

# Main Event – July 6, 2017: The Latest Show I Forgot to Remember

## Main Event

Date: July 6, 2017

Location: Talking Stick Resort Arena, Phoenix, Arizona

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Corey Graves

This show is starting to improve as I can't remember what happened last week. Far too often the shows would be almost interchangeable with the same talent appearing over and over. Now though, things are being mixed up enough that I can't even guess what was on here last week. Therefore, hopefully we can have another show that I forget by Sunday again. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

### Rich Swann vs. Ariya Daivari

Daivari misses a shot in the corner and Rich dances away as only he can. A dropkick gives Swann two but Daivari rolls away before the Phoenix splash can launch. Instead he sends Swann hard into the post and stomps away back inside. We hit the neck crank before Daivari puts on something like a Sharpshooter with his arms, only to have Swann make the rope. Shame too as that was a cool looking move. A big kick to the head knocks Daivari silly and a rollup gets two. Daivari grabs a reverse DDT and the frog splash gets two. Another kick to Daivari's head sets up the Phoenix splash to give Rich the pin at 5:41.

**Rating:** C-. As dull as Daivari is, Swann continues to be one of the most energetic members of the roster. Sure his big thing is dancing but that's become background information to the solid matches he's put on. The problem is he's stuck here on Main Event or in unimportant matches on 205 Live. At least the matches are still good though, which is a great reason to keep him around.

Long recap of Enzo Amore vs. Big Cass.

From Raw.

Here's Enzo to open the show. He lists off all the bad things that have happened to him in the last year and says that all happened while Cass was behind his back. Cass watched all that time because he never had Enzo's back. Cass wanted to take advantage of the silver tongue but now he has to face the fists that come with it.

Enzo is grateful for everything that's happened to him and he'd shove his dad down a wishing well before he joined the dark side. He's grateful to every kid out there wearing his gear. They're the people who help put food on his table because he believes in the good that he's doing. It's something you just can't teach. He walks in and out of a room with confidence because he knows who he is and he knows where he's going. He's been in holes a lot deeper than seven feet before and Cass is nothing more than a catchphrase that Enzo wrote.

Cass said his mouth writes checks that he can't back up but no one goes harder than him. Next time, don't be surprised if that merchandise check is for ZERO DIMES. Unless he starts wearing a Casshole shirt. Enzo is ready to go but comes back to say he's ready to fight on his own because it's all him now.

Also from Raw.

Samoa Joe and Brock Lesnar are live via satellite for a sitdown interview. Joe rants about being tired of answering questions because he's ready to fight. Lesnar calls him a coward but Joe says Brock can never get his hands on him. Joe is ready to fight so Lesnar lists off all the names he's beaten. That's fine with Joe, who has a list of names he's choked out. Lesnar and Heyman chuckle so Joe walks out and goes to find Brock. Angle tries to talk him down but security pulls Joe away from Lesnar's room.

Kalisto vs. Scott Dawson

And Revival isn't on Raw...why? Dawson sends him into the corner to start

so Kalisto slaps him in the face. A dropkick sends Dawson outside and that means a teased dive. Dash Wilder tries to offer a distraction but Dawson's rollup only gets two. A knee to the shoulder works a bit better and we take over with Kalisto in trouble. Back with Kalisto knocking him off the ropes and getting two off a middle rope crossbody. Dawson comes back with a slingshot suplex (ala Tully) but Kalisto counters into a small package for the victory at 8:10.

**Rating:** D+. Did I mention I don't know why Revival is here instead of on Raw? They were one of the big surprises on the post-Wrestlemania Raw and for some reason they can't get back on Raw no matter how much the tag division could use them. The match was nothing to see but Dawson isn't exactly known for his singles work.

We look at Braun Strowman threatening to hurt Roman Reigns on Raw.

From Raw one more time.

#### Apollo Crews vs. Braun Strowman

Crews does what he can to start but is quickly thrown outside as soon as Strowman gets his hands on him. We hit the neck crank before Crews is sent outside again. Titus fires him up enough that two enziguris stagger Strowman. The standing moonsault is broken up with Strowman kicking Apollo across the ring in an awesome block. Three straight powerslams finally put Crews away at 4:13.

**Rating:** D. This was just a step above a squash and that's all it needed to be. Strowman is gearing up for the second biggest match at Sunday's pay per view and it makes sense to have him squash someone. At least it was someone fresh and not the same stuff we've seen a dozen times.

Post match Titus tries to save Apollo from a worse beating but takes one himself. Apollo gets thrown into the ambulance but it won't drive away. Of course Reigns is the driver (Thanks for having Crews' back earlier you jerk) and he spears Strowman off the stage. Strowman is on his feet before the show is over.

**Overall Rating:** C. The Raw stuff more than saves the show from a pretty

dull week of original wrestling. Dawson and Wilder being stuck here makes my head hurt and spin at the same time but until something changes, they're not going to be on Raw for whatever reason. I'm sure it's asking too much to push one of the top teams in the world when you already have so many heels on Raw. Clearly turning or depushing one of those teams (or moving American Alpha over to Raw) is out of the question so we're stuck with things like this for now. Dang I really get annoyed at the tag division.

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## **Main Event – July 13, 2017: Let the Women Have a Chance**

### **Main Event**

Date: July 13, 2017

Location: Toyota Center, Houston, Texas

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Corey Graves

It's back to the easiest show of the week. This week's Monday Night Raw

had some big moments and it could be interesting to see what we get on this show. They really could throw multiple things at us and when you add in some original wrestling which could go several ways, there's potential for this show. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

### Mickie James vs. Emma

I don't remember the last time we had the women on this show. Mickie works on a top wristlock to start before blowing a kiss and getting two off a dropkick. The hurricanrana out of the corner is countered with a powerbomb and Dana Brooke is watching in the back. Emma grabs a seated full nelson before putting her in the Tree of Woe and pulling at the hair. Mickie fights up without too much effort and hits the middle rope Thesz press, followed by the MickieDT for the pin at 5:58.

**Rating:** C. This was a lot better than I was expecting as they beat each other up for a few minutes. If nothing else, I'm amazed by the fact that they actually used something like this for storyline advancement with Brooke watching in the back. Nice match here with Mickie showing that she still has it.

First time from Raw.

It's time for MizTV with the Mizzy Awards for last night's Intercontinental Title match. First up is Best Supporting Actor, which goes to both Bo Dallas and Curtis Axel in a tie. After they thank Miz for changing their lives, Maryse wins Most Gorgeous, Beautiful, Sexy Leading Lady. Maryse is honored and that leaves us with Greatest Man in WWE. Miz opens the envelope and is shocked to say Dean Ambrose...but he's kidding because Miz wins.

Miz saw a lot of people running their mouths last night but Seth Rollins, the Hardys and Akira Tozawa were all just full of hot air. Last night he beat the toughest man in WWE so what does that make him? Cue Ambrose to go after Miz but it's Rollins coming in for the real save. Hopefully this sets up Miz vs. Rollins as I can't handle Ambrose vs. Miz again.

Also from Raw.

Here's Kurt Angle to introduce Paul Heyman and Brock Lesnar for a chat. Angle congratulates Lesnar for his win last night and says Brock surprised him. Heyman gives a quick victory speech but here's Roman Reigns to interrupt. Roman says the three of them were all in the Attitude Era (No Roman, they weren't.) but Angle never learned how to handle Strowman and Lesnar is never around to do it.

Reigns thinks Angle owes him one and that should be Lesnar at Summerslam. Lesnar laughs this off because Reigns hasn't earned it. Cue Samoa Joe to say Lesnar escaped him last night instead of beating him. Joe throws in that Reigns has never beaten him and wants another piece of Lesnar. They go nose to nose but Joe stops to say Roman lost last night. Reigns: "Look at me, then look at Braun if you can find him." Angle makes Joe vs. Reigns for the title shot at Summerslam for next week.

#### Lince Dorado vs. TJP

They trade wristlocks to start until Dorado grabs a hurricanrana and TJP bails to the floor. Lince throws in a dab before cranking on a hammerlock to slow things back down. We take a break and come back with Lince getting in a faceplant and a moonsault for no cover. A Stunner gives Dorado two more but he misses the shooting star. The Detonation Kick ends Dorado at 8:02.

**Rating:** C-. You can only get so much out of Dorado as he's not the most interesting character in the world and that's not exactly a secret. TJP is a fairly big name in the cruiserweight division and it's nice to have him around here instead of the same nothing matches all the time.

And the finale.

#### Seth Rollins vs. Bray Wyatt

Rematch from last night with Wyatt starting the mind games early. Seth hammers away but gets thrown into the corner for some forearms. Bray charges into a superkick for two and Seth takes him outside to start in on the hand. Makes sense after the eye poke last night. The hand gets

rammed into various objects ranging from the barricade to the steps, only to have Bray counter a springboard into a release Rock Bottom.

Back from a break with Seth fighting out of a chinlock and getting in a dropkick. Bray grabs a DDT though and it's right back to the chinlock. Wyatt can't get in a suplex though and Rollins scores with an enziguri for a breather. The Sling Blade drops Bray again and there's the springboard clothesline for two more.

After a Blockbuster and Falcon Arrow give Seth two more near falls, Seth has to slip out of Sister Abigail. You don't see this much offense from a face a lot of the time and it's kind of cool to see for a change. Bray headbutts him in the bad eye though and Sister Abigail is good for the pin on Rollins at 17:04.

**Rating:** C+. The hand stuff didn't go anywhere but it was cool to see Wyatt get a second win in two nights, especially over a major name. In theory this should send Seth on to a feud with Miz, because losing back to back matches is grounds for a title feud (Right Roman?) and that's going to be better for most people.

Post match Bray disappears and it's the Miztourage coming through the crowd for the beatdown. Ambrose makes the save with a chair and beats the fire out of Miz.

**Overall Rating:** C+. Not one mention of Angle's issues this coming week? Really? Anyway, good show otherwise with the women being a nice surprise and TJP doing as well as could be expected. I like this show so much more when they mix things up a bit and that's what we've gotten recently.

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# 205 Live – July 11, 2017: The Small Problem

## 205 Live

Date: July 11, 2017

Location: AT&T Center, San Antonio, Texas

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Corey Graves

The big story tonight is the long (and I do mean LONG) awaited conclusion to Noam Dar vs. Cedric Alexander, who will be facing each other in an I Quit match. Other than that we're building towards Neville vs. Akira Tozawa II for Neville's Cruiserweight Title, which is all but confirmed at this point. Let's get to it.

Titus O'Neil is on the phone with Tozawa and telling him to not worry about beating Neville last night. He seems to have the rematch set up. Ariya Daivari comes in to hang up on Titus. Daivari goes on about the awesome history of Iranian wrestling and questions Tozawa's honor.

Opening sequence.

## Akira Tozawa vs. Ariya Daivari

Daivari wastes no time in kicking at the ribs, meaning Tozawa grunts a lot. A knee to the back gets two but the chinlock doesn't last long for Daivari. Tozawa fights back and loads up the top rope backsplash, only to have Neville come in for the DQ at 2:17.



Neville massacres Tozawa like the good villain he is. A kick to the leg sets up the Rings of Saturn to knock Tozawa's mouthpiece out.

We look back at Mustafa Ali beating Drew Gulak when Gulak's anger got the better of him and he crashed coming off the top rope.

Gulak, in a press conference setting, apologizes for his indiscretion two weeks back when he dove. He sincerely apologizes and proposes a 2/3 falls match to end their feud next week.

We recap TJP turning heel, much to the chagrin of Rich Swann. This led to Swann beating TJP in a good match last week.

### Rich Swann vs. Mario Connors

The referee calls for the bell and here's TJP to watch. Swann cranks on the arm to start before they run the ropes. Connors drops tot he mat and Swann hits a running stomp to the ribs, sending the referee straight over to check on Mario. Back up and Connors hits a running kick to the chest for two, followed by a running tornado DDT for the same. Swann pops up with a running Fameasser and a kick to the head for two. The Phoenix splash puts Mario away at 3:48.

**Rating:** C. This was better than you would have expected with Connors getting in a ton of offense instead of just being squashed. Swann gave up a lot more than usual, which is probably storyline development of some sort. TJP vs. Swann is more interesting than I guessed and it made for a good match.

TJP says that was impressive but he would have beaten Mario in half the time. Therefore, let's have another match right now.

### TJP vs. Mario Connors

Running dropkick to the knee sets up the kneebar....which is countered into a rollup for two. TJP shrugs it off and finishes him with the Detonation Kick at 28 seconds.

Here's Brian Kendrick to make fun of Jack Gallagher again. Kendrick is in another suit and mocks Gallagher's Charlie Chaplain strut. Gallagher

isn't unconventional but a clown and a third rate William Regal. He goes on a rant about how he's had to sacrifice so much to get here and now the fans would rather laugh at someone like Gallagher. Cue the real Gallagher to say he's been doing this since he was sixteen. He's earned the right to do things the way he wants to because he's a first rate Jack Gallagher. Jack punches him in the jaw but gets beaten down by the umbrella.

Long recap of Alexander vs. Dar. Cedric dated Alicia Fox but Dar stole her away, sending her into insanity. Alexander was out with an injury but now that he's back, he doesn't want to deal with them. That's not cool with Fox who has dragged Cedric back into it, setting up a big showdown.

#### Cedric Alexander vs. Noam Dar

I Quit. Cedric wastes no time and knocks Dar into the corner for some chops. They head outside with Dar going hard into the steps but Cedric won't even let him get in a yes or no. Dar comes back with a kick to the leg to knock him off the steps though and Alexander has a glazed look in his eye.

Back in and Dar starts in on the arm but standing on the arm isn't enough to make Cedric quit. With that not working, Dar takes the pad off the hook that attaches the buckle to the post, only to have Cedric put Dar's fingers through the hole and bend them against the steel (FREAKING OW MAN!). Back up and Cedric tries a moonsault to the floor but hurts his knee, which Dar immediately kicks out.

Cedric is fine enough to grab a Flatliner onto the ramp, followed by a running flip dive to drop Dar again. Dar sends him over the announcers' table but Cedric is right back up with a dive off said table. Back in and Cedric scores with another springboard clothesline, only to have his knee kicked out. Dar loads up a chair so Cedric hits a jumping enziguri and grabs the chair. Alexander wraps the chair around the arm and stomps away. Dar won't quit so Cedric gives him one more chance before stomping about ten times, making Dar quit at 11:09.

**Rating:** C+. The match was ok but there were multiple occasions where I forgot this was an I Quit match. It was a good enough fight but a lot of

it felt like an intense match instead of something where the two of them wanted to hurt each other. The ending was good enough and looked like Dar was defeated, though I lost interest in this story weeks ago. In theory this should move Cedric up to the next level to challenge for the Cruiserweight Title but I still don't feel he's anywhere close to that point yet. There's a big gap between the top and middle of this show and it's very obvious most of the time.

Post match Noam says he quits Alicia, drawing a huge YES chant. He's the youngest member of the 205 Live and Monday Night Raw rosters and he's used Fox to get where he is. Does she really believe he doesn't have a woman in every city the WWE goes to? Dar got the attention he wanted from her and now she needs to jog off. He won't even do the catchphrase as he leaves Fox in tears. I think that was supposed to make Dar a super heel but it came off like a face turn with the real heel getting what she deserved, despite Dar saying some rather horrible things.

**Overall Rating:** B-. It feels like we're actually moving somewhere here, especially with Alexander and Dar wrapping up. Other than that we have the Gallagher vs. Kendrick feud and Swann vs. TJP, though that brings up the problem with 205 Live: aside from Neville and whoever is challenging him, no one feels like a big deal. Everyone feels like a kid who is just starting out, which makes them feel like they would get mauled on the main roster. You could fix that in time but at the moment it's not looking good. The show is still watchable and entertaining at times but that's a big hole to get out of.

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# Monday Night Raw – February 10, 2003 (2017 Redo): The Business Meeting Show

## Monday Night Raw

Date: February 10, 2003

Location: Staples Center, Los Angeles, California

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

We're officially in the Evolution Era and less than two weeks away from No Way Out, meaning Scott Steiner vs. HHH II. Why we're doing that is anyone's guess but I would assume a lot of liquor was involved. There isn't much else set on the Raw side but we'll likely remedy that tonight. Let's get to it.

In Memory of Curt Hennig. That's an especially sad one.

We get a long recap of the Bischoff Needs to Fix Raw angle, which seems to be culminating tonight because WWE can't count to thirty.

Here's a nervous looking Bischoff to open things up. Eric hasn't heard from Steve Austin about No Way Out and that means he might be in trouble. Vince McMahon is on his way here tonight and there's a good chance that he's going to get fired. Eric starts sucking up to the fans and then demands their support. The old villains never learn.

Until Vince gets here, Eric is going to do whatever he wants to do and he's going to start with the commentary team. Jim Ross seems to have almost guaranteed that Austin will be back but now it's not happening. Eric thinks JR could do more and blames him for Austin not signing. JR suggests that Austin just hates Eric for firing him from WCW (there's a

reference that not many people will get) so Eric fires him.

During the break, a limo arrived with Eric waiting outside, only to find Evolution instead of Vince.

Since Lawler is on his own, he plugs his book in something that fits Lawler so perfectly.

### Christian vs. Test

Test takes him down and rams his head into the mat a few times as Lawler tries to figure out how to do JR's job. Christian snaps Test's neck across the ropes as Jonathan Coachman comes out to join commentary. The pumphandle slam is countered into a reverse DDT for two on Test as Lawler is instantly better with someone to talk to. Test misses the big boot but hits the full nelson slam for the pin.

**Rating:** D. The story is helping Test a bit but that doesn't make his matches any better. At least it's not the same unfunny Testicles jokes over and over again, which were much more stupid than anything else. I can't imagine they'll put Test over Jericho in the eventual blowoff match but at least he's getting a win here.

Christian takes Test out post match but Jeff Hardy of all people comes in to save Stacy.

JR tries to get in touch with Austin.

We recap Booker T. and Goldust splitting last week in a rushed yet emotional moment. Then Evolution electrocuted Goldust later in the night because reasons. On a well run show, this would lead to Booker/Goldust vs. Evolution but they don't seem smart enough to pull that off at the moment.

### Booker T. vs. D'Lo Brown

Yeah they're not that smart. Booker dedicates this to Goldust but Brown and Teddy Long cut him off. Teddy says Goldust is another white man holding the man down and suggests a team with D'Lo. Booker opts to chop and punch away in the corner instead until Brown leg lariats him down.

The side kick (clearly not making contact) sets up the ax kick to give Booker the easy win.

Jericho asks for a match with Jeff Hardy.

### Jazz vs. Molly Holly

Molly goes right after her and has as much luck as you would expect with Jazz easily taking her down into a cross between the Muta Lock and Cattle Mutilation. Rolling butterfly suplexes get two on Molly as Lawler tries to figure out JR's job status. A half crab cuts off Molly's comeback and the STF puts her away without too much effort.

**Rating:** C. I'm not a big Jazz fan but she beat the heck out of Molly here and made it look awesome. Sometimes you need someone tough and awesome who can beat the heck out of various opponents. The problem is the division isn't exactly deep right now and Jazz is probably already the #1 contender after winning one match. Not that she's not undeserving of it but I could go with dedicating more time to set things up.

Jazz gives her the double chickenwing faceplant and the STF.

Steve calls JR. Fink comes up and asks what's going on but that was Steve from Oklahoma, not Austin.

### Kane/Rob Van Dam vs. 3 Minute Warning

Van Dam starts with Jamal and is quickly shoved off the top and onto the barricade in a big crash. Rosey gets in some clubbing forearms but heel miscommunication allows the hot tag to Kane. House is quickly cleaned and Rolling Thunder gets two on Rosey. A chokeslam into the Five Star puts Jamal away.

**Rating:** D. Just a step above a squash here as 3 Minute Warning somehow gets even less interesting and valuable every single week. I really don't know why they're even still on Raw other than filling in time. Kane and Van Dam are working as the oddball team and it gives them something to do, which in a way is a lot more important than having good matches.

Vince arrives and wants to know why JR is in the parking lot.

Here's Vince in the ring for the big speech of the week. He wastes no time in calling down Bischoff and Chief Morely. Coach: "It's been a long thirty days." Actually it's been a short 21 days. Starting with Morely, he hasn't met any of the goals that Vince has set for him. He's not getting fired immediately though, because he has a chance to keep his job. All he has to do is win a match against all three Dudley Boyz.

Morely goes to get ready so Vince asks if Bischoff has signed Austin, which apparently became the saving grace move off camera. Vince says Eric would have saved his job if he had signed Austin but Bischoff pleads his case. By that he means bringing out lesbians for HLA. But wait, because these aren't just regular lesbians but rather bisexual lesbians. Since that's one heck of an oxymoron, Vince fires him anyway. Vince even leads the Goodbye Song on the way out and throws in the maniacal strut.

William Regal and Lance Storm suck up to Vince after a break and he announces a new GM being hired tonight.

### Chief Morely vs. Dudley Boyz

The trio wastes no time in starting the beating with a double flapjack and overhand chops in the corner. There's a Samoan drop before the trio just stomps him down in the middle. A whip sends Morely into the steps and they bounce off his head for good measure. The Dudley Dog and 3D finally end the massacre.

**Rating:** D. It's pretty unfair to rate this but obviously this was more about the angle than the "match". This is all it needed to be though as the Dudleyz have been screwed over by Morely and Bischoff for weeks now and it's time for them to get something back. They kept it quick though and this accomplished its goal. Morely deserves some credit here too as he sold everything really well.

Morely goes through a table for good measure.

Bischoff offers JR a handshake but he tells Eric to go clean out his desk.

### Batista vs. Tommy Dreamer

Batista Bomb and we're done in 22 seconds.

Booker T. comes in for the post match save but Scott Steiner makes the real save.

Jeff Hardy nods at Shawn Michaels but says nothing.

Stacy has a new idea for Test: some personal appearances with GGW. Yes, that would be Girls Gone Wild.

Bischoff is packing up his office (as he does every week) but the Dudleyz come in to sing the Goodbye Song again.

### Chris Jericho vs. Jeff Hardy

Jeff's headlock doesn't get him anywhere so Jericho forearm him in the face to take over. Hardy gets tossed over the top but Jericho misses a dive for a crash on the floor. Jeff sends him into the steps but gets crotched on the way back inside. A backbreaker keeps Jeff in trouble and Jericho bends the back over his knee to make things even worse.

Jeff's comeback is cut off by a clothesline and we hit the chinlock with a knee in the back as the crowd is really not interested so far. Back up and Jericho goes shoulder first into the post, though his leg is fine enough for an enziguri to take over again. The Walls go on but are quickly broken with Jeff taking him down in a hurry. The Swanton gets two with Jericho getting his foot on the ropes. Jericho has had enough now and grabs the Walls for the tap, which Jeff has to do three different times before the referee stops the match.

**Rating:** C. Jeff is on another planet at this point and it's becoming clear that he's not getting much better anytime soon. I have no idea what happened with the heel turn from last week but he's about as much of a face as you can be this time around. Jericho was doing what he could here but that was only going to get him so far.

Evolution is on the way to the strip to celebrate but Vince cuts them off, saying the new GM is about to be announced. Next week, it's going to HHH/Batista vs. Booker T./Scott Steiner.



Here's Vince to announce the new GM. Jim Ross comes out but Vince says it's not him. Bischoff comes out behind JR, who says Austin WILL BE at No Way Out. That means JR is reinstated...and so is Bischoff, assuming he's will to join Vince's signature Club (complete with Vince making it do tricks). Eric says no way so Vince puts him in a match with Austin at No Way Out to end the show. Somehow everything from the announcement of the club to the end of the show took nearly eight minutes.

**Overall Rating:** D. The wrestling wasn't all that great but even worse than that is the whole Bischoff junk. Ignoring the fact that they apparently can't count to thirty, there's the fact that this story has been little more than "Sorry fans, but your rattlesnake is on another show." Raw has become a mess as of late, though at least this week didn't focus on Steiner, who has been shifted to more of a glorified afterthought role. That's better for everyone, though it still doesn't make for a good show.

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# Smackdown – July 11, 2017: Wake Me When The Battle Is On

First off, Happy Anniversary Becca. Thanks for the first two of many.

## Smackdown

Date: July 11, 2017

Location: AT&T Center, San Antonio, Texas

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Byron Saxton, John Bradshaw Layfield

We're less than two weeks away from Battleground and we don't know much about the card yet. The big story so far is the Punjabi Prison match with Smackdown World Champion Jinder Mahal defending against Randy Orton, but Orton is off filming a movie. With that feud temporarily on the shelf, we'll look at AJ Styles, who won the US Title over the weekend in a big surprise. Let's get to it.

We open with a look at last week's battle royal with AJ winning a shot at Kevin Owens and the US Title. Styles then won the title at Madison Square Garden at a house show over the weekend.

Opening sequence.

Here's AJ to open things up, saying his face is an upgrade for the Face of America. Styles talks about the Open Challenge that Owens used to issue and thinks he should have one of his own. The Challenge is on and.....here's John Cena. John wants the shot right now and AJ is more than game. We hit the Big Match Intros but cue Owens to interrupt before the bell.

Owens says no one wants Cena around here anymore because his time is over. John says the usual: if you want him gone, get rid of him. Rusev runs in from behind and takes Cena down, leaving Owens to powerbomb AJ. Cena gets caught in the Accolade and the villains stand tall.

The obvious tag match is set.

## Jinder Mahal vs. Tye Dillinger

Non-title. Tye starts fast and sends Mahal into the corner, setting up a springboard high crossbody, only to get caught with a clothesline. Jinder hammers him down and chokes on the ropes a bit as we take an early break. Back with Tye shoving him away and firing off his left hands in the corner, only to eat a running knee to the face. The Khallas gives Mahal the pin at 6:40.

**Rating:** D. And so much for Dillinger. You had a nice moment with the debut and the TEN chants but now you're getting squashed by the guy who was the squashee until a few months back. There really didn't need to be a break in the middle of this as it merely showed how lame most of Mahal's offense is. As usual, that's the big problem with Mahal: he's nothing beyond average and there's not much away around it.

Mahal talks about bringing diversity and having 1.3 billion people behind him. He'll take care of Orton next week when he brings the Punjabi Prison.

## Jey Uso vs. Xavier Woods

Woods hits a few forearms to the back but gets sent into the corner early on. New Day protests and it's a triple ejection with Kofi, Big E. and Jimmy being tossed. A quick superkick gets two on Woods but the Superfly Splash hits knees. Woods comes right back with the really long top rope elbow for the pin at 2:18.

The women's division is in the locker room trying to find out who is getting the next title shot. Charlotte threatens a ruckus if it's Lana so Shane McMahon makes a five way elimination match for Battleground. Hostilities seem imminent so he makes Charlotte/Becky Lynch vs. Tamina/Natalya. The rest of the women leave so Carmella comes in and demands that James Ellsworth be reinstated as per orders from her attorney. Shane rips up her request.

Baron Corbin isn't worried about Shinsuke Nakamura and says it's going to be sayonara tonight.

## Baron Corbin vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

Nakamura jumps him in the aisle and since this is an angle, referees break it up instead of letting the match happen. Odds are we'll see this at Battleground.

Cena comes up to Styles in the back to talk about the US Open Challenge. Styles wants some payback from the Royal Rumble but they'll have each others back tonight.

Cedric Alexander tells us to watch his I Quit match against Noam Dar on 205 Live.

## Becky Lynch/Charlotte vs. Tamina/Natalya

Becky trips Tamina up and drops a spinning leg before handing it off to Charlotte. That doesn't go as well as Charlotte gets taken into the corner for a stomping, only to nip up and chop away. The Bexploder sends Natalya to the floor but she sends Becky into the steps as we take a break.

Back with Becky fighting out of a chinlock but not being able to get over to Charlotte. Becky kicks away from the Sharpshooter and now it's off to Charlotte for the chops. House is quickly cleaned but Lana pops up onto the apron for a distraction. Natalya uses the distraction to make a blind tag, allowing Tamina to get in the superkick for the pin on Charlotte at 8:40.

**Rating:** D+. Just a standard tag match here as Lana and Tamina get some momentum. The Smackdown women's division is suddenly feeling rather inferior to the Raw counterpart as they seem to be trying to make new stars instead of running with what they have. It doesn't help that two of the heels, Natalya and Tamina in this case, are black holes of charisma.

Maria Kanellis looks for Sami Zayn for the sake of an apology but no one has seen him.

Post break Sami interrupts Mike and Maria and says he won't be apologizing. He's been busy trying to have wrestling matches but keeps having to skirt around the two of them. Sami asks which one of them is

the fighter so Maria slaps him in the face. Mike busts a vase over Sami's head.

It's time for Runway Walker: Texas Rangers, meaning a new version of the Fashion Files, complete with Chuck Norris clips from Survivor Series 1994. They're in cowboy gear this year with Tyler wanting to lasso someone so they have to tell the truth like Wonder Woman. Fandango distracts Zack Ryder but Breeze lassos himself by mistake.

This makes him tell the truth, including that he wears a bra while going undercover because he's no hippie. Mojo Rawley comes up and asks what he just stumbled into. Fandango suggests that the Hype Bros jumped them but Mojo says they wouldn't do something shady like that.

Ryder calls Mojo eliminating him last week shady but Mojo says it was a battle royal. Ryder thinks it's time to get back to reality and seems to suggest that Breezango does the same. In the melee, someone has stolen Fandango's (stick) horse but they can't decide if it was ghosts or aliens. Together: "GHOST ALIENS!" Next week: The Fashion X Files. Seriously.

### Rusev/Kevin Owens vs. John Cena/AJ Styles

Rusev headlocks Cena to start and drops him without much effort, meaning it's time to wave the Bulgarian flag. It's off to Owens for some choking before Rusev punches Cena in the face. Back with Rusev spinwheel kicking Cena down but missing the middle rope headbutt. The hot tag brings in Styles for a quick Calf Crusher, only to have Rusev take him down again.

Owens comes in to stomp away and we hit the chinlock. The limping Rusev comes back in with the bearhug, which JBL says won Bruno Sammartino the World Title in 35 seconds in 1963 (it was a backbreaker in 48 seconds but the year is right). Styles escapes and comes in with the usual, including the Shuffle to Owens. Rusev eats the Phenomenal Forearm and it's the AA to pin Owens at 13:09.

**Rating:** C. Just a main event tag here but good enough while it lasted. For the sake of the ending here, I'm glad Owens lost the title so having him take the fall isn't the worst thing in the world. The match was

perfectly fine and a good way to have two feuds together in one, though I'm only somewhat interested in Cena vs. Rusev at the pay per view.

Cena and Styles celebrate but have a staredown with Cena looking at the US Title. Cena holds up AJ's hand to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C-. Pretty much a skippable show here as there were a few things added to the pay per view card but it doesn't feel like much of an event. Then again, given some of the stuff we might be seeing at Summerslam, I could easily live with watching a lackluster show like Battleground to get there. Nothing special this week, but there are far worse ways to spend two hours.

### Results

Jinder Mahal b. Tye Dillinger – Khallas

Xavier Woods b. Jey Uso – Top rope elbow

Tamina/Natalya b. Becky Lynch/Charlotte – Superkick to Charlotte

John Cena/AJ Styles b. Rusev/Kevin Owens – AA to Owens

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the Histories of Saturday Night's Main Event and Clash of the Champions, now in PAPERBACK. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/05/19/history-of-saturday-nights-main-event-and-clash-of-the-champions-now-in-paperback-plus-price-drops/>

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# Monday Night Raw – July 10, 2017: More Important Than Wrestling

## Monday Night Raw

Date: July 10, 2017

Location: Toyota Center, Houston, Texas

Commentators: Michael Cole, Booker T., Corey Graves

It's the night after Great Balls of Fire and unless something major has changed, our top face is now an attempted murderer. Last night Roman Reigns lost the ambulance match to Braun Strowman and then attempted to kill him by putting him in the back of the ambulance and ramming it into a semi truck. You know, for kids. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Reigns nearly killing Strowman, not for a lack of trying that is.

Opening sequence.

Here's Big Cass, with JoJo introducing him as "Seven feet tall and you can't teach that". Cass: "How you doin'?" He's doing pretty well because he destroyed Enzo last night. We see some still shots and a video of after the match when Enzo had to be very slowly helped through the back. Cass warns everyone up and down the totem pole that he's coming for them, even the one all the way at the top.

No one can get on the bandwagon now because he never needed anyone here. One day, he's going to be Universal Champion and shove it down everyone's throat when he's main eventing Wrestlemania and appearing on the Tonight Show. No one can touch him because he's seven feet tall and here's Big Show to interrupt. Show easily chases him off because we need to have Cass pass the Big Show initiation or whatever they think the upside of

this is.

Here's Elias Samson with a song for Finn Balor, which Balor cuts off in short order.

### Finn Balor vs. Elias Samson

Samson slams him down a few times so Finn kicks him in the head and loads up the Coup de Grace while the announcers talk about Samson beating up a guy on the way to an Eric Clapton concert. Back from a break with Samson grabbing a seated full nelson until Balor fights up and kicks him in the head again. Finn's next kick is countered and Balor goes shoulder first into the apron. A Fujiwara armbar doesn't get Samson far as Balor kicks him in the head and hits the Sling Blade. The Coup De Grace is enough to put Samson away at 10:10.

**Rating:** D+. Just a match here and Balor going over clean is the right call. Having Samson beat Ambrose twice via interference was one thing but Balor isn't someone you want getting pinned at this point. Samson is much more of a character than a wrestler and there's nothing wrong with that, at least not for someone like him.

The Hardys come out to celebrate and have something to say after a break. Jeff has been talking about how the team has been having some issues of late so maybe they should fade away and classify themselves as obsolete. They're not going anywhere though because they have magic left to work. Cue Anderson and Gallows to say they're magic killers. Matt says they're a little bruised and broken (pause for the pop) but we can get a referee down here right now.

### Hardys vs. Anderson and Gallows

Anderson gets double suplexed to start and there's Poetry in Motion to Gallows as we take a break. Back with Jeff eating the Boot of Doom for two but making the tag off to Matt anyway. Gallows gets in a cheap shot from the apron though and it's the Magic Killer for the pin at 6:55.

**Rating:** C-. Unless I'm missing something, that's the first regular loss for the Hardys in over two years. This would seem to be setting up the



Bullet Club vs. the Broken Hardys, or at least that's where it would be going in a more interesting world. Then again, odds are we're getting this match again and again because that's how WWE works.

Post match here comes the Revival to lay out the Hardys.

It's time for MizTV with the Mizzy Awards for last night's Intercontinental Title match. First up is Best Supporting Actor, which goes to both Bo Dallas and Curtis Axel in a tie. After they thank Miz for changing their lives, Maryse wins Most Gorgeous, Beautiful, Sexy Leading Lady. Maryse is honored and that leaves us with Greatest Man in WWE. Miz opens the envelope and is shocked to say Dean Ambrose...but he's just kidding because of course Miz wins.

Miz saw a lot of people running their mouths last night but Seth Rollins, the Hardys and Akira Tozawa were all just full of hot air. Last night he beat the toughest man in WWE so what does that make him? Cue Ambrose to go after Miz but it's Rollins coming in for the real save. Hopefully this sets up Miz vs. Rollins because I don't think I can handle Ambrose vs. Miz again.

Post break Ambrose tells Rollins that he doesn't trust him and there's no reunion.

### Sasha Banks/Bayley vs. Alexa Bliss/Nia Jax

Bliss and Banks get things going with Alexa running away to start. Nia comes in and runs Banks over as everything breaks down. Nia and Alexa are sent outside and we take a break. Back with Bliss getting choked in the corner, followed by Bayley getting two off a kind of bulldog.

Nia gets her leg dropkicked out and Bayley snaps her throat across the middle rope. A Bliss distraction lets Nia run Bayley over and things slow down a bit. The slow beating begins with Nia sending her into the corner and getting in a splash for good measure. Twisted Bliss gets two on Bayley and Sasha avoids the charge into the barricade. Bayley rolls Bliss up for the pin out of nowhere at 9:22.

**Rating:** D+. The ending was rather sudden and I'm hoping they're not

expecting that to be enough to revive Bayley. She looked like the biggest loser in the world in recent weeks and a simple rollup isn't enough to fix that. Odds are we're heading for a multi-woman match at Summerslam and I think I'm ok with that for the most part.

We look back at the ambulance match and Strowman walking out after.

### Goldust vs. R-Truth

Goldust leans over the referee to get in a cheap shot and they slug it out early on. Truth takes over with right hands in the corner but gets crotched on the ropes for his efforts. We hit the chinlock for a bit, followed by a spinebuster for two on Truth. The scissors kick connects but Truth is too spent to cover. Goldust sends him into the post and the Final Cut is good for the pin at 5:40.

**Rating:** D. Not the best match in the world but they were smart to do this on Raw instead of the pay per view. No matter how you look at it, they're both older and not the best in the ring but that doesn't mean their angle should be forgotten. There will likely be a rematch and that should wrap things up.

Here's Kurt Angle to introduce Paul Heyman and Brock Lesnar for a chat. Angle congratulates Lesnar for his win last night and says Brock surprised him. Heyman gives a quick victory speech but here's Roman Reigns to interrupt. Roman says the three of them were all in the Attitude Era (No Roman, they weren't.) but Angle never learned how to handle Strowman and Lesnar is never around to do it.

Reigns thinks Angle owes him one and that should be Lesnar at Summerslam. Lesnar laughs this off because Reigns hasn't earned it. Cue Samoa Joe to say Lesnar escaped him last night instead of beating him. Joe throws in that Reigns has never beaten him and wants another piece of Lesnar. They go nose to nose but Joe stops to say Roman lost last night. Reigns: "Look at me, then look at Braun if you can find him." Angle makes Joe vs. Reigns for the title shot at Summerslam for next week.

I'm going to assume that Strowman interferes in that match because otherwise, WWE is actually going with the idea that wins and losses mean

nothing. Joe pointing out the loss made sense and Lesnar saying Reigns hasn't earned the shot makes sense, but then they just give him a #1 contenders match anyway. That makes very little sense but you have to expect that since it's WWE. Hopefully they come up with something, though I can't say I'd be complaining if they didn't just have Lesnar vs. Reigns already.

Angle and Graves are in the back with Kurt saying they got the same text. Kurt is going to go public with whatever it is next week but knows it might be the end for him. He's even worried that his family might walk out on him. Graves says it's not a big deal but Angle doesn't seem convinced.

### Akira Tozawa/Cedric Alexander vs. Noam Dar/Neville

Cedric knocks Dar outside to start and right into the waiting arms of Alicia Fox. Back inside and Swann gets caught in the numbers game and some double stomping takes us to a break. We come back with Tozawa in trouble until Alexander gets the hot tag to come in with the springboard clothesline. Neville crotches him on top though, only to get crotched as well. Cedric dives onto Dar and Tozawa kicks the ropes to make it even worse for Neville. The top rope backsplash gives Tozawa the pin at 9:34.

**Rating:** C. This was angle advancement to set up Neville vs. Tozawa II as well as the already announced I Quit match between Alexander and Dar to FINALLY end their feud. This didn't have the time to go anywhere but they did what they could do to set up both matches, which isn't the worst thing in the world.

We look back at MizTV.

Rollins isn't worried about Miz because he's focused on Bray Wyatt.

Bray says Seth can't escape his past or erase his sins. How dare Rollins take his eye off Bray. Wyatt is here tonight.

### Seth Rollins vs. Bray Wyatt

Rematch from last night with Wyatt starting the mind games early. Seth hammers away but gets thrown into the corner for some forearms. Bray

charges into a superkick for two and Seth takes him outside to start in on the hand. Makes sense after the eye poke last night. The hand gets rammed into various objects ranging from the barricade to the steps, only to have Bray counter a springboard into a release Rock Bottom.

Back from a break with Seth fighting out of a chinlock and getting in a dropkick. Bray grabs a DDT though and it's right back to the chinlock. Wyatt can't get in a suplex though and Rollins scores with an enziguri for a breather. The Sling Blade drops Bray again and there's the springboard clothesline for two more.

After a Blockbuster and Falcon Arrow give Seth two more near falls, Seth has to slip out of Sister Abigail. You don't see this much offense from a face a lot of the time and it's kind of cool to see for a change. Bray headbutts him in the bad eye though and Sister Abigail is good for the pin on Rollins at 17:04.

**Rating:** C+. The hand stuff didn't go anywhere but it was cool to see Wyatt get a second win in two nights, especially over a major name. In theory this should send Seth on to a feud with Miz, because losing back to back matches is grounds for a title feud (Right Roman?) and that's going to be better for most people.

Post match Bray disappears and it's the Miztourage coming through the crowd for the beatdown. Ambrose makes the save with a chair and beats the fire out of Miz.

Angle is on the phone with someone who he wants here next week to reveal something. He says he loves them to end the show. There was no update on Strowman, which was promised all night.

**Overall Rating:** C. This show was hard to grade as the wrestling wasn't anything special though I don't think it was supposed to be. Tonight was about setting up the board for Summerslam and that's a good idea with over a month to go before the pay per view. I'm genuinely curious about the Angle story but it seems that all roads lead to Stephanie coming back to show him how business really works. Not a great show but it did some good things to set up stories for later, which is more important than wrestling on any given night.

## Results

Finn Balor b. Elias Samson – Coup de Grace

Anderson and Gallows b. Hardys – Magic Killer to Matt

Bayley/Sasha Banks b. Nia Jax/Alexa Bliss – Rollup to Bliss

Goldust b. R-Truth – Final Cut

Akira Tozawa/Cedric Alexander b. Noam Dar/Neville – Top rope backplash to Neville

Bray Wyatt b. Seth Rollins – Sister Abigail

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# **Great Balls of Fire: This Show Came Along and Moved Me**

# Honey

## Great Balls of Fire

Date: July 9, 2017

Location: American Airlines Center, Dallas, Texas

Commentators: Michael Cole, Booker T., Corey Graves

It's time for the most oddly named pay per view in a long time and yes they're actually going to call it this. Brock Lesnar is getting back in the ring for the first time since Wrestlemania to defend the Universal Title against Samoa Joe. This has the potential to be a war and that's what the title needs. Let's get to it.

### Kickoff Show: Cruiserweight Title: Neville vs. Akira Tozawa

Tozawa is defending and has Titus O'Neil in his corner. They run the ropes to start and flip away from each other. Neville gets sent to the floor but blocks a dive with a kick, allowing Neville to yell at Titus. Tozawa gets sent into the barricade and we take a break. Back with Neville getting two off a kick to the chest. Tozawa gets in a kick of his own and goes up so Neville bails, meaning Tozawa gets in a suicide dive for two.

An Octopus Hold sends Neville to the ropes before he can kick Tozawa in the head for two more. Neville's Phoenix splash misses and Tozawa gets in the top rope backsplash, only to have Neville roll outside again. Tozawa heads up but gets crotched hard. Neville kicks the ropes to make it even worse and a kick to the chest retains the title at 11:26.

**Rating:** C+. What in the world is supposed to stop Neville? The division is pretty much empty now, though that finish seems to set up a rematch. I don't really need to see these two fight again but that's never stopped WWE before. Summerslam is up next and Tozawa vs. Neville II doesn't seem like the most interesting match in the world. Then again that would allow the creative department to not have to do anything so look for it to happen. The match didn't really click the way I was expecting as Tozawa just kicked and did his dives but at least he was a fresh challenger.

A longer than usual opening video has a drive-in movie theme with the matches being treated as old school trailers.

### Bray Wyatt vs. Seth Rollins

Standard Bray feud: Rollins is popular so Bray wants to beat him up. Seth kicks him down to start and Bray smiles in the corner. It's too early for the suicide dive though as Bray punches him back and hammers away. They head to the apron for a slugout and Seth is sent hard into the steps for his efforts.

One heck of a charge sends Seth into the barricade and we hit the chinlock. Seth fights up and heads to the top, meaning it's a superplex to bring him back down. Bray has cut him off almost every time so far like he has Seth very well scouted. Rollins knees out of a suplex and sends Bray outside for the suicide dive.

The Sling Blade and Blockbuster get two on Bray but he breaks up the momentum with a heck of a clothesline. That hard release Rock Bottom gives Bray two and he runs his mouth about being a god. Rollins slugs away until a poke to the eye cuts him off. Sister Abigail gives Bray the pin at 12:05.

**Rating:** B-. Well it was short but at least Bray won, even if that's not going to mean anything in his future. He's done this kind of thing before and it never goes anywhere because he'll lose the next time there's anything remotely resembling a big match. WWE has made it clear that they're not going to do anything with him long term and that gets very annoying for anyone who wants to get behind him.

The Hardys have been watching superhero shows to prepare for facing Sheamus and Cesaro. Jeff talks about being in the first tag team tables match and tag team ladder match. Not only do they break barriers but they also break bars.

We recap Enzo Amore vs. Big Cass. They were a popular team but Big Cass got tired of bailing Enzo out of trouble for running his mouth. Cass finally had enough of it and turned on him, sending Enzo into a more emotional place than ever before. Enzo is in way over his head physically

but his heart could carry him through.

### Enzo Amore vs. Big Cass

Before the match, Enzo talks about how they debuted here last year in the same arena but now it's war. He quotes some That's Life and says if Cass wants to stomp on him, come on because he's always going to be a dreamed. Enzo goes on for a LONG time and basically says he's here to fight because he won't give up. Cass debuts some new music, which might not be the most original but at least it's something new.

Enzo charges right at him and gets tossed around like he's not even there. Something like a crossface chickenwing slows Enzo down and Cass splashes him for good measure. Some forearms to the back have Amore in more trouble and Cass tells him to bring it on. A gorilla press drop sends him outside but he gets back in at nine. The big boot ends Enzo at 5:22.

**Rating:** D+. Total and complete squash and that's exactly what it should have been. Amore isn't someone who is going to be able to get in any significant offense on someone like Cass and that's what happened here. This is a good example of a perfectly booked match and that's not something you get anymore.

### Tag Team Titles: Hardys vs. Sheamus/Cesaro

Sheamus and Cesaro are defending and this is a thirty minute Iron Man match because we haven't watched them fight enough. Cesaro distracts Matt to start and it's a Brogue Kick for the first fall at 20 seconds. Jeff tries his luck and dropkicks both of them down, followed by Matt ramming Sheamus' head into the apron a few times. It's Cesaro cutting Jeff off to save his brother and they head outside with the champs taking over.

Back in and Cesaro grabs a gutwrench to keep Jeff in trouble as the announcers get in "playing defense" as many times as they can. Jeff is sent outside and the match is going so slowly that we look back at the first fall. Cesaro grabs a side choke as we're not even ten minutes in yet. Matt gets knocked off the apron and the assisted White Noise gives Cesaro the second fall on Jeff at 9:48.



Back up and Sheamus goes shoulder first into the post, allowing the hot tag back to Matt. Sheamus is rammed into three buckles ten times each, followed by Poetry in Motion and a Side Effect. The Twist of Fate ends Cesaro to make it 2-1 at 12:55. Sheamus comes in and gets caught with the slingshot dropkick in the corner for two as we hit the halfway point. Jeff flip dives onto everyone but Cesaro posts Matt for a countout to go up 3-1 at 16:55.

Sheamus grabs a chinlock, followed by the very slow forearms to the chest. We hit ten minutes to go as Sheamus gets two off a double suplex. Cesaro kicks Jeff off the apron and grabs the Sharpshooter on Matt. Sheamus gets dropped as well though and Matt makes a fast tag so Jeff can cradle Cesaro to make it 3-2 at 22:55. A basement dropkick gives Jeff two more, followed by Matt's tornado DDT for two at 5:00 to go.

Matt hits the moonsault for what looked like three with Cesaro diving in (possibly too late) for the save. A super Twist of Fate drops Sheamus and we're tied at 2:55 to go. Sheamus is still down so a top rope splash/elbow give the Hardys two. Jeff gets a blind tag and hits the Swanton but Cesaro, the legal man, rolls him up for the pin at 25 seconds left. Time runs out and the champs retain 4-3 at 30:00.

**Rating:** D. WOW this was boring and one of the most boring matches I've seen in years. There was no need for this to be thirty minutes long and this better wrap up the feud already. The last few minutes were a bit better but this felt like it was about an hour and a half long, which really isn't something you want happening, especially on a pay per view with no breaks. Now PLEASE let them be done.

Xavier Woods was at the Rocket League World Championships.

We recap the Women's Title match. Alexa Bliss is tired of being judged and if she has to beat up Sasha Banks to prove herself, so be it.

#### Women's Title: Alexa Bliss vs. Sasha Banks

Banks is challenging. Sasha knocks her outside to start and Bliss takes a breather while feeling her own jaw. Back in and Bliss does her dislocated arm thing, which the announcers are all shocked by because they've never

watched her matches before. Bliss teases walking out and rams Bliss into the apron to take over. The double knees and moonsault knees to the back give the champ two and it's off to a modified surfboard.

One heck of a backbreaker gives Bliss two more but Sasha comes back with some forearm to the face. Bliss catches her with a sunset bomb out of the corner for two (nasty landing). Twisted Bliss hits knees (kind of) and the Bank Statement has Alexa in trouble until a rope is grabbed. Banks sends her into the barricade but Bliss slaps her in the face and takes the countout at 11:48.

**Rating:** C. The ending hurt it a bit but this is clearly there to set up a rematch. The dislocated elbow thing is still creepy and Banks is good for a challenger. I'm sure this is going to set up a rematch in some form of gimmick match, probably at Summerslam, which might not be the worst idea in the world. It's good enough but felt like a longer TV match.

Post match Sasha fights her up to the announcers' table. Bliss gets shoved off and the double knees off the table drops Bliss to the floor.

We look at the Kickoff Show match.

Tozawa is in pain and tells Titus he wants a rematch. Titus will work on it but wants Tozawa to get looked at by the trainers.

#### Intercontinental Title: The Miz vs. Dean Ambrose

Miz is defending. Dean goes after the Miztourage to start and grabs a rollup for two. Miz gets in the short DDT and kicks Dean in the chest to stay in control. Dirty Deeds is broken up but Ambrose throws Miz down to get a breather anyway. A butterfly superplex gives Dean two but he tweaks his knee on the way down.

Dirty Deeds still doesn't work and we hit the Figure Four. Dean, with a bloody lip, makes the bottom rope but the knee is done. Miz fires off the YES Kicks but gets slapped in the face. The top rope standing elbow gives Dean two but the Miztourage pulls Dean to the floor for a beating.

Dean dives on all three of them but bangs up his knee even more. Back in and Dirty Deeds connects with Maryse putting the foot on the ropes. Dean

hits a suicide dive (partially taking Maryse out in the process) but Dallas hits him in the back of the head, setting up the Skull Crushing Finale to retain at 11:15.

**Rating:** C-. They had a long way to go to get over the boring story and they didn't get there. The Miztourage is a great addition for Miz as they fit him so well and Dallas looking like a Duck Dynasty/Sons of Anarchy hybrid helps a lot. I hope this doesn't lead to another rematch but these two have only dominated the Intercontinental Title picture for fifteen months now. WWE can get at least three more months out of this thing before they have to come up with something new.

Long recap of Roman Reigns vs. Braun Strowman. They were fighting back in February, then took a break for Wrestlemania, then Strowman shoved over an ambulance with Reigns inside, then they took another month off because of an elbow injury. Tonight it's an ambulance match in what should be the blowoff.

#### Roman Reigns vs. Braun Strowman

Ambulance match. Strowman goes right after the ribs and throws Reigns outside with ease. A shot with the steps crushes Roman again but Strowman hits the post with the steps. Back in and Roman's comeback is cut off by the powerslam with Strowman going for a cover out of instinct.

Reigns slips off of Braun's shoulders and manages a Samoan drop. Strowman goes shoulder first into the post and Roman wraps it around the post. Some chair shots make the elbow even worse but Strowman just gets up and shrugs them off. Strowman tells Reigns to hit him and then knocks him off the stage and into the side of the ambulance. Reigns send him head first into the ambulance for a breather, followed by a Superman punch to put him halfway inside.

Strowman hits him with a backboard and throws Reigns back onto the stage. A hard shot knocks Strowman through the LED screen but Reigns can't follow up. Instead Braun pops up and throws him off the stage again. Roman misses a spear though and winds up in the ambulance to give Braun the win at 15:30.

**Rating:** B. It was a fun brawl and should end the feud (oh just wait a minute) but now it's clear that we're getting Reigns vs. Lesnar at Wrestlemania. Why? We're just that lucky I guess. Strowman vs. Lesnar could be a heck of a war like this one, though hopefully with an ending that doesn't look like the Cowardly Lion diving away from the Wizard of Oz. This was about what you had to expect, but that's not a bad thing in this case.

Roman pops out of the ambulance and spears Strowman into it. He jumps into the driver's seat and speeds to the back where, after a few camera cuts, backs the ambulance into a production truck to pretty much kill Strowman. Kurt Angle and company come up to try and open the ambulance...and we're going to the ring?

#### Heath Slater vs. Curt Hawkins

This is an impromptu match and I have no idea why it's been added. Hawkins is barely ready and the announcers ignore the match to talk about Strowman being in trouble. We cut to the back again where a fire truck is coming in to get Strowman out. With the camera away from the ring, Slater wins with something we don't even see at 2:28.

Still in the back, the Dallas fire department is here to use the jaws of life to open the ambulance. Braun crawls away and refuses medical help. Angle is STUNNED as Strowman walks away to applause. If they didn't do this for the sake of a double turn, I have officially lost the ability to understand this company. That was every possible sign of a Strowman face turn and Reigns, who lost and ATTEMPTED TO MURDER STROWMAN, is now about as heelish as you can get.

We recap Brock Lesnar vs. Samoa Joe. Samoa Joe became #1 contender last month and has showed that he's not afraid of Lesnar, even nearly choking him out at one point. Lesnar has shown no signs of being afraid of Joe and laughed at him for even trying. Tonight it's going to be a fight.

#### Universal Title: Samoa Joe vs. Brock Lesnar

Lesnar is defending and Joe's music hits at 10:51pm. Joe jumps him during the Big Match Intros and they head outside with Lesnar being Rock

Bottomed through the table. The bell hasn't rung yet and Lesnar is dragging himself inside. Joe enziguris him in the corner and starts laying in the headbutts. Lesnar can't overpower him and Joe hammers away in the corner. He can't get the full Koquina Clutch in though and Lesnar sends him into the buckle for the break.

There's the first German suplex, followed by the second and third but Joe kicks him low for the break. Another Rock Bottom gives Joe two but he still can't get the Clutch. A weak version of the Clutch goes on until Lesnar escapes with a side slam. Lesnar charges into the post, only to slip between Joe's legs and turn on the German suplexes again. We hit the sixth but Joe slips out of the F5 and puts on the Clutch. Lesnar grabs the ropes but the referee casually lets it stay on. Brock is turning purple but he powers up into the F5 to retain at 6:29.

**Rating:** B+. THIS is what I've been wanting from Lesnar for a long time. Joe got in some serious offense and beat on Lesnar for a good chunk of that match. This was FAR from what we had to sit through with Lesnar just wrecking people as he was put to the test and caught Joe in the end. I had a great time with this and it was certainly acceptable rather than having Lesnar destroy him. Very good match and a big relief.

Joe glares at Lesnar with the announcers emphasizing that Joe got caught and Lesnar was in big trouble to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. The two main events are enough to carry it but SWEET GOODNESS the rest of this show was weak. The Tag Team Title match felt like it went on for longer than ever, Banks vs. Bliss was there for the sake of setting up a rematch, Bray vs. Seth was exactly what you would expect and Miz vs. Ambrose is likely continuing for no logical reason.

That being said, this show was the modern day In Your House: a lot of nothing and a major match on the end to draw the fans. It's certainly not terrible but there's no hiding the fact that it's a pit stop on the way to Brooklyn for Summerslam. That's not a bad thing and the fact that it's the same price at Wrestlemania makes up for a lot of it. Check out the main event but that's all you really need to see.

Results

Bray Wyatt b. Seth Rollins – Sister Abigail

Big Cass b. Enzo Amore – Big boot

Cesaro/Sheamus b. Hardys 4-3

Sasha Banks b. Alexa Bliss via countout

Miz b. Dean Ambrose – Skull Crushing Finale

Braun Strowman b. Roman Reigns – Strowman shut Reigns in the ambulance

Heath Slater b. Curt Hawkins – Unknown

Brock Lesnar b. Samoa Joe – F5

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## Pick the Summerslam Redo

Usual stuff: I'll be redoing both the 2016 edition and one other of your choosing. Whichever one gets the most votes in whatever arbitrary space of time I decide on wins. 1998,

2002, 2011 and 2015 are ineligible as I've done them recently. You can vote in the comments.

KB

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# Smackdown – February 6, 2003: Ignore the Man and LOOK AT THE TONGUE!

## Smackdown

Date: February 6, 2003

Location: First Union Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

No Way Out is creeping closer and it's pretty clear that Hulk Hogan vs. the Rock is the main event, even if the big match on the horizon is Hogan vs. Vince McMahon. Other than that though we have Team Angle gearing up to face Los Guerreros for the Tag Team Titles, which should be a lot of fun. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

There's a crane in the arena and a big gift from Big Show, which has Undertaker's name on it. Last time I remember seeing one of those things it was Cactus Jack so hopefully it's more of the same.

## Rey Mysterio vs. Jamie Noble

Mysterio looks at the package on the way in. Is your name Undertaker Rey? Then why are you looking at it? Quit being greedy. Jamie does the same but that's more acceptable since he's a poor West Virginian and didn't

get many presents growing up. They run the ropes before awkwardly colliding with Jamie getting the better of it. A gutbuster gives Jamie two and we hit an early abdominal stretch.

Rey pops up and hits a spinning springboard crossbody for two of his own. Nidia pulls Rey off the apron but Rey is right back up for the 619 a few seconds later. That's broken up by Nidia as well but an enziguri sets up the double 619 on both villains. Tazz: "TWELVE THIRTY EIGHT!" The West Coast Pop puts Jamie away.

**Rating:** D+. Just a match here as Rey gets some momentum back after getting crushed by A-Train. It would seem that they're saving his Cruiserweight Title win for a major moment, though putting him in that nothing division would seem like a huge downgrade. The title can barely get five minutes a week and we're supposed to buy Rey, who was going toe to toe with Angle just a few weeks ago, not being able to beat some of the talent down there?

Rock joins us via satellite and rips on Philadelphia and its cheese steaks before saying it's because he's lactose intolerant. He'll take some Tampa Bay Tofu instead (Tampa recently eliminated the Philadelphia Eagles from the NFL Playoffs) but first let's hear them chanting his names. They boo instead, because Rock is one of the best heels in wrestling when he wants to be.

Rock is cool with being booed because he knows he can electrify like no other. After mentioning Eagles quarterback Donovan McNabb, Rock says there's one person Philadelphia never turned on: Hulk Hogan. After talking about a phone number Hogan can call to get a whipping, Rock wraps it up. This is still tweener stuff but when Rock turns on the full on heel push, it's going to be amazing.

### Rikishi vs. Nunzio

Nunzio goes straight after him to start and gets superkicked for his efforts. The running splash in the corner sets up the Rump Shaker for the fast pin. Squash.

Rikishi starts dancing but Nunzio says cut it out because he's got



friends. As I've said time after time: stop trying to start angles with people who just got beat in a minute and a half. It makes it really hard to care and I don't know why wrestling companies think it's a good idea.

Here's Heyman to order the gift brought to the ring. Post break Heyman says Big Show isn't here tonight but he'd like Undertaker to come out here and get his gift. Undertaker comes out and Heyman bails, leaving the gift to be opened to reveal...Brother Love. With the annoying voice sounding exactly the same, Love talks about a message of forgiveness to Big Show. Love brings up their history and says if Undertaker remembers anything from their original time together. Undertaker chokeslams and Tombstones him in short order. Good little cameo here and it didn't overstay its welcome as so many others do.

Hogan is here and runs into Brock Lesnar, who he's all cool with all of a sudden.

#### Matt Hardy vs. Billy Kidman

Non-title though Matt has a TV/DVD player in his car and usually exceeds the speed limit. Kidman goes after Shannon Moore and walks into an early Side Effect. A legdrop gets two but Kidman is back up with a dropkick and a Sky High for two of his own. Kidman heads up top but dives into a Twist of Fate attempt, only to counter it into a rollup for the pin on Hardy. Too short to rate but energetic while it lasted.

Matt promises to drop ten pounds and take Kidman's most cherished possession. Torrie Wilson?

Kurt Angle tells his team to fly like an eagle. Kurt: "A real eagle. Not the Philadelphia Eagles." We get the idea already.

#### Tag Team Titles: Los Guerreros vs. Team Angle

Eddie and Chavo are defending and it's just Heyman with Team Angle instead of Kurt. Chavo and Benjamin start things off with the former getting in way over his head in a technical sequence. It's off to Eddie instead and a dropkick knocks Haas down so Chavo can get two.

Benjamin comes back in and eats a clothesline before getting choked in

the corner. Charlie gets drawn in so the champs can crotch Benjamin against the post, bugging Shelton's eyes out of his head. Shelton finally fights out of a chinlock and takes Eddie into the corner, only to have Eddie whipped into Chavo for a double knockdown. Another collision sends Chavo outside in a heap and we take a break.

Back with Chavo in trouble and Haas dropping some rapid fire elbows for two. The jump over Haas onto Chavo's back gives Shelton two more but Eddie breaks up a second attempt. Everything breaks down and Chavo DDTs both champions, allowing the hot tag to Eddie. Three Amigos get two on Charlie and it's an old school Powerplex with Shelton making a save. Charlie German suplexes Eddie but gets caught in a sunset bomb for another near fall. Eddie shoves Shelton off the top and hits the frog splash but Benjamin isn't legal. The confusion lets Charlie roll Eddie up for the pin and the titles.

**Rating:** B. I rather like the fact that Team Angle won the belts clean. Yeah it was a bit of a confusing ending but it was completely within the rules as Eddie was the one covering the wrong man. Chavo and Eddie's antics alone will keep them over so Team Angle can get a lot more out of the titles, especially since they're so new.

Heyman seems more excited than the new champions.

Here's Hogan to respond to Rock but before his music even quits playing though, Rock comes on screen to interrupt again. Hogan calls Rock out for not being here in Philadelphia but Rock tells him to get to the WELL LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING BROTHER because everything else is just meaningless.

Hogan talks about Rock being lucky that he's nowhere near Philadelphia but hang on again. It turns out that Rock has to leave because the tofu is ready. Hogan needs to get to the point already but Rock wants Hulk to remind him to give him a beating at No Way Out, if you smell (Rock: "LOOK AT THE TONGUE! LOOK AT THE TONGUE!") what he's cooking.

Rock leaves so Hogan goes on a rant about Vince thinking Hulkamania is on life support because he's scared to face Hulk one on one. He dubs Rock as the Rock-a-Jabroni (egads) and promises that the millions and millions of

Hulkamaniacs are going to run wild on Rock at No Way Out. As you might have guessed, Rock was entertaining because he was mixing things up while Hogan was one of the two same promos he's cut for about five years at this point.

The locker room is watching Hogan talk in the back when Sean O'Haire comes in to talk to Brian Kendrick. O'Haire thinks Kendrick should streak to get attention and Brian thinks it's a good idea. He puts on a scarf (reference to a commercial at the time) and thankfully we go to a break.

#### A-Train vs. Shannon Moore

Kendrick runs in without anything on, dances around, runs away from the referee and sprints through the crowd. A-Train wins in about forty five seconds with the Train Wreck.

Kendrick comes back until referees corner him, only to have Brian dive underneath the ring and escape to the back.

During the break, Kendrick ran into Stephanie's office so size jokes can be made. As usual, there was no reason to have Stephanie here other than for the sake of her getting screen time.

Here's John Cena to call out Lesnar for no logical reason. Cena insults Lesnar's intelligence and says Brock can have the next big thing if Cena takes his pants off.

Benoit talks about how amazing the ovation he received in Boston was, only to have Angle come in. Angle says the title and gold medal are his wife and children so no one is taking them away.

#### Chris Benoit vs. Kurt Angle

Angle's wife isn't on the line. Benoit armdrags him into an armbar and gets two off a snap suplex. Angle sends Chris outside and Heyman actually runs him over in a rare sight. Back in and we hit a chinlock with a bodyscissors. A belly to back suplex gets two but Benoit makes a quick comeback with a clothesline and backdrop. The Crossface goes on but Angle reverses into a cradle to escape.

The Angle Slam is countered into a Crossface on the other arm as the crowd is really not reacting to any of this. Angle can't use an ankle lock to escape but he gets to the ropes for a break. Kurt is back up with a buckle bomb of all things, only to get thrown down with a release German suplex. A bloody Benoit gets two but misses the Swan Dive to get us back to even. Benoit's headlock is countered into the Angle Slam for the VERY sudden pin. Maybe they went home fast because of the cut?

**Rating:** B. Well that was quick. The match ran about ten minutes and felt like it needed another five when it just ended. Benoit certainly didn't have the same fire out there but you're only going to get so much with a limited time on a run of the mill TV show. Even on a bad night these two are going to be good though, so it's hard to complain much.

Post match Team Angle comes in, only to have Edge and Lesnar make the save to end the show. Sounds like a six man.

**Overall Rating:** C+. The two matches involving Kurt/Team Angle were both good but it's a barren wasteland outside of them. The only things coming into my mind are Kendrick streaking, Matt needing to lose weight and Rock shouting LOOK AT THE TONGUE. As has been mentioned many times, this show (and its counterpart) really need something for the midcard to do and it's becoming clear that there was no need to get rid of the Intercontinental and US Titles. Just bring them back already and let the show improve because of it. The good matches carry this but good night it would have been bad without them.

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# 205 Live – July 4, 2017: Bad Old American Timing

## 205 Live

Date: July 4, 2017

Location: Talking Stick Resort Arena, Phoenix, Arizona

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Corey Graves

We're in the desert this week as the build towards Neville vs. Akira Tozawa for the Cruiserweight Title continues. It's hard to say what else we might be getting on this show, but there's a good chance that it's going to be more of Cedric Alexander vs. Noam Dar in the feud that won't die. Let's get to it.

Titus O'Neil is in the back talking to Akira Tozawa, who is over in Japan training. O'Neil runs into Ariya Daivari and Mustafa Ali, who he recruits and promises not to hit. Titus certainly has some great energy and he's a better fit as a manager than a horrible manager.

Opening sequence.

Announcers chat for a bit.

Here's Titus for a chat, including a clear podium and pictures of both Tozawa and Neville. Titus praises Neville but knows he'll be no match for the Power of Tozawa. This brings Neville out and we see the ending to last night's show with Braun Strowman destroying both Titus and Apollo Crews. Neville is cut off by a YOU'RE NOT STROWMAN chant but suggests that Titus take a seat and watch what happens when he's mad at someone.

Neville vs. Lince Dorado

Non-title and Titus sits in on commentary. There's something amusing about Dorado making his entrance while the ring crew takes the big carpet to the back. Neville powers him down to the mat to start but Dorado starts to flip around, including escaping a German suplex. A monkey flip drops Neville again as Joseph is now wearing Titus' sunglasses and hat. Neville gets pulled out to the floor in a heap for a hurricanrana off the apron but Dorado is sent knees first into the steps. Back in and Neville powerbombs him into the Rings of Saturn for the tap at 3:59.

**Rating:** C-. Just a squash here but I get one heck of a kick out of watching Neville just mauling people. Dorado isn't going to lose anything by getting beaten down by Neville, who basically does this to everyone. Whenever someone finally takes the title off of Neville, it's going to be a huge deal and it's because of matches like this one where Neville looks great.

TJP has requested a match with Rich Swann to get back on track with some friendly competition. He seems to be turning back to the good side.

#### Jack Gallagher vs. Tony Nese

Nese poses at him to start and Gallagher makes the questionable choice to accept a test of strength. With that going nowhere, Jack takes him down for about five straight rolling crucifixes for the same number of near falls. Nese finally sends him hard into the ropes and hammers away to really take over. Jack gets tied in the Tree of Woe so Nese lays on his back and kicks away while doing situps at the same time. Sounds like the evolution of Scott Steiner.

Back up and Nese grabs a fireman's carry but bends Jack around his neck to grasp his hands, kind of like a reverse torture rack. Jack slips down and tries a cross armbreaker but Nese powers out again. Nese tries something like a Lionsault but tweaks his knee on the landing (Is anyone else getting tired of that?), setting up the headbutt and running dropkick to give Gallagher the pin at 6:09.

**Rating:** C. They had a story here with Nese getting a bit too flashy for the sake of showing off, allowing Gallagher to catch him in the end. All Gallagher needed was a single opening to get the win, which should help

keep him strong in the feud with Brian Kendrick. That has some potential, especially after how good the feud with Tozawa was.

Post match here's Kendrick on screen, this time dressed like a stereotypical Revolutionary War Era Englishman. Kendrick lists off some dates in the American Revolution, all of which involve the English losing. Brian promises to rid 205 Live of the British scourge. Was this really the right idea on THE FOURTH OF JULY? The USA chants while the good guy, from England, is in the ring would suggest otherwise.

We look back at Cedric Alexander beating Noam Dar (yet AGAIN) last night on Raw.

Dar is getting his neck looked at and is told to keep icing it. Alicia Fox comes in and Dar talks about wanting the Cruiserweight Title. That is NOT cool with Fox who wants Dar to deal with Cedric. This better get some votes for Worst Feud of the Year because it's lasting longer and is more unpleasant than a bad fungus.

#### TJP vs. Rich Swann

They grapple to start with TJP grabbing a wristlock but getting taken down into an armbar. That's countered into a headscissors on the mat, only to have Swann pop up and flip over TJP for a running dropkick. The threat of a dive to the floor sends TJP running and Swann dabs a bit.

Swann misses a charge though and crashes out to the floor for a nine count, followed by an armbar back inside. Rich gets kicked down for trying a comeback as Joseph keeps calling TJP Perkins. If that's allowed, why not just call him TJ Perkins? I'm going to assume it's something stupid and move on. We hit a Muta Lock on Swann until a rope is grabbed, meaning it's time for the real comeback.

Rolling Thunder and a modified Michinoku Driver get two each but TJP is right back with a springboard forearm into a nipup. That just earns him a spinning kick to the head (Swann's former finisher) but TJP pops right back up with the double chickenwing gutbuster for a near fall of his own. The kneebar is broken up so it's a double kick to the head to drop both guys. TJP's Detonation Kick is countered and we hit a pinfall reversal

sequence with Swann reversing a sunset flip into a cradle for the pin at 12:17.

**Rating:** B. This was the kind of longer wrestling match you don't get often enough. They were playing up the idea that they knew each other so well and Swann just caught him in the end instead of really beating him. It's nice to see Swann getting a win here to get himself back on track, even if it's just in the short term.

They shake hands to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B-. Sometimes you need an episode that barely focuses on the title, which is what happened here. Neville had a squash but Tozawa wasn't around and the champion's match was by far the shortest match of the night. There was also a good main event and that makes for an entertaining hour, though the Cedric vs. Dar stuff needs to crawl in a fire somewhere soon.

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