler story?

We look back at Cass and Jericho earlier.

## Sami Zayn vs. The Miz

Non-title. Sami gets in some rollups for two early and headscissors Miz out to the floor. Miz bails to avoid the suicide dive and drives Sami's back into the barricade instead. The moonsault off the barricade takes Miz down, only to have Maryse yell a lot as we take a break. Back with Sami being sent hard into the steps and barely beating the count back in. Miz kicks him in the face and gets in the short DDT for two.

The Figure Four is broken up and Sami gets a near fall of his own off the Michinoku Driver. Now the Figure Four goes on but Sami dives over and makes the rope. A sunset flip is blocked as Miz grabs the ropes, only to have the referee break it up. The exploder suplex into the corner sets up the Helluva Kick for the most obvious pin in a long time to send Sami to Extreme Rules at 12:58.

**Rating:** B-. I liked the match as usual but you could see the ending coming a mile away. After all, the only thing better than having one champion get pinned is to have TWO champions get pinned back to back in the span of half an hour. Sami winning is a good thing, though I can't imagine he gets the title at the pay per view.

Becky Lynch doesn't believe that the eye poke last week was an accident. Emma comes up to tell her that she really needs eyes in the back of her head. Cue the debuting Dana Brooke to lay Becky out and tell her that playtime is over.

We see Darren Young asking Bob Backlund to be his coach. As usual, Smackdown means nothing.

The Up Up Down Down crew shills Pizza Hut.

Zack Ryder is telling Shane that he knows he belongs when Kevin Owens comes in. Owens sums up the whole thing by asking Ryder why he exists. Shane's decision is to make Owens vs. Ryder for the spot in the Intercontinental Title match tonight.

Roman Reigns and the Usos are ready to get rid of Gallows/Anderson before Reigns takes Styles out on his own.

## Sin Cara vs. Rusev

Rusev suplexes him down a few times, followed by a bearhug and a fall away slam. Cara's quick comeback goes a bit better than you would expect with Cara getting in a moonsault to send Rusev outside. A suicide dive looks to set up the Swanton but Rusev blasts him with a superkick. Lana starts yelling for no apparent reason, allowing Kalisto to kick Rusev in the head. Cara grabs a rollup for the pin upset at 3:45.

**Rating:** D. Does this show want to make my head hurt? Their big idea to make me want to see Rusev vs. Kalisto is to have Sin Cara beat him? I mean I know he just had a title match at Wrestlemania but this is still a stretch. This is the third straight match where the booking has somehow gotten worse and I have no idea who thinks this is the right idea.

Greetings From Puerto Rico. I have no idea if this is ever going anywhere but it might be nice to do something with it already.

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

Elimination rules. Jey smacks Karl in the face to start and it's already off to Reigns, meaning the booing begins early. That goes nowhere so Jey powerslams Anderson for no cover, only to have Anderson get in an uppercut from the floor, allowing Anderson to roll Jey up with tights for the pin at 2:38. Now we get Reigns vs. Styles with a big shot sending AJ right back into the corner. It's already off to Gallows to run over Jimmy, who rolls the legal Anderson up for the pin at 4:35 total.

Back from a break with just Jimmy having been eliminated during the break. Reigns wastes no time and Superman Punches Gallows for the elimination at 9:35. It's down to one on one so AJ hits the strike rush and knocks Reigns out to the floor. That means it's time to load up the announcers' table but Reigns throws AJ across instead. This brings out Anderson with a chair to blast Reigns for the DQ at 11:43.

**Rating:** C+. The match was fine, albeit with your usually questionable eliminations ala a Survivor Series match. I do like the ending better than Reigns taking a fall, though I dread the eventual title match with the Usos and Club running in for twenty minutes before Reigns wins

anyway.

Post break everyone but Reigns and Styles fight to the back, leaving AJ to load up a Styles Clash on the chair. Reigns backdrops him to the apron though, leaving them in a staredown with the chair between them. Roman picks it up and throws it to AJ's feet. Styles tries the Forearm but Reigns grabs the chair, leaving AJ to bail to the floor.

### Zack Ryder vs. Kevin Owens

The winner is in the Intercontinental Title match at Extreme Rules. Owens grabs a headlock to start (Owens: "NO ONE BREAKS MY HEADLOCK!") before running Ryder over and dropping the backplash. They head outside with Owens trying the apron powerbomb but getting backdropped instead. Back in and Owens blasts him in the back of the head with a clothesline but misses the Cannonball. Ryder takes him outside for the Broski Boot up against the barricade, followed by the top rope Elbro for two back inside. The Rough Ryder doesn't work and it's the Pop Up Powerbomb to end Ryder at 4:05.

**Rating:** D+. Yes yes, WWE. You've made it very clear that Ryder winning anything is nothing more than a pipe dream. You don't have to pound it into our heads all over again like we're stupid enough to believe it could actually go somewhere. I really don't know why this needed to happen but Ryder getting beaten up every single week is almost more cruel than anything else at this point.

Big Cass says he'll win tonight.

Here's New Day for a chat, complete with Kofi twirling some unicorn horns like nunchucks. They're not sure how to pronounce Vaudevillains but realize they're the opponents at Extreme Rules for the WWE World Tag Team Championships. We get some bowing down to the last piece of Booty0's before Big E. says the Vaudevillains are from an era that weren't kind to people like them. Woods looks nervous but Big E. says he's talking about smartphone users. Those are the kinds of phones you can use to call your Mammy and Pappy to tell them NEW DAY ROCKS.

### New Day vs. Dudley Boyz

Non-title and joined in progress after a break with Bubba hammering on Kofi's face. Bubba even dances a bit before it's off to Big E. for a shoulder and the Warrior Splash. Kofi comes back in and eats D-Von's spinning elbow for two, only to have Big E. launch him onto D-Von in the corner for two. Everything breaks down for a bit until D-Von gets caught in the Unicorn Stampede. Cue the Vaudevillains to go after Woods though, leaving D-Von to hit one heck of a clothesline for the pin on Kofi at 5:10.

**Rating:** D+. A champ just got pinned with a clothesline. You couldn't have them get counted out while they chase the Vaudevillains off instead? Anyway, the match was watchable enough and set up some stuff going forward but it felt like they were just filling in time until Gotch and English ran out there.

Kofi gets the Whirling Dervish post match.

#### Chris Jericho vs. Colin Cassady

During Jericho's entrance, someone attacks him and steals the jacket. For reasons of general stupidity, the announcers are stunned when it's Dean Ambrose. Dean rips up the jacket and Jericho is so scared that he can't come to the ring and save the thing. He finally charges now that the jacket is destroyed but gets beaten down for his efforts. Jericho gets in a shot to the face and grabs the jacket but runs into Cass on the floor. Cass feeds him into Dirty Deeds and Dean continues to destroy the jacket.

We're still not done though as Shane and Stephanie....have nothing to say.

Jericho yells a lot to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** D+. This show just kept going and felt like it would never die. Above all else though: three champions took falls tonight. Three of them. It should be a big deal when one of them gets pinned but instead we're seeing it happen three times in one night. This show was a very long sit with a bunch of really questionable to flat out bad booking holding it back. I'm not sure where they need to go to fix a lot of these issues, but better choices in who wins what would be a great place to start. This was a really weak show and a big step back for WWE in recent

weeks, which you kind of had to know was coming.

## Results

Baron Corbin b. Dolph Ziggler – End of Days

R-Truth b. Fandango – Lie Detector

Paige b. Charlotte – Rollup

Sami Zayn b. The Miz – Helluva Kick

Sin Cara b. Rusev – Rollup

Roman Reigns/Usos b. AJ Styles/Karl Anderson/Luke Gallows via DQ when Anderson hit Reigns with a chair

Kevin Owens b. Zack Ryder – Pop Up Powerbomb

Dudley Boyz b. New Day – Clothesline to Kingston

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of the History of the Intercontinental Title at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B01D4D3EG0>

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

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

---

# Monday Night Raw – April 25, 2016: The Old New

## Monday Night Raw

Date: April 25, 2016

Location: XL Center, Hartford, Connecticut

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

It's the go home show for Payback and things are getting interesting around here. The big story at the moment revolves around what's going to happen with the recently debuted Karl Anderson and Luke Gallows, who may have attacked Roman Reigns to help AJ Styles. AJ has denied it but there's a chance that this could be a Bullet Club reunion. Let's get to it.

We start with an In Memory Of graphic for Chyna. That's almost more than I was expecting.

The opening recap focuses on Reigns, AJ and Gallows/Anderson from last week.

Here's Shane McMahon to get things going. Shane talks about how he's here because of the fans and this Sunday is the first pay per view of a new era. I do love how they're just admitting that Smackdown means nothing and comes along on Raw's ride. Cue Stephanie to make her big return and suck up to the Hartford crowd as she was born in this town.

Apparently this is Shane's last night running the show because Vince hasn't been pleased. Therefore, we're going to find out once and for all who is running the show. Shane does a quick poll of the crowd to predictable responses but Stephanie says she isn't leaving. That's fine with Shane, who is in charge tonight and therefore calls security down to remove Stephanie from the ring. She fights them all the way to the back as is her custom. Shane introduces our first match.

AJ Styles vs. Sheamus

Sheamus drives him into the corner to start (take a shot) but AJ comes back with his dropkick sequence. It's back to the heavy forearms to knock AJ around so Styles hits one of his own to put Sheamus on the floor. A moonsault off the apron misses though and Sheamus sends him into the steps to take us to a break.

Back with Sheamus holding the chinlock (take another shot), followed by two straight Irish Curses for no cover. Off to a bearhug and you can't fault Sheamus' psychology here. AJ escapes and avoids a charge to send Sheamus into the post (take another shot) and go up top. Sheamus tries a super White Noise but AJ escapes into a release super powerbomb of all things. Looked good too.

It's time for the running forearms and kicks in the corner until AJ is sent face first into the buckle. A nice powerslam gets two for Sheamus but he can't get the Cloverleaf. Instead AJ comes back with a good looking Pele to put both guys down. Sheamus is up first this time and throwing on the Cloverleaf until AJ gets a quick rope. The Brogue Kick hits the ropes though and it's the Phenomenal Forearm to put Sheamus away at 14:26.

**Rating:** B. This has been a great buildup for Styles who has taken down one big name after another before he gets ready for the World Title match. In other words, there has been no 50/50 booking or making either the champion or the challenger look like a goon. The commentary helped here too as they talked about how similar Sheamus and Reigns are. This was a really well done setup and the whole thing worked exactly as they were hoping for. Oh and it was a good match too, which doesn't surprise me.

Anderson and Gallows come out to look at AJ, which fuels the conspiracy theory for some reason.

Roman Reigns is watching in the back when the Usos come in to suggest that they'll have his back on Sunday. Reigns doesn't seem to hate the idea. The fans in the arena were chanting WE CAN'T HEAR YOU during this.

Here's New Day to talk about how awesome their tournament has been while promising to party like it's 1999. This brings out the Vaudevillains to

say they want to party like it's 1899 when they beat up those mangle ridden mongrels Enzo and Cass. Of course this brings out Enzo and Cass to a BIG reaction with Enzo saying he's hotter than a 104 degree fever and wants to run down a beach and jump into his own arms. Woods says they'll beat whoever wins because NEW DAY ROCKS. I miss simple little build segments like this without a match or a big blowoff or something. Just let people talk.

Gallows and Anderson leave AJ's locker room.

John Cena will be back on Memorial Day, May 30.

### Usos vs. Karl Anderson/Luke Gallows

No team name yet but they do have matching white vests. Cole says Anderson and Gallows were in "a club" with Styles over in New Japan. Jimmy and Anderson get things going with the twin taking over to start. It's off to Jey for chops of his own, only to have Anderson come back with a hard leg lariat. Gallows comes in for a really big clothesline to turn Jey inside out before Anderson starts working on Jimmy's bad shoulder.

The bald guys take turns chinlocking Jey before it's back to Anderson with another armbars. Jey's uppercut is knocked away with an even bigger uppercut from Gallows and the bad arm is bent around the ropes. Jey goes up top but gets knocked down hard, sending the shoulder into the barricade as we take a break. Back with Jey kicking Anderson away and making the hot tag off to Jimmy for the array of strikes. Another big clothesline turns Jey inside out though and Anderson posts him for good measure. The Magic Killer (elevated suplex into a neckbreaker) knocks Jimmy silly at 13:52.

**Rating:** B-. Good debut here and really just a step above a squash. This was total domination with Anderson and Gallows looking like the monsters they needed to be. I could easily see them getting the titles by the summer as New Day can move on to something bigger and it's not like anyone else needs the belts at the moment. Also the Usos will be fine as they're as made as a tag team can be.

The beating continues post match until Reigns comes out for the save.

Styles says he had nothing going on with Gallows and Anderson. The two of them come in to say they'll have his back on Sunday and can do whatever he wants.

We look back at the history between Sami Zayn and Kevin Owens with both guys talking about how they grew up together and were best friends for years. Then Sami won the NXT Title in December 2014, only to have Owens turn on him and take the title a few months later. Owens debuted in WWE a few months later and beat John Cena in his first match on the main roster. Sami injured his shoulder around the same time and was out for months before returning in January 2016 to eliminate Owens from the Royal Rumble. Owens thinks Sami is the one making this personal. This Sunday it's about payback.

#### Sami Zayn vs. Rusev

Rusev has Lana with him for the first time in what feels like months. Sami can't do much with the power to start and gets stomped down on the bottom rope as the fans want Lana. A headscissors takes Rusev down but the slingshot plancha is pulled out of the air with Sami being dropped onto the apron. Sami pops back up though and moonsaults off the barricade to drop Rusev again. Rusev kicks him hard in the head though and we take a break. Back with Sami fighting out of a front facelock and hitting a high cross body. Rusev throws him down but can't get the Accolade, allowing Sami to roll him up for the pin at 12:00.

**Rating:** C. Sami needed this win a lot more than Rusev, though the incredible downfall for the Bulgarian continues. It's so strange to think that he was feuding with Cena for the US Title just a year ago and now he's a midcard monster for someone like Sami. Still though, the right guy won and it really wasn't that shocking.

Lana throws a shoe at Sami post match. That goes nowhere so Owens runs out and drops Sami with a shot to the back.

Stardust interrupts Apollo Crews in the back but Apollo calls him Cody to make things serious. Apparently Dusty Rhodes came up with the name

Apollo, which makes me wonder what Crews' name was before that. Stardust is odd as usual.

### Apollo Crews vs. Stardust

Crews starts fast with his standing moonsault to avoid Stardust and a dropkick gets two. Stardust kicks him down and takes off his gloves for some reason before cranking on Crews' arm. That goes nowhere so Crews gets two off the standing moonsault. The lifting powerbomb gives Crews the pin at 3:08.

**Rating:** D+. They need to go somewhere with Crews or he's going to get boring with the constant smiling and squash wins over low level guys. It's hardly a lost cause or anything but he's getting close to the Rocky Maivia territory. Give him a story or a quick feud or something, as long as it doesn't mean listening to Crews talk that much.

Here's Dean Ambrose for a chat. Dean was supposed to host the Ambrose Asylum tonight but he's not in the mood for fun and games after he was attacked from behind last week. This Sunday he's facing one of the best of all time but he's ready to fight. Jericho may be the best in the world at what he does but Ambrose is pretty good at what he does too. When Ambrose sees a problem, he rolls up his sleeve and starts leaving bruises and chipping teeth because that's what he does.

Dean wants Jericho out here right now so here's Chris to call him an idiot. Jericho isn't wasting his time fighting Ambrose in a dump like Hartford. Instead, Dean should be down on his knees kissing Jericho's \$1,500 boots for letting him be in this ring. Jericho changes his mind and asks for an apology from Ambrose for stealing the Highlight Reel. Dean apologizes that Jericho paid that much money for such ugly shoes, for wearing a scarf everywhere and for that Bon Jovi haircut. He's not sorry for the brawl that starts but Jericho quickly gets the better of it and puts Dean in the Walls on the announcers' table.

### Natalya vs. Emma

Charlotte is on commentary. Emma quickly takes it outside for a gutwrench suplex before we hit a seated full nelson. Not that it matters as Natalya

gets up and grabs the Sharpshooter for the submission at 2:19.

Natalya stares Charlotte down first match so the champ hides behind Ric.

Chyna tribute video. It's nice that they're actually doing this. Most of this is a series of clips and then a series of tweets from various wrestling personalities commenting on her passing.

#### Baron Corbin vs. Damien Sandow

In a role reversal from Smackdown, no match as Ziggler jumps Corbin from behind and chases him off.

Greetings From Puerto Rico.

Here are Miz and Maryse to talk about Miz's title defense against Cesaro on Sunday. Miz is used to being tormented by the anonymous internet trolls who now think Cesaro is going to win on Sunday. This title is more than important because it's legendary. Miz is tired of seeing all the handmade signs saying CESARO SECTION because the fans should be better than that. You can have your internet section because he has a Miz section that looks like Maryse.

This brings out Cesaro to interrupt but Miz goes into a Robert De Niro speech from Taxi Driver. Cesaro promises to roll the credits on Miz's title reign and tells Miz to make his day. Miz goes to leave but tries a cheap shot, earning himself Swiss Death but Maryse dives on top of her husband to prevent the Swing. Cesaro holds up the title. I could totally go for this "let's yell at each other and make the story more unique" to set up big matches. If only that had been done for decades instead of "here's a match three times before the BIG version of it that you have to pay for."

AJ comes up to Reigns in the back and says he's taking the title on Sunday. Reigns thinks Gallows and Anderson already have ringside seats.

This week's Kickoff match is Ryback vs. Kalisto for the US Title.

#### Alberto Del Rio vs. Roman Reigns

Non-title. Roman throws him around to start and gets in one of those running corner clotheslines. The running enziguri staggers Reigns though and Del Rio double stomps him from the apron as we take a break. Back with Del Rio holding the chinlock a bit longer than usual before hitting a DDT for two. The low superkick misses though and Reigns comes back with his series of clotheslines. That earns him the now standard booing but Del Rio bails to avoid the Superman Punch.

Instead it's the apron kick to send Del Rio into the post, only to have him kick the ropes to crotch Reigns as he comes back in. This is referred to as a kick to the hamstring due to reasons of convenience, allowing Del Rio to get in the superkick for two. Del Rio misses the top rope double stomp because Reigns is able to drop down instead of sit up, allowing Reigns to hit the Superman Punch. Cue Anderson and Gallows to stare Reigns down, allowing Del Rio to roll Roman up for two. The spear puts Del Rio away at 13:00.

**Rating:** C. At least they seem to be turning Reigns heel because there's just no way it's going to work as a face act at this point. No matter what Reigns does, that booing is part of the whole package now. They're certainly acknowledging it now though and that's the best thing to happen to Reigns in a long time.

Post match Anderson and Gallows come in for the beatdown. AJ runs out to stop them but gets Superman Punches. Gallows and Anderson come back in, allowing Reigns to hit the Phenomenal Forearm to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B-. This show started off looking great and then really ran out of steam in the second half. However, they did a lot of good things to help set up the pay per view and you can still see the momentum from Wrestlemania. The key thing for me is they're doing a better job of setting up feuds and big matches.

Whether it's the rather awesome World Title match or Sami vs. Owens (ok so that one wrote itself) or Cesaro going after Miz and the title, most of the matches have gotten a much stronger focus than in previous months. Above all else though they all seem to have a mostly unique story and setup.

With Cesaro vs. Miz it's Cesaro never holding the title before and all the movie stuff. With the tag tournament match you have two unique teams with a bit of a history in NXT. With the Women's Title you have the families feuding (not a fan but at least it's something). The key though is everything has a story instead of "well they've fought a bunch of times and now they're fighting again" or "contractually obligated rematch". It makes things feel fresh for a change and that's something WWE has been lacking for years now.

### Results

AJ Styles b. Sheamus – Phenomenal Forearm

Luke Gallows/Karl Anderson b. Usos – Magic Killer to Jimmy

Sami Zayn b. Rusev – Rollup

Apollo Crews b. Stardust – Lifting powerbomb

Natalya b. Emma – Sharpshooter

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of the History of the Intercontinental Title at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B01D4D3EGQ>

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

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

---

# Monday Night Raw – April 18, 2016: What's The English Word For Good Show?

## Monday Night Raw

Date: April 18, 2016

Location: O2 Arena, London, England

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

It's the annual post Wrestlemania European tour so we're in England for a big change of pace. The show is also taped tonight which can often lead to some less interesting TV. We're less than two weeks away from Payback where AJ Styles will be challenging Roman Reigns for the WWE World Title. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's Dean Ambrose to open things up for the Ambrose Asylum. Dean actually treats it a bit more like a traditional talk show with a joke about a monster in the Thames River ("I didn't know Braun Strowman could swim."). He brings out Shane McMahon as his first guest and that means it's time to dance.

Dean talks about all the crazy stuff he's done over the years and then shows us a clip of Shane diving off the Cell at Wrestlemania. That made Dean ask what Shane could have been thinking, which Shane sees as a compliment. Shane's plans are about giving new talent a chance.

Names like AJ Styles, Sami Zayn and Sasha Banks (two of which had title shots at Wrestlemania before Shane was in power of course but that's just over thinking things) have gotten a chance and that's why we have arrived. Cue Kevin Owens to ask why Shane threw him out last week. Shane brings up Owens wanting to cost Sami the title shot last week but Owens says that just means he's an honest man. Sami has been riding his coattails for years now because he's just not good enough.

This brings out Sami to accuse Owens of trying to stab him in the back, which brings out Chris Jericho for some reason. Jericho and Shane are about to get into it when Dean yells at them to be careful around the plant. Shane makes Jericho vs. Ambrose and Zayn vs. Owens for Payback and it's nearly a brawl.

### Chris Jericho vs. Sami Zayn

Sami cranks on an armdrag into an armbar to start before a back elbow sends him out to the floor. Back in and Sami can't pull off the corner walk wristdrag as Jericho crotches him to keep control. A dropkick sends Sami outside again and we take a break. We come back with Jericho suplexing Sami on the floor and hitting the chinlock. Some clotheslines and a high cross body put Jericho down so he grabs the bulldog to stop Sami's comeback.

A quick Blue Thunder Bomb gets two as you can tell these two aren't exactly going at full speed. Another high cross body is dropkicked out of the air and it's off to the Walls. Sami makes the rope and gets Jericho outside for the diving tornado DDT. Back in and Jericho pokes him in the eye (becoming the top choice for heels in recent weeks) to set up the Codebreaker for the pin at 12:47.

**Rating:** C+. Like I said you could tell that they were just doing signature stuff here which is a trademark of these overseas shows. These two could do something very entertaining with more time and less fatigue so we'll call this more of a "what could have been" than a disappointing match.

AJ Styles is in the back for a chat when Karl Anderson and Luke Gallows come in. Apparently AJ gave them their recommendations to get jobs in WWE and he's very glad to see them. Gallows wants to go find a spot to catch up because he can't quite remember their last night in Japan.

### Tag Team Tournament Semi-Finals: Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady vs. Dudley Boyz

Enzo says there's a dud in the Dudley Boyz because they're a couple of haters instead of a couple of studs. Enzo: "We're like A-cups because we're real whether you like us or not." D-Von and Enzo get things going

and we take a very quick break. Back with Bubba slowly beating on Enzo before it's off to D-Von for a big slam. The middle rope backsplash misses though and the hot tag brings in Big Cass. Some splashes have Cass in control and he shrugs off the reverse 3D. A big boot sets up the Rocket Launcher for the pin on Bubba at 8:35.

**Rating:** D+. This was a bit disappointing but they were probably smart to just give Enzo and Cass a win. I'm really not sure if they should give Enzo and Cass the tournament as it's a big jump to have them be Tag Team Champions so soon and you don't want them to lose their first big match.

Here's Roman Reigns to a lot of booing for the "I'm the guy" line. Reigns says that anyone who thinks they're part of this new era of WWE can come out here and get punched in the mouth. The fans call him boring so here's AJ to interrupt. Styles praises Roman's talents and admits that he'll have to have the match of his life to win the title. The thing is that's what AJ has done to become a champion everywhere.

Reigns is ready to take him apart but AJ says he'll make a phenomenal champion. Styles leaves and here are Gallows and Anderson to beat Reigns down. AJ didn't see them at first but does see them lay Reigns out with a running boot/spinning flapjack combination. They leave the ring and join AJ, who doesn't seem pleased with what he just saw.

Post break Roman is walking through the back when AJ comes up to say that he had nothing to do with that attack. Roman doesn't buy it after Anderson and Gallows attacked the Usos last week. AJ admits they've been friends for a long time but he doesn't need them to win the title. That's fine with Reigns who wants it to be one vs. all.

#### Baron Corbin vs. Fandango

Ziggler is on commentary. Corbin shrugs off the chops and takes it outside where he throws Fandango over Ziggler. A kick to Dolph's ribs leaves him laying, followed by End of Days to Fandango for the pin at 1:29.

Baron kicks Ziggler in the face and gives him End of Days on the floor.

Greetings from Puerto Rico.

Here are Miz and Maryse for MizTV. Miz insults Prince George, saying he's plain and simple looking while the Intercontinental Title is perfect. Cue Cesaro to say the only kind of royal that Miz would ever be is a royal pain. The fans call Miz boring so he does a modified monologue from the movie Taken where he promises to beat Cesaro at Payback. Cesaro is ready to fight now and does Roddy Piper's bubblegum line from They Live, only to have Miz say Cesaro already has a match right now.

### Rusev vs. Cesaro

Cesaro sees Del Rio and Sheamus out there but it's worried because he's already had a chat with Shane McMahon. Instead, we'll be having this match.

### League of Nations/Miz vs. Cesaro/New Day

To make this even better, Cesaro has a New Day shirt under his suit. We start joined in progress with Woods taking over on Miz and bringing in Kofi for a kick to the chest. The Warrior splash gets two for Big E. and it's time for some gyrating. Del Rio comes in and gets beaten down as well, setting up a little tromboning. Sheamus gets the tag and stomps Woods down in the corner before knocking him outside as we take a break.

Back with Rusev splashing Woods in the corner and knocking the other good guys off the apron. Woods gets in a tornado DDT and the hot tag brings in Cesaro for the running uppercuts. The uppercuts go outside as well, followed by a high cross body for two on Sheamus. Miz gets in a cheap shot though, allowing Sheamus to hit a sitout powerbomb (that's a new one for him) for two on Cesaro. We hit the parade of finishers with Big E. hitting the Big Ending on Miz, followed by the Neutralizer for the pin on Sheamus at 13:30.

**Rating:** C+. This got better at the end but again it was a lot of standing around before we got to the entertaining stuff. New Day and Cesaro is a very fun combination though and beating up the League is an easy layup win. The League needs to go somewhere soon or just split up because you can only beat them so many times before it stops meaning anything.

Charlotte and Ric Flair laugh off Natalya making her tap out last week. Natalya comes in to say she's getting a rematch at WWE Payback (as opposed to Botswana Payback) where Bret Hart will be in her corner.

### Natalya/Becky Lynch/Paige/Sasha Banks vs. Tamina/Charlotte/Summer Rae/Naomi

Charlotte is nice enough to let Summer start with Natalya, who calls Summer pathetic. It's off to Sasha, who eats an elbow to the jaw to actually let Summer take over. Everything breaks down and the good women stand tall over the villains as we take a break. Back with Becky throwing Naomi into the corner before eating a superkick from Tamina.

Summer comes back in and chokes in the corner for a bit before handing it off to Naomi for some kicks (thankfully minus the dancing). Becky finally sends Naomi through the ropes, setting up the diving tag off to Natalya. The basement dropkick puts Summer down but she gets in a quick spinning kick to the face. Charlotte comes in as everything breaks down with Natalya getting the Sharpshooter on Charlotte for the submission at 10:45.

**Rating:** C-. I wasn't feeling this one but there's only so much you can do with eight people in there at a time. The key thing here though is they're keeping this serious and the matches are working much better. This feels like a division with depth instead of the normal two people fighting for the title and a minor side story going on at the same time.

We recap Anderson and Gallows laying out Reigns earlier and AJ saying he had nothing to do with it.

Styles is with Gallows and Anderson again.

Greetings From Puerto Rico.

### Tag Team Tournament Semi-Finals: Vaudevillains vs. Usos

Jimmy gets beaten into the corner to start and English slaps on a chinlock. A kick to the head allows for the tag to Jey for some house cleaning. The running Umaga attack hits English and a superkick knocks him out of the air for two. Everything breaks down with Jimmy being sent

into the barricade, only to have Jey dive on both of them. Jimmy's bad shoulder goes into the post though and it's the Whirling Dervish to send the Vaudevillains to the finals at 3:24.

**Rating:** D+. Again no time to go anywhere but Vaudevillains vs. Enzo/Cass is the best possible option so this makes sense. It's not like the Usos need the win so let one of the new teams get a title shot somewhere down the lines. The ending being mostly clean is a good sign too, especially since the Vaudevillains don't seem to have the longest shelf life.

Video on Apollo Crews.

### Heath Slater vs. Apollo Crews

There's no Adam Rose in sight due to the suspension. Earlier tonight, Crews agreed to join the team if he loses here but they'll leave him alone if he beats Slater. Crews starts with the AJ Styles dropdown into a dropkick and a delayed vertical suplex for no cover. Slater sidesteps a charge into the corner though and Slater grabs a chinlock to keep control. Back up and Crews moonsaults onto the other Outcasts, followed by a jumping enziguri and the lifting powerbomb to pin Slater at 4:28.

**Rating:** D+. That chinlock stopped them cold so this could only be so good. Crews finishing the mini feud with the Outcasts is a good idea but now he needs to have a match that actually matters. If nothing else it might help him develop a much needed personality because right now he's just a smiling goon.

As Crews leaves, Kevin Owens comes out for his match and we get a quick staredown. That's quite the upgrade for Crews and quite the downgrade for Owens, though to be fair Owens feuds with half the roster most weeks.

### Kevin Owens vs. Dean Ambrose

They start slugging it out until Owens elbows him in the face to take over. Ambrose forearms him in the head but the fight quickly goes outside for a real brawl. Owens is sent over the announcers' table and we take a break. Back with Ambrose getting caught in a chinlock and then being sent out over the top.

A frog splash off the apron crushes Ambrose again but he somehow gets up top back inside. Owens gets knocked to the floor and there's the standing top rope elbow to put both guys down. Back in and the rebound lariat gets two, only to have Dean run into a superkick for two. The spinning superplex gets the same for Owens but his second frog splash gets two. The Cannonball misses though and Dirty Deeds gives Dean the pin at 17:21.

**Rating:** B-. Pretty strong main event style match here with both guys trading big shots near the end. I could go without Owens losing another big match as he should definitely lose to Sami at Payback but at least he can bounce back from losses faster than almost anyone else on the roster.

Post match Jericho comes in and gives Dean a Codebreaker to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B. The youth movement continues around here and that's exactly what needed to happen after the really weak Wrestlemania build. AJ vs. Reigns took a nice step up tonight and is starting to feel like something that could be a really strong pay per view main event. The rest of the show was fun as well, despite there being a lack of energy, possibly due to traveling. Raw continues to be on a roll though and that's a good sign leading into a big pay per view.

### Results

Chris Jericho b. Sami Zayn – Codebreaker

Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady b. Dudley Boyz – Rocket Launcher to Bubba

Baron Corbin b. Fandango – End of Days

Cesaro/New Day b. League of Nations/Miz – Neutralizer to Sheamus

Natalya/Becky Lynch/Sasha Banks/Paige b. Charlotte/Tamina/Naomi/Summer Rae – Sharpshooter to Charlotte

Vaudevillains b. Usos – Whirling Dervish to Jimmy

Apollo Crews b. Heath Slater – Lifting powerbomb

Dean Ambrose b. Kevin Owens – Dirty Deeds

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of the History of the Intercontinental Title at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B01D4D3EG0>

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

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

---

## **Wrestlemania XXXII Preview: Usos vs. Dudley Boyz**

Uh...yay.

I really don't want to see this match. I know it's going to be good and I know the story is good enough but ever since this was put together I've felt like it's nothing I want to see. The Usos are long past their point of being interesting (though they're still very talented) as their characters really hit a wall, which wasn't the biggest surprise in the world. The tables stuff has stopped being worth anything either so the whole thing isn't doing much for me. At least it's on the pre-show though so it won't get that much time.

The Usos are going to go over here and much like Jericho vs. Styles, there isn't much of a reason to think otherwise. The Dudleyz can do whatever they want and are going to stay over so there's no need to give them a win on this level. I'm sure it's going to be an entertaining match but it's really just not something I want to see. That Uso splash looks really cool in person though and the dives will help carry it to entertaining though.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of the History of the Intercontinental Title at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B01D4D3EG0>

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

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