

Sheamus Out 4-6 Months

Shoulder injury.

I was about to make a Thought of the Day called “What happened to Sheamus?”. This might be the best thing for him as he DESPERATELY needs to freshen up his character.

I Want To Talk A Little Bit About Advertising WWE Matches (The Mad Men Table Of Contents)

Over the last few years wrestling television has changed from a show of squashes to what you see today with the stories being advanced every week for two or three hours a night. However there are a few changes in how the shows could be presented from week to week that could help things a lot. Today we’re going to look at how WWE screws up the advertising of their show and how easily this could be fixed. Let’s get to it.

This was originally going to be part of another I Want To Talk A Little Bit About but it evolved into its own. I could get used to this.

The other day I was reading and at the start of the book there was a table of contents. It’s a basic idea and tells you what you’re going to get in the book you’re reading. Last night’s Raw (August 5, 2013) was a pretty stacked show, with John Cena, Randy Orton, Daniel Bryan, CM Punk,

Rob Van Dam and Shield in action. Of all those guys, two were announced early in the show. The other six were announced as being in action over an hour into the broadcast.

Now jump with me back to 1987. The main WWF show was Superstars of Wrestling and it always had the same intro: Vince and company telling us the wrestlers we would be seeing on the card. It might not include their opponents (as more often than not they would be in a squash match) but you would see who was wrestling that day and you knew inside the first 40 seconds of the show. In other words, it was like you had a table of contents that was telling you what you were going to see on the show that night.

This brings us to today's shows where you often hear only one or two matches at the start of the show. You can probably guess that certain people will be on the show, but it's really a guessing game. In other words, you have to judge the book by its cover instead of actually knowing what you're going to be getting that night. Now, this is a bad idea and let's take a look at a few reasons why.

First and foremost, if you know what you're getting later, there's a good chance the fans of those people are going to stick around. Suppose you're a Randy Orton fan. If you're watching Raw and hear that he's going to be in a match against anyone that night, odds are you're going to stick around. Many fans would stick around no matter who it's against, but on occasion it's going to be against someone that people aren't going to be interested in.

This brings us to the second point of advertising the matches: pick what you mention. For instance, last night we had Rob Van Dam facing the World Heavyweight Champion Alberto Del Rio. That's a very popular former world

champion in a rematch with a world champion that people would like to see. In other words, it's a match worth mentioning at the top of the show. On the other hand, a few weeks back we had CM Punk vs. Darren Young. The way to advertise that: "CM Punk will be in action later tonight."

Going back to Raw from last night, the main event was a six man tag between Shield and Daniel Bryan/Randy Orton/John Cena. The match was announced at roughly 9:15 and the opening bell was about an hour and forty five minutes later. That's a big match but it's only getting 105 minutes of time to build. This move causes another set of problems which can be rectified in just a few easy steps.

We'll start with the most obvious problem: it's not enough time to get the word out. If you weren't watching in a span of less than two hours, you had no idea the match was happening by the end of the show and you'll miss the match. These are three world champion caliber guys fighting the top three man team in years with potential world title implications. Daniel Bryan also happens to be the hottest act in the world right now and Cena is his opponent at the second biggest show of the year where Orton might cash in his shot at the title. And this gets less than two hours of build.

Here's the simple solution: announce the match for next week's show. It's a simple solution: you give it seven days to build up to the match instead of half a show and people have a chance to hear about it and anticipate it. Think about Wrestlemania 28. The main event had over a year to build up and it made a fortune. It's a simple principle: give it more time and people will be more interested.

Now what can you do in this week? You can use that social media that WWE

is head over heels for to talk about the match. Have Bryan, Cena and Orton cut promos and put them on the App and have Shield respond to give the match another reason (sidebar: why did Shield come down in the first place? It was never explained, likely due to not having enough time) to happen. Have Orton Tweet about possibly cashing in the briefcase on Cena if he's vulnerable. Which is more interesting? Hearing Orton tease a cash-in or hearing a 15 year old from Ogallala, Nebraska talk about how much he's looking forward to something.

Think of the whole thing in practical terms. If you go to a restaurant to buy some food for the night, it's not all in plain brown bags. It's on a menu which tells you exactly what you're getting. You don't buy some mystery bag and hope you get something good in it. You look at what's presented and pick something if you think it looks good. The same idea is true of wrestling: if you like what's offered to you that night, you'll stick around for the show and stay until you get what you agreed to stick around for.

It also solves another problem: what was going to fill in the rest of the card? This is one of those things that gets on my nerves with general manager characters. Suppose Orton, Bryan or Shield hadn't come out during that segment? What was Maddox supposed to be filling in the rest of his show with? You book that main event in advance and the show is much more logical, as you have a match for the show coming in and aren't booking things on the fly.

Booking things in advance also keeps the card from changing around all the time. Instead of mentioning something and then never following up on the idea later on because there's no bridge to the next week, you already have a match set up in advance and can build the show around that. If nothing else it could help prevent continuity errors like something being brought up one week and never mentioned or followed up on the next.

Finally, there's another out for the WWE by advertising the matches in advance. If a majority of the matches are announced in advance and someone sticks around because they want to see something but doesn't like it, they only have themselves to blame. You knew what you were offered, you agreed to stick around, potentially for hours on end, and you wanted to see a match. If it turns out the match sucks, you can't blame WWE for it as it was your idea. It's better than having someone wait up and then say "I waited two hours for THAT? Screw this company."

Overall, WWE has a lot of good stuff to offer its fans but it goes about telling them those matches exist very badly. Whether it's giving them just over an hour and a half's notice that a match is coming or not letting the match build itself up at all or offering WWE the Mystery Meat of the Day card and hoping you like what you get, there are distinct problems with the way the shows are advertised. Fix these things up and the shows would easily attract a bigger audience.

On This Day: August 5, 2011 – Smackdown: KB Goes To Smackdown

Smackdown

Date: August 5, 2011

Location: Rupp Arena, Lexington, Kentucky

Commentators: Josh Matthews, Booker T, Michael Cole

We have two more shows before Summerslam and this is the first of them. I'd expect a lot of build for Christian vs. Orton V

and also some more from the midcard stuff that Smackdown has gotten good at. The big thing though is the freshly face Sheamus continuing Mark Henry. I'm giddy over that one. Let's get to it.

The opening video is about Sheamus vs. Henry. The crowd popped huge in the arena for the line of "I'll fight him."

Sheamus vs. Great Khali

Here's a test...kind of. I was confused at first because the tron video said Jinder Mahal, which would have surprised me. Josh immediately gets on my nerves by saying they're on the campus of the University of Kentucky, which is flat out not true. The city owns Rupp Arena and it's not on the campus. The only affiliation it has with UK is the basketball team plays there. Everyone makes that mistake that isn't from here though so it's understandable. For some reason it's like they're afraid to say Lexington.

Sheamus vs. Henry is announced for Summerslam. Khali takes him down quickly with the power game. Sheamus gets him tied up in the ropes so that Khali is facing the crowd and pounds away on the chest. He goes up top but gets chopped in the chest to send him back down to the floor. Time for a nerve hold since Khali isn't that versatile in the ring, nor does he need to be.

Khali chops away in the corner and Sheamus fires off some double axes to the chest. Sheamus is all fires up but a chop to the head stops the Brogue Kick. It only gets two, despite being the finisher of a former world champion. Vice Grip goes on but Sheamus breaks that too. He elbows Khali in the ribs and the Brogue Kick hits for the pin at 5:22.

Rating: C. Yes it was kind of boring, but what are you expecting here? Khali is a giant and Sheamus is a power brawler. If they had done technical stuff or anything else, it wouldn't make any sense and would probably be awful at the

same time. Not sure what else to say here but this was fine.

The Rewind is Beth eliminating the Bellas and turning heel on Kelly. This was the Slam of the Week in the arena. No idea why they changed it.

AJ vs. Natalya

What an odd choice for a match. Commentary goes silent for some reason and until Josh says something about AJ being the Diva next door or something similar to that. AJ takes her down with a headlock and Natalya can't figure her out. And never mind as a crucifix is countered into the Sharpshooter for the tap at 2:00. This was nothing.

Post match Nattie turns on AJ, beating her down and hitting a snap suplex on the floor. She says she's with Beth: no more pretty princesses.

Ryder will be giving the State of the Show later. The reaction to this is fake as the fans didn't move for that graphic other than a few people.

Orton gets a big pop and we see a video from last week where Orton hit an RKO on Truth on the table and then a second to go with it. He's not worried about Summerslam because he knows Christian can't beat him clean.

Video on Justin Gabriel in South Africa. This is different from last week's and it has more wrestling in it.

Tyson Kidd vs. Daniel Bryan

Barrett is on commentary. Bryan has new music which sounds like it's out of a thriller movie trailer. Bryan's pop was barely there when he came out. Some chain wrestling starts us off and Bryan does his moonsault out of the corner. Kidd is sent to the apron and then to the floor where Bryan hits a big dive through the ropes, shoving Kidd to the floor. Kidd gets a shot in on the knee and starts the attack on it.

Figure four around the post goes on and Bryan is in trouble. Barrett talks about how he doesn't think Bryan is going to cash in. That makes sense as it would be surprising if he made it that far. We take a break and come back with Kidd working on the knee. I'm not sure if anything actually changed in that break so they might have just picked up immediately where they left off.

A quick leg lock goes on until Bryan starts his comeback. He goes up top but gets crotched instead. Cole and Barrett ramble about how much they hate Bryan. Good to see them talking about the match at all. Kidd hasn't been talked about once. Bryan fights Kidd off the top and hits a missile dropkick but can't follow up due to the knee.

He fires off some kicks but has to pause because of the pain, allowing Kidd to hit a (American) dragon screw leg whip and a half crab. Bryan escapes but can't get the LeBell Lock. Pinfall reversal sequence doesn't go anywhere but Bryan gets all fired up and hammers away with forearms. BIG kick to the head sets up the guillotine choke and we're done at 7:00. I timed the match at 7:45 live so we didn't miss much at all.

Rating: B-. Solid match here that would have been better with more time. The just under 8 minutes wasn't enough time to get going but Kidd has been able to put on some good stuff over the last few months and I've been liking him pretty well. Good stuff here and it's the kind of win Bryan needs: physical, come from behind, submission wins.

Barrett and Bryan stare each other down post match. There's a match teased but not officially announced.

State of the Showski is up next.

Here's Ryder who got a small reaction but it was there. Ryder takes credit for the ratings going up because he's the assistant GM. He says he's going to change a lot of stuff but Big Zeke cuts him off. He got zero reaction at all. Zeke says

Ryder must think he's here to beat up Ryder for being in the handicap match last week. Jackson isn't happy but Ryder says he thought they had an agreement.

They're cut off by Cody's music and here's one half of the biggest rib in wrestling history (think about it: the sons of Dusty Rhodes were a metrosexual and whatever Goldust was. How could that not be a massive rib?) along with Ted who is in wrestling gear. Cody says Jackson has sour grapes and is unbecoming of a champion. He says Jackson is making the championship look bad so Cody should just take it from him and resurrect it, just like he's resurrected Ted's career.

Jackson says he's merely using DiBiase. Cody says Ted has free will and Ted should come out and beat Jackson right now. That's up to Ted and Ryder though. Ryder says cool but here's Teddy (who got a surprisingly good reaction) to protest. Ryder is NOT the assistant GM but rather Teddy's assistant. Teddy makes Ryder vs. Jackson for right now. Gee it's a good thing they're both in wrestling gear.

Ezekiel Jackson vs. Zack Ryder

Cody and Ted are banned from ringside. Cole hates Ryder so I'm really not sure if he's face or heel here. Ryder takes over and gets some kicks to the head. Front facelock doesn't work at all and Jackson catches a middle rope cross body to start up the slams. Rack and we're done at 2:30 with the tapping coming on Jackson's head.

Teddy is in his office and here's Aksana, now with long black hair and a leather suit. There's bad romantic sounding music in the background. She wants to talk business with him so he gives her one of his cards. She asks for his personal number which he gives to her. That was rather odd.

Mark Henry is up next.

At this point the show stopped taping and HHH came to the ring

and talked about having stress. Ryder was still in the ring and HHH got in some one liners about various wrestlers. He asked the crowd if they could keep a secret and dropped Ryder with a Pedigree. Awesome moment and the pop of the night.

Mark Henry vs. Vladimir Kozlov

Vlad fires away but can't really get anywhere. He manages the trapping headbutts but Henry remembers that he's a monster heel and plants Kozlov with the World's Strongest Slam for the pin at 1:15.

Post match he Pillmanizes Kozlov's leg, which explains him leaving since Kozlov was released today. Sheamus comes out late for the save with a chair. Henry bails, not wanting to fight until Summerslam. Kozlov goes out on a stretcher.

After a break Sheamus says that Henry isn't just beating people but rather is taking their ability and will to do what they love. That won't happen to Sheamus though because no one can take away his passion to compete here. There are many reasons but the biggest is because he's Irish, which means he has the Luck of the Irish. The following is a near direct quote of the next few things he says: "And that means I was born with a 24 karat horseshoe up me arse. And if need be I can rip that horseshoe out and leave hoofprints on him." Oh and Henry is a whale that belongs in the ocean with Shamu.

Michael McGillicutty/David Otunga/JTG vs. Trent Barreta/Usos Brothers

The Usos do their rhythmic dance thing. Remember when they were all sophisticated or whatever it was? Jey vs. JTG to start us off. Off to McGillicutty and then Otunga rather quickly. And now let's talk about what the announcers are tweeting at ringside. Apparently Booker said Cole is a tool. Jimmy is getting beaten down at the moment and there isn't much else to say as far as the match goes. Hot tag to Trent who is someone I'd like to see more of. Everything breaks down

and the champions hit that elbow drop/backbreaker combo to end Baretta at 3:43.

Rating: D+. Just a six man here and nothing interesting at all. I have no idea why Baretta and JTG of all people got picked. They're not bad or anything but why them? Anyway this was fine but the Usos need to get their title shot already, hopefully winning the titles. I've liked them recently and some fresh champions would be nice.

Johnny Curtis sees the writing on the wall and will be in action next week.

Raw ReBound is about the Cena vs. Punk vs. HHH moments from Raw and how the match at Summerslam was made.

Christian says he isn't surprised that the match with Orton is now no holds barred. Everyone has been on Orton's side. Truth pops up to say it was a conspiracy. He says not to let the Little Jimmys fool him and that tonight Orton is gonna get got. Christian still doesn't know who Little Jimmy is.

Randy Orton/John Morrison vs. R-Truth/Christian

When did Morrison lose his pyro? Oh ok that part wasn't on the broadcast. Kind of surprised they didn't have that for the live crowd though. Orton and Truth start us off and Truth hammers him down into the corner. Morrison comes in and Truth runs so he can tag in the Canadian. There's that big spinning springboard kick for two.

Christian takes him down though and it's off to the coward crazy R-Truth. Suplex into the Stunner is countered (called that move by Booker) and Morrison goes all angry JoMo on him, hitting the running knee for two. Christian breaks it up and Orton chases him to the floor and into the crowd where we take a break. Back with Morrison and Truth hammering away on each other. During the break Orton stared Christian down a lot while the other two laid down in the ring.

Truth works on the neck which is logical. Good thing that when he went nuts he didn't lose his wrestling psychology. Christian comes in and gets a neckbreaker for two. Have one of those ever broken a neck? Middle rope headbutt misses but Christian is smart enough to take Orton out before John can make the tag. Truth comes in and does a little dance which makes it look like he wants to make a little love to Orton.

Morrison comes out of nowhere with the C4 to put both himself and Truth down. Hot tag brings in Orton and the fans are all fired up. Powerslam puts Christian down and Orton gets a jackknife cover for two. Killswitch is blocked into the backbreaker for two. Orton grabs a rollup out of the corner for two. Christian hits a spinebuster that Booker calls a sidewalk slam. Spear misses but Christian avoids the RK0.

Instead Orton gets him in punting position but Truth and Morrison come back in. Morrison sends him to the floor and dives out onto him. Christian jumps Orton but gets caught in the elevated DDT. Truth comes in and takes the RK0 but Christian grabs the Killswitch and pins Orton 11:55 shown of what I thought was closer to 20 minutes but whatever.

Rating: B. I liked this a lot as the ending was rather intricate with all of the spots intertwining very well. The whole point of this was to make it clear that Christian could get the pin on Orton in what you could call a clean method and that's what he did here. This worked well and was a solid main event that did a few things well. Good stuff.

Overall Rating: B. This was a moving day episode of Smackdown. Not a lot actually happened here but a lot of stuff for the future was set up. You can see most of Summerslam now which you could only see pieces of a week ago at this time. The stuff that we got was pretty good and the show is shaping up pretty well. Also Aksana being back with those abs of her is never a bad thing.

Results

Sheamus b. Great Khali – Brogue Kick

Natalya b. AJ – Sharpshooter

Daniel Bryan b. Tyson Kidd – Guillotine Choke

Ezekiel Jackson b. Zack Ryder – Torture Rack

Mark Henry b. Vladimir Kozlov – World's Strongest Slam

David Otunga/Michael McGillicutty/JTG b. Uso Brothers/Trent Barreta – Elbow drop/backbreaker combination to Barreta

Christian/R-Truth b. Randy Orton/John Morrison – Killswitch to Orton

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CM Punk Teaches You Grammar

It's exactly what it sounds like and it is GLORIOUS.

This is great stuff.

Total Divas Viewers Rise 14%

The show is a hit. Let the Did You Knows begin!

Monday Night Raw – August 5, 2013: Don't Touch The Beard!

Monday Night Raw

Date: August 5, 2013

Location: Resch Center, Green Bay, Wisconsin

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

We're back live this week after last week's not so great taped show. No matches have been announced for tonight that I can remember but there will be Daniel Bryan's corporate makeover. We're rapidly approaching Summerslam and there are only three matches announced. Odds are we'll get a lot of stuff added on tonight and Friday so let's get to it.

Here's Stephanie to open the show. She talks about Bryan's corporate makeover and gives us a video of him being fitted in a suit and having his hair cleaned up. Back in the arena and the fans chant NO. Here's the improved Bryan in a suit with a ponytail and a beard. He isn't sure how the fans like it but he doesn't think this is what the company wants. They clearly want someone in cargo shorts and a yellow t-shirt who will sell a bunch of stuff the people don't need.

Bryan talks about how Cena has been on the top of the mountain for ten years now because he's an entertainer, but Bryan is a wrestler. If Cena was fired he'd go back to his mansion and cars and would never have to wrestle again. If Bryan were to be fired tomorrow, he'd be in every armory and gym because that's what he loves to do. The fans cheer and Bryan thinks they love wrestling too. Bryan says he'll dress up for now but at Summerslam, he's going to make John Cena tap out like everyone wants him to do.

This brings out Vince who says he appreciates Stephanie's efforts and thinks Bryan has given it the old college try but it's not perfect. Vince talks about how he doesn't want Bryan or Cena to be champion because we've never had a dwarf as champion. Bryan is so unkempt that he looks like a miniature Mick Foley but maybe we can work something out. There's one final thing that needs to go though: the beard. Vince calls for the barber's chair but Bryan says no. The boss talks about how Bryan will do this if he wants to be WWE Champion and this is the first step.

Bryan gets out of the ring and takes off the suit jacket but Vince says we need a barber. The barber is going to be...Wade Barrett? Wade gets ready to shave him but Bryan jumps him and shaves off Wade's beard (or at least half of it) before sending Barrett into the crowd. Bryan says he won't change for Vince because he's going to be who he is and then be WWE champion. He takes off the shirt to reveal a t-shirt saying The Beard Is Here with an arrow pointing up. Vince is ticked.

Alberto Del Rio vs. Rob Van Dam

Miz is on commentary. Non-title again and Ricardo is back, a week earlier than the reported return date. Del Rio attacks to start but Van Dam fires back with forearms to the jaw. A standing moonsault gets two and Del Rio rolls to the floor, only to have Rob hit a moonsault off the apron as we take a break.

Back with Van Dam blocking a shot into the buckle and kicking Del Rio down.

Rolling Thunder misses and Alberto's low superkick gets two. Alberto misses his running enziguri in the corner and Van Dam kicks him down

before. Rolling Thunder connects for two but the split legged moonsault hits knees. Ricardo puts the bucket in the corner but it's Alberto being sent face first into it, giving Van Dam a rollup for the pin at 6:14. Not long enough shown to rate but did we really need this loss?

Post match Del Rio superkicks Ricardo and hits him with the bucket before crushing him between the steps and the post.

Here's Cody Rhodes in the ring to talk about Sandow jumping him from behind last week. He has a present for Sandow in a box but first, we look at their issues over the past few weeks. Back in the arena and Cody opens the box: the crushed briefcase, complete with seaweed hanging off the side. Here's Damien himself to say put the case down and walk away. Cody puts it down but charges at Sandow and the fight is on. Cody kicks him to the floor and opens the case to reveal the actual contract. Rhodes puts it back in the case and throws it back at Sandow who doesn't pick it up.

Ryback vs. Mark Henry

They stare each other down and Ryback grabs a headlock to start. Henry runs him over with a shoulder but Ryback goes after Henry's knee. Mark comes back and knocks Ryback to the floor...and Ryback walks out at 1:46. Thanks for this one guys.

The Bellas are arguing over who looked better on Total Divas. Eva Marie comes up to laugh about how they made Natalya look stupid last week. Natalya comes up and slaps a Bella, likely setting up a match later.

Here's Cena with something to say. Cena says he's used to being a target but most of the time the people are just mad at him. Every once in awhile though he has to face a true fan favorite, which means the people have to choose. He's been listening to the people and it's obvious the fans Daniel Bryan. Cena heard what the people said and he doesn't blame them.

He also heard what Daniel Bryan said earlier and it made Daniel Bryan sound ignorant. Daniel Bryan said the same things that The Rock and CM Punk and everyone else who doesn't like the color of Cena's shirt or the kind of cereal he eats. Cena was back a day after breaking his neck and his elbow looks like a football but he's here because he loves it.

Bryan talked about wrestling in armories and gyms because that's where he's most comfortable. Daniel was right that if Cena was fired tomorrow he'd never wrestle again because he wouldn't settle for anything but the best and he wouldn't tarnish the WWE by going elsewhere. Cena has heard people tell him he can't wrestle for years and he knows what it sounds like. He's been WWE Champion 11 times and that's too many times to be lucky. Cena thinks the fans want to see Bryan vs. Cena right now and there's the YES chant.

This is a huge match for Bryan and if he wins, he's earned the WWE Championship, but if he loses he has to admit that he's not good enough. Bryan is on fire but Cena has been mowing people down since January. At Summerslam the people can cheer for whomever they want, but Cena is walking out champion. Excellent stuff here that sets up the dynamic of the match perfectly.

Cena drops the mic but here's Orton. He talks about how Cena is always aware of the target on his back but he never remembers the target in front of his face. The briefcase is what matters because it means Orton will be WWE Champion. It could happen at Summerslam, it could happen the night after, or it could happen at Wrestlemania. All it means is that the champ is here, not with Cena.

Cue Shield of all people as things get even more interesting. They surround the stars but here's Bryan (still in the ponytail) for the save. Shield runs off now that the odds are even but it's GM time, with Maddox making the six man main event. When did Maddox shrink and become a bald black man?

Wyatt Family vs. Tons of Funk

Harper starts with Tensai and shouts yeah a lot. A big boot puts Tensai down and it's off to Rowan for forearms in the corner but he runs into an elbow. Tensai puts him down with a clothesline and everything breaks down with Rowan running Brodus down. Harper's discus lariat sets up a splash from Rowan to pin Tensai at 1:20.

Post match Bray gets in and hits Sister Abigail on Brodus before grabbing a mic. He says Kane isn't a monster but rather an illusion. The demon is

a lie but he himself is much different. He's the man of 1000 truths and the eater of worlds. He is forever and follow the buzzards. Wyatt kneels over Brodus but Kane's pyro lights up the arena.

On screen, Kane says that when you pull the wings off a buzzard, they're impossible to follow. He sees through Bray's words and sees that Bray is here to maim everyone in his path. Kane likes that and does them as well, but he does them for amusement, not to spread a message. Bray will find out why Kane is the devil's favorite demon at Summerslam. Not the Family nor anyone else can save Wyatt from the ring of fire. Fire shoots out of the posts and Bray drops to his knees in laughter.

Punk is in the back and wants to talk about Curtis Axel's dad Mr. Perfect and Bobby Heenan. The difference between those two and Axel/Heyman is Perfect had his own thoughts when he was on screen with Heenan. The younger version having Heyman as his guide is going to earn him a beating tonight. After that, Punk is going to take the Beast's manhood away, just like he promised.

Kaitlyn vs. Layla

Thankfully Layla hasn't dropped the shorts. Layla says she turned on Kaitlyn for the attention and she's coming for all the regular divas and the Total Divas. Kaitlyn takes her down to start and pounds away so Layla runs to the ropes. The referee pulls Kaitlyn away, allowing Layla to take over with a DDT. Layla chokes away in the corner and slams Kaitlyn face first into the mat. She charges into a backbreaker though and Kaitlyn starts her comeback. The gutbuster puts Kaitlyn down but here's AJ to distract Kaitlyn from the spear. Layla bails to the apron but an AJ distraction lets Layla kick Kaitlyn in the head for the pin at 2:59.

Kaitlyn and Layla skip around the ring post match. Apparently that kick is called the Bombshell.

We recap Cody and Sandow's issues from earlier. Cody vs. Sandow is official for Summerslam.

Christian vs. Heath Slater

Christian sends him into 619 position but can't uppercut Slater because of the other Band members. Slater takes over with some forearms to the chest and it's off to the chinlock. Slater jumps off the middle rope and lands on Christian's boot and a flapjack sets up a middle rope dropkick for two for Christian. Slater is knocked to the apron and backdropped back inside so the sunset flip out of the corner can get two. Slater stops to dance but gets caught by the spear for the pin at 3:15.

Rating: C-. This was a better match than I was expecting but it still was nothing great. Christian looked good and gets a win before the PPV, unlike Del Rio earlier. That being said, it would appear that Del Rio wins at Summerslam because that's what WWE does. Why they think losing all the matches until winning the blowoff makes things ok I'm not sure, but that's the status quo.

CM Punk vs. Curtis Axel

Non-title of course. Punk charges up the ramp before the bell and the brawl starts near the stage. Punk keeps trying to get to Heyman who has gone backstage. They head to the ring with Punk in control and the bell rings. Axel takes over with some chops but Punk takes him down into an Indian Deathlock of all things. Before he falls down with the hold, Punk spits in the air and tries to slap it away ala Mr. Perfect and the gum. Axel rolls to the floor and gets caught with the suicide dive as we take a break.

Back with Axel cranking on an armbar and elbowing Punk in the face for two. A middle rope elbow sets up another chinlock from Axel as Heyman comes back to ringside. Punk finally rolls out of the hold and crawls over at Heyman, only to be clotheslined down for two. Punk comes back with a spinning cross body out of the corner but a Heyman distraction lets Curtis take over. CM comes back with a kick to the head and the running knee in the corner but Curtis breaks up the Macho Elbow. The McGillicutter gets two but Punk kicks Axel in the head again. Not that it matters as he goes after Heyman, drawing a DQ at 10:22.

Rating: C+. I was digging this match until the end but the ending kind of sucked. To be fair though they didn't have Axel do another job which is

the right idea. Punk vs. Lesnar is going to be golden and the hatred that Punk has for Heyman is selling this feud as perfectly as you could ask it to. Decent match here with Axel getting to look good.

Post match here's Lesnar but Axel pulls Punk to the floor. Punk takes him down with a GTS and grabs a chair but Brock takes it away. Punk fires off forearms and kicks to the head to stagger Brock and a flying forearm off the table takes Brock down. Not that it matters as Lesnar casually grabs him and throws him down with a belly to belly. They head inside but Punk escapes the F5 and hits Brock in the back with the chair. Heyman is in the ring and drops to his knees in terror but Lesnar takes the chair away from Punk and lays him out with the F5. Brock nails Punk in the back with the chair for good measure.

After a break Lesnar wants to know if that's the best the world has to offer. Heyman says next week, he's going to the ring and giving Punk a chance at a man vs. man fight.

Fandango vs. Kofi Kingston

Kofi is much skinnier and is in long tights now. Fandango takes over quickly to start and takes Kofi down as the announcers talk about ballet. A quick chinlock sets up a dropkick to Kofi but a middle rope knee drop misses. Kofi comes back with a dropkick and the Boom Drop but Fandango bails from Trouble in Paradise. Fandango gets in a kick of his own but misses the legdrop, allowing Kofi to get two off a cross body. Trouble in Paradise is good for the pin at 3:43.

Rating: D+. I hope that was just ring rust from Kofi as he didn't look very good out there at all. The fans didn't seem to care about him at all and the tights aren't working for him. Fandango has fallen since that concussion and it's a shame to see the booking go this way for him. Kofi didn't look all that good though and hopefully he gets better.

HHH is in the office when Stephanie comes in crying. Vince hated the segment and HHH goes NUTS, ranting and raving about how Vince is no longer a creative genius and goes on his own whims. HHH isn't going to stand by and watch the ship go down and he's going to do something about Vince.

Real Americans vs. Usos

Colter resorts to making fun of cheese and the Green Bay Packers to get heat. Jey runs over Swagger for two to start but gets caught in the powerslam/belly to belly for two. Off to Cesaro for a double stomp for two more before Jack comes in with a shoulder to the leg. Swagger finally misses the Vader Bomb and it's hot tag to Jimmy. Everything breaks down and Jimmy hits a big dive to take Swagger out. Cesaro jumps into part of a superkick but gets out at two. A Colter distraction lets Cesaro hit a quick Naturalizer for the pin on Jimmy at 3:52.

Rating: D+. This was ok but I'm having a bit of trouble buying the Real Americans as a threat after all those matches they lost. The Usos are the latest team to get going for a few weeks and then fall back into jobber status a few weeks later. That's WWE booking for you because Heaven forbid anyone get hot when it's not for a title.

Big E. Langston vs. Dolph Ziggler

Ziggler hits a quick dropkick for one and gets out of a gorilla press, only to be knocked off the apron and out to the floor. Back in and Langston puts on an abdominal stretch for a big. Big E. misses a charge into the post and Ziggler snaps off a quick Stinger Splash and a neckbreaker for two. Ziggler tries to speed things up but gets caught in a drop into a backbreaker to put him down. Langston misses a splash and Dolph mostly misses a Fameasser for two. Kaitlyn comes out to go after AJ because that feud hasn't gone on long enough. The girls get in the ring and Big E. runs Dolph over. Big Ending and we're done at 4:14.

Rating: D+. The crowd didn't care here and I don't think they'll care much more about the tag match this sets up for Summerslam. Why Ziggler would want to team with Kaitlyn after this I'm not sure as she just cost him a match but that's WWE logic for you. Not much to see here but Langston clearly has a ton of potential.

John Cena/Daniel Bryan/Randy Orton vs. Shield

The bell rings at 10:59 so don't expect much from this one. Orton starts with Rollins and it's Seth in early trouble. A suplex puts him down and

it's off to Bryan with a middle rope dropkick but Ambrose gets the tag. That's cool with Bryan as he runs Dean over with a clothesline and sends him to the floor for the FLYING GOAT.

Reigns gets in a shot on the floor to take over and it's Bryan as your face in peril. Rollins hooks a chinlock before it's off to Roman for some power. A double gutbuster gets two on Bryan but he charges over for the tag to Cena...but the referee doesn't see it. Everything breaks down anyway and Bryan gets the YES Lock on Rollins, drawing in the other Shield members for the DQ at 5:26.

Rating: C-. This was what you would have expected. The match didn't have time to go anywhere and was just there to set up the post match stuff. I'm not a fan of endings like that because there are saves made all the time that don't draw DQ's. This was crippled by a lack of time which is a shame.

Post match Orton lays out Bryan with an RKO but has to help Cena clear the ring. Shield runs and there's an RKO to Cena. Orton GETS THE BRIEFCASE but Shield comes down and beats up Cena and Bryan even more. Orton walks away in a heelish move and Bryan takes a TripleBomb to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. This was a moving day towards Summerslam as we added a match and enhanced a lot of the others. The matches were good enough tonight but this was all about the promos and storytelling which often make for better episodes. Bryan vs. Cena is going to be AWESOME with both guys trying to prove the other wrong and the promos showed that. Punk vs. Lesnar looks good with Punk trying to slay the monster and the physical side has a chance. Good but not great show tonight.

Results

Rob Van Dam b. Alberto Del Rio – Rolling Cradle

Mark Henry b. Ryback via countout

Wyatt Family b. Tons of Funk – Splash to Clay

Layla b. Kaitlyn – Bombshell Kick

Christian b. Heath Slater – Spear

Kofi Kingston b. Fandango – Trouble in Paradise

Real Americans b. Usos – Neutralizer to Jimmy Uso

Big E. Langston b. Dolph Ziggler – Big Ending

Randy Orton/John Cena/Daniel Bryan b. Shield via DQ when Ambrose and Reigns wouldn't leave the ring

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Kane vs. Bray Wyatt at Summerslam

Announced tonight. That's a good first match for Wyatt.

On This Day: August 3, 2012 – Smackdown: GM-Arooni

Smackdown

Date: August 3, 2012

Location: Bankers Life Fieldhouse, Indianapolis, Indiana

Commentators: Michael Cole, Josh Matthews

The big story tonight is that we're going to find out who the new GM is tonight. For some reason WWE decided to tell us who it was on WWE.com the day that it happened but it's not like they care about Smackdown anyway. Other than that I'm sure Sheamus and Del Rio will find ways to bore us that the world never dreamed was possible. Let's get to it.

Do You Know Your Enemy? Mine is the Indians' GM. Thanks for not trading for a starter or two and dooming our season.

Here's Vince to open the show. Josh says this is the first time Vince has been on Smackdown in three years. That can't be true can it? He talks about the process of picking a new GM and says it has to be someone the people respect. The new GM is Booker T. Cole: "Thank goodness! That means he won't be on commentary!!!" Booker thanks Vince and the Board but is interrupted by Del Rio.

Del Rio goes into his schtick about becoming the new world champion and Booker tells him to stop sucking up. How exactly he was sucking up isn't really clear but whatever. Booker talks about what Del Rio said on Monday about Sheamus, including how Sheamus is beneath him. Sheamus is a peasant and was born poor and here he is. Sheamus congratulates the new GM on being the new GM and says the first pint is on him tonight.

Sheamus says he's proud of where he came from and says he wouldn't take a few weeks off out of fear like Del Rio has done. Del Rio says he won't be competing until Summerslam but Booker disagrees. Both of them will be in the ring tonight but Del Rio says no. Booker says yes he is and he's facing Randy Orton. I'm so glad they spent the time having Del Rio say he wouldn't fight until Summerslam and made it last less than four days. Sheamus' match is up now.

Sheamus vs. Tensai

Tensai cuts an inset promo in Japanese. Ok then. They brawl into the corner to start and Tensai knocks Sheamus back with a shoulder block. Sheamus grabs the arm but it turns into another slugout. The champ knocks

him into the corner and takes Tensai down to the mat for a chinlock. Tensai comes back with an elbow to the face and pounds away. For the life of me I don't get why they don't just let Tensai be Albert or A-Train again. At this point he's just A-Train speaking Japanese and no one cares, so why not change it back?

Sheamus shrugs off the punches to the face and knocks Tensai to the floor. Back in and Tensai knocks him down again and stomps in the corner. Sheamus kicks him away and pulls himself to the top but has to jump over Tensai instead of hitting the top rope shoulder. Irish Curse is broken up so Sheamus clotheslines Tensai to the floor instead. Tensai catches Sheamus in a dive off the apron and rams him into the post as we take a break.

Back with Tensai hitting a Vader Bomb to the back for two. A bearhug goes on but Sheamus quickly escapes. He can't slam Tensai so Tensai kicks him in the head for two. Another Vader Bomb is broken up but so is the electric chair Sheamus wanted to try. Instead he just knocks Tensai off the ropes and out to the floor. When all else fails go simple I guess.

There are the ten forearms and Tensai appears to have a cut on his stomach. As Tensai is coming back in he walks into a powerslam for two. Sheamus gets sent into the post and the Baldo Bomb gets two. A Tensai charge misses and the Brogue Kick gets the pin at 10:20 shown of 13:50.

Rating: C. From a technical standpoint this was a pretty good power brawl, but my goodness these guys aren't interesting at all. Tensai is a warm body with a bald head and tattoos on his face and that's it. Seriously, what else is there to say about him? Sheamus is one of my favorites but he has almost no character at all. The match was fine but my goodness I don't know why they think people are going to care about these two or Del Rio for that matter.

Eve sucks up to Booker and tries to get a job. Booker doesn't seem interested and hires Teddy Long as his senior adviser. Booker sends Eve in her little black dress out.

Antonio Cesaro vs. Santino Marella

Cole takes a jab at Sarah Palin before the match for some reason. Uh oh, she might yell at him on Facebook. Cesaro says hi to us in five languages before the match. Cesaro immediately takes Santino into the corner but gets rolled up for two. A gutwrench suplex puts Marella down and it's off to a chinlock. Santino makes his comeback with his usual stuff but the Cobra is blocked. Gotch Style Neutralizer is broken up and the Cobra gets two due to Cesaro's leg being under the rope. Out to the floor and Santino is sent into the barricade. Back inside the Neutralizer gets the pin at 2:34.

Bryan is in the back and we get a video on his psych evaluation from Raw. Bryan says he has no comments and that he's going to be saying NO a lot more often because the fans have stolen his catchphrase. He also doesn't need another psychiatric evaluation. As he's shouting no, the lights go out and it's time for a six man.

Christian/Chris Jericho/Kane vs. Daniel Bryan/Dolph Ziggler/The Miz

Bryan has a NO NO NO shirt now. Christian and Bryan start things off and the fans chant YES. Bryan takes him to the mat and stomps away but Christian speeds things up and takes Bryan down with a shoulder block. Off to Kane with the top rope clothesline for two. Bryan avoids a charge to send Kane into the corner and it's off to Miz. Jericho comes in but gets distracted by Ziggler, allowing Miz to kick him in the face.

Dolph comes in legally and is immediately sent to the floor by Jericho. Vickie acts as a human shield to block a dive and we take a break. Back with Miz holding Christian in a chinlock. Back up and Christian grabs a sunset flip for two on Miz but the champ kicks Christian in the face for two. Off to Bryan for some NO kicks followed by a Ziggler dropkick for two.

Back to Miz as the heels are working well together. Another boot to the face gets yet another two count on Christian and it's off to a chinlock. Miz's running clothesline in the corner eats boots and Christian takes him down with a jumping back elbow off the middle rope. Double tags bring in Bryan and Jericho and they run the ropes. Jericho changes directions and hits a springboard dropkick to take out Ziggler.

Lionsault gets two on Bryan and it's off to Kane. Christian and Miz tumble to the floor, landing on Kane in the process. Jericho puts Bryan in the Liontamer but Jericho has to hit a Codebreaker on Ziggler. The distraction lets Bryan roll him up for the pin at 8:30 shown of 12:00.

Rating: C+. This was fine for a midcard six man tag. It's very good to see Smackdown putting on some longer matches since Raw doesn't seem all that interested in pushing anyone new outside of the same group of people that always dominate the TV time. I'm looking forward to some of these blowoff matches and having three feuds in one match is never a bad thing.

Bryan shouts NO in a fan's face post match.

Orton says the WWE is his life and being away from Raw and Smackdown was like taking the breath away from him. Del Rio is only the #1 contender because he hasn't faced Orton. Tonight it's an RKO for Del Rio.

Jinder Mahal vs. Ryback

Ryback actually gets to cut an inset promo, talking about how he lives by the rule of eat or be eaten and everywhere he looks in the WWE, he sees food. Feed him more. Not bad. Ryback slams him to the mat and rams Mahal's head into the mat to start. Mahal comes back with the jumping knee to the head but a second one is countered into a spinebuster to put Mahal down. They head outside and Mahal hits Ryback in the head with I think the microphone for the DQ at 1:13.

The Prime Time Players want t-shirts.

Darren Young vs. R-Truth

Truth goes right after Young to start and pounds him into the corner and then against the ropes. AW is at ringside and has the mic again. Truth is sent to the floor and Titus gets in some shots, so here's Kofi for the save. AW throws his jacket at Kofi's head so Kofi chases him off. Truth tries to suplex Young back in but Titus trips him up for two. Kofi is back now but gets his head taken off by Titus. The distraction lets Young hit the double knee gutbuster for the pin at 1:55.

Raw ReBund is about Punk's explanation and the eventual announcement of

the triple threat match.

TOUT IT OUT ABOUT PUNK BABY! Oh my goodness these people get on my nerves.

We recap Booker being announced as GM.

Booker is on the phone in the back when Layla comes in. Cody Rhodes comes in to brag about retiring Booker earlier this year. Layla leaves and Booker makes Cody vs. Sin Cara for next week.

Randy Orton vs. Alberto Del Rio

Del Rio sends him into the corner immediately and works on the arm. Orton comes back with a clothesline and pounds away in the corner. Del Rio goes to the floor but comes back in and rams Orton into the top rope to take over. Out to the floor we go and Del Rio kicks Orton in the chest. Del Rio hooks a chinlock but Orton escapes and hits his circle of stomps. Knee drop misses and Alberto takes over again.

Orton gets sent into the corner and Del Rio kicks him again. I'm not sure if the black trunks are helping Del Rio or not. Orton avoids a charging Alberto, sending Del Rio's shoulder into the post. That gets two and Orton starts his finishing sequence. The powerslam puts Del Rio down as does the Elevated DDT. Here comes the RK0 but Ricardo runs in for the DQ at 6:13.

Rating: D. Nothing to see here at all but thank goodness they didn't have Orton get a clean pin over the #1 contender here. I don't think I could take another triple threat at this point. Actually scratch that as it would be better than Sheamus vs. Del Rio again. The match was really short for a Smackdown main event, but then again we had to TOUT stuff earlier so some of the time had to be given away.

Post match Del Rio goes after the arm but Orton blocks the armbreaker and dropkicks Del Rio to the floor. Sheamus throws Del Rio in for the RK0 to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. After last week's good show, this was a disappointment. The main event didn't do anything, but that's partially

because it was about advancing a feud that no one wants to see. Booker as GM is a good enough choice as he's still well known enough to be considered a big deal as a boss. This show was ok overall but as is becoming the norm with Smackdown, if you missed it you never would know the difference.

Results

Sheamus b. Tensai – Brogue Kick

Antonio Cesaro b. Santino Marella – Gotch Style Neutralizer

Daniel Bryan/The Miz/Dolph Ziggler b. Christian/Kane/Chris Jericho – Rollup to Jericho

Ryback b. Jinder Mahal via DQ when Mahal hit Ryback with the microphone

Darren Young b. R-Truth – Double Knee Gutbuster

Randy Orton b. Alberto Del Rio via DQ when Ricardo Rodriguez interfered

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Thought of the Day: Hulk Hogan Is TNA's Gorilla Monsoon

This makes sense when you think about it. I'm 25 years old, meaning I grew up watching Hulk Hogan in the WWF and later in WCW as Hollywood Hogan. Hogan retired from full time competition when I was about 15 years old.

Now let's flash back to my childhood and a few years before. The voice of the WWF was Gorilla Monsoon, a play by play announcer who would later become Commissioner. Monsoon had been a wrestler in the 70s but retired in 1981, several years before I was born. I never saw Monsoon wrestle and to the best of my knowledge his last match was in 1987 in an old timers battle royal.

This brings us to modern TNA. Hulk Hogan is now retired and the GM of Impact. He's wrestled two matches in TNA but is far from an active competitor. As mentioned, Hogan last wrestled in 2003 and to call him a regular back then is a stretch. For all intents and purposes, Hogan's last full year as an active wrestler was in 1999.

Therefore, unless you're about 17 or older, you probably don't remember Hogan as an active wrestler. I'm sure you've heard of him and know who he is, but there's no direct connection to him. Growing up, I knew who Monsoon was and that he used to be a wrestler but I knew nothing about his career other than a few Coliseum Video matches. In other words, Monsoon was an

old guy who used to be a wrestler apparently.

For younger fans, that's what Hulk Hogan is in TNA. He's like Jack Brisco or Dory Funk Jr. to someone my age. I know of their work and I respect what they did, but there's nothing that ties me to them, much like younger fans with Hogan today.

Yet in TNA, Hogan is the focal point of the show a lot of the time. The portion of the audience that has a connection to him as a wrestler is shrinking and the portion of the audience that knows him as that guy who used to wrestle is growing. To them, Hogan is a guy they've never seen wrestle other than on DVD.

And they wonder why their audience barely grows.

Smackdown – August 2, 2013: With A Backslide!

Smackdown

Date: August 2, 2013

Location: Toyota Center, Houston, Texas

Commentators: Michael Cole, Alex Riley

After the mess that was Raw on Monday hopefully things pick up tonight. Last week's show was very interesting with the focus on everything but the main event matches. That's the kind of show Smackdown needs to be: something completely different from Raw and not a rehash of everything we

sit through for three hours. Let's get to it.

Here's Del Rio to announce his Summerslam opponent. Alberto says when he was champion before the fans didn't support him so he has nothing to thank them for. Now he's champion again and there's nothing they can do about it. He does however want to thank Vickie Guerrero for allowing her to pick his Summerslam opponent.

Del Rio says Cena picked the troll Daniel Bryan to hide from Del Rio, so maybe Alberto should pick the beast Brock Lesnar. Well he's taken already so maybe it should be Houston's own Booker T. That won't work either because everything that comes out of Houston is worthless. That's the best insult he can come up with? Then Del Rio came up with the perfect opponent to grant a first ever world title shot: Ricardo Rodriguez.

This brings out Vickie who says Del Rio is trying to disrespect him. She speaks some Spanish and calls Ricardo a jiggly little manchild. Alberto says he wasn't trying to disrespect her and he'll pick Brooklyn Brawler instead. Vickie says Vince wouldn't like that pick so Del Rio will face the winner of RVD vs. Orton vs. Christian tonight.

This is a good example of why GM's are a waste of time. The whole segment took over ten minutes and could have easily been accomplished by saying "tonight there's a triple threat match for the #1 contendership." Instead we have to bring out Vickie and listen to Alberto when we could have used this time for anything else. It develops Del Rio as a cowardly heel a little bit, but the same thing could have been accomplished in a backstage segment with him recommending Ricardo or the Brawler as his opponents.

Kaitlyn vs. AJ for the title later.

We recap Cody stealing the briefcase last week and throwing it in the Gulf of Mexico.

Cody Rhodes vs. Jack Swagger

Colter doesn't start talking until Cody is already on the apron. Rhodes doesn't want to listen so he decks Swagger to get us going. Cody hits a

quick uppercut and a knee to the side of the head for two. Swagger comes back with his powerslam/belly to belly and a clothesline for two. Cody fights up but the Disaster Kick is knocked out of the air and a Vader Bomb gets two. The gutwrench powerbomb is countered into a sunset flip for the pin for Cody at 1:57.

Post break Cody goes on a rant against Sandow for being so stuck up and bragging about himself. Cody compares throwing the briefcase into the Gulf to the Deep Water Horizon oil spill. "That was a joke." Sandow comes in and beats him down for the bad line.

Sin Cara vs. Big E. Langston

Langston runs over Cara as the lights go orange. Cara mostly hits what was supposed to be a dropkick for two as Zigler is watching from the back. Big E. takes him down with a headlock and drives an elbow in the chest. Langston goes old school with an abdominal stretch and even gets caught holding the ropes. Riley: "Only illegal if you get caught." Cole: "He did get caught. That's why the referee was counting." Cara springboards into the Big Ending but slips down the back and fires off some kicks. A standing Lionsault is caught in the Big Ending for the pin at 2:52. It was longer than I was expecting but Langston dominated.

Wyatt Family promo focusing on their issues with Kane.

Layla and Kaitlyn are in the back with the Brit saying she'll support Kaitlyn in her match tonight. Kaitlyn's idea for AJ: "Fool me once shame on you, fool me twice you're going to get speared." Layla says she's been around a long time and Kaitlyn is the real deal. They hug and Layla smiles a lot.

Del Rio yells at Vickie for going back on her word about letting him pick his opponent. She accuses him of being afraid when Brad Maddox comes in. Apparently Del Rio will be on Raw and under his jurisdiction. Isn't he there every week?

Fandango vs. CM Punk

This is a result of Fandango interrupting Punk last week. Fandango dances

around so Punk kicks him in the legs to take over. Punk fires off strikes but gets caught in a headlock from the dancer. A spinning kick to the ribs and a high elbow take Fandango down for two but he sends Punk into the corner to take over again. A GTS attempt is escaped and we take a break.

Back with Fandango coming around Summer to send Punk into the steps. Punk slides back in at the last second and Fandango starts in on the arm. He drives knees and elbows into Punk's face before we hit the chinlock. So much for the arm stuff. Fandango cranks on the chinlock and wraps his leg around Punk for extra leverage.

Punk fights up but a hard elbow to the face gets two. Fandango misses a splash and Punk hits the running knee in the corner. Fandango rolls to the apron and gets in a kick to the head and a falcon's arrow for two. The top rope legdrop is countered and a superplex sets up the Anaconda Vice to make Fandango tap at 9:40 shown of 12:00.

Rating: C+. Nice match here as Fandango got to show off here. This is the kind of match that can do midcarders a lot of good. Punk gets a competitive win and Fandango gets to look good as well, but he doesn't lose anything because he has no business beating the star. Good booking here and it gives Punk something to do for a week.

We recap the opening of the show.

RVD says Christian and Orton aren't pushovers but they're not Rob Van Dam. Christian comes in and says he deserves one more match. Orton comes in and says he's fine with winning the World Heavyweight Champion while still holding the briefcase. Van Dam says he's here to win titles, not to stroll down memory lane.

Divas Title: Kaitlyn vs. AJ

AJ is defending and Kaitlyn, the hometown girl, has Layla with her. Kaitlyn takes her straight into the corner to start but AJ comes back with a quick sleeper. She wraps Kaitlyn up on the mat as Layla plays cheerleader. Kaitlyn gets up and rams the champion into the corner but AJ trips her up and dances around the ring. The blonde comes back with a

gutbuster to send AJ to the floor but Layla gets in the way of the spear and smiles. AJ gets in a cheap shot and the Black Widow gets the submission at 3:02.

Rating: D. This falls under the category of turns that surprised no one and that no one cares about. It's a good way to shift away from AJ vs. Kaitlyn though as that story has been played out for months now. Layla works better as a heel but hopefully she doesn't ditch the shorts. Match was nothing.

The Raw ReBounce recaps the Vince/Bryan situation and the double main event from Monday.

Randy Orton vs. Christian vs. Rob Van Dam

The winner gets Del Rio at Summerslam, but the booking makes little sense. Cole says Orton and Christian are here because they pinned the champion. Van Dam lost to the same guy clean in less than three minutes but he gets the same reward as guys who got clean pinfalls? The champion comes out and says he'll be watching the three stooges beat the guacamole out of each other. One of them will be tapping out at Summerslam and does anyone really believe him?

Orton is sent to the floor and Van Dam kicks Christian down but Randy trips up Rolling Thunder. Van Dam sends Orton into the steps and puts him on the barricade followed by the spin kick to the back. Van Dam celebrates but gets caught by a spear from Christian as we take a break. Back with Christian getting two on Van Dam off a tornado DDT. Rob rolls to the floor and Orton pounds away on the Canadian. Randy hits a superplex for a delayed two and Rob is back with the kicks all around. A monkey flip (which isn't unique Cole) sends Christian flying and the split legged moonsault gets two on Orton.

Van Dam charges into Orton's knee but Christian counters Randy's Elevated DDT. Rob is sent to the floor as well and Christian joins them. Rob slams Christian down and goes back in for a BIG flip dive to take everyone out as we take another break. Back with Orton and Christian slugging it out and Van Dam on the floor. Orton catches Christian's middle rope dropkick and starts a pinfall reversal sequence. Christian takes over and knocks

Van Dam off the apron but the spear misses. The middle rope back elbow puts Orton down but Rob kicks Orton down before the Killswitch.

Another kick puts Christian down and the Five Star connects for a delayed two, allowing Orton to make the save. Van Dam hangs on to avoid the powerslam but Orton pops up to catch Rolling Thunder in the powerslam in a cool move. Rob fights out of the Elevated DDT but Orton dropkicks him to block a springboard. The Elevated DDT lays Christian out but Orton has to hit the RKO on a charging Van Dam. The distraction allows Christian to backslide Orton for the pin and the title shot at 10:20 shown of 15:50.

Rating: B. Very good triple threat here with the crowd loving Van Dam, Orton being the likely winner and Christian being the man in the middle who steals the win at the end. They didn't really get to near falls until the end which made the match flow much better. Good stuff here and nice to see Christian getting a shot at a major show. And he got it with a backslide!

Post match Orton teases turning on Christian but shakes his hand instead. Rob shakes his hand too. Christian is about to say something but Del Rio jumps him from behind to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. This was a pretty solid episode as we're finally getting somewhere with the Del Rio losses. The main event was good and the Punk match was fine, giving us two good matches in two hours. Only the Divas match was bad but at only three minutes long there isn't much to complain about. It's a good show as Summerslam finally has more than two matches with about two weeks left before the show.

Results

Cody Rhodes b. Jack Swagger – Sunset Flip

Big E. Langston b. Sin Cara – Big Ending

CM Punk b. Fandango – Anaconda Vice

AJ b. Kaitlyn – Black Widow

Christian b. Randy Orton and Rob Van Dam – Backslide to Orton

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