

# NXT – July 8, 2015: Do We Have Proof He's A Human?

## NXT

Date: July 8, 2015

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Byron Saxton, Corey Graves, Rich Brennan

We have a new NXT Champion though we're likely only going to hear about it in voiceovers as this is a taped show from a few weeks back. Finn Balor took the NXT Title from Kevin Owens in Tokyo on 4<sup>th</sup> of July and you know Owens is going to be gunning to get his title back. Other than that though, we have the Vaudevillains vs. Enzo/Cass for the #1 contendership. Let's get to it.

### Sasha Banks/??? vs. Dana Brooke/Emma

The new announcer introduces Dana and then throws in that she's accompanied by her partner Emma. Dana laughs at Sasha for not having a partner so the fans chant Blue Pants. Sasha is ready to fight on her own but here's someone to back her up.

### Sasha Banks/Charlotte vs. Dana Brooke/Emma

Charlotte says she'll be Sasha's partner but Banks owes her one. Banks kicks Dana around to start but Brooke runs when it's off to Charlotte. That means it's off to Emma, who bails to the floor to avoid a knee drop. The heels finally take over but the fans are busy arguing over whether Dana is ratchet or not. Emma bodyscissors Charlotte to slow it down but she fights up for the tag off to Sasha and the champ cleans house. A running knee in the corner and the Bank Statement makes Brooke tap at 4:39.

**Rating:** C. This didn't have time to go anywhere and it dragged the match down a lot. Dana tapping out is a bad sign for her but I don't think anyone really bought her as the top star of the division or anything like that. Sasha vs. Charlotte again is going to be fine and Becky and Bayley

returning will make things even better.

As you might guess, Charlotte's payment will be a title shot next week, which Sasha is just fine with.

Bayley says she can't wrestle at the moment because of a broken hand. She'll be back for the NXT Title, but Emma is in for more than a hug.

Video on Finn Balor's rise to the top of NXT and becoming #1 contender.

We get a clipped version of Balor vs. Owens for the title in Tokyo, but here's the full match in case you haven't read it yet.

### NXT Title: Finn Balor vs. Kevin Owens

We get the Demon entrance and oh yes it's still glorious. For a bonus, the camera changes to an arena shot at the crescendos of the music. To make it feel even more special, we get the full on flower presentation from geisha girls (Owens throws his into the crowd of course) and streamers for both guys. Get this through your head ROH: doing the same thing for every match doesn't make it feel more special. Hideo Itami is shown in the front row and we're ready to start. Balor has more paint than ever with his face, torso and left leg covered.

Balor charges at the bell and loads up the Coup de Grace in the first ten seconds. Owens rolls outside so Balor nails a big dive as the NXT chants start up. He tries to bail again and eats a baseball slide as Balor is all over him. Back in and Owens hammers away to take over for the first time. Owens: "AND THAT'S WHY I'M THE CHAMP!" We hear more of Balor's accomplishments in New Japan as Owens takes some bows.

It's off to Chinlock City before a forearm breaks up Balor's springboard. The slow pace is working for Kevin here and it fits him very well. Finn beats the count back in but takes the backsplash for two. Back in and Owens snapmares him down and runs the ropes...before stopping for a chinlock. Owens: "Are you not impressed? I don't care. I hate this country and all its stupid people!" Balor fights back again with a middle rope forearm for two so Owens does Cena's finishing sequence, complete with an attempted AA.

Balor is afraid of a lawsuit over gimmick infringement (only Kurt Angle can steal that many finishers) and slips out twice in a row. Bloody Sunday is teased (and the fans gasp) but it's a Pele Kick to put Owens down instead. Owens takes a big flip dive and a top rope double stomp to the back, followed by a reverse Bloody Sunday (not called that of course) for a VERY close two. The Coup de Grace misses though and Owens' Cannonball gets two. The package piledriver slam gets the same but Balor hits a quick Sling Blade.

Another Coup de Grace is countered so Balor kicks him in the head and FINALLY connects with the stomp...for two. Dang I thought that was it. Owens can't hit the swinging fisherman's superplex so he settles for a middle rope Regal Roll for two. That looked great. Kevin's Swanton hits knees and the real Bloody Sunday gets an even closer two. They're trading bombs here and it's getting awesome. Owens makes the eternal mistake of slapping a hero in the face and saying the hero can't beat him. Balor dropkicks him into the corner, hits a running corner dropkick and a second Coup de Grace for the title at 19:30.

**Rating:** B+. Was there ever any doubt that this was going to be awesome? Owens is one of the best heels that I've seen in years and he does everything he can do to make you hate him. The fact that he can go as well as he does in the ring makes him even better, which is saying quite a bit as he's that good as a character.

Tatsumi Fujinami congratulates Balor on his win.

Kevin Owens doesn't have anything to say about the loss.

Chad Gable doesn't know why Jason Jordan doesn't want him as his partner other than he's happy with losing. Jordan finally comes up and asks Gable to be his partner next week. Well it's more saying they'll be partners next week but it's as polite as Jordan gets.

Solomon Crowe says he's back to be the resident monster.

Marcus Louis vs. Solomon Crowe

Louis is back with no music but he's still crazy. A chop puts him down

and Crowe puts on a standing Crippler's Crossface with his leg tied into Louis' to crank on the shoulder. That's a new one. Louis crotches him on top for a very aggressive two and puts on a kneeling abdominal stretch. Crowe fights up again and slaps on a Brock Lock, apparently called the Crowebar for the tap out at 3:18.

**Rating:** C-. Well Crowe looked better, but it's still not fitting for him. I'm also never a fan of a crazy guy tapping out as it shows way too much logic and common sense to give up like that. The match wasn't anything special but neither guy has anything going for them so seeing them on TV is a good sign.

The Vaudevillains say they'll be the #1 contenders.

Clip of some guys congratulating Balor on winning, including John Cena. Balor says this couldn't have gone any better.

#### Vaudevillains vs. Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady

English is rocking a MANLY beard. Enzo and Gotch get things going with Simon getting a rollup for two. Off to English for a headlock on the mat but he's back out just a few seconds later. Cass shoves both of them to the floor and calls them S-A-W-F-T as we take a break. Back with Cass throwing Enzo into Aiden for two but Enzo charges into a boot in the corner, giving him one of the best eyes wide open stunned faces I've ever seen.

It's Enzo playing the semi-human in peril (I've yet to see actual proof that he's a person) in a chinlock followed by a legdrop before diving over for the tag to Colin. Everything breaks down and Aiden gets kicked in the face. The Rocket Launcher has to be changed into a cross body though and English rolls through for the pin and the title shot at 10:48.

**Rating:** C+. I liked this more than I thought I would but my goodness they're really not going with Enzo and Cass getting the titles in Brooklyn? Are they just asking for the worst reaction in years? I know the Vaudevillains will be well received, but my goodness this is one of those layup ideas that they're just missing. Granted there's another month before we could get there so all hope isn't lost.

**Overall Rating:** C+. This was another shot that set the stage for later more than a good stand alone episode. However, it's setting up Takeover in Brooklyn and there's no way that's not going to be awesome due to the crowd reaction alone. Things will pick up when they can say Balor won the title instead of just having the commentary do it, but Sami will get a great reaction next week in the last show of the taping cycle.

### Results

Sasha Banks/Charlotte b. Dana Brooke/Emma – Bank Statement to Brooke

Solomon Crowe b. Marcus Louis – Crowebare

Vaudevillains b. Enzo Amore/Colin Cassady – English rolled through a high cross body

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# Smackdown – July 9, 2015: I'll Have The Special

Same as last week as I won't be able to post the full thing tonight so here it is in advance.

**Smackdown**

Date: July 9, 2015

Location: Bradley Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Jimmy Uso, Jerry Lawler

We're back after this Monday's classic of Cena vs. Cesaro and Lesnar squashing a Cadillac with...maybe Cesaro and Rollins if we're lucky. My guess is we'll get more of a focus on Reigns vs. Wyatt, which is a far more interesting story than the World Title situation. Hopefully the wrestling will be good. Let's get to it.

The opening recap is a long video on Lesnar vs. Rollins, with Cena vs. Cesaro not warranting air time.

Here's Rollins to open things up by calling Lesnar a coward. Luckily we're treated to a JUSTIN BIEBER chant because that's a full time thing now. Rollins rants about the destroyed Cadillac but here's Paul Heyman with a tow truck hauling out the remnants. Heyman says you can't treat Lesnar like Rollins did and not expect to be taken to Suplex City.

Both say that the car is a metaphor for their opponent (or client's opponent) in a good exchange. Rollins brings up the whole destroying the Shield thing but Heyman promises Lesnar putting his foot on Seth's chest as he holds up his new title. Seth cuts him off again and promises to keep the title. This was basic stuff but it's why they have Heyman with Lesnar though. If Brock can't be around, just throw Heyman out there to do the talking.

### Dean Ambrose vs. Bo Dallas

In case Monday's squash didn't do it for you I guess. Before the match, Bo takes credit for the success of Rock's new HBO series Ballers. Ambrose works on a hammerlock to start but Dallas sends him into the post three times in a row. Some choking with the ring skirt (that's something you don't see too often) sets up Bo's belly to belly (his old finisher) for two and we take a break. Back with Dean fighting out of a chinlock and firing away against the ropes. We get a big surprise as Bo runs the ropes for a belly to belly superplex, followed by a Downward Spiral for two. That goes nowhere so Dirty Deeds finishes Bo at 9:07.

**Rating:** C-. Bo surprised me here a bit and it's been cool to see him working extra hard lately, dating back to the match against Neville on pay per view. Ambrose is still looking for his next feud and you almost have to assume it's going to be against Reigns because, simply put, who else is there?

Big Show tells Rollins to take care of Lesnar and promises to take out Reigns tonight. Man I thought we were past that mess.

Recap of Rusev putting Ziggler out on Raw.

#### Fandango vs. Rusev

Rusev has shoes now, which is a very smart mandate for him. Fandango scores with a headscissors to start as Jimmy brings up Rusev wearing boots after Tom and Jerry spent thirty seconds talking about it during Rusev's entrance. This is every Rusev match before he feuded with Cena: a nerve hold, no selling Fandango's comeback, the superkick and the Accolade for the submission at 3:15.

**Rating:** D. Hey, Rusev is back. I think that sums up the whole thing here as it was just a quick squash with a bunch of shots of Summer Rae to make things a bit easier to sit through. Summer works fine as a gold digger, even if Rusev doesn't have a ton of gold at the moment. Make Rusev a monster again and he'll be fine.

#### Roman Reigns vs. Big Show

Remember what I said about being fine? Forget all of that here. Show is now in a sleeveless black shirt instead of the singlet top. Reigns gets thrown around to start and Show shoves him out to the floor. The giant gets posted for an eight count and it's time for Reigns' clotheslines, because where would we be without a series of clotheslines? The Superman Punch is loaded up but we've got a fake Wyatt on the stage. The real one gets punched off the apron but pulls Reigns down for the DQ at 4:00.

**Rating:** D+. This was barely a match as a good chunk of it was spent on the fake Wyatt and waiting on Big Show to beat the count back in. Thankfully we didn't have to sit through a long Reigns vs. Big Show match

which would have killed the crowd and been a big bore all match long. Wyatt vs. Reigns should be a really fun power brawl when we get there though.

Bray hits a pair of Sister Abigails.

#### Titus O'Neil vs. Big E.

E. takes over to start and hammers Titus into the corner to start. That's a very common way to open matches these days. We hit the early abdominal stretch complete with slaps but Titus tosses E. out to the floor. A belly to belly stops Titus' comeback and the partners all try to interfere, earning them a mass ejection. Clash of the Titus ends E. at 2:49.

Austin WWE2K16 video.

Video on the Cadillac being crushed earlier this week. So what wrecked car was brought out earlier???

After a recap of what happened between them on Monday, here's Orton to talk about what happened with Sheamus earlier this week. He keeps it simple by saying he's going to attempt to make Sheamus entertaining by ripping off his mohawk, but here's the Ascension of all people for some reason. There was a time when this might have been interesting but instead it's RK0's all around.

Video on Cesaro vs. Cena from Raw. This deserved any attention it could get.

#### Naomi/Tamina vs. Brie Bella/Alicia Fox

Brie shoves Naomi into the corner to start before it's off to Tamina, who takes some kicks to the ribs as well. All hail the Bellas right? Tamina makes a comeback so it's off to Alicia and Naomi with the latter still having no luck. Everything breaks down and a Nikki distraction lets Alicia hit the ax kick for the pin on Tamina at 2:55.

Ryback doesn't like how Seth Rollins has been acting as champion, including how he ran away on Monday. Tonight, Ryback will show Rollins how a champion acts because there is no running and hiding.



## Ryback vs. Seth Rollins

Non-title and both guys come out alone. Ryback shoves him out to the floor with ease to start and Rollins is already frustrated. Back in and some knees to the chest only earn Rollins a thirty second delayed vertical suplex. Seth kicks him off the apron though and nails a nice suicide dive, only to come back in using Brock's jump to the apron. Man this guy has some guts.

Seth's chinlock is quickly countered into a Backpack Stunner and the low superkick is countered into a powerbomb. It's Rollins' turn to counter though as he escapes Shell Shock and kicks Ryback in the head. Instead of covering though he walks out, but Ryback throws him onto the floor a few times. The threat of a Shell Shock on the floor is enough to make Seth run into the crowd for the countout at 8:11.

**Rating:** C-. I've seen worse. Ryback is really starting to find his groove as the upper midcard guy who can dabble in the main event when he needs to. He's already a solid Intercontinental Champion and a good power guy so why not see how far out he can swim? This was more about the story and there's nothing wrong with that.

Post match here's Big Show to double team Ryback but Reigns makes the save to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** D+. I'm getting really tired of these not terrible yet still totally skippable shows. This is another example of a show that you do not need to watch but won't hate yourself if you sat through it. In other words, meh. That's Smackdown in a nutshell: it exists and mostly doesn't suck. That's hardly a ringing endorsement but what else is there to say about it?

## Results

Dean Ambrose b. Bo Dallas – Dirty Deeds

Rusev b. Fandango – Accolade

Roman Reigns b. Big Show via DQ when Bray Wyatt interfered

Titus O'Neil b. Big E. – Clash of the Titus

Alicia Fox/Brie Bella b. Naomi/Tamina – Ax kick to Tamina

Ryback b. Seth Rollins via countout

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## **WWE Announcer Instructions Online**

Oh now this could be fun. So what we have here is a set of instructions given to the announcers from a few years back. It should be VERY interesting to see some of these details and the rules/ideas they're told to follow. I've read through the list and a lot of them aren't worth commenting on, but there are some major points of interest. Check out the whole list as it's interesting information that you will likely say "THANK YOU!" to more than once, but here are some highlights. All of the following are direct quotes.

Note that these are from 2011 at the latest so not everything is going to be completely up to date but it's nothing out of the ordinary. Here are the originals if you want to see them:

<http://imgur.com/a/NW1WG#DWVb3IL>

1. Play by play announcers cannot be emasculated by their broadcast partners.

WOW. They're getting right to the hypocritical nature of this right off the bat. After all the time that we had to hear Cole rip on JR (even making it a recurring in ring segment), they actually told them beforehand to not emasculate their colleagues. Does Cole work on a different planet or something?

2. Announcers should rarely lead our fans. Let them decide for themselves if they like a Superstar or dislike him.

Yeah screw that face/heel stuff. I know Orton kissed HHH's unconscious wife and lied about some mental disorder, but does that really make him a bad guy?

3. Announcers ARE NOT THE STARS.

I think we've covered this already but dang did they switch this up soon when Vince started liking Cole as Miz's fanboy.

4. All announcers must read WWE.com every week.

That's actually a really smart one. Announcers should sound like they know what they're talking about and should be the experts guiding us through the shows. This is hammered in multiple times and is a very, very good idea.

5. Never assume the viewer watched last week's broadcast or that they watch any of the other of the WWE brands.

This is one that a lot of big fans forget. Yeah we watch most of if not all of the shows, but there's always someone flipping through the channels who might not have ever seen a wrestling show before. If they watch it and have no idea what's going on, why would they keep watching? Get them hooked in and keep saying the details. You don't have to recap everything, but "Owens has disrespected Cena week after week and Cena

wants revenge" tells you almost everything you need to know about their feud in five seconds. Throwing in "Owens, on your left and Cena on your right" wouldn't hurt either.

6. This is television, not radio. We don't need to call every move a Superstar makes.

A-FREAKING-MEN! This used to drive me crazy about Joey Styles. I can see what's going on and I don't need to be told every single freaking thing that is going on. Cut that nonsense out.

7. DON'T SCREAM!

Yeah yeah yeah we know. You hate Jim Ross and think he was the worst thing ever. Let it go already.

8. Don't call a move before it happens. If this is so predictable, why are we watching?

Dang Maggle. Steve Austin just kicked someone in the stomach and grabbed their head. You think he might be going for a snapmare next?

9. Our fans are always interested in what happens "in the locker room" or "away from the arena."

Yes they are. What they're not interested in is WWE trying to jack up their social media numbers by showing Ambrose walking around with the title on Instagram. Why you ask? BECAUSE NOT EVERYONE IS ON FREAKING INSTAGRAM AND NO ONE CARES ABOUT YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA NUMBERS!

10. Humor is good when it is used in a timely fashion. We are there primarily to inform and entertain.

Wait...so this is Vince's vision of NOT being funny? Who says that man is out of touch?

11. Do not use pronouns.

This is a rare occasion where speaking like Stephanie is a good thing. There's nothing wrong with saying "Cena is in trouble" over and over, but you don't have to use the proper names for everything.

12. Everyone hates being told what to think.

The hypocrisy here speaks for itself.

13. Nobody knows dates, everybody knows when “in two weeks”, “tomorrow”, etc is.

Yes, because everyone on the planet sees this show at the exact same time on the exact same day of the week right? Also, it doesn't help when on Raw, you say a pay per view is in two weeks when it's a week and six days. That's not two weeks, no matter how many times you say it is. Yeah I know what you mean, but if someone is new at this, how do they know when it is? They're watching this show on Monday, so why would they not think that a big show is going to be taking place in two weeks instead of a regular Raw? “Well that's not how it works.” Really? It's how NXT works. Why should a fan think Raw is different?

#### Words to Avoid

Belt/strap. This has been around for a long time and it's still stupid. No one cares.

The business/our industry. Unless you're HHH right?

War. Unless you're HHH right?

Shot (no title shots). As I have said many times, WHO COULD POSSIBLY CARE ABOUT THIS???

Now for some memos.

Per Kevin Dunn: “Please never use the words “title changing hands” again. Titles are won or lost, they don't change hands.”

As has been said time after time: Kevin Dunn is an idiot.

Sent by Steph: “Vince would like to reinforce to all announcers NOT to say “the referee didn't see it” when the referee didn't see an illegal action. It makes the product feel cheap, like we're in grade school. It is ok to say “the referee's vision was impaired”. Or “the referee's vision was blocked”...

Cheap? How does this make it sound cheap? Or for that matter how does it make us sound like we're in grade school?

The levels of micromanagement this company has astounds me. I mean, not being able to say a referee didn't see something? That's the biggest worry they have? I can easily see why no one wants to stick around on this job and I continue to praise Cole's ability to not put a gun in his mouth.

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# Monday Night Raw – July 6, 2015: Well Of Course Brock Smash

## Monday Night Raw

Date: July 6, 2015

Location: Allstate Arena, Chicago, Illinois

Commentators: Byron Saxton, Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

The big story coming out of last week: product placement and lame action. The shows really aren't lighting the world on fire right now, but a lot of that has to do with a lack of the Authority and Brock, because without the two of them, the show comes off as a glorified Smackdown. Get to the point already or get rid of the Authority as the main focus of the show because otherwise, a show without them on it isn't going to go anywhere. Let's get to it.

The opening recap covers last week's product placement and Rollins reuniting the team.

We open with Heyman and Lesnar coming out to the exact reaction you would expect for them in a smark paradise like Chicago. Heyman talks about how the Authority thinks Brock is still in Tokyo, because they allowed him to

show up tonight. Lesnar is a god and hallowed be his name, but he isn't a god of love or charity or kindness. No, Lesnar is a god of violent retribution and the sword that will pierce Seth Rollins' shield.

Heyman brings up the Streak but points out that it wasn't because of any malice towards Undertaker. Heyman: "This one you'll cheer." When Brock took John Cena to Suplex City, it was just because Lesnar wanted the title and not out of disrespect. The same was true for Reigns at Wrestlemania, but it's not the case for Seth Rollins.

No, Rollins has broken the 11<sup>th</sup> commandment by cashing in Money in the Bank, running away from a rematch and having his Authority buddies attack him two weeks ago. Heyman's job is to sell us on Battleground in St. Louis, but the beatings and the suplexes begin tonight in Chicago. The Beast of Battleground is waiting for the champ tonight, so Rollins better be ready.

Kane is in Hawaii and we have badly photoshopped and unfunny photos to prove it.

The Stooges have taken a road trip and we're going to get pictures later. That....could work?

### Big Show vs. Ryback

Non-title and Miz is at ringside in director's chair with a microphone. In an inset interview, Ryback says he is one of the few who can manhandle Big Show and Big Show doesn't like that. Well not many people would but Ryback never was very insightful. Miz starts shouting into the mic but only tells the big guys to hit each other.

The fans really don't seem pleased with this one and Show chops Ryback in the corner. Miz: "ONE MORE TIME! ONE MORE TIME!" Ryback kicks him in the face a few times but Show knees Ryback into the corner. This is a very slow and lumbering match so far which isn't a great choice for the opening match. Miz distracts Ryback so Show can slam him down as we take a break.

Back with Show holding a leg lock and Miz telling Show that he should

never retire (WOO!). Ryback powers out and takes out the knee as well before dropping Show with three straight shoulders. The Meat Hook and a splash get two but the top rope version misses. Show hits a chokeslam and middle rope elbow, drawing in Miz for the double DQ (he was smart enough to hit them both at once) at 9:24.

**Rating:** D-. I have tried and tried to defend this three way feud but my goodness Big Show is dragging it down. Ryback is trying to become a more interesting character but there's only so much you can do with Big Show as the power moves against him look cool, but once you've seen them a few times (over the last fifteen years or so) they lose a lot of their impact. Let him do comedy again or something, because Show as the big, strong monster is WAY past its expiration date.

Miz attacks both guys and then begs both guys to wait for Battleground. Ignore the large gap behind him where he could run at any time of course. Miz takes a Shell Shock and chokeslam and another Meat Hook drops Show again. At least the champ stood tall.

More Kane hysterics.

The Stooges went to Wrigley Field and weren't impressed. They could at least take the price sticker off the window. That car better bite the dust before the end of the night.

### Brie Bella vs. Paige

Paige gets backdropped to the apron to start and the announcers are already on the amount of days Nikki has held the title. So we're just stuck with nothing interesting until we get to AJ because Nikki is interesting or something. Nikki: "BRIE MODE!" You can hear the crowd dying for this one, which could be because this story hasn't changed in weeks now. Fox gets in a cheap shot but Brie knees down her sister/friend at the same time by mistake. Paige sidesteps the middle rope dropkick ala Samoa Joe but the other girls get involved, setting up the Bella Buster for the pin at 3:12.

**Rating:** D. This story needs to go somewhere already, and by somewhere I don't mean having Naomi and Tamina come in to help Paige. This story has



been set up for something major and the same Divas being rotated in one more time certainly isn't it. The Bellas are long past interesting at this point and while Nikki is better than she was, this story needs a rest but we're pretty much confirmed for the next few months because AJ MUST DIE or something.

Paige gets beaten up post match.

Recap of Wyatt vs. Reigns from last week.

### Sheamus vs. Roman Reigns

Get your countouts ready now. Reigns shoves the briefcase out of Sheamus' hands before we start and the brawl is on with a devastating headlock. Sheamus knees him in the ribs to take over but Reigns pulls him off the middle rope and knocks Sheamus outside. They're still firmly in first power gear at this point.

Sheamus actually wins a slugout on the apron and sends Reigns face first into the post as we go to a break. That looked (and sounded) good at least. Back with Sheamus holding a chinlock and a nice loud CM PUNK chant keeping the crowd from being bored. Reigns' best way around this is a bunch of clotheslines, followed by a BIG clothesline in the corner. Feel the intensity!

The Irish Curse is countered and a Samoan drop connects. The Superman Punch is countered into another Irish Curse for two but Reigns Superman Punches him out of the air...and here's Bray. Roman charges up the ramp and Superman Punches...somebody, as Bray pops up on the screen and says anyone but you. Sheamus wins by countout at 11:20.

**Rating:** C. Decent enough power brawl here but like I said, it was no secret that we were going to get a countout or some kind of wonky finish. It wasn't anything of note, but there's only so much you can do with power brawls, especially when we just had one about forty minutes ago. WWE REALLY needs to work on alternating their styles because you keep getting the same styles of matches over and over and they get old fast.

Post match Randy Orton comes out for an RK0. I had been wondering where

he was.

The WWE Network is in Italy. Uh...yay.

Rollins comes in to see HHH, who wants to know what Seth is going to do about Brock Lesnar. The champ thinks he has Battleground in the bag, but HHH is worried about tonight. Rollins needs to do the unthinkable tonight: have him laid out by the Authority like they did two weeks ago. To be fair, that is pretty unthinkable. Imagine the Stooges and Rollins being a real threat to Brock.

Here are Rusev and Summer Rae to keep this mess going. Rusev loves having a submissive Summer around but gets annoyed at the fans wanting Lana. He rambles on about being better than Dolph Ziggler until Summer tells the fans to give Rusev the respect he deserves. Rusev: "Thank you hot Summer." Is she a radio chick now?

Cue Ziggler and Lana with the former saying Rusev achieved everything he has in WWE because of Lana. Dolph says Lana is his now and it's time for kisses. The girls tease a fight but Rusev blasts Ziggler with the crutch before taking off the boot. This goes on for nearly five minutes with the only highlight being Summer attacking Lana. Ziggler's comeback didn't work and the beating just kept going.

This was WAY too long and my goodness Ziggler sucks in this role. After all the years of being with whatever girl can get him somewhere he's all gaga over yet another good looking blonde because....she likes him? Is there any other reason for these two to be together? Rusev needs to murder Ziggler and then do something bad to Lana and then never speak of this whole mess again.

Post break they actually do the big serious talk about Ziggler being attacked. Ziggler even did a stretcher job. This story SUCKS and there is no need to ever talk about it again. Figure out how your characters work and then don't screw with them because going against established characters is one of the worst things you can do in wrestling or any other form of entertainment.

Bo Dallas vs. Dean Ambrose

Before the match, Dallas talks about how that was a bad thing happening to a bad person. Good things happen to people like him though, as long as you BOLIEVE! The dueling WE BOLIEVE/LET'S GO AMBROSE chants start up as Bo gets two off a clothesline before hitting the chinlock. Bo misses a knee drop and gets bulldogged down, setting up Dirty Deeds for the pin at 2:59. This was WWE saying "yeah Ambrose is still a thing after losing Thursday. Oh you didn't know he lost Thursday? Well then never mind."

The Stooges got stuck in traffic. Seriously.

### R-Truth vs. King Barrett

No entrance for either guy as this feud just keeps going. Barrett stomps him down in the corner to start and a clothesline takes them out to the floor. Truth is sent into the post a few times and we hit the chinlock. A big boot gets two for Barrett and we take a break. Oh freaking joy we get to see more of this match. Barrett hammers away but runs into a series of clotheslines (WAY too popular tonight and in general). Winds of Change is countered into a crucifix for two but a low blow drops Truth. Truth goes up and dives into the Bull Hammer for the pin at 9:37.

**Rating:** D. So? Barrett has knocked Truth out a few times already, so what difference does it make if he does it again? Why should this horribly uninteresting feud that has made Barrett look even less important than he was when he was Intercontinental Champion? Barrett could be doing ANYTHING else and it would be better but we're stuck with this. The match was boring too, just like everything else they've done.

Back from a break with another look at Zigler being beaten down. This is treated as way too big of a deal after the mess they've made of this feud.

Here's Rollins with an ax handle and the Stooges with their car and their own ax handles. Oh come on man. No one could possibly be that stupid. Rollins is going to burn Suplex City to the ground before going on about how awesome he is a bit longer. He finally asks if Lesnar is just Heyman's...uh...I think you can figure this out, so here's Brock. All three are ready for him so Brock thinks better of it and tells Heyman to bring him something. Heyman brings over an anvil case containing a pair of

axes. Oh this is going to be good.

Brock smashes the ax into the car door and can't even get it out, so he breaks a few windows and tears off a door. The door goes flying into the crowd (apparently hitting a fan, who was ok) and now it's time for the Stooges to come save their car. Noble winds up with a broken arm and Mercury gets suplexed onto the hood, much to the delight of the crowd. Brock chases Rollins out of the ring and holds up the title to wrap things up.

THIS is what Brock should have been doing for the last six months. Just have him break stuff and be a freak of nature. Don't have him get beaten down by Kane and the Stooges like EVERY OTHER FACE EVER. That was the problem with the HHH feud: anyone could have played Lesnar's role. Here, there isn't anyone else that Rollins hasn't already beaten or has any real reason to be afraid of anymore so only Brock really fits.

#### Lucha Dragons vs. New Day

Woods is the odd man out here and the Players are on commentary, with a shirt for Cole. The Dragons speed things up to start but Kofi comes back with a kick to the ribs (devastating!) before it's off to Big E. Titus goes on about some kind of fungus that Big E. has (maybe he could use a washcloth to clean it up. It didn't make sense when they said it for weeks on end (and yes I know what it is) so why not say it again here?) before the Dragons clean house and dive on all three New Day guys as we take a break.

Back with Kofi getting two on Kalisto before it's off to Big E. for more clubbing forearms. The abdominal stretch with the slaps set up a chinlock from Kofi as we hear about where everyone went to college. The hot tag brings in Cara and Titus takes over on commentary, doing a pretty awesome old school play by play, including a quick rant about how he should have JBL's salary. Everything breaks down and the Midnight Hour ends Cara at 10:16.

**Rating:** C. This was fine and a nice way to set up the title match at Battleground. Neither of these teams are exactly lighting the world on fire at the moment but it's nice to see something other than the team

fighting over and over again. Titus continues to be WAY more charismatic than half the roster and deserves the success he's having.

Steve Austin is on the cover of WWE2K16.

It's Open Challenge time but first we get a package on Owens losing the NXT Title in Tokyo over the weekend. Cena says have no fear because the champ is here, meaning there will be a title match right here on Raw. Again Owens interrupts and says this is the worst part of the show every week because the people have to listen to Cena saying the same garbage over and over again. The bell is about to ring but here's Cesaro one more time. Cesaro says he deserves another shot because he had Cena ready to tap out but Owens cost him the title shot. Owens walks away from the threat of violence and it's time for a rematch.

#### US Title: Cesaro vs. John Cena

Cena is defending of course. A quick uppercut puts Cena down on the floor and we take a very early break. Stop doing that nonsense and just have the bell after the break. We got maybe 40 seconds of "action" and then miss three and a half minutes. I hate that way of thinking. Back with Cesaro stomping away as he almost has to play the heel here, even though he's turned face for all intents and purposes.

A one arm delayed vertical suplex with a squat gets two but Cena shrugs it off (because it's a suplex) and drops Cesaro with a front face electric chair drop. The AA is countered into a DDT for two and it's off to the chinlock. That's good for a second commercial in about five minutes of actual match time because they're really trying to fill in time. Back with Cesaro catching Cena's shoulder in a backbreaker and countering the Shuffle with a crossface.

That's countered into an AA attempt but Cena has to settle for the STF instead. A rope is grabbed so Cesaro rolls some gutwrench suplexes for two of his own. That was a cool looking spot, as always. Cena blocks the Swing by doing a big situp into a DDT for two of his own and the fans are starting to buy into this. Cena rolls through a cross body into the AA but Cesaro lands on his feet.

Swiss Death is countered into a hurricanrana for two and both guys are down. The fans officially think this is awesome so they've won over one of the tougher crowd. Cesaro makes it even more awesome with a spinning springboard uppercut for an even closer two. They fall to the floor with Cena backdropping him into the timekeeper's area but the referee takes his time counting. Well to be fair that's not really a main event level finish so you can't go there again.

Cena shoves Cesaro off the top for two off the Fameasser and then tells him to hold the ropes, which Cesaro does to counter another AA. A HUGE Swiss Death connects for two more but a quick AA gets the same. Both guys are spent so Cesaro is able to grab the Swing, setting up the Sharpshooter which he transitions into another crossface, but Cena slips out and puts on the STF.

Cesaro powers out of THAT and lifts Cena up into the air for a snap suplex. That is just scary, scary power. The Springboard Stunner misses so badly that Cesaro just Neutralizes Cena for two instead of going down. Cena's tornado DDT is stopped in midair and Cesaro slaps him down into another crossface, sending Cena into the ropes for a chorus of boos.

The apron superplex (with EASE) gets two but Cena pops back up and floats over into a Batista Bomb (the sign of Cena being desperate) for a sloppy two, as called out by the announcers. Cena takes him to the corner but almost gets caught in a super Neutralizer, only to be countered into a super AA to retain the title at a mind blowing 30:10.

**Rating:** A-. Yo Vince, I think the guy can connect to the fans. Cesaro is basically where Dolph Ziggler was a few years ago: having really entertaining matches but never being able to show what else he can do because he's never given the chance. Cesaro is one of the rare cases where he nails every single thing he's asked to do and almost everyone is begging for him to move up to the next level, but something about a superhuman freak with a good look who can speak five languages fluently and has nearly fifteen years experience doesn't click with Vince and for some reason the guy never gets the push he deserves.

At least there was this though, which is somehow better than last week's

near classic. Cena and Cesaro are guys with incredible chemistry and yet another example of someone going out there and having maybe the match of their lives against Cena. I'm hoping that when Cena retires, people look back at him in awe because this is a once in a generation kind of talent and we take him for granted.

Owens runs in and eats an AA to close the show.

**Overall Rating:** C. It took a lot to bail this show out but thankfully the main event is awesome and eats up well over half an hour to close things out. Other than that and the awesome BROCK SMASH segment, there really wasn't much to see here. The wrestling in the first hour was horribly lame and the Rusev vs. Ziggler stuff has to end with Ziggler getting eaten like a Russian stew or the whole thing is an even bigger disaster than I was expecting. The main event leaves this on a very positive note, but there's a lot for it to overcome here.

### Results

Big Show vs. Ryback went to a double DQ when Miz interfered

Brie Bella b. Paige – Bella Buster

Sheamus b. Roman Reigns via countout

Dean Ambrose b. Bo Dallas – Dirty Deeds

John Cena b. Cesaro – Middle rope Attitude Adjustment

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# Monday Night Raw – July 6, 2015

I'm still in England so Raw should be up tomorrow. Use this thread to discuss whatever happens and come up with your own ways to blame the Authority for Raw sucking.

## Monday Night Raw

Date: July 6, 2015

Location: Allstate Arena, Chicago, Illinois

Commentators: Byron Saxton, Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

The big story coming out of last week: product placement and lame action. The shows really aren't lighting the world on fire right now, but a lot of that has to do with a lack of the Authority and Brock, because without the two of them, the show comes off as a glorified Smackdown. Get to the point already or get rid of the Authority as the main focus of the show because otherwise, a show without them on it isn't going to go anywhere. Let's get to it.

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## Thought of the Day: The Mice Won't Play

And that's not good.

Something I didn't get around to reporting last week was that the ratings for Raw were a disaster (come on guys you can watch even though your boss is gone). Here's the thing though: it really isn't hard to figure out



why. The problem is, and I hate to admit it, the Authority wasn't around. WWE has pretty much made it clear that if they're not around then Raw is basically a glorified Smackdown.

Yeah stuff might happen, but it's either wrapped up later in the night and barely mentioned again, or completely erased by the Authority. The show has turned into everyone dancing around to entertain HHH and Stephanie as they get to ignore almost all character motivation and logic for the sake of keeping themselves looking good.

The fans know that if the Authority isn't around, big stuff isn't happening and they're much better off going to bed or doing something else and checking the results later, because three hours of mediocre wrestling (and a John Cena match), uninteresting stories and Rollins trying to figure out if he's his own man or needs to buy the rest of the team presents to save him from some big bad isn't enough to hook you in all night. WWE can change this line of thinking pretty easily, but it's been proven before that they're not very interested in getting Stephanie and HHH off TV that easily and I can't imagine it happens anytime soon.

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# Beast in the East: The Land of the Wrong Main Event

## Beast in the East

Date: July 4, 2015

Location: Ryugoku Sumo Hall, Tokyo, Japan

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton

This is one of those times where the WWE Network shows how amazing it really is. Instead of a pay per view or TV show, they've basically sent cameras to film a major house show and we get to watch it because we're lucky that we have the Network in our lives. The main draw is of course Brock Lesnar in a rare match as he faces Kofi Kingston in what could be a

lot of fun. Let's get to it.

The opening video talks about the only two things that matter: Finn Balor vs. Kevin Owens and Brock Lesnar. Does anything else matter?

It's a really basic set with a short aisle and a square Titantron. I like that.

### Neville vs. Chris Jericho

That's quite the opener. The fans are mainly behind Jericho but the LET'S GO NEVILLE chants sneak in there. Feeling out process to start with Jericho working on a wristlock but getting sent out to the floor for his efforts. Back in and we hit a bow and arrow hold on Neville, only to have him flip over into a cover for two.

They're working a nice technical style to start here. Cole talks about their histories and my mind is blown as we hear about Dragon Gate and FMW on WWE programming. Back up and Neville tries some flips, only to be sent out to the floor. The springboard dropkick puts him down again and the fans are eating up some Canadian hero.

We hit the chinlock back inside as Jericho is working a very simple heel style while still being a face for the crowd. An enziguri gets two on Neville. Cole: "And now Neville may be the one heading back to the locker room." So is Jericho just going to stand out there if he wins? It's not the worst idea in the world but as usual, Cole doesn't think before he speaks. Neville fights back up and goes to the top but Jericho is right there waiting to knock him down. Very nicely done there as you can see the story they're telling here.

Jericho's superplex is countered but he has to roll through a Red Arrow attempt. A try at a hurricanrana goes even worse as Jericho counters into the Walls for a very solid reaction from the crowd. The ropes are quickly grabbed though and Neville hits a quick dropkick and standing shooting star for two. Jericho forearm him down and hits the Lionsault for the same. The Codebreaker connects but Jericho takes his time covering so we keep going. Neville pops back up with the delayed German and a superkick but the Red Arrow hits knees, setting up the Liontamer (yes Liontamer)

for the submission at 16:13.

**Rating:** B. Huh? They spent the entire match setting up Neville's big comeback to beat Jericho and then they have him win? I'm not sure on that one but at least Neville looked great in there. I was really digging the story they were going with here Jericho being one step ahead of Neville and cutting him off at every turn while treating him as someone beneath him with all of his cockiness. Good match with a questionable result but the fans dug the heck out of the Lio Tamer so points for giving them something to cheer for. Jericho was the heel here, but it was very basic at best.

Brock is here.

Divas Title: Nikki Bella vs. Tamina vs. Paige

Nikki is defending and it could be interesting to hear how the fans treat this one. Cole, ever the genius, calls the former Women's Champion Bull Nakana (it's Nakano, as Byron Saxton corrects him. Yes, Byron Saxton is the smart one on this team). Paige takes over to start but actually works with Nikki to suplex Tamina. You know, because Tamina is so big that you can't suplex her.

Nikki takes over as you can hear some very loud spots being called. The champ loads up a superplex but the referee is nice enough to tell Tamina to get back in so she can do the Tower of Doom. Tamina gets sent outside again though because she really has no reason to be here other than likely taking the fall later. The Rampaige gets two on Nikki because she killed that move during one of their title matches. It's Tamina in again though with a superkick to Paige but Nikki rolls away from the Superfly Splash, setting up the forearm to retain at 7:13.

**Rating:** C-. This was fine and basically a Raw Divas match. Nikki is pretty clearly getting the Divas Title record because it's going to make us forget about AJ Lee or something like that, because only WWE really cares about these things. You can see the other Divas having to take it back a notch to let her keep up, but Nikki is a lot better than she used to be.

Brock Lesnar video, which might as well be Kofi's last rites.

### Kofi Kingston vs. Brock Lesnar

Just Kofi here and surprisingly no Heyman. For some reason I don't see him as being a big deal in Japan. Kofi is smart enough to bail to the floor to start and we're told that New Day's tag match took place before the show went on the air. I was wondering how they were going to be able to fit the whole seven match card in two hours, but did anyone really need to see New Day vs. Lucha Dragons? Cole mentions Brock being the IWGP Heavyweight Champion, which is always interesting to hear in WWE.

The chase is on for a few seconds but the inevitable beating quickly begins. Kofi's cross body works as well as you would expect it to work and a dropkick to the back just annoys Brock even more. Kofi flips out of a German and goes after the knee for as much effect as it's going to have. There's the first German though and the Japanese fans chant SUPLEX CITY. German #2 makes Kofi's hair bounce in a good bit. The fans try to cheer for Kingston so Brock just destroys him with the F5 for the pin at 2:58. This was exactly what it should have been.

Brock throws in a few more Germans because he can, followed by some F5's to an invading New Day. Again, this is exactly what it should have been.

In case you're wondering about the other two advertised matches, Cesaro beat Diego by submission and the Lucha Dragons pinned the New Day in dark matches.

Quick recap of the NXT Title match, which should be main eventing but instead we're getting a lame tag match because that's how WWE works. Anyway, Finn Balor made his name in Japan and is coming back home as the Demon to take the title from NXT Champion Kevin Owens. Kevin simply said it's not going to happen.

### NXT Title: Finn Balor vs. Kevin Owens

We get the Demon entrance and oh yes it's still glorious. For a bonus, the camera changes to an arena shot at the crescendos of the music. To make it feel even more special, we get the full on flower presentation

from geisha girls (Owens throws his into the crowd of course) and streamers for both guys. Get this through your head ROH: doing the same thing for every match doesn't make it feel more special. Hideo Itami is shown in the front row and we're ready to start. Balor has more paint than ever with his face, torso and left leg covered.

Balor charges at the bell and loads up the Coup de Grace in the first ten seconds. Owens rolls outside so Balor nails a big dive as the NXT chants start up. He tries to bail again and eats a baseball slide as Balor is all over him. Back in and Owens hammers away to take over for the first time. Owens: "AND THAT'S WHY I'M THE CHAMP!" We hear more of Balor's accomplishments in New Japan as Owens takes some bows.

It's off to Chinlock City before a forearm breaks up Balor's springboard. The slow pace is working for Kevin here and it fits him very well. Finn beats the count back in but takes the backsplash for two. Back in and Owens snapmares him down and runs the ropes...before stopping for a chinlock. Owens: "Are you not impressed? I don't care. I hate this country and all its stupid people!" Balor fights back again with a middle rope forearm for two so Owens does Cena's finishing sequence, complete with an attempted AA.

Balor is afraid of a lawsuit over gimmick infringement (only Kurt Angle can steal that many finishers) and slips out twice in a row. Bloody Sunday is teased (and the fans gasp) but it's a Pele Kick to put Owens down instead. Owens takes a big flip dive and a top rope double stomp to the back, followed by a reverse Bloody Sunday (not called that of course) for a VERY close two. The Coup de Grace misses though and Owens' Cannonball gets two. The package piledriver slam gets the same but Balor hits a quick Sling Blade.

Another Coup de Grace is countered so Balor kicks him in the head and FINALLY connects with the stomp...for two. Dang I thought that was it. Owens can't hit the swinging fisherman's superplex so he settles for a middle rope Regal Roll for two. That looked great. Kevin's Swanton hits knees and the real Bloody Sunday gets an even closer two. They're trading bombs here and it's getting awesome. Owens makes the eternal mistake of slapping a hero in the face and saying the hero can't beat him. Balor

dropkicks him into the corner, hits a running corner dropkick and a second Coup de Grace for the title at 19:30.

**Rating:** B+. Was there ever any doubt that this was going to be awesome? Owens is one of the best heels that I've seen in years and he does everything he can do to make you hate him. The fact that he can go as well as he does in the ring makes him even better, which is saying quite a bit as he's that good as a character.

Tatsumi Fujinami comes in to congratulate the new champion. Owens of course refuses a handshake because he's a true heel.

### Kane/King Barrett vs. John Cena/Dolph Ziggler

Here's a match that no one wants to see because it's lame even by house show standards and WWE didn't think this stuff through. And Lana isn't even here, though to be fair she wouldn't make sense out there with Cena. Ziggler shoulders Barrett down to start so it's off to the power guys, meaning Kane gets to bore main event crowds in a new country. Cole: "Cena has restored credibility to what many would admit was a rather stagnant United States Title." Oh yeah Vince isn't listening.

Cena slugs away at Kane for no effect, just as he's done about 194 times over the years. Maybe if we're lucky Kane will break a hole in the ring and be a demon/monster again. Barrett chinlocks Cena before it's back to Kane, who bores the announcers so much that they start name dropping Japanese wrestlers and co-promoted shows. Cole: "It's amazing to know that COO HHH is watching this show live." No Cole, it isn't.

Barrett comes back in for some big right hands as the announcers keep trying to find ANYTHING to talk about here. Another Barrett chinlock slows things down even more but Cena comes back with an AA to a very limited reaction. Kane breaks up the tag but can't hit a chokeslam, so Cena, ever the genius, tries an AA. Since it's against Kane though, the powers of history and Cena's strength don't work because Cena can usually do that on Henry and Big Show but can't handle the 100lb lighter man.

ANOTHER chinlock makes the match drag on even further but Barrett misses an elbow to finally allow Ziggler to get the hot tag. Dolph cleans

house...and gets taken down again so this match can keep going for reasons I do not understand. Just let Cena AA Barrett for the pin already. We hit the double arm stretch on Dolph before Winds of Changes is countered into a crucifix for two. The FIFTH chinlock of this match is followed by Barrett's apron knees and yet another chinlock.

Winds of Change stops Zigler again and Kane does the old Arn Anderson drop down onto the back until he crotches himself. Now usually that would mean a hot tag, but why do that when you can have Kane hit a big boot and a double back elbow from the heels to keep this going? The chokeslam is countered and Zigler finally hits the jumping DDT for the hot tag. Cena AA's Kane with ease (because this match has erased the last ten minutes from history) and hits another on Barrett for the pin at a mind numbing 23:52.

**Rating:** D. The match wasn't even horrible but you could have cut out at least ten minutes of this and done the exact same match. Rusev would have made a lot more sense than Barrett but for some reason they didn't change this match to ANYTHING else. The time was the real problem here as it went on forever and the chinlocks killed any interest there might have been here.

A big celebration ends the show. Cole: "You and I actually trended on Twitter tonight!" Is there really any other way to end this? Thankfully the last shot of the show is Balor holding up the title.

**Overall Rating:** B. Here's the thing: this show had two goals to take care of: Brock Lesnar being all destructive and a good NXT Title match with Balor getting the belt. They nailed those two things to near perfection, so anything else was a bonus. Luckily there was a good opener and a fine Divas match, but that main event killed a lot of the energy the show had. They really should have aired one of the other matches in its place, because that was the completely wrong choice to end the show. This should have ended with Balor pinning Owens, not a lame tag match. Still though, really fun stuff for a glorified house show.

## Results

Chris Jericho b. Neville – Red Arrow

Nikki Bella b. Paige and Tamina – Forearm to Tamina

Brock Lesnar b. Kofi Kingston – F5

Finn Balor b. Kevin Owens – Coup de Grace

John Cena/Dolph Ziggler b. Kane/King Barrett – AA to Barrett

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## **Smackdown – July 2, 2015: The Early Bird Catches The Same Old Smackdown**

This is the full review as I watched the show already and did this in advance. There might be a few little bits here and there that I missed, but it would probably be Tough Enough stuff etc. If there's anything major, let me know.

### **Smackdown**

Date: July 2, 2015

Location: Giant Center, Hershey, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Jerry Lawler, Jimmy Uso



There isn't a lot to say at the moment as we're getting closer and closer to Battleground and the showdown between Lesnar and Rollins. Raw mainly focused on Wyatt vs. Reigns, which is coming off as a strong feud with Wyatt getting inside Reigns' head, but I can't imagine there being much of a challenge for Roman when they finally face off. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Rollins giving the Authority all their presents on Monday, leading to the Authority and Wyatt beating down Reigns to end the show.

Here are Rollins and the Stooges to open things up. Rollins keeps plugging the product placement but says it's time to talk about the present. One day, everyone is going to ask about what it was like when Seth Rollins destroyed the Roman Empire and burned Suplex City to the ground. After some clips of the beatdowns, Rollins brags about conquering the conqueror last week.

Then Roman couldn't hang with the power of the Stooges and Kane got on his flight to Tokyo, but before he left he made a few matches for tonight: Dean Ambrose vs. Bray Wyatt and Roman Reigns vs. Seth Rollins, assuming Roman shows up. Cue Ambrose to come towards the ring but he walks back and comes out again with a kendo stick. Dean fights them off but is told his match with Wyatt starts RIGHT NOW.

#### Dean Ambrose vs. Bray Wyatt

Dean chops and strikes away against the ropes to start but walks into the running body block to change control early on. We hit the chinlock way faster than we should before they head outside for Ambrose's 619 under the bottom rope and a big clothesline before it's off to a break. Maybe they can get out of this lame formula stuff during the commercial. Back with Dean fighting out of Sister Abigail and nailing a big suicide dive to the floor.

A tornado DDT gets two for Ambrose but Wyatt takes his head off with a clothesline and gets two of his own off the backsplash. Back up and Dean's rebound lariat and top rope elbow get two as well, meaning the wait for anything but signature moves continues. Dean dives off the apron and gets thrown into the barricade for his efforts. Well that was

different. Sister Abigail is good for the pretty sudden pin at 9:00.

**Rating:** D+. It was watchable as these two have fought so many times before, but this felt a lot more like a house show match than anything else. Dean did his signature stuff, Bray did his signature stuff, and then Wyatt won. I've seen far worse matches, but I never got the slightest bit interested in this one, partially because I'm sick of seeing these guys fight.

Adam Rose and Rosa Mendes are in the ring to call the entire audience jealous of him, only to be interrupted by R-Truth.

### R-Truth vs. Adam Rose

Rose gets thrown around to start and Truth thrusts some pelvis at him. Phillips: "Truth is aware we don't have kings in this country right?" Lawler: "Are you kidding me?" Truth blocks some right hands and hits the Lie Detector for the pin at 1:58.

Video of Rock appearing at a house show over the weekend. Since this is WWE, they show it on the WWE Youtube channel.

Recap of Cena vs. Cesaro on Monday with Owens coming in for the DQ.

On WWE.com, Ryback promised to run through Mark Henry tonight on his way to Battleground, where he'll run over Big Show and Miz.

Mark Henry disagrees and says Ryback is disrespectful.

### Mark Henry vs. Ryback

Non-title again and Henry's signature entrance with the camera behind his back makes its return. Mark shoves him to the floor to start but Ryback just punches him in the face and tries Shell Shock, only to be thwarted by the powers of fat. The announcers say that if he can't get Henry up, he can't get Big Show up. Please forget that HE ALREADY DID THAT. Ryback gets one off a splash but can't get Henry up for a suplex. Henry: "FEED ME MORE!" How many times do you think that's been said in Mark's life?

The bearhug doesn't last long but Henry falls on Ryback's slam attempt

for two. There's a double clothesline to put both guys down but Ryback is up first with the suplex. The World's Strongest Slam is countered into the spinebuster, followed by the Shell Shock for the pin at 7:00. Jimmy Uso is VERY excited over this.

**Rating:** C-. I liked this more than I was expecting to with Ryback building up to the suplex and then finally paying it off. No it's nothing mind blowing, but they built something up and then got to the point. That's basic storytelling and it's WAY more than you would expect to get out of something like this.

The Stooges show off some Apple Watch features.

### Brie Bella vs. Naomi

This is described as a match between the stars of Total Divas. Brie slaps her in the face to start and a chase on the floor lets Brie get in a clothesline to take over. Back in and the BRIE MODE minus obnoxiously shouting BRIE MODE knee to the face gets two but Naomi slaps her in the face. Turnabout being fair play and all that jazz. Fox trips Naomi up though and the Bella Buster is good for the pin at 3:59.

**Rating:** D. Yeah this happened. It's a shame that Naomi's big push has been stopped for the sake of another Total Divas storyline because it's that time of the year again. There are some good elements in the division but the complete lack of any real motivation or logic to most of the characters cripples anything they could do.

Wyatt says he's the reason Reigns wasn't there to save Ambrose earlier tonight. Reigns must be hiding in some cave feeling sorry for himself. That isn't the Reigns that Bray knows though, because Reigns is all about fighting the world. Bray hasn't known anyone since he's been on this planet and that makes him stronger. Everything Roman loves in this world is going to be burned to the ground, leaving Wyatt and Reigns all alone. Then and only then will Wyatt finish Reigns, because it's anyone but you Reigns. Run.

### Prime Time Players vs. Ascension

Non-title. Titus chops Viktor to start and the announcers cringe in stereo. Jimmy: "Geez Louise." Darren gets suplexed onto Viktor and gets two off the Earthquake splash. It's off to Konnor to run Darren over, followed by shrugging off a forearm and punching Young down. They head outside with Darren getting posted as we head to a break.

Back with Lawler updating us on Roman Reigns' status for tonight: he's still not here. And I'm sure he will NOT be here for the match they've basically spent the whole night advertising. Young finally sends the losers into each other for a hot tag off to Titus as house is cleaned. Jimmy: "BOO YEAH!" Everything breaks down and the Clash of the Titus ends Konnor at 9:41.

**Rating:** D+. The match was acceptable and the action was fine, even though there was never any doubt as to who was winning. The part I'm interested in though is who the Players are going to be facing. They keep hyping the idea that it isn't clear which members of the New Day are getting the shot, which makes me think Dallas might be brought in as a surprise. Why that would be imposing is anyone's guess.

Here are Rusev and Summer Rae (looking as good as she ever has in a white dress) for a chat. Summer wants to apologize for her actions at Raw as she stooped down to the gold digger's level when Lana isn't even a real woman. Rusev says Summer knows her place but almost calls her Lana by mistake. He's coming for Zigler and that's about it.

Rollins and the Stooges come out for the match with Reigns and it's time for the dreaded ten count. In case you've never watched wrestling before, Reigns shows up at nine and it's time to fight.

### Seth Rollins vs. Roman Reigns

Non-title of course. Roman starts fast and whips Rollins into the corner before taking FOREVER to powerbomb Mercury, allowing Seth to kick him in the ribs and take over. A top rope double stomp on the back makes Reigns' injuries (from Raw) even worse and a spinning kick to the ribs stops his comeback. Reigns shrugs it off again and plants Seth with a powerbomb, drawing in the Stooges for the DQ at 5:58.

**Rating:** D. I get that it was short, but there's no reason to have this match. Why burn through another edition of this match instead of having, say, Reigns vs. the Stooges? If you're only going to give it a few minutes then let Roman beat the two of them up and then have Rollins interfere. It's that simple and a way to save one of these matches from being done to death. Again, thinking can make the booking that much better but for some reason it almost never happens.

The beating is on but Ambrose comes out for the save, allowing for a big double beatdown on Mercury as the other two bail to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** D+. This one didn't work for me as it was mainly midcard stuff and then a really lame main event story that went nowhere. You can only have the Shield guys fight each other so many times before it stops being interesting and unfortunately we passed that back in like December. These matches should be major showdowns, not getting six minutes and a lame DQ finish on a random Smackdown. The show didn't do anything for me and there's no reason to see this.

### Results

Bray Wyatt b. Dean Ambrose – Sister Abigail

R-Truth b. Adam Rose – Lie Detector

Ryback b. Mark Henry – Shell Shock

Brie Bella b. Naomi – Bella Buster

Prime Time Players b. Ascension – Clash of the Titus to Konnor

Roman Reigns b. Seth Rollins via DQ when Joey Mercury and Jamie Noble interfered

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# Monday Night Raw – June 29, 2015: What A Shock

## Monday Night Raw

Date: June 29, 2015

Location: Verizon Center, Washington, D.C.

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

Battleground is on the horizon and the Authority seems to be reunited to help Seth Rollins defend his World Title against Brock Lesnar. This means Kane and Joey Mercury at the moment, as Lesnar injured Jamie Noble last week, meaning there aren't many obstacles for Lesnar to overcome to get to Rollins. Let's get to it.

The opening recap shows the ending of last week's show with Lesnar being laid out by the devastating forces of Kane, Mercury and Rollins. I'm so glad they had Lesnar get beaten up as he was getting way too close to feeling like something special and they needed to cut his legs out from underneath him. Well, maybe just the toes or so as Lesnar is going to be fine.

Here's the Authority, complete with the secret weapon of Noble, to open things up. This is officially Monday Night Rollins, because Rollins has been watching some old Nitro matches. Perhaps on the WWE Network for \$9.99? He talks about the power in this city, which you attain by doing things no one else could do. Rollins did something that Cena and even the Undertaker couldn't do, as he conquered the conqueror last week. Suplex City was burned to the ground and Lesnar is now on his way to Japan.

That's what he deserves after what Lesnar did to Noble last week. We even get a quick Jamie Noble chant because these fans are that intelligent. They're quickly tossed aside though as Rollins demands that the fans show Noble the respect that he deserves. However, it's time for presents! Rollins has Apple Watches for everyone, likely fulfilling a product placement agreement. Kane is getting a bonus though. He debuted back in 1997 (that really shouldn't be brought up) and a lot of things have changed since then.

Bill Clinton was in charge, the internet was dial-up and Paul Heyman was fat and disgusting...so not everything has changed. In all that time, Kane hasn't asked for a thing, so Rollins is sending him to.....Hawaii, complete with a picture saying Hawaii, thereby making this a complete copy of the segment where Rocky Maivia took over the Nation, giving the members watches and Faarooq a picture of Rocky himself.

As a hula dancer and ukelele player come out to complete the mood, Kane is looking forward to deciding which animal to throw into a volcano, but Rollins thinks they should team up to destroy Ambrose and Reigns in a No DQ tag match tonight. Rollins still isn't done though as he has a 2015 Cadillac for the Stooges to travel in. The guys celebrate as Rollins lists off the price and features. I was right about that product placement it seems. This goes on until Big Show comes out for his match.

The tag match later is presented by the new Terminator movie. I'm sure some people will get annoyed by this but it's money for the company in like 30 seconds. It's not the worst thing in the world.

### Big Show vs. Mark Henry

Oh...yay. Miz is on commentary to cheer for Henry but Show pounds Mark into the corner with right hands (which are the size of typewriters according to JR), only to have Henry knock him down and hit a splash for two. Not that it matters as two big right hands knock Henry silly for the pin at 1:24.

Ryback (sans belt) hits the ring to take Show down with a shoulder to the leg. Miz runs in to kick Ryback in the jaw, so Ryback wants their match to happen right now.

## Miz vs. Ryback

Non-title., but now Ryback has the belt. I know it doesn't mean as much today but it disappears? Miz tries to stomp him down but gets his head slammed into the mat for his efforts. Ryback whips him across the ring with authority (not THE Authority of course. Like they'd be involved with the Intercontinental Title), followed by a totally ridiculous FORTY SECOND delayed vertical suplex.

Miz bails to the floor but comes back with a short DDT for two, setting up a nice face pull. A chinlock goes nowhere but the Reality Check gets two more. That's it for Ryback as he comes back with a spinebuster but the threat of a Meat Hook sends Miz running for the countout (the rare three count countout before the referee just says screw it and ends the match) at 5:11.

**Rating:** D. I would say this is what you would expect, but what you would actually expect is for Miz to beat him off a rollup when Big Show distracted Ryback. The triple threat match really isn't doing anything for me, but at least there's an actual feud over the title instead of just a one off match for a change.

## Alicia Fox vs. Paige

Alicia comes out to the Bellas' music and has them at ringside. Paige takes her down into an armbar to start and drives a knee into the face for two. Some kicks in the corner don't bother Paige much as she hits a Thesz press, only to have the Bellas offer a distraction so Alicia can take over again as we go to a break. Back with Fox standing on the hair before we hit the chinlock.

As the fans start falling asleep due to the rest hold, the Bellas are right there with the COME ON (insert name here) shouting. A tilt-a-whirl backbreaker gets two on Paige and it's back to the chinlock. Two chinlocks in a match this show tells me that Fox has no idea where to go on offense. Paige comes back with her three clotheslines and a kick to the face for two. Nikki tries a distraction so Fox can roll her up, only to have Paige roll through (with nothing on Fox's arms, meaning there's no reason she didn't kick out) for the pin at 9:43.



**Rating:** D. The idea was fine here but it's very clear that Fox had no business controlling most of a match this long. Paige vs. Nikki could be good, but I don't buy for a second that Paige is going to win as Nikki just MUST get the Divas Title record so we never think of AJ Lee again. I mean, that would just change so many things right?

Here's John Cena for the US Title Open Challenge (with the promo during the entrance instead of in the ring)...and here's Kevin Owens! I'll ignore Cole calling this a budding rivalry because Cole is that big of a schnook when he stops thinking.

#### US Title: Kevin Owens vs. John Cena

Owens drops to the floor after the Big Match Intros and says he'll just wait for Battleground. He'll take the US Title there, but maybe this man can do it instead.

#### US Title: Cesaro vs. John Cena

Owens joins commentary, which should be entertaining stuff. Thankfully they're immediately talking about the Balor vs. Owens NXT Title match this coming Saturday. Cena starts with a headlock and monkey flip to send Cesaro into the corner, meaning it's time for a standoff. This time it's Cesaro putting on a headlock before planting Cena with a powerslam, followed by a crucifix of all things for two.

The AA is countered and Cesaro drops Cena with a right hand for another near fall. As usual, why make things more complicated than they need to be? Off to an abdominal stretch on the mat as Owens talks about having what it takes to be a real champion. A dropkick staggers Cesaro but he casually slugs Cena down and gets two off a crossface punch to the head.

Back from a break with Cesaro trying a Sharpshooter of all things but Cena kicks him away, only to take a big clothesline for two. Cesaro loads up the Swing but opts for a catapult instead, only to have Cena bounce back into something similar to a springboard Stunner (it barely connected) for two of his own. Cesaro flips out of the AA and hits a massive Swiss Death for two more.

There's the STF but Cesaro rolls out, adjusts his legs and turns the hold over into the Sharpshooter. That was Hart vs. Perfect-esque. Cena makes a rope though and Cesaro's frustration is setting in. Owens: "Cena is in trouble. Not as much trouble as he'll be in at Battleground but close enough."

The apron superplex puts Cena down again as Cole thinks this is going to be a match of the year candidate. It kind of loses its appeal if you keep saying it over and over again, which is why a lot of Cole's commentary gets old. And yes, I'm aware it's mainly him being fed lines. Cena gets two more off a tornado DDT and they slug it out until Cesaro tries a high cross body, only to have Cena roll through into...actually not the AA as he spins Cesaro forward into a faceplant for another near fall.

Owens gets up and swings at Cole for praising Cena, who is dropkicked off the top rope and out to the floor. Back in and Cena tries a sunset flip but has to settle for a sunset bomb for yet another two. There's a Neutralizer out of nowhere but Cena kicks out again. A spinebuster sets up the Swing (good idea to have a power move set it up. It's weird when he just grabs the legs) which sets up the Sharpshooter but Owens comes in for the DQ at 20:20.

**Rating:** B+. Can Cena have a bad match at the moment? The guy is on one heck of a roll, which says a lot given how good he normally is. Cesaro using the Sharpshooter is fine but debuting it against Cena isn't the best idea as Cena hasn't tapped out in about thirteen years. Very good match here, but did you really expect anything else?

Kevin powerbombs both guys and says if anyone is taking the title off Cena, it's going to be him. Owens comes off as such a jerk on commentary and I love it very much.

Tonight, Dolph Ziggler and Lana are going public. Oh man this is going to be bad isn't it?

We get what I think is the same recap that opened the show. That's quite the use of another three minutes.

Bray Wyatt pops up on screen with the ANYONE BUT YOU picture of Reigns.

He wants Reigns to open his eyes to see the truth and close his mouth so no more lies can be spread. Wyatt wasn't his father's favorite because his father threw him away like a piece of trash. I wonder if IRS wrote that off his taxes. Wyatt has his wings back now though and Reigns knows everything Bray stands for. There will be no distractions at Battlegrounds because the insects that watch them every week are inconsequential. They're the yin to each others yang and Bray will be Roman's crown of suffering. Anyone but you Roman. Run.

### Lucha Dragons/Prime Time Players vs. New Day/Bo Dallas

JBL: "We lucha on Monday nights!" We get a clip of Rock's big surprise appearance at a house show over the weekend where he laid out Dallas, which is a GREAT advertisement for the house show circuit. It's the same thing as when they would occasionally have a title change and then turn it right back soon after. No it's not going to happen all the time, but make the people think it could and you can sell some more tickets.

Woods and Kalisto get things going with the masked one flipping off the top rope into a wristdrag as JBL says the Dragons remind him of the APA days. Off to Cara vs. Dallas with Sin cranking on the arm, only to have Darren come in for his standing Earthquake splash for two. Titus comes in to throw Dallas around with ease, which is a really simple yet effective power move. Kalisto doesn't have the same luck as Bo knees him in the head to finally take over.

Back to Young for a chinlock as the match slows down. The belly to back suplex onto the apron plants Dallas again and the threat of a huge brawl sends us to a break. We come back with Woods holding Kalisto in a cobra clutch (that's a move that has gotten a lot more popular recently) but it's quickly off to Cara to flip around and kick Big E. in the head.

E. isn't in enough trouble to get caught in the Gut Check though as he shoves Young to the floor to take over. We get the rotating stomps before it's back to Bo for the chinlock. That goes nowhere and the hot tag brings in Titus and everything breaks down. The Dragons hit big stereo dives, allowing Titus to hit a sitout spinebuster for the pin on Kofi at 14:35.

**Rating:** D+ Longer match than they needed to have here and I'm not wild on New Day losing again before their big rematch. That's why you bring in someone like Dallas: to take the fall and keep the New Day looking as strong as possible, but since WWE never actually thinks these things through, this is what we get. At least the champions didn't lose though.

Here are Dolph and Lana for their big moment. Originally they weren't on the best of terms because Lana was just trying to get back at Rusev. Then things changed, Ziggler is a real man, and Lana cares for him. Rusev finally hobbles out with Summer Rae by his side. He never cared about Lana because kissing her was like kissing the ring post.

Ziggler cuts him off and calls Lana his girlfriend and violence is teased, but Summer grabs the mic and calls Lana a gold digger. She was with Rusev when he won the US Title, but as soon as that was gone, so was Lana. That's enough for Lana and the fight is on, with the fans seemingly very pleased when Lana's skirt comes up. The match could be a disaster but the moment wasn't bad.

Ambrose talks to some Terminators when Reigns comes in and assures Dean that he's ready. Dean is the only family Reigns has around here and they're ready to rage.

### Neville vs. Sheamus

Before the match we get a cool video of Neville being turned into a comic book superhero. I actually said he wrestled like a superhero when I saw him at a house show a few months back so they really nailed the idea here. Sheamus takes him down to the mat with a headlock as the announcers debate Neville beating him in the King of the Ring. JBL: "Nobody remembers who came second to Usain Bolt." Cole: "We did." JBL: "Well you're nobody."

Neville kicks him to the floor and Sheamus grabs the briefcase for comfort as we take a break. Back with Sheamus hitting the Regal Roll and a release suplex for no cover. Instead Sheamus just smiles like a bully is supposed to do. The fans think this is boring, so Sheamus puts his hand to his ear and slaps on a chinlock. Now THAT is a great heel move. No sarcasm there if it's not clear.

Neville kicks him in the face for a breather but Sheamus calmly hits three straight Irish Curses to regain control. Sheamus gets low bridged to the floor though, setting up a great looking Asai moonsault. Back in and Sheamus gets kicked in the head again but is still able to kick the ropes for a huge crash to break up the Red Arrow. The Brogue Kick ends Neville at 12:41.

**Rating:** C. This was fine and again I like that they're pushing Sheamus instead of having him go on the stupid, stupid losing streak that has become the trend for Money in the Bank winners. I'm hoping Neville can bounce back from this as it felt like a downgrade for him, but there's a very good chance that it's a one off loss and nothing else. The superhero video was a very nice touch and gives me hope.

#### Jack Swagger vs. King Barrett

Before the match, Barrett demands that all of his opponents must bow down to him. Swagger will have none of that so Barrett bails to the floor to start. Back in and Swagger throws him down with ease and gets the Patriot Lock with Barrett already in the ropes. Well he's a hoss you see so you can't expect that much intelligence. Jack runs into a knee in the corner and the Bull Hammer ends this at 1:47.

#### Roman Reigns/Dean Ambrose vs. Kane/Seth Rollins

No DQ. The Stooges come out in the Cadillac. It's a brawl to start as it should be with Rollins quickly being knocked out to the floor. Kane gets double teamed but Rollins gets back in to shove Ambrose off the top rope. Back from an early break with Rollins holding Reigns in a chinlock and the partners on the apron, because WWE doesn't get what NO DISQUALIFICATION means. Reigns fights away from Kane and it's a double tag to bring in Ambrose and Rollins.

Dean quickly cleans house and knocks Rollins to the floor. It's weapons time with a table getting things started. As if the fans didn't love Dean enough already. The Stooges pull it away so Reigns comes back with a bunch of kendo stick shots to Mercury, followed by three straight Superman Punches to various evildoers. Speaking of evil, cue Bray Wyatt to take out Reigns, including a Rock Bottom onto the announcers' table.

Dean can't fight them off alone though and it's a chokeslam and Pedigree for the pin at 11:45.

**Rating:** C. Again, this was totally fine and they covered all the bases they needed to cover here. Wyatt costing Reigns the match makes perfect sense and at least the pin on Ambrose took two people. It's a pretty standard main event tag, but I'm glad they made it no DQ to avoid the same tired ending we always get.

Post match Reigns saves Dean from a TripleBomb through the table but Kane chokeslams him down too. Reigns fights back again but is finally thrown through the table in the corner. Another Pedigree puts Reigns down, leaving Wyatt to come back in (where was he for the last eight minutes?) and hit Sister Abigail to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. Well it took me three days and....eh. I'm not at all surprised as it wasn't the best looking show in the world but at least it had the awesome Cena vs. Cesaro match (I'm as shocked as you are) and a few other good things in there as well. The Ziggler/Lana segment started off looking bad but Lana getting physical was long overdue. The show wasn't too bad and had more than enough moments to make it work. Good enough stuff here, but the car actually survived. That's quite the shock.

## Results

Big Show b. Mark Henry – KO Punch

Ryback b. Miz via countout

Paige b. Alicia Fox – Rollup

Cesaro b. John Cena via DQ when Kevin Owens interfered

Prime Time Players/Lucha Dragons b. New Day/Bo Dallas – Sitout spinebuster to Kingston

Sheamus b. Neville – Brogue Kick

King Barrett b. Jack Swagger – Bull Hammer

Kane/Seth Rollins b. Dean Ambrose/Roman Reigns – Pedigree to Ambrose

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## **Suplex City Mach 1**

Thanks to NSL for pointing this out, which he did due to the recommendation from Wrestling Wars, which you should all be listening to. Back at King of the Ring 2001, Kurt Angle suplexed Shane McMahon over and over and over. JR's description: "Angle is taking Shane McMahon to Suplex City."