



Cubed Circle Newsletter

This week wasn't as much of a busy week compared to last week and the week prior, however we still have some interesting stuff to cover this week. We have another New Japan Road to Destruction Show, coverage of the WWE Hulu deal, the RAW Ratings, RAW itself, the Observer Hall of Fame Part V with Bill Apter, New Japan's upcoming iPPV, Impact, SmackDown and NXT.

This is the 50th issue of the Cubed Circle Newsletter, meaning that it has been going for just under a year. We have come a long way since the first issue, but there is still a lot to improve on and that is why, like we do every 25 issues or so, there is a survey up on the front page to see what you want out of the newsletter and the site – so we can make it happen. I would really appreciate any participation in the survey that can be accessed either from the front page, at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/VKHCMNQ> or simply at <http://tiny.cc/ccw50surv>.

WWE Signs Deal With Hulu Plus

WWE has signed a deal with web-based streaming company, Hulu, to broadcast programming on their premium service. At this time the money involved in the deal is not known, but it is thought to be upwards of ten million dollars a year. The channel launched earlier this week and as of right now includes Superstars, NXT, a ninety minute version of RAW and SmackDown.

The programming seems to surface one day after its original airdate, which means RAW on Tuesdays and SmackDown on Saturdays. From what I have heard advertising is minimal, however large matches were removed from RAW such as Kofi Kingston/Dolph Ziggler.

This means that it is probably the international programming surfacing on the channel, because it is international viewers who received a shorter version of the show. In the case of countries like South Africa, the show is still kept at an hour when the show has expanded to three.

Unfortunately Hulu isn't available outside of the United States, so international viewers will either have to wait for Hulu to accommodate international visitors (I don't know if they currently have plans to do this or not.) or the WWE will probably have to find

an alternative service for them – if they are looking to branch off into the international market.

I don't know what this will mean for the Network and as for if this is going to be a "Network Light" or not, I don't know. We will probably know more when the new earning report comes out with a good indication of how much the Hulu deal is bringing in.

I assume that over the next few weeks more content will be added. I would assume that it would be similar to Netflix with WWE DVD releases being available, but only this time on the WWE channel. As far as pay-per-views go I can't see those heading over to Hulu. Hulu premium only charges \$7.99 per month, so putting a \$50+ pay-per-view on there wouldn't make much sense as of right now.

As far as I know Classics on Demand is still being scrapped, so this could be a viable alternative. I don't know how many of the Classics on Demand subscribers have access to Hulu, but I would assume that in today's day and age many should have access to it. However, I don't know how many of them will be willing to watch Classic content on Hulu without adequate peripherals like a Roku Box.

This could be a viable option for a "Network Light" for the WWE. They save face for not launching the Network and make a good amount of money for the amount of money that they have to fork out (most likely a very small amount). I don't think that the Vince would settle for Hulu and settle for not having the Network – it just doesn't seem to be the way that Vince thinks.

However, if this works out, it could be like YouTube to a much larger extent. Programming that is either already there, or is extremely cheap to produce yielding a profit. Plus this could be a good option for fans that currently don't have direct access to the product, or for one reason or another would like to watch WWE's programming through an internet streaming service.

Wrestling Observer Hall of Fame Part V: Bill Apter

Bill Apter is a very unique case in the sense that there is no one like him currently inducted into the Hall of Fame. He is not a wrestler nor is he a promoter, commentator or manager, he was a journalist that was able to gain such wide coverage in a group of magazines that he was able to make a notable difference on the wrestling business at the time.

Bill Apter was the most notable write for a group of magazines that would later be known as the "Apter mags", published by Stanley Weston. These magazines included Inside Wrestling, The Wrestler and probably most notably Pro Wrestling Illustrated.

These were a group of kayfabe magazines that focused heavily on photography as a selling point for their magazines. The magazines also prominently featured editorials written completely in kayfabe and taking...um...artistic license. But, it was that artistic license, colourful and vivid photography together with results that sold the magazine.

The reason that these magazines were so important was because of just how large their scope was and how they conveyed information between territories. Before cable TV and the internet it was difficult to find information and results for the other territories outside of your area, so the Apter mags became a means for that information to travel.

That of course helped wrestlers to get over before they even got to a territory as the Apter mags represented their own microverse of dramatic pieces, often times graphic photography and results that really helped to portray certain wrestlers in a light that was governed by the Apter magazines themselves.

Bill Apter obviously wasn't the publisher of any of these magazines, but without Apter there really wouldn't have been any *Apter* mags.

Apter was in many ways to his audience and at his time the Dave Meltzer of his era and while some could argue that Meltzer would be a more deserving candidate as a hall of famer – it is his hall of fame after all and having himself on the ballot wouldn't really portray the Hall of Fame in the most honourable way. This is the way it is even though Meltzer probably deserves to be inducted.

Apter is the closest that we are going to get to that major editor of a pro wrestling getting inducted into the Hall of Fame for now. The big question is of course, does he deserve to be inducted into the Hall of Fame? Is being the figure head for the one of the largest pro wrestling publications enough to be inducted into the Wrestling Observer Hall of Fame?

Yes, I believe it is. Apter was such a meaningful part of the pro wrestling business in the United States during the territorial days as a barer of news and he served a role in getting wrestlers over to a relatively large extent for a wrestling publication. If you were on the cover of Pro Wrestling Illustrated and the picture was a catching one, then that would mean far more than you might think.

Apter was at the pinnacle of his sector of the business for a very long time and although it he didn't directly act upon a promotion, his influence can't be denied. Also for what it's worth he made Pro Wrestling Illustrated and all of the Apter mags for that matter very successful in terms of sales.

I wouldn't feel insulted if Apter got into the Hall of Fame even if I wasn't for him, just for the simple fact that he was at the top of his sector of the industry. And you could make the case for just how meaningful that contribution was, but there is no denying just how successful Apter was.

We have gone through this before and my stance hasn't changed. However, many people especially people that grew up in the rural areas of the United States will site Bill Apter as a very important figure and while this isn't the Hall of the Popularity of Rural Children we are debating, I did think it was worth a mention.

Bill Apter garnered 23% of the vote last year, down 10% from the year before. I don't think that there has been a heavy enough push for Apter this year. It isn't like he is a Big Daddy or Sting who gets a wide range of debate every year so they could sway in

either direction. The argument for Apter for the time being remains stagnant, so I can't really see him getting in this year – even though he probably should.

NJPW 40th Anniversary Road to Destruction September 17th 2012 Kusunoki Hall, Saitama, Japan

Overall Thoughts

This was once again a fun show, just like the other Road to Destruction shows. However, this show did lack the at least one great match unlike the other shows, the mainevent was good, but there was nothing that really stood out on the show – which was fine. With the exception of one match the card was made up completely of six and eight man tag matches, which is your typical house show style format. I was perfectly happy with the show, some stuff did drag like the Yano/Iizuka and TenKoji tag matches, but the show was still fun. There is really nothing to go out of your way to see on this show, except if you are interested in a very entertaining Romero/Koslov promo and a huge upset in the mainevent.

1. Hiromu Takahashi vs. Takaaki Watanabe

Takahashi and Watanabe went back and forth working out of a wrist lock. They went to the elbow exchanged, which broke down into a chop exchange and then back into the elbows. Watanabe got the better of the exchange landing a body slam on Takahashi. Watanabe locked in a camel clutch and wore Takahashi down. Watanabe followed it with a big back bodydrop for two and locked in a Boston crab on Takahashi. Takahashi began to crawl to the ropes, he was pulled back to the centre, but he eventually willed his way to the ropes. Takahashi fired back with a dropkick and landed a running forearm to the back of the neck, and one to the head for the count of two. Takahashi fired off with forearms, but was caught with a big flying forearm from Watanabe. Watanabe then landed a running dropkick in the corner and sideslam for two. Watanabe went back to the Boston crab, Takahashi once again willed his way to the ropes. Watanabe landed a couple of elbows, Takahashi absorbed them, but responded with a huge slap and missile dropkick. He then landed a bridging fisherman's suplex for the win in 06:52.

I am all for the Young Lions look of black trunks, boots, kneepads and hair coupled with white wrist tape. However, in a match like this it becomes a bit disconcerting. Takahashi and Watanabe put on a simple, yet fun opener, which told a decent story. Takahashi came off looking good, although the closing sequence could have gone longer.

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2. Ryusuke Taguchi, Alex Shelley & KUSHIDA vs. Gedo, Rocky Romero & Alex

Taguchi and Gedo started off. Taguchi locked in a wrist lock, Gedo went crazy, he ran in a circle attempting to tag in a partner, but was dragged to the mat by Taguchi. Gedo shook hands and hugged the official. He then offered Taguchi the same treatment, but caught him with an eye poke. Taguchi responded with a dropkick and Koslov consoled Gedo. He was tagged in along with KUSHIDA. Koslov locked in a headlock and the tag was made to Shelly. This led to a double team and Romero was tagged in.

Shelly shouted “f**k you” at Romero and landed a leg lariat. He then went off on Romero with strikes in the corner. He landed a chin breaker and went for a running move, but he was pulled to the outside by Koslov – a chase ensued. However Romero cut Shelly off in the ring and made the tag to Koslov. Koslov landed an atomic drop and Romero a neckbreaker. Koslov landed some punches on a grounded Shelly and yelled “how is the f***** man?”. Koslov then put on the hat as Romero chanted for Russia on the apron. He landed a couple of kicks and tagged in Gedo. Gedo landed a few shots and made the tag back to Koslov. Romero knocked Taguchi and KUSHIDA off the apron and Romero halted Koslov who attempted duelling lariats. He wouldn’t let Koslov in and this resulted in Shelly landing a bulldog and making the tag to Taguchi. Taguchi landed a springboard dropkick for two and a fameasser. Taguchi proceeded to land two of the three amigos. Koslov grabbed the hair of Taguchi, backed off and then landed an enzuigiri. The tags were made to KUSHIDA and Gedo. KUSHIDA landed a standing moonsault, but was caught with an enzuigiri from Romero. Romero unloaded with lariats and an assisted lariat from Koslov which was awesome. Gedo landed a superkick, but Shelly broke the pin up. KUSHIDA and Shelly landed a Koji clutch dropkick combo on Gedo and Koslov was taken off the apron with a handspring back kick. Shelly then landed a sliced bread/powerbomb combo with KUSHIDA for the win in 11:22. After the math Koslov said they did it for mother Russia and “father Cuba”, Romero and Koslov are a great act.

3. Jushin Thunder Liger, Tiger Mask & Máscara Dorada vs. Jado, Low Ki & Averno

Averno and Dorada started off. They had an athletic exchange and had a battle of strength. Dorado locked in a submission and got a quick pinfall and flying head scissors. Averno caught Dorado with a hurricanrana, but Dorado sent Averno to the outside. Averno avoided a dive and the tags were made to Tiger Mask and Jado. Jado landed some chops, wooing away. Tiger Mask caught him with an enzuigiri and sent him into the ropes for the tiger kick. This led to Jado doing an awful Flair flop and tagging in Low Ki. Liger was tagged in too. Ki landed a kick, but he was dropped to the outside where Liger feigned a dive. However, he was caught with a shot from behind from Jado and Low Ki rammed Liger into the guardrail. Low Ki locked in a camel clutch and made the tag to Jado. He did his stomping on the extremities gimmick and made the tag to Averno. Averno landed a powerslam, but the pin was broken up by Tiger Mask. Ki was tagged in, Liger fought off some strikes, but Ki was able to land a few kicks and some shots in the turnbuckle. Liger attempted to counter into a powerbomb, but he was brought back down to the mat. Liger countered an attempted Jado/Ki double team and tagged in Tiger Mask. Tiger Mask however missed a dropkick on Ki. Jado and Ki went for the double team, but Tiger Mask had kicks for everyone. Dorado landed a topé con giro on Averno and Tiger Mask landed the tiger driver on Ki for two. He followed it with a highkick, but Jado ran in with a neckbreaker. Averno was tagged in together with Dorado and Dorado ran wild. He got a pin, but Ki broke it up. Everyone brawled on the outside while the two went at it, however when Dorado went to the top, he was caught with the top rope devil’s wings for the win in 10:12.

4. TAKA Michinoku, Kengo Mashimo, Lance Archer & Harry Smith vs. Hiroyoshi Tenzan, Satoshi Kojima, Togi Makabe & BUSHI

Makabe went straight after Mashimo as a brawl broke out. Mashimo landed some kicks in the ring, but Makabe caught one of the kicks with an elbow to the knee. Makabe then knocked him down with a shoulder block and the tags were made to Tenzan and Archer. They engaged in a pushing contest and Archer landed a knee and knocked Tenzan down with a shoulder block. Tenzan landed a few Mongolian chops and shoulder blocks, but Archer wouldn't go down. Archer went after Tenzan, but he was caught with a leg lariat finally knocking him down. Tenzan and Kojima landed a couple of double teams and BUSHI and Michinoku were tagged in. BUSHI landed a big dropkick and rolling cradle for two. BUSHI landed a dropkick, but he was caught with a leaping highkick and all of the faces were taken to the outside by Michinoku's team. Mashimo strangled Makabe with a chain on the outside, while Michinoku worked BUSHI over in the ring. Smith was tagged in. He landed a huge powerslam calling in Tenzan. Archer was tagged back in and they landed a big guillotine legdrop on BUSHI. After BUSHI kicked out, Archer rammed the referee into the corner. He landed a powerslam, but the pin was broken up by Tenzan. Michinoku was tagged back in and he clawed at the mask, stomping at the face of BUSHI. BUSHI landed some forearms, but was simply cut off with an eye poke. Mashimo was tagged in and he landed a back senton following a knee from Michinoku. Both Michinoku and Mashimo landed knees. However BUSHI landed a code breaker and made the tag to Makabe. Makabe knocked the heel team off the apron and ran wild on Mashimo. He landed some shots in the corner and shouted "f*** you". However he was cut off by Mashimo who landed some big kicks. Mashimo landed a DDT, but was caught with a snap powerslam from Makabe. Kojima and Smith were tagged in. Kojima unloaded with machine gun chops on Smith and then went after Michinoku. He caught Smith with the big flying forearm and elbow for two. Kojima landed a flurry of elbows, but was caught with a leaping knee from Smith. Smith caught Makabe with a kick, but he was caught with a crusher from Kojima. All the faced went after Smith in the corner. TenKoji landed the 3D and Kojima removed the elbow pad. But, he was grabbed by the leg and Archer interfered. Smith caught him with a backdrop driver and he and Archer landed tandem powerslams and a powerbomb/inverted DDT combo for the win in 12:11. This was every single Suzuki/Makabe eight-man tag match you have ever seen only without Suzuki, continuing the Archer/Smith title push.

5. Tetsuya Naito, Wataru Inoue & Captain New Japan vs. Toru Yano, Takashi Iizuka & YOSHI-HASHI

Of course before the match Yano and Iizuka attacked. Inoue got the advantage over Iizuka and tagged in Naito. Naito and HASHI went at it. Naito and HASHI exchanged forearms, HASHI landed a slap and an athletic exchange followed. The tags were made to New Japan and Yano who did some comedy. New Japan went to the top rope and missed a diving headbutt. This led to HASHI knocking the face team off the apron and a brawl ensued. New Japan was caught with a chair shot from Iizuka, but he made it back into the ring at nineteen. They worked over New Japan. Iizuka strangled him with a piece of rope from the turnbuckle, and he was thrown into an exposed turnbuckle back first. New Japan fought back against HASHI with some shots, but was taken back down with a rake to the eyes. New Japan then threw Yano into the exposed turnbuckle, but Iizuka ran in, knocking Naito and Inoue off the apron. New Japan landed a double body press and made the tag to Naito, Naito took

both Yano and Iizuka out and was limping a bit with his taped up knee. However, even with that injury he sprung to the top and landed a missile dropkick. Yano however halted Naito's run by pulling him down by the hair. HASHI was tagged in and Naito landed a hurricanrana and tagged in Inoue. He landed the belly to back piledriver, but was cut off with a lariat from HASHI. HASHI then landed a brainbuster for two. Iizuka, HASHI and Yano landed a double team, but Inoue still kicked out. He landed a lariat on HASHI and caught him with a spear. Inoue then landed a bridging German suplex on HASHI for the win in 12:20.

This match really dragged. Iizuka and Yano as a team have just become really stale in their current position and even though you had Naito and Inoue in there it really was more of the same. The match started off in a brawl, Iizuka and Yano did all of their same spots, it was the same match we have seen so many times. It couldn't have really gone shorter, but it felt like it just dragged for hours.

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6. Hiroshi Tanahashi, Hirooki Goto, Karl Anderson & Tama Tonga vs. Kazuchika Okada, Shinsuke Nakamura, Yujiro Takahashi & Tomohiro Ishii

Goto and Nakamura started off. Goto caught him in a top wrist lock, but Nakamura got out of it and locked in a headlock. Nakamura landed a shoulder block; Goto didn't budge and landed one of his own knocking Nakamura to the mat. They exchanged some counters, which Goto got the better of landing a hip toss and making the tag to Anderson. Nakamura landed some shots to the gut of Anderson and made the tag to Okada, this of course led to the over the shoulder double big boot of CHAOS brotherly love. Anderson wrenched at the arm of Okada and tagged in Tanahashi. He and Anderson landed a double team, but Tanahashi was forced into the heel corner allowing for the tag to Takahashi. They engaged in a battle of strength, which Tanahashi got the better of, however Yujiro bit the hand of Takahashi for the advantage. Tanahashi landed a crossbody and tagged in Tonga. Takahashi clawed at both of their eyes, but Tanahashi and Tonga responded with a double hip toss. The tag was made to Ishii and he and Ishii exchanged forearms. Ishii landed a headbutt, but only hurt his head in a comedy spot. Tonga then proceeded to ram his own head into the turnbuckle, Ishii went for a brainbuster, but Tonga countered and landed a suplex. Tonga landed a shop to the chest of Ishii and fired off with shots to the gut. Ishii landed a snap powerslam and the faces were knocked off the apron. This led to a triple big boot and Nakamura and Okada picking up Ishii and dropping him on Tonga with a senton! Okada landed a big dropkick to a downed Tonga and tagged in Takahashi. Takahashi locked in a chin lock, but it was broken by Tanahashi. Nakamura was tagged in and he dropped a knee. Nakamura proceeded to stomp on the toes of Tonga and choked him with his boot. Tonga landed an elbow and powerslam and made the tag to Goto. Goto ran wild on Nakamura, Ishii ran in, but Nakamura accidentally caught him with a boot. This led to Goto landing a lariat on Nakamura and elbows to all the men on the apron. Goto then landed the fireman's carry over the knee backbreaker. Nakamura landed a big leg lariat and went for the Boma Ye, but Goto rolled out of the way. Nakamura landed the knee in the corner with assistance from Yujiro, and Okada landed a knee. However Goto fought back with lariats and made the tag to Anderson. Anderson landed a big flying dropkick and chops on Okada. He followed it with a scoopslam and backsuplex. Okada went for

tombstone, Anderson countered, but Okada landed the belly to back over the shoulder over the knee neckbreaker. Okada landed an elbow and signalled for the rain maker. Anderson ducked, Okada reversed the gun stun, Anderson landed a lariat, but Okada landed a big dropkick. Tanahashi was tagged in along with Takahashi. He landed a splash in the corner together with a flying forearm. Takahashi landed a lariat and Ishii knocked the face team off of the apron. Ishii landed a lariat in the corner, Okada a knee and Takahashi landed a fisherman's buster. The pin was broken up, but Anderson, Goto and Tonga were thrown to the outside. Takahashi went for Tokyo Pimps, but he was caught with a switch blade. Tanahashi missed the highfly flow and Takahashi landed Tokyo Pimps for two. Takahashi then landed a bridging German suplex on Tanahashi for the win 16:54 in a huge upset.

The finish was certainly unexpected. I assume that it will lead to a title match down the line as another Tanahashi title defence before Okada. I don't think that it made Tanahashi look bad going out of the match and it is good to have someone in the wings for after Marufuji. The match was good, although not as good as some of the other eight and six man tags we have seen over the past few weeks.

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WWE Monday Night RAW September 24th 2012 Albany, New York

Overall Thoughts

As a whole this was by far the best RAW since RAW 1000, it dragged, but it did drag less than usual. It had a great TV match, some good progression and a great promo segment with Foley and Punk. The Bryan and Kane stuff started off well, but died down quickly and became juvenile by the end. Punk was the absolute star of the show, as he came off like a legitimate big star, which is the first time that I can honestly say that about him in a long time. Having him go out there with Foley was a really good idea, as both men played off of each other really well. The closing segment with Cena was also good, although I didn't really agree with the pipe shot. They look like they are trying to prepare Ryback for sometime down the line and I am interested to see where they go with it. As a whole this was a much more enjoyable and productive show – thumbs up.

The show opened up with Heyman and Punk in the ring. Punk was sitting in a chair with the championship draped across his shoulder. Heyman stated that he was honoured to be sharing the ring with CM Punk and he said that he had bad news that the show was grinding to a halt right then and there. RAW wouldn't get under way until justice was served. A replay was shown of the mainevent last week, with Punk with his foot under the bottom rope. Heyman said that everyone witnessed a great crime that befell Punk's title reign. That is why he called out the referee from last week, Brad Maddox, to apologize and tender his resignation.

He came out and there were light "you screwed Punk" chants. Maddox said that he made a mistake, it was his first mainevent and he should have checked the ropes – he felt terrible. Heyman told him to resign. He was slightly more hesitant. Maddox said he was sorry, but he didn't feel that a resignation was appropriate. Punk jumped up and said he didn't care what Maddox felt, except if it was shame, he was an

embarrassment. Punk asked how he pretended to be a man and how he got the job. He said that when RAW expanded to three hours he received a call from General Manager, AJ Lee, who said that they were in need of more officials (AJ couldn't have been GM at this time, which was a glaring plot hole). Heyman said that he was a scab, novice, a rookie, because he wasn't a real referee. Heyman said that when he went to sleep he needed a blindfold; he then pulled out a WWE and NFL logo blindfold. Punk called AJ the "idiot general manager" and said if she was good at making decisions she would fire Maddox. He started saying "if she had a brain", which was AJ's cue, but he had to repeat it before she came out.

AJ came down skipping and told Maddox to go to the back. Heyman said that he



assumed that she was out there to correct the issue. AJ said when you assume "you make an ass out of you and me, but mostly

you". She wouldn't let them berate an official and hold her show hostage. AJ asked Heyman who the hell he thought he was. Punk said that he was the WWE champion and he was the reason that she had a job. He was the reason that the fans were in the seats. Punk said he knew why there was hostility between the two of them. He said he would show everyone why she had it out for him. They cut to a clip of AJ's proposal, which was just conveniently ready to roll. Punk asked if that was the reason that she sent an incompetent referee down to the mainevent last week. If she forgot the mainevent last week, he would forget her showing up in one of his shirts and he would hide the hundreds of voice mails that she left – voicemails that weren't fit to air on the USA network. Punk wanted AJ to tell everyone what happened behind closed doors, why she was so happy and why he was the "best in the world"

Heyman freaked out issuing a cheap plug for the new CM Punk DVD. Saying "remember when we talked about this on your DVD". The crowd chanted "CM Punk". Heyman got back on the mic. He dropped down to one knee and asked AJ to marry him. AJ had a discussed look on her face. Heyman said he would fulfil her power fantasies. They would trump all of the power couples, they would rule the WWE, because he would come up with all of the ideas – and she would take credit for their success. He liked them dumb, uninhibited and ambitious. He offered her a hug and she slapped him and walked off.

Punk and Heyman were really great at just being a heel tandem. Heyman doing a lot of the talking is great, because it makes Punk come across as even more heelish. The

segment was mediocre until Heyman got down on one knee. At that point both he and Punk really came off as manipulative and devious - which is really what you want.

A graphic aired for the return of Lawler to TV. Maddox was speaking to a referee backstage when he was approached by AJ. Maddox thanked her for standing up for him and told her that it would never happen again in a very stiff and generic manner. AJ said it wouldn't happen again, because she would make sure that he would never work in the business again if it did. AJ went into a hokey daze. Maddox agreed and a smile spread across her face. Cole and Ross were at ringside, but were interrupted by Guerrero's introduction of Ziggler.

1. Dolf Ziggler vs. Kofi Kingston

Ziggler and Kingston argued at ringside and a drink was thrown into Vicky's face. This resulted in her and Truth being removed from ringside. Kingston landed some leg kicks followed by a dropkick. Kingston followed this with a topé con giro to the



outside. After the break Kingston was throw into the turnbuckle, which allowed Ziggler to land an inverted exploder suplex. Ziggler locked in a

headlock and landed a neckbreaker for two. Ziggler landed another dropkick for a two count and went back to the headlock, this time with a body scissors. Ziggler missed a splash in the corner and he and Kingston exchanged strikes. Kingston landed some shots followed by the boomdrop, he went for trouble in paradise, but Ziggler countered. A series of counters followed. Ziggler landed a leaping highkick and axe fist for two. Kingston went for the monkey flip, but landed a crossbody for two instead. Ziggler kicked the leg and landed a fameasser for two. Ziggler went for the Zig Zag, but Kingston landed the SOS for two. Kingston went for a missile dropkick, Ziggler attempted a counter, but Kingston held onto the legs and landed a crossbody for two. Ziggler went for trouble in paradise again, but Ziggler threw him into the turnbuckle and landed the Zig Zag for the win. This was a really great TV match, the crowd was hot and it is something we need more of on the three hour RAWs.

JR and Cole talked about Cena's surgery and said that he would be on the show live that night. A recap was shown of the Bryan/Kane matches on SmackDown.

After the recap they cut to a diner where Dr. Shelby was talking to Bryan. Shelby said they had made progress, Bryan said he was the tag team champions, Shelby

responded by saying that it wasn't grammatically correct. Kane was one of the waiters and Shelby said that it was part of the therapy. Shelby asked what Bryan would like. Bryan said he would like a steamed vegetable platter and the respect of a "big red freak". Shelby told Bryan that it wasn't Kane, it was Gerald. He said his name was Gerald and he was a waiter. Kane said they had a new cook, who wouldn't listen and took credit for things that he didn't deserve. So he shoved his goat face into the deep fryer and took his goat beard and cut it up and sprinkled it into all of the meals that he served. All the customers looked disgusted. He said that his name was Gerald and walked off. This was really well shot and everyone performed well, but because Bryan is so good at what he does, I am afraid that he is going to be turned into a complete comedy act.

A graphic was shown for the fans to choose Bryan and Kane's team name

2. Prime Time Players (Titus 'O Neil & Darren Young) vs. Zack Ryder & Santino Marella

Young pushed Ryder shouting "millions of dollars", Ryder responded with a slap and a slapjack. Ryder missed a splash and was hung up on the top rope. Marella was tagged in and landed a Saito suplex of all things. He landed a couple of hip tosses, Marella went for the Cobra, but 'O Neil simply picked Santino up and landed the sky high for the win. 'O Neil and Young looked really good.

A graphic was shown for Lawler's first interview again. They then cut to a door that said "RAW gust" on it. It was announced that the guest would be revealed next. There was some Susan G. Koman content.

Mick Foley came out. Foley said that he didn't come there as a hardcore legend, but as a member of the WWE Universe. As a RAW viewer he occasionally sees things that move him, but none more so than the emergence of CM Punk last year. The crowd booed. Foley said Punk inspired change, but that change was bullying referees and hanging out with Paul Heyman. He said the Punk he knew was one that stood up for what was right and Punk's music hit.

Punk bumped Foley out of the way and grabbed a microphone. He said that "if you have something to say, say it to my face, but don't come out and play to the people in an attempt to prove that you are still relevant". Punk asked if Foley was selling a new kids' book. Foley said that he was still relevant last year when he got a text back from Punk after he won the WWE championship. He said that Punk probably responded to two or three people and Foley was still one of them. Foley wanted to know about Heyman, but Punks shouted at the crowd and said that if they had something to say they could grab a mic and he would shove it down their throats. Foley said he used to be a Paul Heyman guy, but he only became a success when he learnt to make decisions on his own. He said that Heyman was probably in Punk's ear for more than a month. Foley said Heyman never lied to him, but he would do the best for himself and not for Punk. But, he asked why Punk, one of the best talkers in the business would need a mouth piece. He said that Punk could either be the best or a cool aid drinker, it was his choice. Punk wanted to know if they were done. Foley said if he didn't listen to him about Heyman, he may have listened to him about Hell in a Cell. Foley said that it made his career, but not one day did he have to ask people for

respect, he earned it that night in Hell in a Cell. He said that whoever makes it through Hell in a Cell earns respect. He cited Michaels, HHH and Undertaker.

Punk said that it was a brilliant speech and wanted to know if he wanted the old CM Punk. Foley wanted Punk to show he was the best in the world by stepping into the cell with Cena. Punk said he heard the same speech from Cena, before Night of Champions and after. He threw the belt down. He said that Hart said the same thing, but he wasn't like Hart or Foley. He said that Hart disrespected him in Hart's home town and he knocked him down and embarrassed Punk. However he said that it would be more embarrassing if he tried to put his hands on Foley, because he wouldn't lower himself to Foley's level. Just like all the people, Foley was beneath him. Punk said he didn't know how many times he had to beat Cena before he would gain respect, but he wouldn't do it for the fans. He said that Foley would jump off roofs, go through thumb tacks or set himself on fire for respect, but Punk could simply do it with a microphone. Punk said he raised the bar by staying champion for 309 days. Foley gave Punk a number 29. The number of combined days he held the championship. Foley began to shout that nobody cared about statistics; they cared about the moments that go on to define you. Foley said that Punk needed one more and that is why AJ let him come out. He said that Cena was there that night and would be ready by Hell in a Cell. AJ let him make the decision, he could either walk away or step into the cell, but he would make that choice to Cena's face. Foley told him to make the decision for himself, Punk and the fans.

This segment was by far the best this on the show. Mick Foley was at the top of his game, delivering a simply awesome promo, while CM Punk came off as a huge star in his battle with Foley. The fact that Heyman does a lot of the talking for Punk is actually pretty smart, because when Punk speaks it really is important. This segment made the title, Punk and the cell mean more than when Foley came out and that speaks to the ability of both men.

3. The Miz vs. Ryback

Ryback landed a big right hand and some shoulder blocks in the corner. Miz landed an elbow, but Ryback got Miz up for a powerslam. Ryback rammed Miz into the mat and Miz rolled to the outside. Miz kicked Ryback into the barricade, he ran out, but he was thrown into the ring. Miz was able to land three big kicks followed by a DDT, but Ryback kicked out forcefully and landed a stiff powerbomb. A fan stormed the ring as Ryback caught Miz with a clothesline and landed the marching Samoan Drop for the win. Logically this should set up an intercontinental championship match, but I really wouldn't hold my breath.

Kane and Bryan were eating at the diner and they found solace in their misery over what Shelby was putting them through. They bonded over their destruction of eight men on SmackDown and Kane shouted "oh, don't, stop" while Bryan screamed yes. Afterwards they were out of breath and Mae Young was ordering "what they are having". This was a rather non-PG segment.

AJ was talking to the officials backstage. She said they were the back bone of the WWE and they never had instant replay. She said that everyone makes mistakes and put her arm over Maddox's shoulders. She then told them to have a good night and

they walked off. She was approached by Del Rio, Otunga and Rodriguez. She said he wasn't getting another title match. She said she would give all three of them a chance at redemption. It would be Sheamus, Mysterio & Sin Cara versus all three men. Otunga and Del Rio were distressed, while Rodriguez was overjoyed.

4. Wade Barrett vs. Tyson Kidd

Kidd landed some leg kicks and a couple of dropkicks. However Barrett cut him off with a knee to the gut and some knees in the corner. Kidd was knocked to the outside with a kick from Barrett. Barrett proceeded to ram Kidd into the apron. Kidd got a rollup, but he was caught with a spinout side slam and short arm forearm for the win.

Cole was in the ring recapping the Lawler situation. He welcomed Lawler via legit satellite. Lawler was back in Memphis sitting on a throne. Cole said Lawler looked great considering the circumstances. Lawler had a raspy voice (which he acknowledged and said was from the breathing tube) and said it was great to be back. Cole asked Lawler what the last thing he remembered was. Lawler remembered the first segment, but couldn't remember anything else. He said that he thought they were still in Aruba, where he and his girlfriend were two days prior. Cole asked Lawler if he expected the out pouring of response. Lawler said he didn't, but it felt like every person he ever met reached out with their well wishes. He thanked them all. Cole asked Lawler when he would be back on RAW. Lawler said that once RAW went from two hours to three hours it was a matter of time before someone had a heart attack. He said he was kidding, but he said he hadn't been cleared by the doctors. However, he said that he would be "on the first thing smoking" once he was cleared.

5. Sheamus, Rey Mysterio & Sin Cara vs. Alberto Del Rio, David Otunga & Ricardo Rodriguez

After the break Sheamus went for the clubbing blows on Otunga, he was pulled down by Del Rio and Rodriguez, but Sheamus dived off the apron with a shoulder block. Mysterio and Cara then landed dual topé suicidas, just avoiding the post, onto Del Rio



and Ricardo. Cara was tagged in and landed an armdrag on Ricardo who was still in his tuxedo. Del Rio landed a

cheap shot allowing for Ricardo to land a shot. Del Rio was tagged in and landed a snap suplex followed by a boot to the back of the head. Ricardo was tagged back in

and he clawed at the mask. Cara went for a flying head scissors, but he had to drop down and then go back up. He made the tag to Sheamus, but Mysterio ran in. He landed a kick on Del Rio and landed a drop-toe-hold. He went to the top, but Del Rio leaped to the top landing a high kick. Otunga was tagged in and he landed a scoop slam. Ricardo was tagged back in and he landed some shots. Mysterio went for a kick, but Ricardo held onto the legs and tagged in Del Rio who landed an enzuigiri to the back. Mysterio made it to his feet and landed a dropkick to the face and made the tag to Sheamus. Sheamus ran wild, but when he went for the brogue kick Otunga bolted out and tagged in Ricardo. Both Del Rio and Otunga dropped off of the apron. Ricardo attempted to flee, but he was grabbed by Sheamus who landed the clubbing blows. He knocked Otunga off the apron, removed the shirt of Ricardo, landed some more shots and set up the 619 for Mysterio. Mysterio landed it, but was taken to the outside, but Mysterio landed a hurricanrana. Sin Cara then landed a springboard senton for the win.

After the match Sin Cara and Mysterio asked Sheamus to brogue kick Otunga and he obliged.

They cut back to the Kane/Bryan role-play. Shelby wanted them to both take a bite out of the others' meal, to take a few steps in their shoes. However, Kane ordered meat balls. Kane smelt the lettuce and Bryan lifted the meatball onto a fork. Kane ate the leaf and Bryan took a bite out of the meatball. I heard an interview that Bryan was no longer vegan, but as far as to what extent I am not sure.. Kane burped as a conclusion to the segment and Bryan said that it wasn't as bad as he thought. Bryan began to heave, as Shelby shouted no. Bryan then regurgitated into Shelby's lap. For such a well thought out set of vignettes to end in such a juvenile manner was a real shame.

Cole revealed the choices for the names the options were: Team Teamwork, Team Hell No and Team Friendship – compared to the batch of names that included AirBoom these weren't bad. There was another Susan G Komen commercial.

Bryan and Kane came out. The name was revealed. Hell No won with 59%, Friendship garnered 38% and Teamwork only 3%. Hell No probably was the best name, but I don't understand why Teamwork got such a low percentage – just due to the fact that it is pretty similar to Friendship. After the results were revealed Sandow and Rhodes ran in with an attack on Bryan and Kane. Rhodes introduced them as Team Road Scholars. Sandow said they now had a reason to truly be angry. I guess Bryan and Kane turned face in this segment.

Recaps were shown of both the opening and Foley segments.

6. Eve & Beth Phoenix vs. Layla & Alicia Fox

This will probably be one of the last Beth Phoenix appearances for the foreseeable future. Layla landed a sloppy splash on Phoenix. Fox was tagged in and she landed a couple of dropkicks followed by a sunset flip. Phoenix landed a powerslam and Eve tagged herself in. She knocked Layla off the apron and Eve landed the neckbreaker for the win. Kaitlyn came out on crutches. She talked about security footage from the night she was attacked. She said she never saw the attacker's face, but she saw her

hair. She said she was a blond. Eve accused Phoenix, she denied it, but Eve landed a neckbreaker. What a strange way to get rid of Phoenix.

7. Tensai vs. Brodus Clay

Tensai landed some headbutts in the corner followed by a splash. However he was knocked down with a headbutt, splash and very sloppy exploder. Tensai missed a back senton and Big Show's music hit. He landed a shot on Tensai and then faced off with Clay. Clay went after him, but Big Show caught him with a punch. This made Big Show look like an absolute monster, too bad the same couldn't be said for Tensai and Clay.

Cena came out. He said he felt he shouldn't have been there, but he personally wanted to thank everyone for their support. Support for the rise above cancer campaign. He told everyone to not doubt the WWE Universe. He then thanked everyone for his support. He wanted to apologize. Apologize to referee Chad Patton and Brad Maddox. He also wanted to apologize for CM Punk, because he had grossly misquoted him. He said that if Punk left Night of Champions it would have defined who he was. That was true, ever since that day, he rambled about what CM Punk had become in PG language. He also wanted to apologize lastly for his injury. He didn't want to make a guarantee about his recovery or that it was a good long term career decision, but he wanted to guarantee that he would walk into Hell in a Cell to fight. He was going to guarantee something in regard to Punk, but Punk's music hit and he came out.

Punk told Cena it was a beautiful speech. It reminded him of the lies that politicians spew, he said that Cena should have been a politician – he should have run for president. He asked if Cena wanted to question his integrity. Punk said he didn't buy it, there was only one CM Punk, there always had been. He was the same man that



won at Money in the Bank, two consecutive SummerSlams and Night of Champions. He was the man that held the championship for the tenth longest period in company history. A title

reign that wasn't going to end any time soon, especially at the hand of a one armed man. Cena wanted Punk to face him and see what happened. Punk said there were many reasons for him not accepting his challenge. He said Cena received numerous title shots and it was time for some of the other people in the back to get a shot. The crowd chanted "CM Chump". He said that he wouldn't be a "passive aggressive weenie" like Cena and he would put them in their place after he put Cena in his place. He said Cena wouldn't be medically cleared to compete, not because of his current

injury, but because on any given Monday he could injure him. Punk told Cena to run, he would give him to the count of five with his back turned and if he was still in the ring he would hurt Cena so badly that his current injury would seem like a picnic. He commanded respect, because he was the WWE champion. Punk then said you have till five, which was awesome. Punk turned around and so did Heyman who held the belt up at the same time. Cena pulled out a pipe and as Punk turned he landed a shot with the steel pipe to the gut. Punk rolled out of the ring and Cena did the solute with the pipe.

Punk was walking backstage and he walked past Foley. However he turned back and landed a kick to his leg, he was going to land another shot, but Ryback was standing guard over Foley.

This was a good closing segment. I thought that having Cena land a shot with the pipe was too much too soon and it kind of brought down tensions that should be building. Ending with just a straight promo would have been fine. I was quite surprised that they chose to elevate Ryback at this point, it was just a tease, but it shows that they really see something in him. I don't know how much they can do with him, but it shows that they are willing to try.

September 24th RAW Rating Crushed Under Strong Competition

This past week's edition of Monday Night RAW did one of the lowest non-holiday ratings in nearly a decade and a half. This can be blamed on really strong competition, a football game featuring the Green Bay Packers versus Seattle Seahawks and a three hour show; although the blame probably falls far stronger on the football side of things.

It isn't really a surprise that RAW was down substantially after the game did 16 million viewers. The fact that RAW has moved to three hours hurt the overrun, no question, but a lot of the rest of the show was just due to the game. RAW was just struck harder, because of the move.

They opened with a relatively strong segment compared to the rest of the show with a 2.99 in the opening segment, which was down compared to last weeks 3.21 quarter. However the football game last week did an 11.58 rating, which is a substantial difference from this week's.

One positive about this week's show was that the Punk segment with Mick Foley did a great gain of 877,000 viewers. This shows that Punk can carry a segment, because although Foley is a strong and recognizable name, I doubt that was completely due to Foley. The overrun segment only did a 2.74, which is terrible for the overrun. This really is also indicative of burn out; although one show's ratings won't tell the whole story.

The Kane and Daniel Bryan segments didn't do all that well in the ratings, which shows that even though a lot of people like those comedy segments, they can't draw and they haven't since the first "hug it out" segment from a few weeks ago. Some acts just don't draw in the ratings, Jeff Hardy is a good example, but Kane and Daniel

Bryan as a team aren't going to draw, not on TV, not on PPV and not in live attendance.

Another very surprising aspect about this week's rating is the fact that the Jerry Lawler interview didn't gain any viewers. It was followed by the Wade Barrett/Tyson Kidd match, which didn't lose any viewers, so the two probably cancelled each other out at some point; although I would have expected the Lawler segment to have been strong enough to overcome that lose.

The worst quarter was the one that featured Tensai versus Orton and the Diva's tag match, which did a 2.43 rating, which was abysmal. Other than the segments mentioned above there was no gain, so it's only logical that the last segment before the overrun would do such a bad rating and it did.

The good thing is that unlike last year, where they changed the WWE championship due to a bad rating, for the first time in a while the WWE actually acknowledged that it was football that caused the drop and left it at that. Still, the move to three hours did play a part in this ratings and that is something that the WWE will not acknowledge and I wouldn't expect them to.

WWE NXT, September 26 2012
Full Sail University, Florida.
Ben Carass.

This week NXT began with a video package, which recapped the Richie Steamboat/Kassius Ohno feud.

After the official intro, Byron Saxton welcomed everyone to the show and a graphic hyping Steamboat vs. Ohno as the main event aired.

Michael McGillicutty made his way down to the ring; Saxton put over his win against Tyson Kidd and said, "for all intents and purposes" McGillicutty has a shot at the NXT Championship. Bo Dallas appeared on the stage and promptly headed down the ramp for the match.

Michael McGillicutty vs. Bo Dallas

Both men started out fast by trading shots but Bo attained the advantage and continued with strikes in the corner. Dallas delivered three simultaneous flapjacks to his opponent, however neglected to go for the cover then connected with a series of clotheslines in the corner. McGillicutty tried to create some distance from the fired up babyface, only to take a back elbow before rolling out to the floor. Dallas pursued his foe and sent the heel face first into the apron; again McGillicutty tried to create some separation, yet still took a big clothesline from Bo.

Back in the ring, Dallas scored with some elbows in the corner, which caused the referee to step between the two competitors; McGillicutty took advantage like a good heel and sent Bo's shoulder into the ring post.

Commercial Break.

Following the break, McGillicutty was in the process of getting the heat; Dallas fought out of a hammerlock, but the heel grabbed a handful of hair to retain the advantage. Using the second rope for an unfair advantage, McGillicutty worked on Bo's arm until the referee admonished the heel; Dallas rolled to the apron and after taking two shots and delivered a sunset flip back in for a near fall.

After the hope spot, McGillicutty connected with the single-arm divorce court for a two count; Dallas fought from underneath following some stomps in the corner and began his comeback. Bo scored with a clothesline in the corner then followed up with a bulldog; the babyface appeared to go for a cover but apparently his mind was occupied by trying to remember the next spot and stopped himself from making the pin. McGillicutty positioned himself under the bottom rope; Dallas attempted to bring the heel back to the middle of the ring, but his left arm had been weakened too much. Bo grabbed a waistlock, however McGillicutty held onto the top rope; the ref backed up the babyface and McGillicutty landed a big boot before hitting his running neckbreaker for the victory.

Michael McGillicutty defeated Bo Dallas via pinfall at 8:13.

Following the bell, William Regal said, "we could be looking at the next NXT champion".

A graphic hyping Richie Steamboat vs. Kassius Ohno rolled, before McGillicutty headed up the ramp celebrating, leaving Dallas on the mat looking at the lights.

The match was nothing special; McGillicutty did a good job, however Dallas shattered the illusion by stopping himself from going for the cover and preparing for the next spot. Early in the match, Bo also failed to make his offense seem meaningful when he neglected to cover the heel.

I like the build towards Rollins vs. McGillicutty, however after going over Tyson Kidd; McGillicutty needs more victories over talent of the same level: Yoshi Tatsu or Justin Gabriel for example. Bo appeared a little out of his comfort zone here and was probably not the best choice to get the heel over strong.

A video package of Paige aired; she told us, she had trained since she was thirteen years old to be a champion. Paige stated: "I'm not here to be a diva, I'm here to be a fighter" and "the less you know about me, the better".

Personally I enjoyed hearing Paige pronounce "fighter" and "better" with typical English vernacular, unlike poor William Regal who has to cover his accent by over enunciating every syllable.

Commercial Break.

The Raw Rebound aired.

Jake Carter hit the ring after the break; Saxton mentioned he was the son of Vader and Regal told a customary old veteran wrestler story of meeting Jake when he was a child. Leo Kruger came out next; Regal put over his new big game hunter gimmick.

Leo Kruger vs. Jake Carter

The bell rang and Kruger remained in a squat position in the corner; he finally charged at his opponent with a forearm then beat down Carter in the corner. Jake attempted to derail the heel's offense with some shots, but Kruger used the tights of his foe to send Carter through the ropes to the floor.

Leo took the match back inside the ring and continued with the heat; Carter managed to duck a clothesline but was caught with a kick to the knee, Kruger then took down Jake, mounted him and unleashed some shots. The heel continued the heat and connected with a shoulder block off the second rope for a two count; Carter countered an attempted backdrop to set up his comeback. Jake fired some Vader-style body shots in the corner but missed a Stinger splash; Kruger landed his hangman's facebuster for the three count.

Leo Kruger defeated Jake Carter, at 3:57; via pinfall.

The match was basic; Kruger was too aggressive for the young Carter and beat him relatively easily. The fact that Jake has not been given the chance to display his personality since the new season of NXT started meant the crowd didn't care about the rugged heel beating him up.

A graphic hyping Ryback aired; Regal said he would be in action next.

Commercial Break.

Ryback made his entrance after the commercials; Regal claimed to not have the vocabulary to describe Ryback.

I have the same problem, but for very different reasons.

Aiden English and Francis Remi Dorian were shown in the ring as the opponents, while obviously piped in chants of "feed me more" were deployed.

Two on One Handicap Match: Ryback vs. Aiden English & Francis Remi Dorian

Regal offered the two geeks some advice in the form of a British colloquialism: "just bugger off", implored the English grappling hero.

Ryback let the enhancement beat on him for the first few moments of the match, before he hit English with a big boot then shoved Dorian to the mat. The big man delivered a chin-checker to English and tossed Dorian into the buckle, prior to a running shoulder block; Ryback then landed a thunder fire bomb on English. Dorian took a running clothesline, which Regal called a "Stan Hansen lariat"; finally Ryback hit his double running Samoan drop for the three count.

Ryback defeated Aiden English & Francis Remi Dorian via pinfall, at 2:26.

Saxton and Regal acted like they had never seen Ryback's double finish before and some more comical, fake "feed me more" chants were utilised.

I get enough Ryback on Monday and Friday nights; frankly I don't see the advantage of having him show up on NXT. The handicap squash got old months ago and WWE are risking over-exposure with the limited big man showing up for no reason on NXT; nobody even mentioned he was a part of the original season.

A spilt screen of Kassius Ohno and Richie Steamboat in the back was shown; both men were walking down a corridor, presumably headed to the ring.

Commercial Break.

Kassius Ohno came out immediately after the break; footage of last week's "sparring session" showed Steamboat running off Ohno. Richie made his way to the ring for the main event, as Jim Ross joined the announce team.

Richie Steamboat vs. Kassius Ohno

Following an intense collar-and-elbow, Ohno performed the classic heel spot of placing his body between the ropes, in order for the referee to back the babyface up. The two locked up again and after a transition, Steamboat scored with a crossbody then performed three tackle and cover spots; each time Ohno kicked out before a one count.

Kassius again halted the babyface's momentum by rolling to the apron; Steamboat continued to control the match, as Ohno took a backdrop and begged off from the face. Richie took Kassius over with a snapmare then applied a chinlock, before he connected with a couple of kicks to the spine and chest; Ohno took cover in the corner after some forearms and the ref backed up the babyface. A Greco-Roman knucklelock led Steamboat to attempt a springboard move, however Ohno countered then sent Richie into the ring post.

Commercial Break.

With extra leverage from the top rope, Kassius had a cravat on his foe when we joined the match again; Ohno scored with some chops in the corner but Richie pulled out the classic babyface no sell and fired back with chops of his own. Ohno cut off the flurry with an overhand right, only to have his running forearm in the corner shut down by a charging forearm from Steamboat.

Richie started his comeback with double chops, which were reminiscent of his father; Ohno took a crossbody off the second rope, however was able to roll through and get a two count. Steamboat got a near fall with a backslide then was dumped on the apron; Richie connected with a headbutt before coming off the top with a missile dropkick for a two count.

Kassius shutdown the fire from his opponent with a big boot and commenced with a beat down in the corner; the referee admonished the heel, which caused Steamboat to land a superkick for a count of two. Richie went for a moonsault, although Ohno avoided the contact and rolled him up for a nice near fall. Kassius scored with his running forearm in the corner and went for his roaring elbow; Steamboat ducked the attempted strike and caught Ohno with an inside cradle for the three count.

Richie Steamboat defeated Kassius Ohno via pinfall, at 8:44.

After the bell, Ohno hit Richie with a cheap shot to the back of his head; Kassius then applied his new submission hold – a rear cravat, while trapping the arm with his knee. Numerous referees ran in to pull Ohno off the babyface; after leaving the ring, the refs had to restrain Ohno again before he headed up the ramp.

I enjoyed this match greatly. Ohno was great as the heel who wanted no part of the fiery Steamboat; Richie competed like a classic face and was only in jeopardy when Kassius did something heelish; great psychology all round here. Ohno even got his heat back after the match. It appears WWE want Ohno to use a submission as a finish, now Wade Barrett has also been given a knockout forearm, which I have no issues with at all.

Other than some questionable psychology in the opening match and the appearance of Ryback for no good reason; NXT this week was again a very good pro wrestling show.

TNA Impact September 27th 2012 Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Overall Thoughts

Impact was fun this week, but once again the Aces & Eights stuff was overpowering. The wrestling was fine, but wasn't great, although the Joe/Anderson match was fun. The Roode and Aries interactions were fine too and they are building to some tension for Bound for Glory, which is a good thing. As for whether or not they will turn Aries heel, I don't know, as it is usually the chasing babyface that refuses to tag in – although it is some times indicative of a heel turn. I also liked Gut Check and really hope that Markopoulos makes it some day, I have a feeling that he could. All in all this was a fun show, but it was overshadowed by Aces & Eights once again.



The show opened up with Hogan coming out. He played the air guitar on the baseball bat. The crowd was really behind Hogan and he told them to watch his back. He said this episode of Impact was a turning point for the company, Bound for Glory was only “three stinking weeks away”. Hogan said it was championship Thursday and it was for the TV title. He said he would have liked Devon to defend the title, but they couldn't reach an agreement (then you should have had him drop the belt). He said he would meet with Bischoff, Anderson, Joe and Magnus. He guaranteed a new TV champion.

He said the Storm/Roode situation was spinning out of control for a year and that is why there would be in a street fight at Bound for Glory with a special enforcer. He called

him the master of disaster – it was King Mo. He fake spat in the ring and said it was time more Aces & Eights. Hogan said he would see what they were made of that night, he went on about all of the things that Aces & Eights have done. He was in it for a fight, even if it meant him going all alone.

Sting came out and Tenay and Taz called it like they were absolutely dumbstruck. Sting said he promised that he would have Hogan's back, they would visit Aces & Eights together. Hogan for some reason was obscenely wacky in this segment, maybe even more so than usual. He started almost every single sentence with "sticking" and just had the hokiest expressions.

Anderson talked about his favourite Bound for Glory moment. He didn't mention what it was, but said his favourite Bound for Glory was 2010.

1. Kurt Angle vs. Chavo Guerrero vs. Christopher Daniels

Angle, Guerrero and Daniels were accompanied by Styles, Hernandez and Kazarian respectively. Chavo Guerrero and Angle landed duelling shots on Daniels. They stomped him in the corner, but Angle missed a shoulder block in the corner. This led



to Kazarian pulling the leg of Guerrero. Guerrero never saw him pull the leg and he accused Styles. Styles explained the situation and Styles, Guerrero, Angle and Hernandez faced off against Kazarian and Daniels. During the break all of the partners were sent to the back. Angle landed a couple of clotheslines

and a release German suplex on Guerrero and Daniels. Angle was sent to the outside by Guerrero and he went after Daniels. He landed a dropkick and senton for two. Angle came back in with a belly to belly suplex and landed an Angle slam on Daniels. He locked in the ankle lock, but Guerrero slid in with a rollup for two. Chavo and Angle botched a move and Angle was sent to the outside. Guerrero landed the three amigos. Guerrero went to the top rope, but Angle locked in the Angle lock. Angle was sent into Guerrero and they faced off after an argument. Daniels then landed an STO on Guerrero for the win.

Hogan was talking to Anderson, Bischoff, Magnus and Joe. Hogan wanted to know why everyone wanted it. Everyone bickered back and forth selling themselves to Hogan. Magnus said he had been a champion in Japan, India and the United States to Joe, ironic since he holds the NOAH tag titles with Joe. Joe said he could win a title in Malaysia too (which, has nothing to do with the three places Magnus mentioned), but it was all about the TNA Wrestling TV Title, because you see the title is so important that a man could leave and they didn't even bother to drop the belt. Hogan eliminated Magnus for no real reason.

They cut to Tara who was approached by Brooke Hogan. Tara was interrupted by a phone call from her Hollywood boyfriend. Hogan said Tara didn't have a title shot she had to earn it. She went back to the same phone call. Brooke grabbed the phone and said that her match was next. Brooke then walked off with the phone.

2. Tara vs. ODB

Eric Young ran into the ring locked up with Terrell, she broke it, but he did a cartwheel and locked up with her again. ODB then pulled Tara into the ring from the outside. ODB landed an arm drag and chased Tara around the outside. Back in the ring she landed a shoulder block. ODB landed a splash in the corner followed by a bronco buster. ODB landed a baseball slide after a distraction from Young. ODB landed a couple of clotheslines and a fall away slam. ODB landed some shots on the outside and Young kissed ODB. Tara removed her knee brace back in the ring and sold the knee. This led to Tara grabbing a rollup with a foot on the rope for the win. This was an awful match.

They had a preview of the Gut Check evaluation. Prichard complained about Snow over stepping his bounds. He said Snow was not a wrestler and he was the unprofessional one. He threw in a WWE lawsuit reference and Taz walked in. Taz said he was presently surprised. Snow said that he had a lot of guts to start at such a young age. Prichard said that he was also impressed. Snow talked about how hard the business was and asked if he could operate at that level despite of all the pressure.

Bull Ray was walking backstage and he was asked who his partner was that night. He told the interviewer to not interrupt him while he was firing away on twitter. He was asked who his partner was. He wouldn't let them know, but he gave everyone a clue. Ray said he looked so good with the title over his head last week.

Hogan was talking to Joe, Anderson and Bischoff. Bischoff and Anderson had a faceoff. He said he could hang with them, but Hogan said it wasn't his time. That is why he wanted Joe and Anderson to have a great match and decide the greatest TV champion of all time. Roode approached Aries. Roode said they earned the respect of one another over the past few weeks. He just wanted to let Aries know that he was Ray's partner. He said he had a vested interest at Bound for Glory, because he couldn't face Aries as champion. He was able to beat Aries as champion, but Roode could never beat Aries. That is why he said that Aries was the better man. He said they didn't want a guy like Hardy as the champion. They both deserved the title, but Hardy didn't.

3. TNA Television Championship Match

Samoa Joe vs. Mr. Anderson

Joe unloaded on Anderson with some shots and they exchanged some counters. Joe landed some shots in the corner followed by a leaping highkick for two. Anderson landed a couple of shots, but was cut off with a running elbow from Joe. Joe landed a chop to the back, he went for a kick, but he was caught with a rollup and a neckbreaker for two. Joe went to the top, but Anderson hung him up and went for the senton bomb. Joe countered, but Anderson was able to get him up and land it.

However, Joe countered it into a crucifix pin for two. Anderson cut Joe off with a



clothesline and went for the mic check, Joe elbowed his way out, but Anderson got a sloppy cover that was countered into the rear naked choke. Anderson willed his way to the ropes, but Joe rolled his way back. Anderson started to fade and the referee declared Joe the

winner. I liked the finish and Joe as TV champion is perfectly fine by me.

A video package was shown of the current Aces & Eights situation. It was C-level movie trailer level. Hogan was talking to Sting and said they would play good cop bad cop. A lady came by and said she wanted them to sign some documents. However, she got this evil look on her face, sprayed pepper spray into the eyes of both men and they were lifted into a van by the Aces & Eights! If the angle drove off of a cliff last week, it drove into a volcano or something here.

It was time for the Gut Check decision. Markopoulos came out clapping. He said he



didn't think he though he brought forth his best effort because he lost, but he got his ass kicked and learnt a lesson. The fans chanted yes. Taz told him he was ahead of the curb and wanted to see him learn under the

Impact wrestling banner. Prichard said he had a hell of a future and there weren't enough people that wanted it that much. Prichard said he needed more time so it was a no. Markopoulos cut a promo about how he wanted to come back each and every week, get his ass handed to him and then come back for more. Snow told Markopoulos it was about finding future stars. He said that he saw big new prospects,

but they never became anything. He thought that Markopoulos had something, but his answer was no.

Markopoulos has potential and it is probably better that he wasn't given a contract. Now he can go work in Japan, Mexico and get more experience on the indies and with some luck he could become great. There was a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles preview – suffice to say it wasn't the 1990s or early 2000s series.

They cut to Sting and Hogan with bags over their faces. However they then cut back to a Bound for Glory retrospective of Magnus' first title win at Bound for Glory 2009. They went back to the Aces & Eights. The Aces & Eights leader was sitting there with his mask off, but his back was turned. He explained the situation. He said Hogan had ruined their fun. Hogan wanted to fight it out. The leader said that they learnt to like Sting and Hogan and they revealed Park who was tied up on a table. He said he wanted Hogan to choose two guys from his brotherhood to fight at BFG against their toughest guys. Hogan and Sting wanted to fight. However, the leader said that for the first time in his adult life it wasn't about Hogan. He wanted to watch Hogan see his men get destroyed. Sting called the leader an expletive, but it was bleeped out, why would the Aces & Eights do that? The leader said they would only let Park go after the match. The Aces & Eights would be on the line at Bound for Glory, but if they won they would have full access to the Impact zone. So they are going to keep this man captive for weeks on end? And the police wouldn't get involved? This was just so hokey.

Storm was happy about Hogan's announcement. He said only one man would walk out and he called King Mo one of the greatest MMA fighters in history (there is hyperbole and then there are blatant lies). He only needed King Mo to raise his hand after he kicked Roode's teeth down his throat.



4. Austin Aries & Jeff Hardy vs. Booby Roode & Bully Ray

Ray landed some shots on Hardy in the corner. Hardy landed a head scissors and arm drag. Ray wanted Hardy sent back and Aries tagged himself in. Ray refused to lock up with Aries and Roode was tagged in. Aries landed some arm drags and a drop toe hold on Ray. Hardy then landed a double clothesline on both men and the crowd was on their feet. After the break Hardy landed a splash. After the next break Hardy landed some more shots, but his leg was clipped by Ray when he went for the whisper in the win. Ray called Aries a "little b*tch". Ray and

Roode wore Hardy down. Hardy landed a chin breaker and the stunner style twist of fate. The tags were made to Aries and Ray. Aries landed some big shots on Ray, but Roode landed a knee and Ray sent Aries to the outside. Aries was then thrown into the steel steps. Roode and Ray went back and forth working over the back of Aries. Ray locked in a bearhug, but Aries clapped the ears of Ray and bit his head. He made it out of the bearhug and landed a dropkick to the knee. Hardy offered the tag, but Aries refused to tag Hardy in. Aries landed a diving clothesline and elbowed Ray off the apron. He locked in the last chancery, but Ray broke it up and landed a big boot on Hardy. Ray went for a big clothesline on Aries, but he missed and hit Roode. Aries landed dropkicks in the corner on Ray and Roode and landed a topé suicida on Roode. Hardy refused to make the tag, but Aries was still able to land a brainbuster on Roode. Hardy then tagged himself in and landed the swanton on Roode for the win.

They then went off with the Aces & Eights dropping Hogan and Sting off. They wanted to fight back, but they warned Sting and Hogan that they had Park and they would “bite his ass” in a rather odd line. Hogan then said “don’t forget they’ve got Parks” and Sting agreed, which just for some reason made me laugh. This was the most humorous ending to Impact in a while.

I liked the finish to the Aries/Hardy tag, although I have seen this story pulled off far better this year by New Japan at the Best of the Super Juniors. Still it was fine and they couldn’t really have Aries and Hardy lose, since they would risk the chance of having both Aries and Hardy looking like complete nothings. The match was fine; although really nothing special.

WWE SmackDown, September 28 2012.
First Niagara Centre – Buffalo, NY.
Ben Carass.

A video package recapping the saga of Damien Sandow and Cody Rhodes vs. The Tag Team champions, from last Friday night kicked off SmackDown this week. It showed Kane being pinned by Sandow and Bryan losing to Rhodes, however it did not show the annihilation of the tag division by the champions.

Josh Matthews welcomed viewers and a graphic hyping the main event of Randy Orton vs. The Big Show aired. Michael Cole called the match, “one of the biggest main events in SmackDown history” then labelled both men, “legends”.

Good old Cole, back to his trademark aggrandisement of recycled angles and matches.

The Big Show lumbered down to the ring for a promo, as footage of Show knocking out Tensai and Brodus Clay from Raw rolled; with the same sound effect used for every Big Show punch we ever see.

Show stated, “the most dominant and destructive force in the WWE is back” and said he wanted to be the World Heavyweight Champion; he continued to explain his embarrassment at the 45 second title reign from TLC last year. Big Show claimed seeing the guy who beat him for the belt lose at WrestleMania in 18 seconds was a

turning point in his career; the giant said he wasn't in the main event then insinuated beating Cody Rhodes for the Intercontinental title caused people to make fun of him. Show asserted nobody would make fun of him when he is World champion, before alleging to be the only man on the roster capable of beating Sheamus.

Randy Orton's music hit and he made his way down to confront Show; Cole and Josh talked about Orton's desire to be the World champion. Randy told Big Show he found it amusing that the giant was talking about taking out Sheamus, when Show had not gone through "the most sadistic, dominate individual on the show."

Of course, being sadistic is an attribute of the classic babyface.

Orton informed The Big Show he had, "just heard backstage" the main event between the two was to determine the number one contender for the World title at Hell in a Cell. Randy notified Show that if he tried to stand in his way of a tenth World title, Big Show would not be standing much longer. Show declared, "someone is going to get bit by an RKO or hit with a K.O."

Alberto Del Rio's music signified the aristocrat's arrival; he came out with Ricardo Rodriguez and said, "You can't just toss Alberto Del Rio like that".

I'm sure he meant: "toss aside".

Del Rio said he was cheated by Booker T at Night of Champions and proclaimed to be better than Orton and Show combined; Alberto got up on the apron then declared:



"both you perro's are going to the back of the line". As Del Rio climbed through the ropes into the ring, Orton immediately nailed him with an

RKO; Randy left and headed up the ramp. Orton then turned to face the Big Show, who was still in the ring, before doing his signature pose on the ramp.

This opening segment did not feel like an eternity; unlike the past couple of weeks, this was much more direct and focused directly on the issues at hand. Is the presumption of a different segment being afforded more time due to the punchy opener justifiable? Keep reading...

A graphic hyping Miz TV, featuring Sheamus rolled.

Because the last one got over so big.

Another graphic told us that Antonio Cesaro would be defending the US title against Santino Marella after the break.

Commercial Break.

Lilian Garcia announced the title match and Cesaro came out first; Cole said Aksana was, “emotionally distraught” at being ditched by Antonio. Santino made his way to the ring with that ridiculous power walk.

United States Championship: Antonio Cesaro (champion) vs. Santino Marella

Cesaro controlled early, he blocked an attempted hip toss and landed a clothesline; after some shots Antonio took the challenger over with a suplex for a one count, while Cole and Josh rambled about Aksana in the middle of a title match.

Santino fought out to deliver a belly-to-back suplex then followed up with a body slam, before going for The Cobra; Cesaro cut off Marella with a shot to the gut and the sock puppet went flying out of the ring. This caused Santino to get caught in an attempted gutwrench suplex, however Marella managed to roll up the champion for a two count. Antonio hit a European uppercut and scored with the gutwrench on the second attempt, which gained a count of two; the heel bad mouthed Marella, this caused the comedy babyface to nail a desperation superkick for a near fall.

Cesaro escaped to the apron, where he connected with a shoulder block and went to the top rope; Santino cut off the champion then went for a superplex. Antonio countered with some shots, before going for the neutraliser off the top. Marella reversed with a backdrop, only to miss a diving headbutt; Cesaro hooked the challenger for the neutraliser to gain the victory.

Antonio Cesaro defeated Santino Marella to retain the US title, via pinfall; at 4:09.

This was fine, although I don't see the point in Santino sliding over last week only to lose again to Cesaro. Marella losing is not the point, as he could lose every night and still remain over; my issue is Cesaro needs better competition to elevate him. Maybe the idea was this would get Antonio as a strong single, without the help of Aksana, but this could have been achieved by beating somebody of merit, not the resident comedy geek.

A graphic hyping Orton vs. Big Show aired.
Commercial Break.

Cole and Josh were at ringside; the pair talked about Kane and Daniel Bryan being named “team HellNo” by the viewers on Raw. Matthews said Dr. Shelby was trying a new form of “radical therapy”; the first diner skit from Monday aired.

Inside the arena, Beth Phoenix was entering the ring to face Natalya.

A Tout from Eve aired; she claimed there would be “serious repercussions” for what happened to Kaitlyn at Night of Champions.

Beth Phoenix vs. Natalya

The two former advocates of “pinup strong” shook hands after the bell, as the crowd chanted, “let’s go Buffalo” in support of Phoenix. Beth and Natalya displayed why



they are the best females on the roster with some tremendous chain wrestling; the two displayed a plethora of holds, counters and reversals. Natalya fought out from Beth’s side headlock

takeover then attempted a leapfrog ; Phoenix caught her opponent, before positioning her into an over-the-shoulder powerslam position, however Natalya escaped and the women stared each other down.

Nattie delivered a slap, which angered Beth and The Glamazon shot for an aggressive double-leg; Natalya reached the bottom rope to prevent any further advantage gained by Beth. Phoenix scored with a picturesque side-Russian-leg-sweep then went for a missile dropkick from the second turnbuckle, however Natalya countered into the sharpshooter. Beth tried to reach the bottom rope, but was dragged back to the centre of the ring by her opponent; finally Phoenix reached the rope on the second try.

Beth took Natalya over with an O’Connor roll, which was countered and both women ended up on their feet; after a nice transition Beth hit the glamslam and went for the cover. Natalya kicked out then sent Phoenix into the turnbuckle; Beth scored a boot to the face and went for a victory roll, only Natalya reversed and got a nearfall. Phoenix countered the momentum of the hold again and finally gained the victory.

Beth Phoenix defeated Natalya via pinfall, at 4:15

I hope every Diva in the locker room, every Diva under contract was watching this. In four minutes, Beth and Nattie had the best women’s match on WWE TV in years; in the process, they proved to have more talent than their peers and made the rest of the Diva’s look completely incompetent and inferior. Why would anybody with half an ounce of common sense let Beth Phoenix leave the company? This woman is an amazing pro wrestler. If you think the play on the Bret/Owen finish at WrestleMania X was lost on this wrestling fan, you would be sadly mistaken; a tremendous performance all round from both women.

Eve came out to spoil Beth’s hometown celebration; Booker T’s assistant apologised to Phoenix for “acting in the heat of the moment on Raw” and said, “until we know exactly what happened to Kaitlyn at Night of Champions, we have to act rationally”. The scheming Diva then told Beth she was “indefinitely suspended”; Natalya yelled she had nothing to do with it and eventually appeared distressed at her friend being suspended.

A graphic of CM Punk, Paul Heyman and John Cena from Raw rolled.

Commercial Break.

Teddy Long and Booker T were in the GM's office after the break; Teddy told Book he thought it was a great plan and Booker said the Tag division is looking strong so he booked an eight team tournament, to determine the number one contenders for the Tag belts. Beth Phoenix walked in and was troubled by what just happened in the arena; Beth asked the Booker man why she had been suspended and questioned Eve's authority. Eve entered and told Beth she did have the power to suspend her, however the GM emphatically informed him she did not, before he reversed the suspension. Eve gave a phony apology and claimed she was just following Teddy's orders; Teddy denied the accusation but Eve insisted he was jealous of Booker's position as GM and wanted his old job back. Book appeared confused by his staff's insubordination; Teddy tried to reassure the GM he had nothing to do with Eve's actions, but Booker told him he needed to think about the situation. Teddy left the Booker man alone in his office to ponder the developments.

The Raw rebound aired.

The Miz was having makeup applied in preparation for his talk show segment.

Commercial Break.

Following the break Zack Ryder was in the ring, Lilian introduced him and Wade Barrett appeared as his opponent

Zack Ryder vs. Wade Barrett

Barrett controlled the match early; Cole must have received a memo, as he remembered Wade was from "Preston, England" after he said "Manchester" on Raw.

Ryder took a pumphandle slam, which garnered a two count then Wade delivered some more shots to Zack. Barrett executed a nice slingshot belly-to-back backbreaker for a two and continued with the heat. Zack fought back to counter a backdrop; Ryder scored with a dropkick off the second rope and set up for the Broski boot. Wade avoided the boot by rolling to the outside, however the babyface hit a version of the kick through the ropes; Zack threw his opponent back in the ring, only to be sent right back to the floor with a clothesline over the top.

After rolling Ryder back in, Barrett delivered his short-arm forearm to earn the victory; Cole said the move was called, "the souvenir elbow".

Wade Barrett defeated Zack Ryder, at 3:16 via pinfall.

A surprisingly entertaining match; not because I have low expectations of these two, but simply due to the parameters I thought would be enforced on their work. Thankfully I was proved wrong, Zack got in more offense than I expected here; this was no Barrett vs. Yoshi Tatsu. Wade looked great this week and I loved the new slingshot backbreaker he debuted during the bout.

The second Diner skit featuring Kane and Daniel Bryan aired.

Sheamus appeared in the back; the World champ was headed to the ring for Miz TV. Josh said it would take place after the break.

Commercial Break.

The Miz was in the ring and the talk show set had been set up for the segment; Miz put over his show but was quickly interrupted by Sheamus. The Heavyweight Champion of the World grabbed the mic and told Miz he didn't want to wait for an



introduction, so he came out when he felt like it. Sheamus sarcastically said Miz "raised the bar" with the first episode of the talk show then asked the heel how he was going to top it this week and what it felt like to have the

World champion as a guest. The Intercontinental champion was unable to respond to the questions, as Sheamus moved the mic away from him every time he tried to speak; The Great White told Miz he was lucky to have a show at all and amusingly called him "useless in the ring". Sheamus informed the IC champion nobody in the crowd wanted to hear him talk about himself for an hour and a half; The Miz responded with, "last time I checked, I was still the Intercontinental champion". This led to Miz telling the people they had to pay to see him excel; he then plugged: his movie, Mick Foley's book, his radio show and claimed to have beaten "three top superstars blindfolded at Night of Champions". Sheamus informed the host of the show that nobody wanted to pay to see him; Miz then questioned the World champion why he was not concerned about the Big Show/Orton main event. The arrogant heel speculated, "your either going to get left slaughtered by an RKO or have your face rearranged by a WMD." Sheamus called The Miz, "a loud mouth, frog faced, Hollywood wannabe" and stated nobody takes the title more seriously than he does.

Frog faced... this company blows my mind sometimes. How many nauseating anti-bullying videos have we been subject to recently and the babyface World champion is making fun of someone else's looks.

The Heavyweight champ said it would be an honour to face Orton then stated he had never been in the ring with The Big Show and wanted to tick that off his "bucket list". Sheamus declared he was not going to let Miz insult his integrity then professed he knew what the people paid to see and was happy to give it to them.

Vickie Guerrero came out with Dolph Ziggler; Vickie told Sheamus, "I don't understand why you are so concerned with Randy Orton and the Big Show, when at

Hell in a Cell you should be concerned with...” Dolph grabbed the mic said he could speak for himself. Ziggler claimed tonight’s main event was irrelevant just like Sheamus’ title reign and guaranteed to be the World Heavyweight Champion after the Hell in a Cell PPV. Sheamus suggested if he retained the title at Hell in a Cell and Dolph felt like cashing in his briefcase Ziggler “may just get lucky”.

I was so burned out with this segment at this point, I’m not sure if the line was a tease or a bad pun about the “luck of the Irish”.

Sheamus then shoved the Miz off his chair and doubled legged Dolph; The Miz tried to attack The World champ but was sent flying over a sofa. Ziggler got on top of Sheamus for a split second but was quickly over powered; The Great White then tossed Miz over the top rope and delivered a backdrop to Ziggler, who landed on the Intercontinental champion. Sheamus posed with his belt, which thankfully brought this segment to a close.

So this is where the extra time was allocated; I cannot convey just how long this segment felt. Ziggler’s promise to become World champion had no effect on me because the Sheamus and Miz interaction went far too long. This was on par with a Triple H opening segment promo from 2003; absolutely horrendous television.

Cole said, “I think Miz TV has now been cancelled on two networks”.

I sincerely hope so.

A graphic hyping the Show/Orton main event rolled, followed by another which gave us the brackets for the tag team tournament; the first round matchups were:

- . The Uso’s vs. Rhodes Scholars
- . Santino & Zack Ryder vs. Tyson Kidd & Justin Gabriel
- . Kofi & R-Truth vs. The Prime Time Players
- . Primo & Epico vs. Rey Mysterio & Sin Cara

A third graphic informed us The Uso’s would take on Rhodes and Sandow after the break.

Commercial Break.

We got the entire interview with Jerry Lawler from Raw after the break.

The Uso’s came out to some new music and neglected to perform the Siva Tau; Cody Rhodes and Damien Sandow were out next and Cole put over the name “Rhodes Scholars”.

First Round Match in the Number One Contenders for the Tag Team Titles Tournament: The Uso’s vs. Cody Rhodes & Damien Sandow

Jimmy and Damien started out; Uso got the early advantage but was caught in the corner with knees from Sandow. Jimmy hit a Samoan drop and both men made the tag. Jey came in with some forearms to Cody, however a corkscrew forearm somehow

connected with Cody's knee and didn't look great. Uso nailed a running hip attack in the corner and followed up with a superkick before tagging his brother; Sandow yanked Jey out of the ring as Jimmy went to the top rope. Uso went for a splash but Rhodes got his knees up and delivered CrossRhodes for the three.

Cody Rhodes & Damien Sandow defeated The Uso via pinfall, at 1:55.

Surely some time could have been shaved off Miz TV and been given to this match; The Uso looked like a couple of insignificant fools here. Of course the heels were going over, but an extra three minutes would not have hurt anyone. I love a good tournament, however WWE's track record is about 50/50 when it comes to tourneys: WrestleMania IV, King of the Ring 95 & 99, Survivor Series 98; need I say more?

The final "team HellNo" diner skit from Raw aired and another graphic hyping the main event rolled.

Commercial Break.

A video package of WWE's latest attempt to appear like a caring company aired; Stephanie McMahon, Alicia Fox and Layla were at the Social Good Summit.

Back in the arena, Tensai was in the ring. Ryback appeared as his opponent; Cole put over his pinfall over The Miz and the pointless stare down with CM Punk at the end of Raw.

Ryback vs. Tensai

Tensai scored a series of headbutts and shots but Ryback remained on his feet the entire time; Ryback then landed a belly-to-back suplex and went for his big clothesline. Tensai blocked and delivered a treeslam for a two count; after taking some forearms, Ryback connected with the clothesline and hit his running Samoan drop for the victory.



Ryback defeat Tensai via pinfall, at 2:05.

I bet Matt Bloom wishes he stayed with New Japan and NOAH; watching him lose to Ryback in was just depressing.

Randy Orton was walking in the backstage area; Josh said the main event was coming up next. Alberto Del Rio then jumped Orton from behind and hit him with a metal storage unit.

Commercial Break.

A replay of Del Rio's attack on Orton rolled and Josh said Alberto targeted Randy's ribs.

The Big Show came out for the main event; Cole and Josh speculated whether the match would take place or not. Randy Orton's music hit but Del Rio appeared on the stage; Alberto said he was going to take Randy's spot in the match. Orton arrived and nailed Del Rio from behind before sending him into the big WWE logo on the stage. Randy made his way to the ring while selling his ribs.

Commercial Break.

Number One Contenders Match for the World Heavyweight Championship: Randy Orton vs. The Big Show

The Big Show tried to cut off the ring, Orton fought back, however Show targeted the ribs. Randy blocked a big overhand chop, but was shut down with a headbutt. Big Show applied a Von Erich style claw to the ribs then hit the final cut for a two count. Orton rolled to the outside and was followed by the giant; Randy tried to fight back but was dropped across the barricade.

Commercial Break.

After the break Orton was selling his ribs in the corner; Show delivered an Irish whip to the buckle but was caught by a boot. Orton fired back with four punches and momentarily forgot to sell his injury; Show cut off The Viper with an attempted chokeslam. Randy countered into a DDT then commenced with the Garvin stomp, only to be shut down again by some body shots; six to be exact. The Big Show yelled at Orton to quit and applied the claw to the ribs again; another right hand to the ribs sent Randy to the outside.



Show looked to send his foe into the ring post; Orton countered and sent the big man into the post. Randy climbed back in the ring then looked to hit the

hangman's DDT; Big Show prevented the move and dropped Orton's ribs across the top rope. Show set up for the chokeslam again; this time Orton scored with an RKO, which received a near fall. Randy appeared to go for his old punt to the skull; Big Show countered with a chokeslam for a two count. Show was angered by the kick out and delivered another chokeslam for the victory.

The Big Show defeated Randy Orton via pinfall, at 9:31.

Having a babyface being injured going into a match is an easy story to tell; the psychology is simple enough to execute. Although Orton forgot to keep selling at one point, that is not my major issue with this match; if Big Show is capable of knocking anybody out with one punch, why on Earth did he deliver numerous shots to Randy's ribs, what kind of psychology is that? Surely one punch would crack a rib, two or three might break a rib, five would cause internal bleeding and seven would probably rupture Orton's stomach. I may be thinking too much about this, but it just seemed far too illogical for me to swallow; Randy kicking out of a chokeslam cemented my opinion of this match.

To make things even more absurd, Show knocked out Orton with one punch after the match. The cut between camera angles upon impact, also came across like amateur hour.

Yep, indy-rific psychology from two guys who should know better.

Big Show got on the mic and said he'd be seeing Sheamus at Hell in a Cell. Show stomped up the ramp, leaving Randy "ribs of steel" Orton unconscious on the mat.

This episode of SmackDown left me feeling annoyed and confused; we got a set up for a main event programme and the kick off of the Tag Team tournament, however the thing I will mostly remember about this show is Beth vs. Natalya.

Big Show has been booked far too regularly as a tame and harmless giant, that when it comes time for him to be an unstoppable colossus, I just can't buy into it; Sheamus vs. Show is hardly a match I am dying to see. It appears that Orton will face Del Rio at Hell in a Cell which I have no problem with as Randy needs his win back; given the predilection to changing angles on a daily basis, I would not be surprised if this takes place before the PPV and we get a four way for the belt at Hell in a Cell.

The Tag tournament felt like a throwaway segment, WWE needs to give this thing some legs if they want a decent payoff in a match with Kane & Bryan.

For me, Beth and Nattie had the stand out performance of the night, whereas Miz TV killed the show in my opinion. The main event was fine if you are a fan of matches that make no sense whatsoever. Overall a disappointing edition, I only recommend watching one thing from this show and I'm sure you can guess what that is.

WWE shot an angle after the climax of the television show; Alberto Del Rio headed down to the ring and proceeded to beat up Randy Orton with stomps and shots to the ribs. Del Rio dragged Orton to the floor and continued to work over the injured Viper; Booker T came out on the ramp and waved towards the back, which brought out a group of referees. Doctors, refs and Booker all restrained Del Rio then checked on Orton.

Cole mentioned that they were off the air, but he and Josh carried on calling the action anyway. I assume this will be shown next week to explain Randy's absence while he's shooting a movie; this makes me believe it will in fact be Orton vs. Del Rio at Hell in a Cell. If that damn Miz TV segment didn't go so long, this could easily have been shown at the end of SmackDown.

Bits & Pieces

New Japan Look to Internet Pay-Per-View Once Again

A couple of months ago New Japan aired their first internet pay-per-view, streaming one night of the G1, the show was said to have been available outside of Japan, but unfortunately that wasn't the case. However, this time around they are offering the October 10th show from Ryogoku on Ustream. The following statement was taken from New Japan's newly created English Facebook Page.

“Big NEWS to overseas fans is that : "King of Pro-Wrestling" Ryogoku event on 10/8 will be broadcast through Ustream all over the world !

The hottest 9 matches including all 5 IWGP Championship are there. The air will start at 17:00 on Oct. 8th, J.S.T.

For more in detail, please refer to NJPW Ustream channel / HP etc.

Price : US \$25.

Start of sale (plan) : Oct. 1, 2012

URL : <http://www.ustream.tv/channel/njpw1972>”

The last time New Japan was on internet pay-per-view they did around 20,000 buys, which is very impressive for two reasons. The first being the fact that New Japan didn't have any presence in the market prior to that date and the second is that pay-per-view isn't as ingrained in the Japanese culture as in the United States.

New Japan are beginning to make a push for the US Market, with Bushiroad and its president having a vested interest in the market. I don't see it doing huge business in the US as of right now. There is no US promotion for the show, apart from on the Facebook page and through word of mouth on message boards and social media – but the group that participates there is awfully limited.

There is a ceiling for internet pay-per-view especially in the United States and while the market is growing, it will take a long time for it to be a completely viable option for a big company.

Still, New Japan is really showing initiative and that is commendable. Plus I know some people that will be extremely happy (including myself) that they are able to watch New Japan live.

It is also a great card with all of the championships on the line, including Kazuchika Okada's briefcase, which will be defended against Karl Anderson. Other than that there is also an IWGP Heavyweight title match with champion, Hiroshi Tanahashi, defending against Minoru Suzuki, which is a rematch from the Tokyo Dome show from earlier this year.

There is also New Japan Intercontinental champion Shinsuke Nakamura defending against Hirooki Goto, in what should be an awesome match. There is the newer team of Davey Boy Smith Jr. & Lance Archer challenging IWGP Tag Team champions Tenzan and Kojima. Kota Ibushi defends his IWGP Junior Heavyweight title for the second time against challenger and former champion Low Ki.

Junior Tag Team Champions Alex Koslov and Rocky Romero defend their championships against KUSHIDA and Alex Shelly. Then of course as was mentioned earlier Okada defends his briefcase against Anderson, in what should be one of, if not the best match on the card.

There are also some big matches in terms of non-title matches. Manabu Nakanishi returns in a six man tag match teaming with Yuji Nagata and Strong Man to face off against Toru Yano, Takashi Iizuka and Tomohiro Ishii. That match should be more of the same when it comes to Iizuka and Yano, but it could be fun.

Tetsuya Naito will face Yujiro Takahashi. Naito has an injured leg and is in need of surgery. However, due to the fact that he was advertised he has been kept on all of the cards. I would assume that he will take a break to go get surgery pretty soon, because if not he could do some damage. I would expect Takahashi to go over, just for the simple fact that they have been pushing him really hard with a win over Tanahashi and that probably set up a title match down the line.

Togi Makabe and Wataru Inoue team up to face the outsiders of Kazushi Sakuraba and Katsuyori Shibata. This could be a decent match, although Sakuraba is beat up and Shibata will be the workhorse of the group. However, Inoue and Makabe can be great at times, so we will at least see where they are going with Sakuraba and Shibata.

All in all this looks to be a stellar show, with New Japan putting every championship on the line and every single match on the card having some meaning. There is no match on the show that feels thrown together, which is pretty unique, because it is only for New Japan's biggest shows that they don't have some sort of six or eight man tag that is a jumble of ongoing programs.

The Okada, Ibushi, Tanahashi and Naito matches all have a chance to be really great. It will probably be well worth the money and if you get a chance I would definitely check it out.

Next Week's Issue

Next week we are back hopefully covering New Japan's destruction show, its upcoming internet pay-per-view, RAW on the road to Hell in a Cell, Impact with what is bound to include more Aces & Eights wackiness, the RAW rating and if it has improved, SmackDown and more!

Contact

Twitter: @RyanClingman

Subscriptions: Subscriptions@cubedcirclewrestling.com

Any Site Questions: Admin@cubedcirclewrestling.com

General/Questions/Feedback: Ryan@cubedcirclewrestling.com

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/CubedCircleNewsletter>

Ben Carass's Twitter Account: @BenDosCarass