

Smackdown – September 24, 2015: Have Fun But Don't Watch

Smackdown

Date: September 24, 2015

Location: American Bank Center, Corpus Christi, Texas

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Rich Brennan, Booker T.

We're getting closer to Kane vs. Rollins, likely inside the Cell, as they blow off their feud from months ago on a show where the other Cell match is the real main event. Then again, given that the World Champion is coming off two losses in two days (though he did beat a 56 year old), maybe it's better that he isn't main eventing. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the ending to Night of Champions and Kane's personality shift on Raw. I'm kind of shocked but the Kane stuff is entertaining me.

Here's a very enthusiastic Kane in the ring. He's back because the WWE is on fire right now and needs someone with his administrative assistance. First up, he makes Rusev/Kevin Owens vs. Dolph Ziggler/Ryback as well as Roman Reigns vs. Luke Harper with associated family members barred from ringside.

This brings out Rollins who wants Kane to cut out the nonsense. Kane talks about his training in conflict resolution and hopes to have a healthy dialogue to solve these issues. Seth doesn't buy it and asks about Kane attacking him twice. Just like on Monday, Kane has no idea what Seth is talking about.

Then he switches to serious and talks about being a corporate worker, not a demon who wants to inflict incredible pain and punishment upon him until he begs for mercy. Seth thinks Kane needs help and Kane is willing to take it under advisement. One last thing: Rollins is facing Dean Ambrose in the main event. Ok Rollins is guaranteed to win there right?

Ambrose barely ever beats...Dean is going to pin Rollins again isn't he?

Booker thinks Kane has multiple personalities but the old trickster Lawler thinks it's a ruse.

Roman Reigns vs. Luke Harper

The Wyatts and Ambrose are banned from ringside. These two have fought each other about once every two weeks since late July. Both guys try powerbombs in the first ten seconds and head out to the floor. Harper gets sent into the barricade and then the announcers' table.

Back in and Harper elbows out of a Samoan drop, only to have Reigns power him up on the second attempt. So much for Reigns selling for more than five seconds. There are the ten clotheslines in the corner and they head outside again. Harper nails a superkick followed by the sitout powerbomb, only to have Roman come back with the Superman Punch and spear for the pin at 3:59.

Rating: D+. So we're now at the point where Reigns can beat Harper in under four minutes. Therefore, why would I want to see them fight again? To be fair I could have asked that question before as these two have fought what seems like a hundred times this year alone, but they had a good match or two so why not try it twenty times?

New Day vs. Neville/Lucha Dragons

Before the match, New Day says the Dudleyz are gone after Madison Square Garden and the tables will be saved. Neville kicks Kofi to start and throws Kalisto onto him for a seated senton. All three members of New Day come in and get stared down to the floor as we take a break less than forty seconds into the match. Back with Kalisto in trouble and getting stomped down in the corner as Woods drops to the floor for some tromboning.

Kalisto backdrops Kofi to the floor and makes the tag off to Cara for a springboard moonsault and elbow to Xavier's jaw. New Day is all sent to the floor, allowing Neville and Kalisto to moonsault from the top as Cara adds a suicide dive. That looked awesome. Back in and Kofi grabs

Kalisto's leg, allowing Woods to add a running knee to the head for the pin at 7:33.

Rating: C-. The match was fun while it lasted but they really needed a break in a seven and a half minute match? I like the idea of some trios teams running around as it's not like they have anything to do on their own or in a tag team. If the Dragons aren't going to get a run in the tag team scene, let them hang out with Neville and do cool dives.

Cesaro vs. Bo Dallas

During Cesaro's entrance, we see clips of Big Show squashing him on Monday to make sure you know you're about to watch a loser. Dallas talks about surviving Suplex City and suggests Cesaro Bo-lieve to get over his trip to Big Show Boulevard. Cesaro does four straight nips to escape a wristlock before wrapping his legs around Bo's waist and rolling him around the ring. Back up and Cesaro charges into an elbow in the corner and gets forearmed in the back.

Dallas pulls him to the apron and drops Cesaro back first across the apron. A chinlock doesn't have much effect so Dallas starts working on the back again. Booker thinks the back injury here could be career ending. If jobbing to Big Show twice in a week didn't kill it already, I don't think a few forearms to the back are going to do it. Back up and Cesaro grabs his arm trap small package for the pin at 4:26.

Rating: D+. Another short match here but it's nice to see Cesaro win again, even if it's to someone like Dallas. Thinking of Cesaro jobbing to Big Show twice in a row to build up what's likely going to be a five minute match with Lesnar doing the exact same thing he's done to Big Show every time they've fought makes my head hurt but that's life in WWE for you.

We recap Charlotte winning the title on Sunday.

Here are Charlotte and Becky Lynch with something to say. Lawler doesn't seem to know why Paige isn't with them. Charlotte talks about how perfect the last week has been for her but Paige comes out to interrupt. Paige has never been a team player and doesn't know what came over her. She's

glad Charlotte won the title but was hoping that she was in this spot. Paige thinks she deserves some recognition for starting the Divas Revolution.

Charlotte agrees and here's Natalya to interrupt. She thinks the division is as good as it's ever been before but Paige thinks Natalya is a crazy cat lady. Paige knows she's better than Natalya and thinks Natalya let the Revolution pass her by. Now she's trying to latch on to these younger Divas to keep herself relevant. Paige slaps her in the face and walks away. This has some potential, but none of it matters if they're going to just go back to the Bellas in three months.

Kevin Owens/Rusev vs. Ryback/Dolph Ziggler

Ever the good coward, Owens tags out before having to face Ryback. Rusev demands Ziggler come in and stomps him into the corner. A dropkick gives Dolph a breather but he walks into a swinging Rock Bottom for two. Rusev: "I beat you Dolph! Now he's going to beat you!" Owens comes in for a few stomps before it's back to Rusev, who is quickly caught in the running DDT as we take a break.

Back with Owens slapping Dolph in a chinlock. Ziggler's running DDT doesn't work on Owens as Kevin throws him down and drops a backsplash. More heavy stomping gets two for Rusev before it's off to Rusev for more of the same. Ziggler slams both heels and makes the big diving tag to Ryback. Rusev's superkick is countered into a spinebuster but Owens offers a distraction, allowing Rusev to hit the superkick. Owens grabs the title and walks out, allowing Dolph to superkick Rusev into the Shell Shock for the pin at 12:45.

Rating: C-. Remember when beating Rusev was a big deal? Or when there wasn't a large stable to be made out of people who use superkicks? The one positive thing I remember here is the days when the midcard was strong and how we're getting closer to having one here. There's been a lot of attention given to the midcard feuds lately and the extra effort is paying off. It's not great or anything, but it's WAY better than it was a few years ago.

Video on Big Show to hype up Madison Square Garden.

The Dudleyz are talking strategy when Renee Young comes in to ask them about New Day. Bubba thinks New Day doesn't act like champions and the titles are all that matter. Notice that Bubba makes sure to get in the date of the show instead of just saying it's in so and so many days or a week from Saturday.

It's a definitive date instead of some point that might change depending on when you're watching the show. That's the old school way of doing things and I wish it was the more common way now. The Prime Time Players come in to say they want a shot after the Dudleyz win the belts. Bubba and D-Von aren't pleased but they shake the Players' hands.

Rollins promises to take care of Ambrose and Kane.

Dean Ambrose vs. Seth Rollins

Non-title. Dean starts in on a wristlock before grabbing the champ's head. Seth comes back with choking in the corner as they're in first gear so far. A dropkick puts Seth on the floor and we take another early break. Back with Seth putting on a chinlock until Dean powers up and sends Rollins outside. The suicide dive is blocked though and Seth's top rope knee to the head gets two.

Ambrose comes back again with some chops but the tornado DDT is countered, followed by the low superkick for two. Booker: "Ask me what I think about Dean Ambrose." Rich: "What do you think about Dean Ambrose?" Booker: "He's a fighter." Thanks Book. Dean hits his rebound lariat (called the Lunatic Lariat) and a bunch of strikes followed by a butterfly superplex of all things for two. Dean comes up holding his leg but he's still able to start a nice pinfall reversal sequence for a bunch of near falls.

A backdrop puts the champ on the floor and now Ambrose's suicide dive connects. Dean gets two off a fisherman's suplex (he's mixing it up tonight) but Seth comes back with an enziguri to put both guys down. Seth is up first with the Sling Blade but the Pedigree is broken up. Instead a buckle bomb puts Dean down but Kane's pyro goes off, allowing Dean to grab a rollup for the pin at 17:33.

Rating: B-. The WWE World Heavyweight Champion has lost three times in five days. TV ratings are sinking like a stone and WWE's solution is to treat the World Champion the same way they used to treat the midcard titles. This is supposed to be the guy that is going to be getting the big face turn and push? The guy who keeps losing over and over again? But hey, did you see HHH and Stephanie dancing a few weeks ago and then getting to be all tough with Kane on Monday? Man they're awesome. Finally, anyone want to bet that this win for Ambrose goes nowhere? Just let it be a countout or DQ and it's the same thing.

Rollins grabs the mic and asks if Kane knows who he is. He hurt Sting at Night of Champions and Seth can do the same thing to Kane.

Overall Rating: C. This is a show where the wrestling was fine but the booking really holds it back. On the surface, it looks like there's some good stuff here. The midcard is looking stronger, New Day continues to be hilarious, Ambrose looks like he's going to get a push, Reigns looks like he's going somewhere over the Wyatts for a change and Cesaro looks primed for a push. That's what you would think if you just watched this show. Here's what's likely going to happen.

The midcard will likely do the exact same stuff it has done in the past because the writers can't maintain any stories. New Day will continue to be hilarious. Ambrose's win will mean nothing. Reigns will keep feuding with the Wyatts for another three months. Cesaro will be built up and fed to someone who doesn't need the push for a match that is never in doubt for a second.

In other words, WWE is fun if you watch once in awhile and don't follow it long term. Once you start getting your hopes up for something, they're going to come crashing down around you when you realize that WWE would rather spin its wheels and make sure that people don't get too popular for reasons I still can't comprehend. Everyone not named Cena winds up on equal footing and the numbers keep going down because there's no one worth cheering for. This was a totally watchable stand alone episode but it's nothing more than that.

Results

Roman Reigns b. Luke Harper – Spear

New Day b. Neville/Lucha Dragons – Running knee to Kalisto

Cesaro b. Bo Dallas – Arm trap small package

Dolph Ziggler/Ryback b. Rusev/Kevin Owens – Shell Shock to Rusev

Dean Ambrose b. Seth Rollins – Rollup

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Monday Night Raw – September 21, 2015: Running On Empty Again

Monday Night Raw

Date: September 21, 2015

Location: Laredo Energy Arena, Laredo, Texas

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

It's the night after Night of Champions and it seems that we're heading for Kane vs. Rollins for the World Title at Hell in a Cell. On the same

show we'll be seeing Undertaker vs. Brock Lesnar for the last time in a match that was a potential Wrestlemania headliner. As for tonight, there's also a chance we'll see the return of the US Open Challenge as John Cena regained the US Title last night. Let's get to it.

We open with the Wyatts instead of the traditional recap. Bray tried to warn Roman Reigns with words but he just didn't speak loudly enough. Then he tried to warn Roman with actions but he just didn't hit hard enough. Then last night he choked the golden idol by the throat and showed that he was right about everyone falling down.

Cue Reigns to say he wants to finish this with Bray, one on one, right now. This doesn't even need to be a match because they can just have a fight. Harper and Strowman head to the floor and Bray is ready to fight. Reigns takes over with right hands and the corner clotheslines, followed by the Superman Punch.

This brings Strowman and Harper back in but Ambrose charges out, runs by Strowman in a smart move, and fights Harper. A pair of suicide dives have almost no effect on Braun but Reigns gets back up. Unfortunately so does Bray and the Wyatts' numbers game takes over. This brings out Randy Orton to even things up and the combined forces of a bunch of right hands, a missile dropkick and the Superman Punch finally knock Strowman to the floor, though never off his feet. How nice was it to open with a fight and a return instead of a lot of talking that will only be repeated 95 times later in the night?

We recap Rollins' two title defenses from last night, as well as Sheamus not being able to cash in due to masked Kane's return.

Rollins comes in to the Authority's office and finds a very perky Corporate Kane. The monster says he's back and asks if Seth got the e-mail. The Authority isn't here yet but Kane has arranged for Seth to have his rematch for the US Title tonight. This was the most entertaining Kane has been since HELL NO.

Lucha Dragons/Neville vs. Ascension/Stardust

Rematch from last night's pre-show. Sin Cara and Konor starts with Cara

slipping off the top on a springboard attempt. It was just a slip and not a horrible botch but it looked bad. After some stomps from the villains it's time for a chinlock from Konor. Stardust comes in for a cartwheel, allowing the tag off to Neville. Viktor tries to break up a Red Arrow attempt like he did last night but Neville jumps over him, only to get Disaster kicked out to the floor as we take a break.

Back with Neville in the wrong corner with Konor being launched at him for two. Off to the chinlockery for a bit before Stardust puts Neville into an inverted Gory Stretch of all things. Neville finally kicks Konor in the head and makes the tag off to Kalisto. Everything breaks down with Cara running back in for a suicide dive on Konor. Stardust gets dropkicked to the floor and the Salida Del Sol pins Viktor at 10:32.

Rating: C-. The botches really hurt things here and dragged down what could have been a fun six man tag. Sometimes things can get dicey when you try to move too fast. This could have been a lot worse but the Cara botch set the stage for the match. I'm not sure where the feud goes from here, but maybe they both add a fourth for some Survivor Series action.

The limping Rollins comes up to the Authority to ask what they're thinking about reinstating Kane. They have no idea what he's talking about, but apparently Kane was allowed to make Cena vs. Rollins again tonight.

Stills of Kevin Owens winning the Intercontinental Title last night.

Ryback vs. Bo Dallas

Owens comes out to do commentary. Bo congratulates Kevin on his win and is thrown across the ring by Ryback. Dallas gets shoved down and a suplex gets two. Cole asks about Owens raking Ryback's eyes to win the title last night. Owens tells Cole not to believe everything he reads on the internet. Dallas comes back with a kick to the face and a chinlock but Ryback shrugs him off. The Meat Hook and Shell Shock put Dallas away at 3:40.

Rating: D. Just a plot device here and another good use of a jobber. I'm fine with Dallas losing because his character is the kind of person who

can pop right back up with a single obnoxious promo. Owens vs. Ryback is a feud that has potential if they go somewhere, which hopefully seems to be a possibility.

Owens goes after Ryback post match but has to run away from a Shell Shock attempt.

Here's Ric Flair to talk about how proud of a father he is. The fans start chanting THANK YOU RIC but Flair quickly thanks the fans to get this back on Charlotte. The proudest moment of his life wasn't all his World Titles but rather last night when his daughter won her first Divas Championship. This brings out Team PCB to celebrate. Charlotte has to fight back tears because she's a Flair.

She's fought a long way to get here and gained two best friends on the way. Becky makes her laugh every day and Paige is the woman whose footsteps she followed in. Paige takes the mic and says that this is all because of her. Yeah Charlotte won the title last night but Paige won it on her first night. The first time Charlotte defends the title, the Bellas will win it back and everything goes back to normal.

There is no Divas Revolution because Becky is irrelevant, Charlotte is just a placeholder and Team Bad is all flash and no substance. Then you have Summer Rae and Lana who are trying to figure out who to climb on top of next. There's Nattie, who doesn't seem like she works here anymore.

Everyone knows why the Bellas are where they are (implying relationships with Cena and Bryan but not actually saying it because Nikki and Cena aren't a thing outside of Total Divas). Paige says that Charlotte is where she is because of her old man and walks off. Cue the Bellas with Nikki saying that Charlotte is going to lose because she can't handle the pressure of being Divas Champion. The Bellas really should have been saved for later because the turn didn't get the chance to sink in but it still worked very well.

Brie Bella vs. Charlotte

Non-title. Brie starts fast with a middle rope dropkick and knocks the champ to the floor. The bad knee from last night gets sent into the steps

and Charlotte is in early trouble. There's a dragon screw leg whip followed by a leg lock as Becky plays cheerleader. A dropkick to the ribs gets two and a chop block puts Charlotte back down again. Off to a half crab for a bit until Charlotte comes up with an enziguri. The neckbreaker and spear set up the Figure Eight to make Brie tap at 6:24.

Rating: D+. Can someone explain the logic of having Charlotte on defense for about 90% of her title win and first match as champion? I mean, she's considered awesome for her abilities on offense and athleticism so you have her on the mat holding her knee most of the time? Brie is the less talented Bella, which really should tell you most of what you need to know about this match.

Sheamus vs. Mark Henry

Henry runs him over to start and it's time for a breather on the floor. A clothesline does the same but Sheamus comes back with the ten forearms. Mark breaks it up at about six or seven but the Brogue Kick puts Mark away at 2:26.

Sheamus says it's a matter of time until he's World Champion.

The Authority comes in to see Kane. Instead of asking why they waited an hour to come talk to him, they ask why they didn't hear from him since he got hurt. Kane brushes it off and says he wanted to make a big impact tonight by making Cena vs. Rollins for the US Title. Stephanie wants Kane to give it back and holds her hand out. Kane high fives her but Stephanie wants the mask. The mask is gone from its case and Kane accuses Stephanie of losing it. Kane is happy to help her look for it though and smiles a lot.

Natalya comes up to see Paige and says Paige isn't the only one who has been frustrated. The only person standing in Paige's way has been Paige herself.

New Day/Rusev vs. Dolph Ziggler/Dudley Boyz

Before the match, Woods holds up a piece of table in a bag which was apparently removed from his.....shall we say nether region. Kofi asks how

many tables must be destroyed. Big E. suggests building a wall around Dudleyville to keep those Dudleys away from our people, our values, and our tables. Kofi and Ziggy get things going with Kingston grabbing a top wristlock. Kofi's leapfrogs set up a monkey flip but Dolph lands on his feet.

Off to D-Von for a legdrop and right hands, followed by the belly to back neckbreaker on Big E. Rusev scampers to the floor and we take a break. We come back with Ziggy dropkicking Big E. but having to scare Woods off the apron, allowing E. to score with a clothesline. Rusev stomps away and it's time for the rotating stomps, complete with trombone accompaniment.

Rusev comes in so Xavier plays Rusev's theme music as we hit the chinlock on Ziggy. A back elbow to the jaw drops Ziggy (Woods: "BULGARIAN TRICEP MEAT! WHY DOES ZIGGLER HAVE ZIPPERS AND NO POCKETS???") and Big E. comes in for an abdominal stretch. Kofi breaks up the hot tag attempt and dropkicks Kofi down for two. It's back to Rusev for choking as he shouts that Lana is his.

The running DDT finally allows a diving tag to Bubba and everything breaks down. A big boot puts E. down and it's off to Ray vs. Rusev. Well for all of five seconds as D-Von comes in for a double suplex, followed by Dolph playing D-Von in What's Up. Ziggy superkicks the trombone out of Woods' hands (thankfully Summer makes the catch) but turns into a superkick from Rusev for the pin at 14:12.

Rating: B-. Oh man Woods gets better every week. This is what I've been talking about with comedy in wrestling: you can tell that these guys have been told to go out there and do whatever they think is funny and they're running with it. It's a different style than what WWE decides is funny and it makes for something much more entertaining. The day that trombone (seriously, they got a trombone over. I can't get past that.) gets broken, which better not be for at least another four months, is going to be glorious.

We recap Kane's odd antics throughout the night.

Natalya vs. Naomi

Both girls flip up to their feet to start until Naomi kicks Natalya in the face for two. We hit an early chinlock as Paige is shown watching in the back. Back up and Natalya makes her comeback, including a discus lariat (Me: "JBL is going to say shades of her daddy." JBL: "SHADES OF HER DADDY!") but a Sasha distraction lets the Rear View end Natalya at 3:46.

Rating: D. I'm so glad we got Natalya back for this mess. There's a chance this leads to her teaming with Paige under their common issue of being held back. It's worked for less talented people before so why not these two also. The match was nothing special but it's cool to see at least one team sticking around.

Rollins asks the Authority about the plan for tonight. HHH gets all serious and tells Seth to worry about Cena because they'll take care of Kane. This has been another moment where HHH's emotions change on a dime and it's considered totally normal.

Cesaro vs. Big Show

Rematch from Smackdown which isn't important enough to mention. Cesaro gets chopped out of the air to start and runs him over with a shoulder. Show launches him across the ring as this is a total squash so far. The Final Cut sets up a chinlock until Show misses an elbow. Cesaro starts his comeback and breaks up the chokeslam. Show is knocked to the floor for a European uppercut, only to catch Cesaro's cross body off the announcers' table and drive Cesaro into the post. Back inside and Cesaro suplexes Show from the apron back inside, only to have Show KO Cesaro for the pin at 6:30.

Rating: D. I know WWE says they're making movies. This must be where they show the trailers over and over again (because this is the same ending as the Smackdown match) and then expect us to see a movie where we know the ending because it's a sequel to the wreck of last year's Royal Rumble and EVERY MATCH THESE SHOW AND LESNAR HAVE HAD IN LIKE TEN YEARS. Of course there was no one in the back that you could have take this loss instead of Cesaro too. No one. Not Swagger or anyone, who is even more like Lesnar than Cesaro. Typical WWE.

Post match Show says he's going to knock Lesnar out and pin him like he did in 2002. For some reason this takes like three minutes.

We recap the Wyatt Family/Orton/Ambrose/Reigns segment from earlier.

Harper says he hears Bray's voice in his head. Bray taught him to learn from his mistakes but Orton never learned that lesson. Strowman talks about skinning a snake and drinking its blood. Bray says Randy will fall like everyone else. It's amazing how much better this team is when Bray isn't losing every other week.

US Title: John Cena vs. Seth Rollins

Cena is defending. Rollins jumps the champ during the intros and gets an early two. Some right hands have Cena in trouble. Like, way more trouble than a sneak attack and some right hands should have him in. The Pedigree is countered and an enziguri gets two. Cena comes back with that big clothesline that he uses when he needs to make a comeback but the announcers are too busy talking about the Kane story to notice. Seth escapes the AA and scores with a DDT for two.

Back with Seth putting on a chinlock, followed by a shot to Cena's face. Cena comes back with the usual but Rollins bails to the floor after the Shuffle. John throws him back in but a superplex is broken up, allowing Rollins to get two off a low superkick. We hit the STF on Cena but he muscles his way up for the counter.

The Pedigree is countered with a catapult into the corner and Cena pulls him off the middle rope with an electric chair. They counter finisher attempts until the Buckle Bomb sets up a Falcon's Arrow for two on Cena. Cena grabs a quick STF but Rollins grabs a rope even faster. A Five Star Frog Splash gets two on Cena but he rolls through into the AA for the pin to retain at 15:38.

Rating: B. I would have had a lot more fun with this match if I hadn't seen it a day ago. Also if there was any sort of a chance that Cena was going to lose. Thirdly, was it really necessary to have the World Champion lose a second match clean in two days? I know it's Cena, but stop having that happen. Now let's get to the obvious Demon Kane moment.

Post match Corporate Kane pops up on screen and says everyone is coming for the title. People Rollins wouldn't even imagine. Like the people from his worst nightmares. Cue the demon Kane through a hole in the ring to drag Seth under. Yes they're REALLY doing this again.

Overall Rating: C+. This show started off with so much promise and then, as is way too often the case, it died about halfway through. Raw runs out of steam way too often these days and it really is just because of that third hour. The night after a pay per view is really rough because you're looking at six hours of TV in just over a day. It's too much and drains way too much out of the fans when they're asked to watch it. The first hour carries this show, but they need to find a way to make this three hour work, because the fans are going to go away more and more with this much TV time to sit through.

Results

Neville/Lucha Dragons b. Ascension/Stardust – Salida Del Sol to Viktor

Ryback b. Bo Dallas – Shell Shock

Charlotte b. Brie Bella – Figure Eight

Sheamus b. Mark Henry – Brogue Kick

New Day/Rusev b. Dolph Ziggler/Dudley Boyz – Superkick to Ziggler

Naomi b. Natalya – Rear View

Big Show b. Cesaro – KO Punch

John Cena b. Seth Rollins – Attitude Adjustment

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Night of Champions 2015: Night of People Really Overachieving

Night of Champions 2015

Date: September 20, 2015

Location: Toyota Center, Houston, Texas

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

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

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

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

Back with Viktor shouldering Kalisto into the corner to take over. Stardust comes in and works on the arm before it's back to Viktor, who

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

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

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

Intercontinental Title: Ryback vs. Kevin Owens

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

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

Rating: C+. Set the injury up, pay the injury off in the ending, give a

young guy a title. I have no complaints off this one and the match was fun in the process. Owens winning with an old school cheating tactic makes it even better. This was more fun than I was expecting and I'm very pleased with the result.

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

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

Rusev is livid at Summer.

Rusev vs. Dolph Ziggler

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

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

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

Rating: D+. WAY too long here and I lost interest about halfway through

at best. This feud is all about the drama and not the in ring action because we were supposed to have the mixed tag until Lana's wrist injury screwed everything up. Rusev getting pinned used to be a huge deal and now it's happened twice in a week.

Summer looks terrified.

Tag Team Titles: New Day vs. Dudley Boyz

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

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

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

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

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

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

Divas Title: Nikki Bella vs. Charlotte

Nikki is defending and can lose the title via DQ or countout. Charlotte takes her into the corner to start but a shoulder to the ribs puts Charlotte on the floor. She tweaks her knee on the landing though and Nikki has a target. A kick to the knee staggers Charlotte again and Nikki powerbombs her off the apron for a big thud. Back in and Nikki puts on a leg lock as the announcers thankfully acknowledge that the Women's Title and the Divas Title are two different titles with two different lineages.

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

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

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

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

The kickoff panel chats for a bit.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

US Title: John Cena vs. Seth Rollins

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

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

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

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

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

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

WWE World Heavyweight Title: Sting vs. Seth Rollins

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

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

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

Rating: B+. This was WAY better than it had any right to be with the ending making enough sense. I really didn't need to have Sting as the World Champion because, whether WWE wants to admit it or not, he's one of

the biggest stars ever and doesn't need this title to validate himself. Good match though as Sting pulls another rabbit out of his hat. Though hopefully not by the ears because that's just cruel.

Sheamus comes out immediately and it's on! Rollins misses a belt shot and Sheamus hits the Brogue Kick but here's Kane in the mask to chokeslam Rollins. Sheamus wants Kane to give him one more but Kane chokeslams Sheamus instead. A tombstone to Rollins ends the show. Yes seriously, it ends with Kane standing tall and likely setting up the title match inside the Cell.

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

Results

Kevin Owens b. Ryback – Rollup

Dolph Ziggler b. Rusev – Zig Zag

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

Charlotte b. Nikki Bella – Figure Eight

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

John Cena b. Seth Rollins – Attitude Adjustment

Seth Rollins b. Sting – Small package

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The Mystery Partner Was....

Someone. Named Chris Jericho. That's not Rowan or Kane so I'm happy.

Undertaker vs. Brock Lesnar Announced For Hell in a Cell

Officially announced at Night of Champions. I REALLY like this idea instead of doing it at Wrestlemania. This opens up some doors and instantly has my attention. Lesnar will also be on the Steve Austin Show on October 19.

Night of Champions 2015

Preview

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

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

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

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

And no cash-in. We get this teasing of a cash-in every fall and then it normally happens in the winter/spring. It's the same repetitive idea that they do every year and if this company is one thing, it's not likely to change an idea that they like.

As for the other title, I'm thinking Cena takes it back. There's no real reason to keep both belts on Rollins and it opens the door for the

Authority to look down on him because that's how they treat everyone. This should be their usual classic, and by usual I mean it's their ninth TV/PPV match since last summer. Oh and if Cena wins here, we could have a rematch! But yeah Cena gets the belt back, softening Seth up for Sting's failed World Title attempt.

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

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

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

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

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

work well enough but it's going to feel like a letdown if/when it's him all over again.

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

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Smackdown – September 17, 2015: Bring Back Livewire

Smackdown

Date: September 17, 2015

Location: Verizon Arena, Little Rock, Arkansas

Commentators: Booker T., Jerry Lawler, Rich Brennan

It's the final show before Night of Champions 2015 and that likely means we'll be focusing on the midcard matches. If the past few Smackdowns before pay per views are any indications, that means it's likely going to

be about Ambrose/Reigns vs. the Wyatts while they tease who the third man might be. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Sting's two matches on Monday, neither of which were important enough to announce more two and a half hours early.

Here's Seth for his opening statement. When he defends the US Title this Sunday, he's going to remind John Cena of what happened to him at Summerslam. Sting is going to get what's coming to him on Sunday. As for Sheamus, tonight he and Rollins will team up to face Roman Reigns and Dean Ambrose and Rollins will show Sheamus what happens to him if he tries to cash in.

This brings out Sheamus to ask if Seth sees him as a friend or an enemy. Rollins agrees with the fans' chants of YOU LOOK STUPID but Sheamus demands that they respect the hawk. Sheamus says the exact same things he's said for three weeks now and Rollins smirks it off. Nothing new here and I don't buy the threat of a cash-in on Sunday. They do this every fall and it hasn't happened in years.

Sasha Banks/Naomi vs. Paige/Becky Lynch

Becky hammers Naomi in the face to start and knocks her into the corner for the tag off to Banks. Sasha quickly fights back and slams Becky on the back of her head as we take an early break. Back with Becky in trouble in the corner as Banks jumps down onto her ribs. Naomi does the same before it's back to Sasha for an abdominal stretch. Basic psychology here so far. Becky gets away and makes the tag off to Paige for her assortment of superkicks and knees to the face. Becky pulls Sasha off the apron but distracts her partner by mistake, allowing Naomi to small package Paige for the pin at 9:02.

Rating: C. The story continues to build to Paige turning on her teammates and blaming them for all of her troubles. This was a better match than most from the Divas because they were working on a body part instead of just doing all their spots. It's the difference between having a match instead of having a collection of moves.

Stardust and the Ascension are ready for Neville and the Lucha Dragons on

Sunday's pre-show. Simple promo to build up a match.

Kofi Kingston vs. D-Von Dudley

The SAVE THE TABLES signs are back! Before the match, Xavier wants to talk about a special woman: Mother Nature. Big E.: "She's a bad mother!" Woods: "SHUT YOUR MOUTH!" They have a petition on a clipboard (Woods: "That's like a mini table!") to save the tables and want the Dudleyz to sign right now. Kofi wants us to know that only we can prevent table poaching. D-Von isn't interested in signing and beats Kofi down in the corner. Big E. pulls out a table but D-Von throws Woods inside. The distraction lets Kofi grab a rollup with tights for the pin at 1:17.

New Day runs off with the table.

We recap Dolph Ziggler giving Summer a present on Raw. Brennan says it was a pair of earrings, which wasn't clear on Raw.

Recap of Nikki retaining the title via DQ on Monday, thereby breaking the record.

Team Bella is preparing for the Bellabration. They have 298 bottles of champagne ready for them. Nikki is proud that Kim and Kanye are coming but there needs to be some non-alcoholic drinks for Kim. Brie and Alicia don't seem pleased with her demands.

We recap the showdown between Reigns/Ambrose and the Wyatts on Monday.

Big Show is on his way to the ring for a match when Miz hands him a notebook with something inside. Show looks at whatever is in there, gets annoyed, and throws the book away.

Cesaro vs. Big Show

Cesaro hits a pair of quick dropkicks to knock Show into the corner but Show chops him back down. Another chop is countered into an armbreaker over the ropes in a unique idea. Cesaro starts cranking the arm across his shoulder but Show throws him down to take over again. Show stands on the knee against the ropes as Booker talks about his Top Five. I've missed that

thing, though I have no idea why. We hit a leg lock on Cesaro (think an ankle lock but with Show's arms around the shin and knee instead of the ankle and foot) but he quickly rolls out.

The uppercuts in the corner stagger Show and a high cross body gets two. Another running uppercut to a kneeling Show gets the same and Cesaro tries the Crossface while Show is on his knees. Booker thinks it's an abdominal stretch because he's not very smart on commentary. The Neutralizer is countered as Cesaro flips out of a backdrop but he tweaks his knee on the landing. Show KO's Cesaro for the pin at 5:54.

Rating: C+. I liked this more than I was expecting to but the ending hurts it a bit. I guess it's time to make Big Show look good before he gets squashed by Brock Lesnar in Madison Square Garden because we're supposed to forget Brock mauling him at the Royal Rumble last year. Oh and well done on making sure Cesaro's push is stopped cold, because there was no one else that could do this job.

Renee Young, in a leather jacket, asks Ambrose and Reigns who their partner is on Sunday. Reigns says they have a partner but they can't say because they know Bray will be on him. Whoever it is, it was Dean's idea. They're ready to get momentum tonight before going to war on Sunday.

Kevin Owens vs. Dolph Ziggler

Ziggler attacks with right hands to start but eats a big forearm to the face. Kevin avoids a dropkick and hits his backplash for two. It's already time for the trash talking, followed by countering Dolph's running DDT into a regular one. We take a break and come back with Ziggler sidestepping a charge to send Owens into the post. A bunch of clotheslines set up the big elbow for two on Owens as they're not exactly doing anything beyond basics here.

Now the running DDT gets two more and Owens stumbles out to the floor. Ziggler tries to slide to the floor after him but gets caught in a fall away slam into the barricade. Owens throws him into the timekeeper's area for a nine count with Ziggler diving in before ten. Kevin superkicks him back to the floor and loads up the apron bomb but here's Ryback for the

DQ at 11:07.

Rating: D+. I was bored for the most part here and the ending didn't help things. They were just doing the basics here and that's not really enough to get me interested in a match. I'm glad to see Owens win again though while Ziggler doesn't get pinned, proving that you can protect both guys and not have them limping into their pay per view matches. Good booking to a lame match.

No one has shown up to the Bellabration.

Connor's Cure video.

Nikki tries to have the Bellabration but no one has shown up. Brie and Fox go off to fix it when Team PCB comes in. Charlotte talks some smack but the three leave without doing anything. Adam Rose, now in glasses, comes in and rips on the party. Nikki throws her cake and hits Brie and Fox. This was even less entertaining than it sounds.

Summer comes up to a tired Dolph and asks about the earrings. He tells her that sometimes a rose is just a rose, but sometimes it means more. Summer is confused.

Roman Reigns/Dean Ambrose vs. Sheamus/Seth Rollins

Rollins and Ambrose get things going but do nothing before Sheamus gets the tag. We have to wait some more though as Sheamus rolls outside to yell at the fans for calling him stupid. He's very sensitive you see. Dean finally gets to punch Sheamus a few times before it's off to Roman for more of the same. Reigns sends Rollins to the floor and the Shield guys stand tall as we take a break.

Back with Seth holding Ambrose in a chinlock, followed by a belly to back suplex backbreaker for two. Sheamus comes in for a suplex into a slam and a lot of trash talking. It's back to Seth for a lot of stomping as Seth and Sheamus don't seem thrilled with tagging in and out. Off to an Irish chinlock until Dean fights up and takes Sheamus to the floor with a hurricanrana. The hot tag brings in Reigns to clean house and it's time for all those clotheslines. Seth escapes a powerslam but his low

superkick is countered into a rollup.

That's not enough for Reigns as he lifts Seth up into a powerbomb. The threat of a Superman Punch sends Seth to the apron but he comes back in with a chop block and the low superkick. Sheamus reaches out for a tag but drops down to the floor instead. Seth grabs the briefcase but tags Sheamus in anyway. Sheamus takes the case right back, only to eat the suicide dive from Ambrose. Back in and the Superman punch and Dirty Deeds give Ambrose the pin at 16:51.

Rating: C. This was your standard main event tag as they continue to try to build up towards the six man on Sunday. It should be interesting to see who the partner is, but I have a bad feeling it's going to be Kane, because we need more Kane in our lives you see. Not a bad match though and Sheamus vs. Rollins is an interesting tease, though I don't think it's going anywhere.

Post match a Wyatt video pops up showing the destruction of Orton and Jimmy Uso. Bray and company come on screen to ask who would be foolish enough to join the fight on Sunday. Not that it matters as they will all fall down.

Overall Rating: C. Well let's see. The promos were mediocre. The wrestling was mediocre. The build to Sunday was mediocre. What else can I do here other than call it an average show? It's the standard Smackdown: it's a decent enough way to kill two hours but you wouldn't miss a thing if you didn't see it. I've never been one to say that Smackdown should be canceled, but if this is all they can do with it, there's no need to have Smackdown around.

Results

Sasha Banks/Naomi b. Paige/Becky Lynch – Small package to Paige

Kofi Kingston b. D-Von Dudley – Rollup with a handful of tights

Big Show b. Cesaro – KO Punch

Kevin Owens b. Dolph Ziggler via DQ when Ryback interfered

Roman Reigns/Dean Ambrose b. Sheamus/Seth Rollins – Dirty Deeds to Sheamus

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NXT – September 16, 2015: Another First Time Ever

NXT

Date: September 16, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Corey Graves, Rich Brennan, Byron Saxton

The Dusty Classic continues tonight as we have three weeks to go before Takeover: Respect. So far there isn't much officially announced for the show but that is likely to change tonight with the main event being set up on this show. I'm sure we'll also get some more tournament matches, including a few that might have taken place outside of Full Sail. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Tyler Breeze vs. Adam Rose

This is the debut of Adam's new party pooper character where he wears glasses and shorts. Before the match can start, Bull Dempsey comes out with the fans getting behind the Bull Fit movement. Dempsey lays on the top rope ala Breeze and says this is no accident. Breeze thinks last week's loss was an accident, just like the day that Bull was born. Tyler would be glad to beat up Bull right now but he has a match first. Dempsey asks Rose to step aside but beats him up instead. Breeze's blind side attack doesn't work and Bull clears the ring. No match.

After a break, Breeze accepts Bull's challenge for a match next week.

Tye Dillinger vs. Danny Burch

Burch had been going by the name Martin Stone but the announcers are going with Burch here. Dillinger gives his early wristlock and cartwheel a ten so Danny grabs a top wristlock. Tye easily escapes and takes his pads down for a one knee Codebreaker and the pin at 3:15.

Rating: D+. Dillinger has a great idea with the perfect ten thing but he needs to be able to talk about it instead of just holing up a ten over and over. It's cool to see him win a match like this though and the fans are way into the new character. Burch is a good example of what you can have when jobbers are allowed to be kept around. He's been built up just enough that it's not a total squash but he has no chance. That's important to have.

Rhyno and Baron Corbin are ready for Ciampa and Gargano tonight.

Asuka (Kanna) is here next week.

Apollo Crews vs. Solomon Crowe

They shake hands to start and Crews takes him down with a headlock. Back up and Apollo offers another handshake but Crowe kicks the hand away. Crews takes him down with a big suplex and Solomon takes a breather on the floor. He catches Crews' baseball slide and ties him up in the ring skirt to take over.

Back in and Crowe drives his forearm into the side of Crews' head, followed by a clothesline for two. Crowe is finally starting to get

something going for himself with this style but it's too late for him. A jawbreaker stuns Solomon and Apollo starts speeding things up. An enziguri sets up the gorilla press and standing moonsault to give Crews the pin at 4:52.

Rating: C. Not bad here but Crowe needs to either have something changed or get rid of him because this character has been a wreck. He has something with the in ring style but it's not working elsewhere. I wanted to see where he could take the hacker thing but that's gone nowhere.

Ciampa and Gargano are ready for Corbin and Rhyno tonight.

Dana Brooke and Emma are tired of being disrespected and think it's time to shake things up for a change. Play time is over.

Sasha Banks arrives.

We get some highlights of the first round of the Dusty Classic and a few second round matches announced, including the Hype Bros vs. Chad Gable/Jason Jordan and Scott Dawson/Dash Wilder vs. the Vaudevillains.

Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic Second Round: Rhyno/Baron Corbin vs. Tommaso Ciampa/Johnny Gargano

Gargano and Rhyno get things going but it's off to Ciampa before there's any contact. Ciampa runs the ropes and scores with a quick clothesline but the fans are busy arguing over whether or not they want Corbin. Baron comes in but gets low bridged to the floor, allowing Johnny to suicide dive both opponents. Ciampa's top rope cross body puts both guys down again as this is completely one sided.

Back in and Rhyno clotheslines Ciampa down to take over and Baron comes in with a big swinging Boss Man Slam. We take a break and come back with Baron choking with a boot. Rhyno and Corbin take turns on Ciampa until Rhyno charges into a boot in the corner. Ciampa scores with a missile dropkick and it's a double tag to Gargano and Corbin. Johnny starts cleaning house and everything breaks down until End of Days puts Gargano away at 11:06.

Rating: C+. This was fun stuff and more proof that Baron can hang in a

longer match instead of just doing a quick squash. Rhyno and Corbin are a good choice for a power team and Rhyno is the kind of guy who can teach Baron a lot in the ring. Good match here though and that's a good sign as we're getting closer to the finals.

The Vaudevillains are looking forward to Wilder and Dawson next week in the Dusty Classic but Blake/Murphy/Bliss come in and invoke their rematch clause for next week.

Bayley vs. Sarah Dobson

Non-title and Bayley runs through the crowd before the match, including bringing her biggest fan Izzy into the ring to pose with her. There is no way this can't be considered cool. Dobson hammers away to start and cartwheels into a kick to the back of the head for an early two. A guillotine choke has Bayley in trouble but she drives Dobson into the corner to break it up. The ax handles to the chest set up the Bayley to Belly for the pin at 2:29. I'm getting a Ricky Steamboat vibe off Bayley: as pure of a face as there can and she takes a beating before making a comeback to win with a basic move. That's a very good path to follow.

Bayley gets the mic but Sasha Banks cuts her off. Sasha has been hearing about how their title match was the match of the year and the fans seem to agree. However, that's not good enough for Sasha. She's not here to please the fans because Bayley was only better than her for three seconds.

Bayley wants to start her own legacy and has no problem giving Sasha her rematch whenever she wants one. That's not what Sasha wants though because she wants to beat Bayley over and over. Fans: "IRON WOMAN!" Cue Regal to give the fans exactly what they want in the main event of Takeover on October 7 in a thirty minute Iron Man match. Bayley and Sasha look a bit nervous but shake hands to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. Now that's how you use an hour of TV time. We have a main event for Takeover, a title match set for next week and advancement in the tournament. The fans ate up that announcement at the end and it's another step forward for the women. Good show here and I had a lot of fun with it.

Results

Tye Dillinger b. Danny Burch – One knee Codebreaker

Apollo Crews b. Solomon Crowe – Standing moonsault

Baron Corbin/Rhyno b. Tommaso Ciampa/Johnny Gargano – End of Days to Gargano

Bayley b. Sarah Dobson – Bayley to Belly

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

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

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

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

1. Monday Night Football. Raw in the Attitude Era didn't come

close to Monday Night Football's numbers and that's never going to change. Monday Night Football is a juggernaut and always will be. There's no way to get around this.

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

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

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

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

6. A lot of people don't watch cable TV anymore, and why should they? With Netflix, Hulu and the WWE Network, there's a ton of good material out there for way cheaper. For the people

who still do have cable, there are roughly 1.38457 million channels to pick from these days. Couple that with DVR and people watching parts of the shows and the ratings shrinking really isn't a big surprise.

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

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

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

Monday Night Raw

Date: September 14, 2015

Location FedEx Forum, Memphis, Tennessee

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, John Bradshaw Layfield

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

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

Here's the Authority walking down the ramp, which now has a Connor's Cure logo. HHH and Stephanie talk about all the new talent that have showed up in the last year and a half. That group will lead the WWE into the new generation, which will be lead by Seth Rollins. HHH explains the double title defense on Sunday and that's about it for Seth right now.

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

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

Tag Team Titles: New Day vs. Prime Time Players

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

Back with New Day still in control and Woods tormenting him with the trombone. Titus comes after them but gets called back by the referee. Woods: "DO NOT TOUCH MY TROMBONE!" Back in and Kofi snaps Darren's throat across the top rope but he dives into some raised boots. Titus comes in off the tag to clean

house and gives Kofi three straight backbreakers. A powerslam gets two on Big E. but Kofi gives Darren Trouble in Paradise on the floor. Woods offers a distraction and gets his trombone broken up, allowing the Midnight Hour to take Titus out for the pin at 12:15.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Paige vs. Sasha Banks

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

Paige comes back with a knee in the corner and some kicks to the face for two as the announcers debate women's tennis in an attempt to tie it into the Divas Revolution. A wicked German suplex sends Sasha down onto the back of her head and out to the floor in a heap. Paige tries to dive off

the apron but Tamina pulls Sasha away, sending Paige crashing down as well. Back in and the Bank Statement puts Paige away at 5:15.

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

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

Video on Connor's Cure.

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

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

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

John Cena vs. Sheamus

Sheamus' headlock doesn't get that far so he elbows Cena in the face instead. John is thrown to the floor and we take an early break. Back

with Sheamus dropping a top rope knee for two before slapping on a sleeper. Cena pops up and hits the ProtoBomb followed by the Shuffle. A tornado DDT gets two on Sheamus but he comes back with an Edgeucator.

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

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

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

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

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

Stardust vs. Neville

The Lucha Dragons come out with Neville to counteract the Ascension. It's a huge brawl to start with the Dragons diving through the ropes to take Ascension out. Neville hurricanranas Stardust to the floor but Ascension drags him away before Neville can dive. No match.

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

Divas Title: Charlotte vs. Nikki Bella

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

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

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

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

Sting was at Survivor Series 2014.

Cesaro vs. Rusev

Rusev grabs a wristlock to start but Cesaro does four or five nipups in a row to escape. A headscissors drops Rusev again and the delayed vertical

suplex gets one. Rusev's spinwheel kick gets two but here's Dolph Ziggler with a present for Summer. The distraction lets Cesaro small package Rusev for the pin at 4:04.

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

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

WWE was at a children's hospital earlier today.

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

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

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

Sting vs. Big Show

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

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

Sting/John Cena vs. Seth Rollins/Big Show

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

the tag attempts. The slow motion Vader Bomb gets two.

Cena turns Rollins inside out with a running clothesline but Show breaks up another hot tag attempt. Show misses the second Vader Bomb though and Cena dives over for the hot tag to Sting. It's showtime as Sting cleans house, only to be run over by Big Show. The giant takes the AA and Sting breaks up the Pedigree with a Scorpion Death Drop. The Scorpion Deathlock makes Rollins tap at 11:58.

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

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

Results

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

Sasha Banks b. Paige – Bank Statement

John Cena b. Sheamus – Attitude Adjustment

Charlotte b. Nikki Bella via DQ when Brie Bella interfered

Cesaro b. Rusev – Small package

Sting b. Big Show via DQ when Seth Rollins interfered

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

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