



### Cubed Circle Newsletter

This is the last of the delayed newsletters. Thankfully my plane did not crash and the newsletter will carry on. Unfortunately there was no NXT report again this week, however we still have Summer Slam, RAW, SmackDown and Impact. Next week we go back to the normal schedule with New Japan Dominion among other things. As always you can subscribe to the newsletter by emailing [subscriptions@cubedcirclewrestling.com](mailto:subscriptions@cubedcirclewrestling.com) with your name and email address or by visiting <http://www.cubedcirclewrestling.com/blog/site-announcements/subscribe-via-email-now-available/>.

### **WWE Summer Slam 2012 Staples Centre, Los Angeles, California**

#### Overall Thoughts

This was a very weak Summer Slam both from a match size and quality aspect. The main event was good, but nothing great and everything else was good or decent. The triple threat match was completely average and would have been much stronger as a singles match and the main event fell flat because of the way that it was worked. With a show like this being built as the biggest show of the Summer, Summer Slam will go the way of Survivor Series in the next few years if things are not changed.

#### 1. Chris Jericho vs. Dolf Ziggler

Jericho came down with taped ribs. Jericho chased Ziggler around the ring and caught him with a back elbow and a chop. Jericho proceeded to take Ziggler down with a flying shoulder block, elbow and another chop. Jericho was in control of Ziggler, but Ziggler landed a shot to the ribs followed by a gut buster. Jericho landed a few shots and launched Ziggler to the outside, he went for the flying dropkick, but Ziggler bridged the ropes and Jericho went crashing to the outside. Ziggler grabbed a quick cover in the ring, wearing Jericho down. The fans got behind Jericho and he landed a few stiff shots, but he was cut off once again by Ziggler. Ziggler covered Jericho nonchalantly, Jericho landed a chop, Ziggler fought back, but Jericho got a rollup for a nearfall. Ziggler took a big bump off the turnbuckle, missing a splash and Jericho began to make a comeback. However, he was cut off with a knee to the gut from Ziggler. Jericho landed an axe handle, but he was cut off again and Ziggler landed a

fameasser for two. The crowd exchanged chants. Jericho went for the walls, it was countered, but Jericho caught Ziggler with an enzuigiri for two. Ziggler locked in a sleeper hold, but Jericho fought out only to be caught with a shot to the gut. Jericho landed some shots on the top rope culminating in a frankensteiner for two. Ziggler



spiked Jericho with a DDT, both men struggled to their feet, Jericho landed a bulldog. Ziggler reversed the lionsault and landed the Zig Zag for a

great nearfall. Jericho caught Ziggler with a code breaker, but he rolled out to the outside. Vicky held onto the leg of Jericho, allowing for Ziggler to grab a cradle for the count of two. Ziggler went shoulder first into the ringpost and Jericho locked in the Walls of Jericho for the submission. The finish culminated in Cole and Lawler saying that Jericho had “won the big one” – the opener at Summer Slam against Dolf Ziggler happens to not be big. It was a well laid out match, but it could have gone longer. Ziggler will probably get his win back on RAW.

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Matt Striker was standing by with Heyman and Lesnar. Heyman said that he convinced a referee to have the fight go to a finish which would allow Lesnar to break the spirit of the WWE. Heyman said that if they weren't “down with that” they had two words for Triple H “tap out”.

## 2. Daniel Bryan vs. Kane

Daniel Bryan came out to thunderous yes chants, which just shows how over he is as a heel. Bryan landed a few kicks to the leg and chest of Kane, but Kane fought back and landed a dropkick to Bryan on the ground. The fans got completely behind Bryan chanting his name. Bryan landed no kicks to the leg of Kane, but Kane overpowered Bryan and threw him to the outside. Bryan caught Kane with a baseball slide, but Bryan responded with a topé suicida. Bryan followed it up with a missile dropkick for the count of two. Bryan shook his head in response to some yes chants and laid into Kane with the no kicks. The buzzsaw kick was cut off with a clothesline and Kane caught Bryan with a splash in the corner. Kane landed the diving clothesline and went for the chokeslam, but Bryan countered. Kane took Bryan down with a strike, Bryan responded with a defiant slap, but then immediately backed off. This resulted in Kane digging into Bryan with strikes. Bryan went for the No Lock, but Kane fought off. Bryan caught Kane with a big kick and went to the top rope which resulted in yes chants. Bryan landed the diving headbutt, however he was caught with a chokeslam from Kane. Kane taunted for a tombstone, but Bryan countered it into a small package for the win. The dichotomy between Bryan and Kane in this match was strange in

many ways. Even though to my understanding Kane is supposed to be the face, he worked as a big lumbering monster and Bryan worked as a face for most of the match.  
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They cut backstage and Kane was throwing a fit, going crazy. He was approached by Matthews who he threw into oblivion. He was screaming for Bryan.

### 3. Intercontinental Championship Match The Miz vs. Rey Mysterio

Mysterio came out in a Batman costume. Mysterio got a quick cover, Miz rolled to the outside, slid back in and landed some shots on Mysterio. Mysterio landed a flying head scissors, but he was thrown out by Miz where he landed on his feet. Both men slid in and out, but Miz was caught with a kick to the outside. This resulted in Miz dropping Mysterio on the barricade and working over his neck back in the ring. Mysterio landed some kicks following a bodypress, but Miz caught Mysterio in a torture rack backbreaker for two. Miz landed some shots on the ground, but he was pulled off by the referee and he landed a boot. Mysterio attempted to make a comeback, but he was cut off with a clothesline. Miz landed the clothesline in the corner, but he was hung up when he made it to the top rope. Mysterio landed a seated senton and went for a flying head scissors. However Miz countered it into a sit out powerbomb. Mysterio landed a big kick to the head for two, Miz attempted to cut him off once again, but he caught Miz with a spike DDT. Mysterio went to the top, Miz attempted to halt him, but he landed a flying head scissors and the 619. He went for the splash, but Miz moved. Mysterio almost grabbed the victory with a roll up, but Miz kicked out. Miz then sent Mysterio into the turnbuckle and landed the Skull Crushing Finale for the win in a good match.

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A trailer was shown for the new WWE app. Eve and Teddy Long were shown walking out of AJ's office. They both talked about how good she was and walked off, which left CM Punk by the door. He took a deep breath and walked in, where he asked AJ about the look on her face. He said that putting the champion in a match where someone else could be pinned and he could lose the title was wrong. He said it was because he didn't marry her, but she gave him the silent treatment. He said that everyone was disrespecting him, but he would prove that night that he is the best in the world and the next night they would be forced to show him the respect he deserves.

### 4. World Heavyweight Championship Match Sheamus vs. Alberto Del Rio

Both Sheamus and Del Rio went tumbling to the outside where Sheamus landed a kick and Del Rio threw Sheamus into the announce table. On Sheamus' way back into the ring Del Rio landed a kick to the head. Sheamus landed a big boot for the count of two and landed some strikes on Del Rio. Del Rio landed a kick to the chest of Sheamus who responded with a rolling senton. Del Rio went to the top, Sheamus caught him in a fireman's carry, but Del Rio removed the turnbuckle pad and landed a kick to the knee of Sheamus forcing him to the outside. Sheamus landed some clubbing blows to the gut and Del Rio threw him into the steel steps. Del Rio landed a

flying shoulder block for the two count and locked in a headlock. Del Rio landed a neckbreaker and some strikes keeping control of the match. Sheamus fought back with some headbutts, but was cut off with a knee to the gut. Del Rio mocked the Brogue kick of Sheamus and went for the Brogue kick himself, but Sheamus caught him with some forearms. However, Sheamus was sent shoulder first into the turnbuckle. He fought back, but once again he was cut off at the top rope and Del Rio caught him with an arm breaker from the top. Del Rio went for the cross armbreaker and screamed destiny, it was briefly countered, but Del Rio locked it in. However Sheamus powered out. If only Sarah Kaufman could have lasted like that. Sheamus landed the over the shoulder belly to back reverse piledriver and taunted for the Brogue kick. Del Rio stepped back out of the way of the kick, but it allowed Sheamus to land the clubbing blows in the ropes. Sheamus began to land some shots in the turnbuckle, but he was dropped down onto the exposed turnbuckle by Del Rio. Del Rio then caught Sheamus with a flying enzuigiri for two. Del Rio became enraged and threw Ricardo into the ring, he threw the shoe to Del Rio, but it went over Del Rio's head and landed in Sheamus's hand. Sheamus landed a shot with the shoe, Del Rio's foot was on the rope, but the referee missed it allowing for Sheamus to get the win. I guess this a babyface victory in 2012.

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Cole and Lawler said that there was a twitter war going on between Mike Tyson and Pierce Morgan about the Lesnar/Triple H match. They then went to a taped segment from the YouTube pre-show. Triple H was talking to referee Scott Armstrong. Triple H said that the match would either win via pin or submission and Armstrong nodded his head. Triple H said it would be a fight to the finish and he ordered Armstrong to "let us fight".

#### 5. WWE Tag Team Championship Match

Kofi Kingston & R-Truth vs. The Prime Time Players (Darren Young & Titus 'O Neil)

Truth and Young started the match off to Koby Bryant chants. 'O Neil was tagged in and he locked in a front facelock on Truth. Truth caught 'O Neil with a kick and both men crawled for the tag. Truth got it first allowing for Kingston to go off on 'O Neil. He landed the boom drop and went for Trouble in Paradise. However, he was distracted by Young allowing for Young to roll out. 'O Neil caught Kingston on the outside with a big clothesline and rolled him in for two. 'O Neil tagged in Young and front suplexed him onto Kingston. The fans got behind Kingston who at that point was trapped in a body scissors. Young went for a back suplex, but Kingston landed a body press. 'O Neil was tagged back in and the crowd got behind Kingston who landed some kicks to the legs of 'O Neil. 'O Neil locked in an abdominal stretch, but Kingston fought 'O Neil off with some shots and caught him with a DDT. The tags were made to both partners and Truth ran wild on Young. He landed a front suplex, but 'O Neil was there to break up the pin. Kingston skinned the cat and sent 'O Neil to the outside where he landed a springboard body press. Young rolled Truth up for a count of two, but Truth landed reverse STO for the win.

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Clips were shown of fan Axxess and the events of the week in Los Angeles.

## 6. WWE Championship Match CM Punk vs. John Cena vs. Big Show

Cole actually mentioned that Punk hadn't mainevented a show the entire year, which was pretty ironic given the place that this match was on the card. Show chopped the chest of Punk and Cena, Punk responded with one of his own, but Punk was knocked down to the ground with a large slap to the chest. Cena and Punk double teamed the Big Show, they went for the double suplex, but it of course was countered. Cena was knocked to the outside with a back splash in the corner from Big Show. He went for one on Punk, but Punk landed a dropkick to the knee of Show which resulted in Show taking a tremendous bump. He landed some shots to knee and went for the GTS, but Big Show dropped off and landed a slap. Cena ran in and got Show up, but Punk knocked Cena down which forced Show off of the shoulders of Cena. Show took control of the match once again. Punk moved out of the way of a splash from the Big Show and went for a crossbody, but he was caught with a big standing splash from the Big Show. Show went for the WMD, but Cena came in. Show caught Cena with a huge spear for the count of two and went for a reverse splash from the second rope on both men – Punk moved Show landed on Cena. Show angrily forced Punk over the top rope and went after Cena who was on the outside of the other side of the ring. He knocked Cena down and threw Punk who just ran into the second rope from the outside, causing him to ricochet to the floor. Back in the ring Show landed a side slam on Cena. Punk was pulled in by the head, but he hung Show up which allowed Cena to land the spin out powerbomb. Cena went for the five knuckle shuffle, but Punk cut him off and went to the top rope where he landed an elbow with a smirk. Big Show kicked out emphatically at two. Punk caught Big Show with a kick to the head and locked in the Koji Clutch – Show slapped his way out. Cena was back in and he knocked Show to the mat with a shoulder block and locked in an STF. However, Show made it up to his feet and forced Cena into the turnbuckle. Cena no sold it and flew off the second rope, but he was caught with a scoop slam. Punk caught Show with a flying clothesline and landed three running high knees in the corner, but he was thrown off of the bulldog. Cena was still able to land a leg drop on Big Show. Punk locked in the Koji Clutch, Cena locked in the STF and Big Show tapped. Cena, Punk and the referee argued and of course AJ's music hit – because everyone knows that you can't have a mainevent without her.

She was skipping – very happy and why wouldn't she be? Her mainevent was a mess, but who cares. Both men argued, Cena said “you two have something going on” and Punk said that the fans could decide. She took forever and said to restart the match. Big Show caught both men with a double chokeslam, a spot that you hardly ever see executed for a two count. He went for the WMD on Cena, but he ducked and landed the AA. Punk threw Cena to the outside and covered the Big Show for the win. No one saw that coming did they? The finish apart from the restart the match was basically every triple threat match you have ever seen.

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Peirce Morgan, Fred Durst (who flipped off the camera and had people freaking out backstage), Rick Rubin, David Arquette and Maria Menounos (wearing a Bob Backlund shirt of all things) were in the crowd. A trailer aired for the new WWE Films Movie, *The Day*, it looked better than your typical WWE film. Antonio Cesaro was shown saying greatness in five different languages and beating Marella to win the

US Championship. Kevin Rudolf came out to perform the Summer Slam theme song with YouTube clips airing in the background. Justin Roberts and Lilian Garcia danced, a few people in the audience danced and the Divas also came out. Cole was behaving like a geek too, but for the most part it was a concert at a wrestling event and it didn't really work as you would expect.

## 7. Triple H vs. Brock Lesnar

Lesnar started off by sending Triple H into the turnbuckle and landed some shoulder shots. He went for the kimura, Triple H fought out, but Lesnar locked it in again. Triple H fought out and knocked Lesnar over the top rope to the outside. Once Lesnar was back in the ring he landed some more shots in the corner, but he was sent to the outside once again. This led to Triple H shouting "this is WWE not UFC" which was the most absolutely ridiculous thing I have ever heard. Lesnar removed his gloves and took Triple H down with a double leg takedown. He landed a stiff shot to the back of the head, where Cole said that you lose a point for a shot to the back of the head in the UFC which was again – funny. Lesnar dropped Triple H on the announce table and Armstrong did not count. Lesnar pulled Triple H in by the hair, Triple H attempted to fight back, but he was dropped arm first with a scoop slam. Lesnar locked in the Kimura, but he released. He proceeded to stomp on the arm, Triple H landed a kick, but Lesnar grabbed the kimura once again. Triple H went for something, but Lesnar landed a huge German suplex and smirked with a small spot of blood under his nose. Triple H rolled out to the outside, he was pulled by the hair, but Triple H hung Lesnar up and began to land some shots. Triple H landed some kind of DDT, but Lesnar locked in a Kimura again and threw Triple H on the arm with a scoop slam. Lesnar continued to pick Triple H apart, whipping him into the steps. Triple H was rammed into the announce table and Lesnar dove off of the toppled table with axe fist. Lesnar



got a small package for the count of two and Triple H landed a shot to the gut. Lesnar quickly regained control with a clothesline and Triple H countered a suplex to garner some momentum.

Triple H evaded one of Lesnar's clotheslines sending him into the turnbuckle. He went for the pedigree, but he was sent tumbling to the outside by Lesnar. Lesnar was thrown gut first into the table by Triple H and he yelled "my stomach" – Cole actually mentioned Lesnar's stomach issues out of nowhere as the information was probably sent from somewhere. Triple H rolled in, Lesnar locked in the kimura, but Triple H fought him off with the knees to the gut, again playing off of the diverticulitis. Triple H landed about a dozen knees to the gut and followed it with a spine buster. He went for the pedigree, Lesnar countered and went for the F5, but Triple H countered and

landed a pedigree for a nearfall. Lesnar was brought up slowly by Triple H, but Lesnar caught him with a big low blow as Lesnar screamed to Armstrong “he wanted the fight!” Lesnar landed a big F5 for the count of two and Lesnar looked on with a look of amazement. Lesnar locked the kimura in again, Triple H attempted to fight out, but Lesnar dropped down. He made it to the ropes, but there was no break. However, Triple H did land some shots to the kidneys which forced Lesnar to break the hold and allowed him to land the pedigree. However Lesnar locked in the kimura as Triple H went for the pin and finally Triple H tapped. After the match Triple H lay fallen in the ring slowly making it to his feet and chasing away “medics”. The crowd chanted “you tapped out!” which was interesting and Triple H walked off saying that he was sorry, he sold the arm, but not too a terrible extent. He apologized to some of the kids at ringside and said that he was sorry and then with tears in his eyes he walked off. Cole played it up like it was his last match, I would be extremely surprised if that was the case. Knowing Triple H his last match will be at WrestleMania at some point. But, you never know.

The match was good although it was worked completely differently to how Cena and Lesnar was worked. It wasn't as gritty and it wasn't as raw, but it was still a good match. The potatoes were kept to a minimum and there wasn't any blood. I feel that it would have been more effective if they did it that way, but at the end of the day Triple H is Triple H and he is going to work his match – and I'm fine with that. Lesnar won and that was the right choice from all angles. I think that Lesnar didn't come off as much of a destroyer as in the Cena match, since he was going for the kimura the whole time and wasn't bombarding Triple H with hard shots.

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### **WWE Monday Night RAW August 20<sup>th</sup> 2012 Fresno, California**

The show opened up with Brock Lesnar and Paul Heyman coming out and not the usual intro. Heyman said that the match from Summer Slam was an uncomfortable match, because of Triple H's ability to withstand punishment. Heyman paused and



said that when he was doing a better job than Cole and Lawler a decade prior he saw Triple H's quadricep get torn right in front of his eyes. He stated how much of a warrior Triple H was for fighting on, he said that a torn quadricep

couldn't stop Triple H, but Brock Lesnar could. He reminded everyone that Lesnar made Triple H tap out and pointed out that Triple H quit – quit on his family, company, fans, friends and the entire crowd. Lesnar stripped Triple H of his dignity

and his manhood and left him a beaten battered shell of a former man. Heyman said that he didn't feel sorry for Triple H and the crowd shouldn't have either, because it was a fight that Triple H picked and it wasn't just a match that Triple H chose, but a fight to a finish. Heyman called referee Scott Armstrong down to the ring to speak with Lesnar. Armstrong walked slowly to the ring and he confirmed with Armstrong that Triple H requested a fight to the finish. Heyman said that Lesnar had two words for him like Heyman had for Triple H a week prior – he told Armstrong “good job”. Heyman crowned Lesnar the new “King of Kings” and the master of the “Brocktagon” and master of “the WWE Universe”. This meant that the fans served under their ruler Brock Lesnar. Lawler said that he got the feeling that Triple H was saying goodbye from his exit at Summer Slam.

A tOut was aired from CM Punk. He said that he defended his title twice at Summer Slam and he would pick his next opponent on RAW.

#### 1. Sin Cara, Kofi Kingston & R-Truth vs. Cody Rhodes, Darren Young & Titus 'O Neil

Kingston and Truth came bearing gifts and a short clip was shown of R-Truth pouring Gatorade supposedly on Little Jimmy. This was for the most part your standard six man tag team affair. The babyfaces had control, the heels gained the advantage and Sin Cara caught Rhodes with a jackknife pin. Honestly the Kofi Kingston/R-Truth and Prime Time Players program needs to come to an end. As it feels like they are just stuck in perpetual mediocrity. The crowd was pretty into the finish with Sin Cara though.

Matt Striker interviewed AJ when David Otunga came by; he plugged his new movie – the Hive. He offered his legal consul if anyone called her crazy. She was offended and told him to offer his services in the ring to someone of her choosing. AJ said that Punk could choose anyone that he wanted as an opponent for Night of Champions under her approval. A graphic was shown for Khloé Kardashian as a social ambassador – I can almost guarantee that she was not watching the show.

#### 2. Ryback vs. Mike Spinner & Eddie Tabez

Ryback threw one of the jobbers out of the ring really hard. He landed a couple of really stiff powerbombs, but was caught with a forearm from the jobber that was thrown to the outside who was quickly disposed of. He went for the double Samoan Drop, but he was attacked from behind by Jinder Mahal. Mahal locked in the camel clutch, but Ryback landed a chin breaker and destroyed the geeks anyway. It's all fine and well that Ryback and Mahal have been placed in a program together, but I don't see this going anywhere. However I could be wrong as the fans seem to be getting behind Ryback to a certain extent.

Chris Jericho was backstage texting when he was approached by Ziggler. Ziggler said that Jericho had finally “won the big one”, but he needed another win and requested another rematch. Jericho said that he knew how to win the big one and asked if Ziggler knew. AJ came skipping by and gave them a rematch, if Jericho lost his contract would be terminated and if Ziggler lost his Money in the Bank briefcase went



to Jericho, because we all know that that makes sense. Ziggler walked off to try get the stipulations revoked afterwards. Del Rio was backstage shouting at Ricardo.

Del Rio said that he should have been the new champion that night. He said that he got robbed the previous night, which is kind of what happens when you have your babyface cheat to win. Del Rio showed a shot of his foot of the rope and he demanded another shot at the title right then and there. AJ came out skipping. She said that the World Title is Booker T's territory, but she would give him something to consider for the next night. She said a cheesy "say hello to my little friend" line and brought out Randy Orton.

### 3. Randy Orton vs. Alberto Del Rio

Just before the match started Sheamus came down to commentate. Del Rio was dropped to the outside following some shots from Orton. Orton landed a ricochet vertical suplex and began to stomp on the leg of Del Rio. He landed some shots in the corner, but he was dropped down face first into the top turnbuckle. Del Rio capitalized with a kick and locked in a side headlock. Orton got a cradle for the count of two, but Del Rio caught him with a dropkick. Orton fought out of the headlock, but he was caught with a knee to the gut and forced to the ground. He mimicked Orton's taunt pounding the mat and proceeded to go to the top rope, but he was hung up. Orton landed a superplex for the count of two and both men exchanged strikes from the kneeling position. Orton landed some clotheslines and a snap powerslam. Orton went for the draping DDT, but he was caught with a big enzuigiri for the count of two. Orton landed a backbreaker, but Del Rio responded with some kicks to the leg. Del Rio went for the cross armbreaker, but Orton landed a neckbreaker for the count of two. Orton landed a draping DDT from the second rope and taunted for the RKO, Ricardo jumped onto the apron, but he was scared off by Sheamus. Orton was distracted by Sheamus, which allowed Del Rio to land a back cracker, but Sheamus placed Orton's foot on the rope. Orton then landed the RKO for the win.

A clip was shown of Antonio Cesaro doing his five language gimmick. The ending was obscenely wacky. A tOut from the ring was also shown. Clips were shown of Axxess.

### 4. Brodus Clay vs. Damien Sandow

Sandow went after the knee of Clay, but Clay responded with a big back bodydrop and shots to the turnbuckle. Clay followed it with a belly to belly suplex and elbow to the ground. Sandow attempted to land some offense, but he responded with a scream and a big headbutt. Clay ran at Sandow, but Sandow got a rollup for the win with a grip on the tights. He took a bow, but Clay was behind him to land a leg trap belly to belly suplex and splash in the ring.

Some tweets were shown from the previous night and Michaels was preparing to appear "via satellite".

Michaels was asked his feelings on Triple H's situation. He said that he thought what he knew what was going on in Triple H's head and he said that you can't prepare for the end. He said that you expect it to happen in private, when in actuality it happens

“in front of millions on pay-per-view”. This show will not break 300,000 buys. He said that you can’t prepare yourself to face your professional mortality, he said that it could be the end of a career. He said that Triple H was a man of honor and integrity someone that Lesnar and Heyman would know nothing about. He left everything in the ring and every night prior is what he said. Michaels said that he wanted to support his friend, but he said that was stupid in hindsight because he became a burden. Michaels said that if he was in Triple H’s corner things may have been different, but they may not have been. He said that he didn’t tell Triple H the truth – he didn’t think that he could beat Brock Lesnar. He wanted Triple H to know that he had nothing to be ashamed of because he always respected and loved him. He said that they all loved him on behalf of himself and the fans they wanted to thank him “for a job well done”. Michaels was pretty great in this segment up until the last line or two, but that was due to bad material. After this promo I honestly see Triple H and Lesnar at Mania in Triple H’s last match, but then again no one really knows.

#### 5. Big Show vs. David Otunga

Show went straight after Otunga landing some chops and shots to the gut. He landed some big slaps in the corner following some slams. He then hit some really big knees and the big fist for the win.

A backstage clip was shown of the Big Show from the night prior. He basically said that the triple threat match was actually a handicap match and that he was the most deserving. He was really great.

#### 6. Daniel Bryan & The Miz vs. Kane & Zack Ryder

Bryan was set to start the match off with Kane, but he quickly tagged the Miz in and left the ring. Kane man handled Miz and tagged in Ryder who landed a missile dropkick on the Miz. Miz knocked Ryder down to the ground with a boot and landed a big boot for two. Bryan was tagged back in. He landed the “no” knees as a response to the yes chants. Bryan landed the no kicks and big knee to the head. Miz was tagged in and he locked in a camel clutch on Ryder. Ryder made it back his feet, but he was taken back down with a neckbreaker. Bryan was back in and he landed the big no kicks in the corner. Bryan went for a running forearm, but hit the Miz and Kane was tagged in. Miz slid off of the apron and Bryan slapped Kane and ran off through the crowd, which was just an amazing move. Kane then chokeslamed Ryder, which means that they are feuding again a presume. However, they could just forget about it next week. Kane then destroyed a technician and landed the tombstone on Ryder. How many turns can you have in one year? Let Kane explain.

A WWE.com interview with Cena was shown. He said that he wasn’t going to blame anyone and he could try again tomorrow. But, he wouldn’t respond to the question which was whether or not Punk was the best in the world. Matt Striker was standing by with CM Punk. He said that he beat everyone, but he thanked AJ and wanted to choose someone that the fans loved, who doesn’t give up and who many people say he can’t beat. He picked John Cena with one condition. He said that he was going to demand respect from Cena that night.

#### 7. Diva’s Number One Contenders Battle Royal



An absolute mess that Kaitlyn won to become number one contender. The finish was botched when Kaitlyn sent Eve over the top rope with a clothesline. This was far into the negative star range.

*Hell!!!*

They actually showed a tOut from Lesnar. He said that he came there to complete everything that he wanted to do and beat everyone that he wanted to beat, so he wasn't coming back. This was actually funny in some ways, since he has only had two matches – one win and one loss. Although he is supposed to be the heel the whole thing just came across as odd to me.

The new Wade Barrett vignette was shown again. Vicky was freaking out backstage saying that Ziggler had to win he said that it was the biggest match of his entire career. She freaked out again and Ziggler swore that he would win.

#### 8. Chris Jericho vs. Dolf Ziggler

Jericho got a rollup, forcing Ziggler to roll to the outside and as Ziggler rolled back in he was rolled up again by Jericho. Jericho landed a big chop, but Ziggler was able to bombard Jericho with shots. Jericho landed a missile dropkick, but Ziggler kicked out. Ziggler was launched to the outside missing a spot, but he quickly jumped onto the apron and was springboard dropkicked off. Ziggler got the handstand headlock, which seemed a bit inappropriate for “the biggest match of your life”. Ziggler locked in a headlock, but it was countered into a back suplex. Jericho caught Ziggler with a boot and a double axe handle. Jericho went for the bulldog, but Ziggler landed up on the top rope where he landed a frankensteiner. Ziggler got a DDT for the count of two and went for the fameasser, but Jericho locked in the Walls of Jericho, however that was countered into a rollup. Both men exchanged counters and there were some missed spots. Jericho went for the lionsault, but Ziggler got the knees up and landed the Zig Zag for the win. After the match Jericho grabbed the briefcase and landed a shot to the gut and back with it followed by a code breaker for good measure. Lawler called it “one of the greatest matches of all time”, which suffice to say it was not. A trailer was shown for The Day.

CM Punk came out. He said he lost his train of thought, he said that he saw Lawler sitting there and remembered what Lawler said. He wanted Lawler to admit that CM Punk turning his back on the fans was a lie. Punk asked for the apology again when Cena came out. Punk said that Cena could have waited, but he decided to steal the spotlight. He said that he had been taking a back seat to Cena, Triple H and the Rock out of respect. However he said that respect is a two way street. He said he let Cena

go last out of respect (this led to a Cena sucks chants). He said that Cena was the guy that he beat last year at Money in the Bank, Summer Slam and the night prior. He declared that he would beat Cena again. Punk said that he had to beat Cena again, but he pointed out that all the times he beat Cena never mattered. He saw the see of green and that's why he had one condition. Punk said that all of John Cena's fans listen to him and that is why to get his championship match he would have to admit that CM Punk was the best in the world. Cena said that he hadn't been champion for almost a year and he asked why all the fans followed him. He said that their relationship was not built off of the championship it was built off of respect, something that Punk was



in desperate need of. Cena mentioned Fresno's name. He said that if their team never won the national

championship they wouldn't abandon them and the same held true for Cena's relationship with his fans. He wouldn't call Punk the best in the world, because to succeed he had to believe in his heart that he was the best. He believed in the fans and wanted them to believe in him. He said that he thought for every second that he thought that he would beat the Rock and if they had a rematch it would be the same. If you didn't believe in yourself the door is there and you can get the hell out is what Cena said. He said that he held the championship for 380 days and never demanded respect. Cena said that Punk had been champion for 274 days, but the only thing that anyone remembers is when he blew the kiss to Vince. Cena offered Punk vindication and said that if Punk wanted to choose somebody else he could. Cena said that Night of Champions was in his home town and if Punk could somehow walk out with the championship it would be a moment to define his existence. Cena said if Punk turned his offer down he would have no respect for Punk and Cena walked off.

Punk went straight back to Lawler and asked for an apology. He called Lawler into the ring and said that Lawler went too far and owed him an apology. Lawler said it was a misunderstanding and apologized. He prepared to walk off, but he pulled back in and Punk said that he wanted to hear Lawler say that he was the best in the world because the people listen to him. Lawler said that he built his admiration with the fans over the years and Punk commanded him again. However, Lawler flat out refused and walked back to the announce table, but on his way there he was caught with a highkick to the back of the head. Punk kneeled over a fallen Lawler to close the show off.

I really enjoyed the closing segment, not only as a way to build to Night of Champions, but also to get both men over in their roles. Punk pretty much turned full blown heel in the last few minutes of the show, but that was expected anyway and

was executed well. I found Cena's home town aspect interesting, because Cena will probably be booed as much if not more than usual in that building and Punk will probably be cheered to a large extent. Even though being a tweener is kind of the kiss of death in some ways and staying there for long is not a good idea, but I was enjoying Punk in that roll. Punk and Cena were both great in this segment.

## **TNA Impact August 23<sup>rd</sup> 2012 Orlando, Florida**

### Overall Thoughts

This week's Impact really wasn't the greatest of shows; in fact it wasn't good at all. There were a lot of botches in pretty much all of the matches and the overarching theme with the Aces & Eights didn't work all that well. From the absence of people that have made it through Gut Check apart from a small clip from Silva I can only assume that they are members of the Aces & Eights. Even though he has a great story and seems like a really nice guy, I can't see how they could bring Chris Lewie in. He is not really in shape and is extremely green. They cut off the Claire Lynch angle, which was good in a way, because I can't see how they could have salvaged it otherwise. All in all a pretty nothing show that incidentally did a good rating – so what does that tell you.

The show opened up with the Aces & Eights riding into the arena on motor. Sting came out together with Aries, Storm, Angle, Styles, Devon, Ray, Hardy and Gunner in the ring and whole bunch of other people on the outside of the ring like Anderson, Van Dam, Robbie E etc. Sting said that he told security to leave the gate wide open. He said that the diverse group was ready for the Aces & Eights. They wanted to remember their victims so they showed some photos of the Aces & Eights' attacks. The crowd chanted "we want Hogan". Sting said that the cloud of doubt was officially gone from James Storm and Storm was brought out.

Storm said that he would have believed that he was behind it if he was on the other side. He had an idea and it was to turn the wrestling show into an "ass whipping show". Sting said that Hogan was p\*ssed off because they went after Brooke and he was there in the building. Two members of the Aces & Eights walked out. They were brought in pretty cordially, but were then beaten down by Angle and Storm. They pulled the mask off of the unmasked man who was bleeding from the mouth. He was given a mic and he thanked everyone. He said that they were all in for a long painful night, which led to Strong landing a shot.

Brooke Tessmacher came out and thanked Brooke Hogan for righting the wrong that took place at Hardcore Justice. But, she said that wasn't the reason that she was there. She said that there is one thing that bothers her whenever she looks in the mirror each day. She said she always questions if she can beat the person that taut her everything in the business – she called out Tara.

#### 1. Brooke Tessmacher vs. Tara

Taryn Terrell came down to officiate the match. Tessmacher landed a few armdrags and botched a leapfrog. Tara landed some slams followed by a powerslam for two.

Tara and Tessmacher exchanged some strikes, Tessmacher was knocked down, but she fired back with some strikes. Tessmacher hesitated to throw a strike and landed an X factor out of the corner. She went to the top, but she was cut off by Tara who landed a superplex for the win. After the match both women hugged, this should lead to a match at the next pay-per-view.

A video package was shown of the Aces & Eights beat down from Hardcore Justice. Sting was talking to AJ Styles, Robbie E and Rob Van Dam. He talked about Pope being put out of action and said that all three of them were set to wrestle Pope. So he said that the only logical explanation would be a triple threat match.

## 2. AJ Styles vs. Rob Van Dam vs. Robbie E

Styles and Van Dam went after E who was hit with a double elbow and rolled to the outside. Van Dam landed a leg scissors pin for two as the result of an athletic exchange, E went after Van Dam, but he was caught with a back suplex from Styles. Van Dam landed a big dropkick, he went for a dive, but was cut off by E. After E got in some offense Styles landed some big shots followed by a flying forearm in the corner. After the break E got a pin for the count of two. E shouted at Styles, Styles went for the flying forearm in the corner, but missed and Van Dam was knocked off



of the apron. Styles landed a jawbreaker to get out of E's headlock, he was taken back down, but he was taken to the floor by Van Dam. This led to Styles landing a plancha onto both men.

Styles landed a fireman's carry over the knee neckbreaker on Van Dam and clotheslined E off the apron. Van Dam hit the big spring kick and rolling thunder. He landed a standing moonsault on E for two and he was sent flying to the outside. Styles was supposed to land the springboard into the inverted DDT, someone missed timed and a clumsy sequence followed where Styles landed the second half of the move. Van Dam pushed Styles off the top rope and landed the five star frogsplash. However, Robbie E threw him off of the cover and covered Van Dam for the win. The finish was actually pretty dumb, since it would have made far more sense to pin Styles and not Van Dam.

Jeff Hardy came out and said that his match would not be a Bound for Glory Series match, but rather a personal one – he called out Robbie T.

### 3. Jeff Hardy vs. Robbie T

Hardy landed an enzuigiri, but was immediately taken down with a clothesline. The crowd got behind Hardy almost immediately as he was worn down by T. T went for something or other that he was taunting for, but Hardy landed the whisper in the wind and landed a few lariats knocking T down to the ground briefly. He went for the legdrop to the groin, but T powered out and went for a big clothesline, but Hardy landed the twist of fate and swanton bomb for the win.

Daniels and Kazarian were backstage. Daniels said that Styles thought that he would have all the answers that night, but he hadn't even heard all of the questions said Daniels. Daniels then offered Kazarian an appetini saying that one a day kept the doctor away, Kazarian declined. Sting called the Aces & Eights back again in a more over the top manner. There was a video package of the Claire Lynch angle from the start.

Styles came out with no music clutching his ribs. The crowd chanted "who's your daddy?" and Styles apologized to his fans, friends and his family. He said that he couldn't remember the night with Claire, but he said that it did happen. He stated that if the child was indeed his he would accept responsibility. However, he said if it was not his child he did not want Daniels or Kazarian to say a thing to him for as long as he lived. Claire Lynch was set to be brought out, but of course she wasn't there since she is not showing up to events and she won't be seen again. Styles and Daniels came out instead.

Kazarian said that he still cared more about himself than the "demon seed" that he had placed inside of Claire Lynch! Kazarian found a way to blame Styles for crime in the United States basically saying that it was men like him who abandon their children like him that breed criminals. Daniels said that he had turned his back on Claire Lynch. Daniels said that Lynch wasn't there because she had suffered a placental disruption caused from AJ stressing her. Daniels asked Styles if he was happy now that Lynch went through so much suffering. Daniels then called Styles a "selfish selfish bastard" as a woman came down to the ring saying that she was Claire Lynch's attorney. She said that she was authorised to read a statement from Lynch. Basically it was a note admitting that they were black mailing and manipulating Styles. They said that Styles' drink was spiked. She basically admitted responsibility to her actions and she said that she had never been pregnant. She said that Styles was and always had been the man that "they" had known him to be. After the woman left the ring Styles caught Daniels with a pelé forcing the heel team out of the ring. Honestly the angle was bad as a whole mostly due to Lynch and it took multiple turns for the worst over the past few weeks. There was no real payoff and it was probably for the best, but for pure comedy sake I would have liked to have seen the original payoff.

A video package was shown for Chris Lewie this week, it was extended. He seemed pretty charismatic and he had a good story. Sting walked by three of the Aces & Eights in his joker gimmick. He dropped some cards on the floor as the three men just stood there. Finally Sting threw a batten to Hogan who was making the most ridiculous noises, honestly he sounded like a bulldog with emphysema. He said that if they ever got close to his daughter he would cut out their "stinking heart" and feed

them to his “damn dog”. Alex Silva was shown training and his eventual goal is to be the greatest wrestler of all time. Good luck with that.

#### 4. Gunner vs. Chris Lewie

Lewie landed a big shoulder block. Both men slipped up and Lewie slid into a cover. Gunner landed some shots to the gut and a dropkick for the count of two. Gunner



landed a big clothesline for the count of two followed by an elbow.

Gunner overpowered Lewie, Lewie landed some awful punches and some kind of strange knee and a Samoan Drop. Lewie missed a diving headbutt and Gunner landed the fireman’s carry facebuster for the win. Lewie seems like a nice guy and all, but he was extremely green and very clunky during the match. Plus for such a short match he looked like he was blown up towards the end. I honestly don’t think that he is ready for a contract.

ODB was backstage speaking to Young on the phone. She kind of plugged his show and said that her “fish were jumping” and supposedly approached someone. Anderson came out and said that it was his last Bound for Glory series match. He said that he saved the biggest, baddest and meanest for last. He brought Bully Ray out.

#### 5. Bully Ray vs. Mr. Anderson

Ray landed a kick to the leg followed by a back suplex, Ray then threw Anderson shoulder first into the turnbuckle. Bully Ray was in control following the break. The crowd chanted either “we want Vader!” or “we want Saturn!” both of which would have been strange. Ray landed some shots in the corner and the fans got behind Anderson. Ray missed the splash coming off of the second rope and both Ray and Anderson exchanged strikers from the kneeling position. Anderson cut Ray off with a clothesline and a spinning neckbreaker for the count of two. Anderson went for the rolling senton, but Bully collapsed on top of him. However he landed one from the top rope for two. Anderson went to the top rope, he was hung up and Ray landed a superplex. In the middle of the match they cut to a brawl backstage with Aces & Eights with Angel, Gunner and others. Ray landed the Bubba Bomb for the count of two, he went for another, but he was caught with a DDT and senton bomb for two. Ray went for the ace crusher, but he was caught with the Mic Check for the win.



They cut to the Aces & Eights' leader who said that they would be there in three minutes to deal out the Dead Man's Hand. Sting came out with a large portion of the locker room. Sting said no more disappointments and called them out. The fans just wanted to see Hogan. There were no Aces & Eights. They finally came out and a big brawl ensued. The one Aces & Eights goon looks like Bobby Dempsey, but I could very easily be wrong. Even more members of Aces & Eights came out around three minutes in and everyone continued to brawl. Two members of the Aces & Eights grabbed a guard rail while Aries was alone in the ring and slammed a chair across the arm, the fans reacted by chanting for Hogan. Ray ran in to make the save. The Aces & Eights then got on their motor bikes and left. I see a lot of them being the people from Gut check and Joey Ryan will probably be there somewhere.

## **WWE SmackDown**

**Bakersfield California – August 24, 2012.**

**Ben Carass**

A video package of the Sheamus/Alberto Del Rio feud kicked off SmackDown this week; including a recap of the finish to the World Heavyweight Championship from SummerSlam.

Inside the arena and Randy Orton's music began; The Viper headed down the ramp, while footage of Orton vs. Del Rio from Raw rolled. Randy cut a promo in the ring, saying he thrived on competition and Del Rio claimed his victory on Raw was tainted. Orton said: "too bad", followed by stating he should be the number one contender for the World Heavyweight Championship; The Viper then challenged anybody in the back who had a problem with that to come out and confront him.

Sheamus' music hit and the Heavyweight Champion of the world joined Orton in the ring. The Great White said: "Bertie", had: "blown all his chances", as he defeated Del Rio fair and square at SummerSlam, just like Orton did on Raw. Sheamus told Randy he should be at the front of the line for a title shot, which brought out Booker T.

The GM asked the crowd if they wanted to see Sheamus vs. Orton, which drew a pop from the fans; Booker said he wanted to see it too, but he needed to address what happened on Raw.

Alberto Del Rio, who came out ranting about what he was witnessing, interrupted the Booker man. Del Rio entered the ring and called Sheamus a: "criminal" and Orton a: "greasy criminal". Alberto then asked Booker T what kind of person did he want as the World Heavyweight Champion, then claimed he should be the champion by now. Del Rio told Booker that his losses at SummerSlam and Raw were due to Sheamus cheating. The GM said he knew where Alberto was coming from, but was cut off by Del Rio who said: "Booker T, you don't know anything". Sheamus told the enraged Mexican aristocrat to calm down, to which Alberto replied with: "I never lost the match; I was in control, I was destroying you". Del Rio then informed us that he filed a protest (with whom was never mentioned) but was still awaiting an answer. Orton accused Del Rio of embarrassing himself and Alberto declared: "I know what this is; this is a conspiracy; everyone is against me". After which, Del Rio called Booker T a criminal and a cheater just like Sheamus. Book informed Del Rio he would have been first in line for a title shot, but running his mouth caused Booker to change his mind. The GM then booked a number one contender's match between Orton and Del Rio as the main event.

*A mediocre opening segment. It feels like Orton has been wedged into the world title picture simply to keep him busy. Sheamus didn't get a clean pin on Del Rio at SummerSlam so that feud is not finished with. Maybe the idea is to freshen up the programme by adding Randy, however the two top babyfaces on SmackDown being involved in an angle will only serve to divide the fans and damage each guy. The Del Rio/Sheamus feud should logically end at Hell in a Cell in October, the addition of Orton would diminish the blow off; much like Del Rio's role in last year's triple threat with Punk and Cena.*

Michael Cole was alone at ringside; he explained Josh Matthews had suffered injuries at SummerSlam.

Footage of Kane launching poor Josh aired and Cole read out a tweet from the abused commentator.

A graphic of Brock Lesnar tapping Triple H with the Kimura from SummerSlam rolled.

Ryback's music began; he did his: "feed me more" routine, before walking down to the ring. Cole hyped Ryback vs. Jinder Mahal after the break.

*What an incentive to stayed tuned.*

Commercial Break.

Back at the announce table and Teddy Long had joined Michael Cole; Teddy said there would be different guest commentator for every match. The advisor to the general manager told Cole he needed all the help he can get at the desk.

*I dread to think what irrelevant, non-wrestling-related tangent Cole would go off on if he were to call a show on his own.*

Ryback cut a promo saying: "Jinder Mahal will finally realise his place in the food chain", followed by another: "feed me more" gimmick. Which unbelievably seems to be getting over. Mahal's music played and he came out for the match.

Ryback vs. Jinder Mahal

The man with chronic pink-eye and an imperishable appetite looked strong early. Jinder escaped a running powerslam attempt; sent Ryback into the turnbuckle then applied a cravat with some knee strikes. Mahal attempted to get some heat on his opponent, however a combination of contemptible offense and diabolical selling only drew the trite: "USA" chants from the crowd.

Ryback didn't make a traditional babyface comeback, the hungry fellow countered with a backdrop, shoulder blocks in the corner and a powerslam. After not going for a cover, Ryback tried to get the fans to join in with his "feed me more"

schtick; the hard camera showed audience were clearly not buying it due to the lackluster action, therefor obviously piped in chants were deployed. Ryback nailed Jinder with a clothesline and a running Samoan drop for the three count.

*Ryback defeated Jinder Mahal, via pinfall at: 2:50.*

*This was appalling in all sorts of ways; the execution of the match was awful, psychologically and aesthetically. What was the point in Jinder attacking Ryback a couple of times, then squashing a pair of unnamed geeks, only to be made a fool of in three minutes? Having Mahal reach the final of the NXT Championship tournament means absolutely nothing and demeans the young talent he went over, if he is constantly made to look like a joke on television. The sweetened “feed me more” chants were worse than the old piped in “Goldberg” chants from WCW.*

A graphic hyping the Del Rio/Orton main event aired.

Commercial Break.

After the break, Kaitlyn sat with Cole; he congratulated her for winning that abominable number one contender battle royal on Raw. She said she was almost excited enough to hug Cole.

Alicia Fox was in the ring, apparently waiting for an opponent. Layla’s music began and the Diva’s champion appeared to face Alicia.

*I thought Kaitlyn’s music was bad; Layla’s is indescribably repellent.*

Non-title match: Layla (Diva’s Champion) vs. Alicia Fox

The two traded pinning combinations early; Layla landed a springboard cross body for a near fall. Fox scored with a dropkick after a leapfrog to get a two count; Alicia applied a single-leg Boston crab and Cole took a break from girl-talk with Kaitlyn to put over the hold. Layla caught Fox with an inside cradle for two, followed by a big kick for the pinfall.

After the bout, Kaitlyn put over the Diva’s champion like she was Manami Toyota, saying: “I’ve learnt so much from Layla”.

*Layla defeated Alicia Fox at 2:05, via pinfall.*

Following a replay of the finish, Kaitlyn entered the ring and hugged Layla; Eve interrupted the pair and joined them. Eve raised both women’s hand and left; Cole put her over as a huge babyface, instead of a scheming heel.

*A two minute match with at least five near falls; what were the agents thinking? A typical Diva’s segment that nobody in the arena or in the back for that matter, cared about. They released Kia Stevens, jobbed out Beth Phoenix, made Natalya look ridiculous and expect us to swallow Layla as a credible champion? This is unforgivable booking.*

A graphic of CM Punk and John Cena’s confrontation from Raw rolled.

Commercial Break.

An excruciatingly long Raw rebound aired after the commercials.

Dolph Ziggler and Vickie Guerrero were talking backstage; Dolph asked what was up with AJ booking the briefcase vs. contract match with Jericho on Raw. Vickie told him, she would take care of AJ and to focus on being the future World Heavyweight Champion. Sheamus must have been listening in as he appeared from nowhere and challenged Ziggler to cash in his briefcase on SmackDown. Dolph replied by claiming Sheamus would never see it coming if he chose to cash in. Teddy Long, who also seemed to be eavesdropping, walked into the shot; the advisor to the GM said he would: “advise Booker T to make the match”. Teddy then told Dolph: “it might not be for the Money in the Bank contract, but if you’re as good as you say you are, then maybe you will get an opportunity to cash in; or then again, maybe not”. Ziggler replied with: “sounds great” and Sheamus shook Teddy’s hand.

Inside the arena, Sin Cara headed to the ring.

Commercial Break.

Back at ringside and Cody Rhodes was at the announce table; Rhodes had a caricature of the “unmasked” Sin Cara with him. Cody claimed it was a professional rendition based on eyewitness accounts; Cole said: “I like it”, as Heath Slater made his entrance to face Sin Cara.

Sin Cara vs. Heath Slater

The two locked up; Slater grabbed a hammerlock but was taken over with a snapmare. Sin Cara hit a dropkick, only to be dumped on the apron; Slater avoided a kick and hit a forearm, sending Sin Cara to the floor. Cole and Rhodes talked over the entire opening portion of the match; Cody said: “it’s more than an obsession” and “it’s about more than literally removing the mask”. However he failed to explain what it is about.

Back in the ring; Slater tried to get some heat with a rear chinlock. Sin Cara fought out; nailing a springboard elbow and a springboard, corkscrew armdrag. The One Man Rock Band rolled to the floor, but Sin Cara hit a corkscrew plancha; Slater then sent Sin Cara into the apron and threw him back in the ring.

The referee admonished Slater, as his opponent was in the ropes; Rhodes left the announce desk and went after the mask of Sin Cara. Cody was unsuccessful in removing the hood, however he managed to turn the mask around, obstructing the vision of Sin Cara. This caused Slater to hit a reverse DDT for the victory.

*Heath Slater defeated Sin Cara, via pinfall; at: 2:36*

After the contest, Rhodes attacked Sin Cara and went after the mask again. Some referees ran in and saved the hooded wrestler from being unmasked.

*Another match under three minutes; at least this time it served an angle. The problem with Sin Cara having all these matches that go a maximum of five minutes is, it becomes abundantly clear he only has one match to offer. He gets some of his stuff in,*

*sells, makes a comeback and gets more of his stuff in, then goes into the finish. Creative still has a long way to go before the unmasking attempts of Rhodes become important and Michael Cole calling the mask a: “Mexican tradition”, is simply not going to cut it.*

A graphic of Sheamus vs. Ziggler rolled; Cole said the match was coming up next.

Commercial Break.

Sheamus was in the ring after the break and Lilian Garcia introduced the World Champion. Vickie Guerrero introduced Dolph Ziggler; the Money in the Bank winner came out to face The Great White. Vickie then joined Cole on commentary.

Non-title Match: Sheamus (World Heavyweight Champion) vs. Dolph Ziggler

After a lock up, Sheamus controlled the early going off the match until Ziggler escaped to the apron. Dolph countered the big clubbing forearms spot and hit a DDT



on to the apron. Ziggler applied a rear chinlock for some heat but Sheamus fought out, to land a belly-to-back suplex; Cole called it a: “side slam”. Ziggler locked in the sleeper; Sheamus

shrugged him off; landing a double axe-handle smash and a Triple H-like knee lift.

The Great White set up for the Brogue kick; Dolph called for Vickie, who handed him the Money in the Bank briefcase. Ziggler nailed the World Champion with the case causing a DQ.

*Sheamus defeated Dolph Ziggler at 5:04, via disqualification.*

Ziggler drilled Sheamus with the briefcase again after the bell; Cole said: “why would Ziggler do that? I thought he would want to pin Sheamus”.

*Why? He already has a guaranteed title shot, which is valid at anytime.*

Dolph then appeared as if he was going to cash in the briefcase; Mike Chioda took the case and turned towards the timekeeper’s table, but Ziggler snatched it back after Sheamus had made it to his feet. Vickie and Ziggler headed safely up the ramp, still with the briefcase.

*The match was simply another way of making Sheamus look far superior to Ziggler. Dolph hit a DDT on the apron; delivered two shots with the briefcase and still wouldn't cash in his contract. Sheamus has pinned Ziggler clean countless times over the past few months and made it seem like Dolph is incapable of beating him; this is precisely why Ziggler should cash in on Sheamus and win the title. The hard work has already been done, all they need to do now is put the strap on Dolph and have the cheated babyface chase the vulnerable champion; this angle writes itself. I'm not making any predictions, although for Ziggler to cash in on Sheamus, The Great White is going to need a victory in a match that is well established as brutal, demanding and exhausting; like Hell in a Cell for instance.*

A graphic of the Orton/Del Rio main event rolled.

Commercial Break.

A Wade Barrett vignette aired.

Inside the arena and Santino Marella came out for a promo, while footage of Antonio Cesaro winning the US title at SummerSlam played. Santino said he had been US champion for: "166 days, 14 hours, 33 minutes and 22 seconds"; he continued to say he let everybody down by losing the belt. Marella went on by explaining that everywhere he goes, people are asking him the same question: "when are Santino Marella and The Cobra going to be on the same page?"

Santino then pulled out the sock puppet and made a terrible joke about it biting his "nonna". The canned laughter used here was worse than an episode of The Munsters. Marella then told the sock it cost him the US title, because Aksana distracted it; after rambling for an eternity, Santino said he couldn't stay mad at The Cobra and he would be US champion again.

Antonio Cesaro appeared with some new music, which is completely unsuitable for him. Aksana said that Antonio wanted to speak in five languages; this week the word was: "winner". Cesaro claimed he personified being a winner, causing Marella to say: "oh no you didn't" and head up the ramp to face the new US champion. Cesaro went for a kick, but Santino caught the boot and made Antonio look foolish by holding onto it for far too long. Marella dropped Cesaro with a forearm, then went for The Cobra; Aksana distracted the inanimate puppet and Cesaro beat down Santino. The new US champion stood victoriously over Santino, holding the belt in the air.

*This segment was bad; WCW Thunder bad. Santino was especially unfunny and his promo took a lifetime. Cesaro looked like a chump when Marella blocked his kick and dropped him and don't get me started on the sock puppet being distracted by Aksana.*

Alberto Del Rio was shown backstage, apparently having a heated discussion with Ricardo Rodriguez; we couldn't hear what he was saying.

Commercial Break.

Following the break, The Prime Time Players were next at the announce desk; Cole did their "millions of dollars" gimmick and looked ridiculous. Darren Young told Cole he was: "worse than Rosa Mendes"; who was in the ring with Primo and Epico. Kofi Kingston and R-Truth came out to face the Puerto Rican team.

Non-Title match: Kofi Kingston & R-Truth (Tag Champions) vs. Primo & Epico w/ Rosa Mendes

Kofi and Epico had a nice exchange early in the match; Epico extended his hand to Kofi, but before Kingston could shake, Epico kicked him in the stomach to get the advantage and tagged in Primo. During the handshake spot, Kevin Dunn thought it would be more important to see the back of Cole and The Prime Time Players' heads, instead of following the story of the match.

Primo got some heat on Kofi; Cole was shown doing Titus' seal bark, or whatever it is. Kofi took a suplex and a slingshot backsplash, but again the director, Dunn felt compelled to show us what was going on at the announce table; this time it was Titus doing some Booker T impressions.

Kofi made the tag; Truth came in with no fire, just his dance moves and hit a gourdbuster on Primo. Epico broke up the pin attempt, but was sent over the top rope with a clothesline, which lead Primo to attempt the backstabber. Truth blocked by holding onto the top rope and hit the Little Jimmy for the three count.

*Kofi Kingston & R-Truth defeated Primo & Epico at 2:22, via pinfall.*

After the fall, Cole did The Prime Time Players gimmick again and said they will be tag team champions some day.

*This match was nothing special, mostly due to the fact they kept cutting away from the ring so we could see three men sat at a desk. They have microphones, why do we need to see them when there is wrestling taking place? After Truth got the "hot" tag (which was considerably cold) he seemed nonchalant with his offence; maybe he was told in advance the announcers aren't going to put anything over and kill the match.*

A video package of WWE's tour of the Far-East rolled.

Matt Striker was backstage with Kofi and Truth; he asked them who is next in line for the belts. Kofi said they had beaten The Prime Time Players at SummerSlam, Primo and Epico tonight, so it wasn't up to them. Truth said Little Jimmy told him there is lots of deserving talent in the locker room. The Prime Time Players showed up; Titus told Little Jimmy to shut up and said he isn't real, just like Truth and Kofi aren't the real tag team champions. The Uso's then appeared saying they deserved the shot; quickly followed by Primo and Epico who said they had beat everyone so they should get the match. Suddenly, Tyson Kidd and Justin Gabriel made an appearance, but before they could say anything a big schmoz broke out; eventually some refs ran in and tried to stop the brawl.

A graphic of Brock Lesnar and Triple H rolled.

Commercial Break.

Booker T and Teddy Long were in the GM's office after commercial. Teddy said the refs had the brawl under control now and Booker asked who deserves the tag tile shot. Teddy ridiculously said: "it's a unique situation, there is no easy answer".

*I guess because Teddy can't employ his patented: show up, book a tag match and leave gimmick. This was not a unique situation and there are plenty of easy answers: Battle Royal, tournament, four-corner tag match, tag team turmoil.*

Booker asked Teddy to advise him, but the former GM was stumped. Eve walked in and hilariously insinuated that wins and losses mean something to these people. She said: "I took the liberty of going through the record book and compiled the win/loss record of every tag team over the last six months". Booker was impressed, he told Eve and Teddy to handle their business and walked off. Eve looked at Teddy and said: "I didn't even notice you were here".

*Eve's "record book" compiling was such a kayfabe line; I found it hysterical, as wins and losses haven't meant anything in this company in over 10 years.*

Michael Cole was at ringside and talked about AJ having trouble on Raw.

Another long video package played, recapping the Daniel Bryan/Kane feud, the Brock Lesnar/Paul Heyman segment and Shawn Michaels' promo from Monday.

Randy Orton's music hit and he made his way out for the main event.

Commercial Break.

Sheamus was with Cole for commentary; Lilian Garcia introduced Ricardo Rodriguez, who then announced Alberto Del Rio's entrance.

Number One Contenders Match for the World Heavyweight Championship: Randy Orton vs. Alberto Del Rio, w/ Ricardo Rodriguez

Orton started fast with a slingshot suplex and a catapult into the bottom rope, however Del Rio gained the advantage by landing a kick to the shoulder, then worked on the arm. Alberto went for the cross armbreaker, but Orton countered with a neckbreaker, causing Del Rio to roll to the floor. Sheamus stood up to get a better view; Cole told him to sit down.

Commercial Break.

After the commercials, we were shown footage of Orton's arm being rammed into the steel steps, as Del Rio controlled with a rear chinlock. Alberto missed a step-up enziguri and Orton began a comeback with clotheslines, followed by a powerslam. The Viper went for the hangman DDT; Del Rio reversed by dropping to the floor,



which wrenched Orton's arm over the second rope.

Back in the ring, Alberto took a desperation reverse headlock backbeaker for a two count, but cut Orton off with a double-knee armbreaker. Del Rio attempted the cross armbreaker once more; Orton countered by



sending his opponent into the turnbuckle and landing a dropkick as Alberto came off the second rope. Randy successfully hit the hangman DDT, before setting up for an RKO. Del Rio blocked the move by grabbing the top rope and locked in the cross armbreaker, causing Randy Orton to tap out.

Alberto Del Rio defeated Randy Orton, to become the number one contender for the World title at: 10:38, via submission.

*The match was fine, nothing special. The finish however was tremendous. I love it when I don't see something coming and Orton tapping, clean in the middle of the ring was the last thing I expected to see.*

After the match, Del Rio threw Ricardo's shoe at Sheamus. The World Champion entered the ring and brawled with the number one contender; Ricardo jumped on The Great White's back, which led Del Rio to nail Sheamus with a shoe. There was more sweetened crowd noise used here.

As Alberto and his announcer were leaving, out came Dolph Ziggler with the Money in the Bank briefcase. Dolph yelled at the referee to get in the ring, but was caught with an RKO from Randy Orton.

The show went off the air with Ziggler clutching his briefcase on the floor, Del Rio signalling he wants the belt on the ramp and Sheamus and Orton in the ring.

*This episode of SmackDown was far from great, although the finish of the main event and the final segment were executed and booked expertly, which was refreshing. Alberto needed to look strong with a big win, considering how many times he has lost to Sheamus. Orton didn't lose any steam, as he nailed Ziggler with an RKO and drew a big pop.*

*The Dolph and Sheamus interaction was also good, I like the idea of Sheamus needing to be absolutely defenceless for Ziggler to cash in. Here's hoping creative don't revert to their old ways and screw up an easy angle to book.*

*Everything else on the show felt like a gigantic waste of time. Excluding the main event, the calibre of wrestling was strikingly dismal and perhaps with the exception of Cody Rhodes, the guest announcers did nothing to get across their views regarding the feuds they are involved in. If you missed the show, I would advise you to check out Del Rio vs. Orton simply for the unexpected clean finish; I would also be envious, because you did not have to sit through that embarrassing Santino segment.*

### **Next Week's Issue**

Next week the puroresu drought ends with New Japan Dominion, plus we cover RAW, SmackDown, Impact, NXT and more! Plus look out for coverage of the Wrestling Observer Hall of Fame over the next few weeks!

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