



Cubed Circle Newsletter

Things have returned back to something that possesses some semblance of normality, the newsletter is of a relatively regular length this week, and I don't feel like I am going into organ failure due to pro-wrestling overload. What does that mean you ask? Well, in a nutshell, there aren't ten plus reports in this week's issue. Regardless, there are still quite a few things going on, and one of those things happens to be the new Cubed Circle Newsletter survey – that's right there is a new survey up right now for you to express your joy, sorrow, anger, and pretty much everything in between when it comes to the newsletter. The survey is up now on the front page of the website, but if you don't want to go all of the way there (admittedly it is a long URL), you can visit tinyurl.com/CCWSurv80 to access the survey. It shouldn't take too much time to complete, and there are only six or so questions, which are really important when it comes to assessing what exactly, you, the reader, want out of the newsletter.

And now that you have successfully skipped past that big block of text, in this week's issue we preview Extreme Rules, New Japan's Wrestling Dontaku, take a look at RAW, Impact, and Ben Carass covers SmackDown and NXT! With all of that out of the way I hope you enjoy this week's newsletter, and have a great week.

-Ryan Clingman, Cubed Circle Newsletter Editor

News

Extreme Rules Card Fitting Together

Despite the fact that WWE's annual post WrestleMania pay-per-view is about four weeks away, a couple of weeks longer than the usual gap between regular shows, it looks like the majority of the card is starting to fit into place. It originally seemed as if they were looking to promote the show close to the level of Summer Slam at first, at least from a card perspective, as Rock was scheduled to be on the show before he destroyed himself in the mainevent of WrestleMania 29, together with Lesnar who should still be on the show.

The Extreme Rules show has been consistently one of the best annual WWE shows for a few years now, which is partly due to the stipulation matches, as well as the fact that it is the show after WrestleMania, and that, for whatever reason, makes it feel far

more special than your typical WWE B-show. Judging from the card that we are going to get into it looks like they may break the tradition, or serve to carry it over depending on exactly how they decide to construct the show.

The mainevent, or at least what I assume will be the mainevent, is a match between John Cena and Ryback for the WWE championship. They have built Ryback quite contrary to how you would want to book a challenger going up against the new champion John Cena. Ryback for the first few months of his run was doing the Goldberg gimmick and never lost, that was until Cena was injured for a match at Hell in a Cell and they decided to elevate Ryback for the show to face, the then WWE champion, CM Punk. They faced a major problem however, as they had booked themselves straight into a corner, Ryback was on a big win streak and couldn't be defeated. Punk was on a win streak of his own, holding the WWE championship for close to a year at that point - making matters worse the match was in a Hell in a Cell, which meant that there had to be a winner...well, at least conceivably that is.

Suffice to say they did not go with a straight finish, and instead had referee Brad Maddox low blow Ryback sending Punk on his way to title retention. That would have been a tolerable move if they didn't have Ryback lose, albeit never through pinfall or submission, in his next three consecutive matches on pay-per-view. The first was a three-way loss at Survivor Series where they did the usual "heel steals the pin" finish with Punk stealing Ryback's pin on Cena with help from the debuting Shield, in another loss that wasn't career ending, but certainly unneeded. The third was a six-man TLC lost against the Shield with Kane and Bryan as his partners in what will probably land up being one of the top ten matches of the year.

After each subsequent loss there was always the idea that they could rehabilitate Ryback on the way to another title shot, which is what they could have easily done at WrestleMania, but it felt as if they were trying to do the total opposite. Ryback faced Mark Henry at WrestleMania, but instead of pinning him clean with his finish in what should have been his WrestleMania moment, they had Mark Henry beat him, and then have Ryback land his finish - something that never made sense then, and makes little more now.

One of the most obscure booking philosophies that the WWE employs is that if a performer is turning heel or winning a championship they can lose countless times and it won't matter; something that if you look back at history is simply not true. Regardless, that is how they booked Ryback on the way to his heel turn, the funny thing about that was that it doesn't really seem as though Ryback turned heel

On last week's edition of RAW Ryback laid John Cena out after a lackluster match with Mark Henry. However, even though it was called by the announcers both last week and this week as a heel turn, no one including the fans at the arenas gives him a heel reaction, which is honestly what you would have expected given that he was the one laying out John Cena.

They are playing off of the fact that Cena won his match at WrestleMania and Ryback lost his, but like the Cena/Rock angle it is one of those things that comes across as

contrived and awfully plastic. They are going to have to beat Ryback again, which really leads to the "what is next?" question popping up, because Ryback is a limited performer, and without him chasing a big opponent he runs the risk of moving below your average person on the card. It is going to be interesting to see what stipulation they are going to go with though.

The other big match on the show is set to be Triple H versus Brock Lesnar for the third time in a steel cage, something that makes very little sense. You could make the argument that it's a move that does not negatively affect Lesnar and his drawing power, but that would all depend on what they do with the finish. Doing a third match seems rather strange to me, as they sacrificed Lesnar in order to tell a complete story with Triple H overcoming "the beast" if you will, but if that's the case why go back on the match? If they have Lesnar win they would be giving him the win back, but wouldn't that be sacrificing the story that they have already told by beating Lesnar for in the first place? And if they have Triple H win, won't that negatively affect Lesnar's drawing power? Then why do it?

There are some complications following the challenge from Lesnar, however, as Hunter is still experiencing problems with his arm after landing badly in his match with Lesnar at WrestleMania. The match is set to be a steel cage match, which in all honesty is a stipulation that hasn't meant much for at least a decade or so. I have no doubt that they will be able to piece together a very good match, but I am still very much apposed to a third match taking place.

The other match that they seem to be building to is a three-way featuring current World Heavyweight Champion, Dolf Ziggler, defending his newly won title against Jack Swagger and former champion Alberto Del Rio. It is not clear this as of this week's RAW if they want to do this match on pay-per-view or free TV to lead to a different match, but I would say that there is a strong possibility that this will be placed on the Extreme Rules card.

Other likely matches include Mark Henry versus Sheamus, which certainly seems to be their current direction. It won't be a good match, but it will be interesting to see how they will make it work. That would presumably leave Orton to go up against the Big Show, meaning that they will be prolonging the inevitable Orton heel turn further.

Although this match is advertised for RAW in the UK, I have a strong feeling that they will be placing the Team Hell No and Undertaker versus the Shield match on the Extreme Rules card. Given that Undertaker wrestles only once a year at this point, it would only make sense to put this match on pay-per-view. This would obviously mean that the proposed match on RAW will either not take place, or culminate in a dusty finish. Although, it is admittedly quite strange that they would fly Undertaker all the way over to the UK for a dusty finish.

It looks like CM Punk will not be on the show, as they are running an angle that will most likely lead to him taking some time off. He was recovering from a knee injury that was a big deal a few months ago, and after his WrestleMania match with the

Undertaker many of his small injuries have caught up with him and he is going to need to take time off.

This is obviously somewhat of a negative for Punk, although he is quite happy apparently with his time off. Likewise, this could land up being a positive occurrence for the viewing audience, as I can see the return of Punk after a couple of months off being somewhat of a big deal if they book it right. Punk could also come back in an even better position than when he left depending on how things go.

New Japan Wrestling Dontaku 2013 Set for May 3rd

Following New Japan's stellar, 'Invasion Attack', show from the Ryogoku Kokugikan on WrestleMania weekend, New Japan are set to run their long running annual 'Wrestling Dontaku' show from the Fukuoka International Center on May 3rd - and once again I do not expect anything less than stellar. Despite the fact that the Invasion Attack show was one of the better shows of the year so far, it will in all likelihood be taken over by the Dontaku show, as it seems to be a superior show from a wrestling standpoint.

The show is headlined by Minoru Suzuki challenging Kazuchika Okada for the IWGP Heavyweight title in Okada's first defense since winning the title at the aforementioned Invasion Attack show. From a booking standpoint the build to this match has been watertight, as they built from the Suzuki-gun/CHAOS feud centered around both men and Okada failing to beat Suzuki, to Suzuki failing in the New Japan Cup against Yano and Okada succeeding against Goto in the finals, to Suzuki getting his redemption over Yano and Okada winning the IWGP heavyweight title.

There have been some people complaining on forums and such saying that Okada shouldn't have lost to Suzuki, and ignoring the fact that the "Okada should never lose" argument is completely groundless, this was completely solid booking and makes perfect sense when trying to elevate Okada. The idea is to have Okada repeatedly fail against Suzuki, only for him to win the title against Tanahashi (who has his own back story with both men) and presumably vanquish Suzuki for the first time.

In terms of match quality I can't see it being as good as either one of their respective battles with Tanahashi over the last few months, but with two phenomenal workers in there they will most likely pull something close to a Tanahashi level mainevent off; and of course these matches very often exceed expectations, so we should be in for a more than great mainevent here.

Due to the elbow injury that Kazushi Sakuraba suffered at the hands of Saito suplex delivered by Yuji Nagata on the previous internet-pay-per-view, Sakuraba will not be wrestling in the planned singles match with Yuji Nagata on this show. It is for that reason that Nagata has been placed in the customary multi-man tag to open up the show. He teams with Liger, Tiger Mask and Maximo to take on the team of Tomohiro Ishii, Gedo, Jado and YOSHI-HASHI, in what should be a fun match, but nothing special. Later in the card Nagata's tag partner when combating Laughter 7, Hirooki

Goto, is set to face Katsuyori Shibata in what should be another blow-away match on the card.

Five out of the six current New Japan championships are being defended on the show, with the opener being the Time Splitters defending against who else, but the team of Rocky Romero and Alex Koslov, the Forever Hooligans. These two teams have had match after match with each other, and while it should be a good match once again, it is getting stale. I would expect the Time Splitters to retain here, although I wouldn't be surprised in the least if Forever Hooligans come out with the titles.

The freshly turned IWGP Junior Heavyweight champion, Prince Devitt, teams up with his new partner in crime so to speak, Badluck Fale - it really is a shame that they didn't have Fale keep the King title, as some great Devitt promos could have resulted around a King and Prince theme - and they take on the team of Captain New Japan and Prince Devitt's former Apollo 55 teammate, Ryusuke Taguchi.

If you do not follow Prince Devitt on twitter, and there is no reason that any sensible human being would not, then you have missed some of the most entertaining twitter rumblings of the year. In a nutshell, Devitt is "real" and Captain New Japan is not apparently, the two have been building up a rivalry for ages, but Devitt went too far when unmasking New Japan on the last show, and proceeding to stick the mask in his trunks and then onto his head. You wouldn't have thought of Devitt as such a tremendous personality, but Devitt, who is one of the top 10 workers in the world, has become quite the entertaining promo in the context of New Japan. And while Fale and New Japan aren't the greatest wrestlers in the world, I fully expect a fun match carried by Taguchi and Devitt leading to more phenomenal Prince Devitt antics.

In a rematch of one of the best matches of the 2012 Wrestling Observer calendar year, two of the most underrated wrestlers not only in New Japan, but in the world, do battle over the NEVER championship when Masato Tanaka defends his championship against Tomoaki Honma. On December 23rd of 2011 they put on one of the most criminally overlooked and undervalued matches of that Observer Year, shortly after that Honma was released from the company due to personal problems that New Japan had with Honma. Then at the New Beginning show, Honma made his triumphant return, and while I am not sure if he is signed with the promotion just yet, I would assume that he will sign pretty soon.

Honma (36) and Tanaka (40) have both had their great matches, but I think that very few appreciate just how good they really are. Specifically in the case of Tanaka, who has been a guy around for years who has never been handed the status of a tremendous worker, which I believe he can be at times. Regardless, depending on how much time they are given and exactly how far they can go, I can see them not only having the sleeper match on the show, but possibly the best match of the entire event.

In a tag team title four way, with what at press time seems to be Lance Archer and Davey Boy Smith Jr. defending against against TenKoji, Nakanishi & Super Strong Machine and Yano and Iizuka. I say this was a degree of uncertainty, because at Smith and Archer are set to defend their tag team titles against Scott Summers & Ryan

Genesis on an NWA show on April 20th. At press time we have no results for the match, but it is a safe bet to say that Archer and Smith will retain, as I can't see New Japan having such a large title change outside of Japan.

It is probably the match that I am least looking forward to on the entire show, as it will probably be fine, but I can't see it going anywhere past average. Who knows, they could have a good match, but with Yano, Iizuka, Nakanishi, Strong Machine and Tenzan in there with no phenomenal workers to carry the match, it probably won't surpass that level. Smith and Archer will most likely retain – I can't see any of the other three teams getting the titles.

Yujiro Takahashi goes up against Togi Makabe, in what should be the blow-off to their program that has spanned a few months now. When they had their first match at the Tokyo Dome it seemed to be a once off match simply to get both men on the show, but they have actually turned it into a pretty long program. The matches have mostly been comprised of Takahashi beating Makabe with the involvement of shenanigans, but it is time to end the program and Makabe should go over here.

In a rematch of one of the better matches of the year thus far, Hiroshi Tanahashi takes on Karl Anderson once again, and if the first match was anything to go by this should be a phenomenal match. It is being billed as the first of three matches as a part of the triple mainevent, so it probably won't get as much time, as an IWGP title match, but given the talent level of both men involved they really could have a fifteen minute classic if things fell into place. Given that they just went with Tanahashi/Okada I wouldn't be surprised if they have Anderson get the win here in order to set up an IWGP title match against Okada at some point - although Anderson has already had a title shot in the last few months.

Shinsuke Nakamura defends his Intercontinental Championship against a mystery opponent, who most people presumed to be K-Dojo talent, Yuji Hino. However, in a recent promo Taka Michinoku of Suzuki-gun said that the mystery opponent would certainly live up to the intercontinental name, which led me to assume that it would be a former WWE talent in the form of a Shelton Benjamin or maybe even an MVP. It turns out that the mystery opponent is in fact Shelton Benjamin, who isn't really a disappointment, but he

As a whole this is looking to be a very good card, and it much like their Invasion Attack show it is sure to blow away WWE's offering in the same month.

WWE Monday Night RAW April 15th 2013 Bi-Lo Center, Greenville, South Carolina

Overall Thoughts:

This wasn't going to be better than last week's show from any angle, and it wasn't. The show wasn't bad, but there was nothing on the show that I would call truly great either. The Punk promo was enjoyable and seeing Lesnar destroy people is always something, and that was pretty much it. The mainevent segment between Cena and

Ryback, reminded me far too much of the current direction that Impact is going in with AJ Styles, and the manner in which he walked out on Storm. They did a lot of build on the way to Extreme Rules, but I don't know how much of that build really got me excited.

They returned with the usual soap opera opening. Orton and Sheamus came out for a two on one handicap match against the Big Show. Sheamus started off with the Big Show. Sheamus landed his clubbing blows until Show attempted to lash out with a KO punch. Sheamus ducked, but was thrown to the floor for his trouble. They really played off the fact, much like at WrestleMania, that Orton hadn't been tagged in and was frustrated on the apron. Sheamus landed an electric chair on Big Show, and Orton ran wild with the crowd very much behind him. Sheamus then came in for the brogue kick and Orton landed the RKO for the win. It seemed like a very strange idea to have the babyface team go over in a handicap match without setting up a big angle. From the way that they have been telling this story I would presume that they are leading up to a Big Show babyface turn and Orton heel turn. There was a recap of the Triple H/3MB/Shield segment from SmackDown, before they cut to 3MB backstage with Josh Matthews. Slater said that they would be calling the Shield out next. After the break 3MB were in the ring demanding a hand written apology, leading to loud "you suck" chants. Lesnar's music hit and he came out like he was ready to blow holes through McIntyre, Slater and Mahal. He cleared house, Slater looked to escape, but Lesnar slid straight out of the ring and killed him with a clothesline. Poor Slater then



took two F5s on the barricade. Heyman stopped Lesnar, the crowd chanted for another, Lesnar smiled, but didn't give it to them. Heyman put Triple H over for knocking Lesnar out, something that he actually did in the opening minutes of their Mania match.

Heyman then proposed a rubber match, and he preempted the announcement of the stipulation with the strongest adjectives possible, leading up to the announcement of a steel cage match. Yes, the stipulation that has been devalued for over a decade. While it will probably be the best of the three matches, I can't see how any of this will work. They have already done a stipulation match for Hunter's career at the biggest show of the year, and I don't see Triple H losing - so why do it. They have already sacrificed Brock enough to tell a complete story and get Triple H his win back; going back to a match that hasn't worked in the past makes no sense.

Kofi Kingston made it out for a US title match with Antonio Cesaro, yodeling, which is a fine spot, but is going to turn Cesaro into a comedy act in the long run. That's something that you don't want happening to a talent of as high a caliber as Cesaro.

Kingston landed Trouble in Paradise a few minutes in, but Cesaro rolled out to the floor. They had a really fun TV match with a great closing exchange. They did rollup after roll-up in an exchange until Kingston landed Trouble in Paradise for the win. Hopefully this allows Cesaro to move up the card and not the other way. Kingston said that he brought the US title "back home" in a post-match interview. The entire match was shown from Ziggler's tremendous World Title cash-in from last week. Ziggler, who looked like a legitimate star, made his way out with AJ and Langston. Did a similar promo to the one that he cut on SmackDown saying that he was champion simply because of himself. He kissed AJ, but Del Rio's, jolly music hit, and Ricardo made it out to interrupt. Del Rio wanted his rematch right then and there, Ziggler was baffled, but out came Vickie to make the match for that segment - what happened to the whole "we have to do this on pay-per-view" gimmick? As the match was about to get underway Swagger and Colter made it out to interrupt. Del Rio sent Swagger to the floor, he looked to go after Ziggler, but Langston stepped in the way, leaving Swagger open for an attack by Swagger. Swagger then locked in the ankle lock on the "injured" ankle of Alberto. After the break they cut to Del Rio being checked on backstage by EMTS.

Daniel Bryan and Kane made it out to face the Prime Time Players. They had a perfectly decent match with Bryan pinning Young with a diving headbutt. They in a way officially announced Bryan, Kane and Undertaker versus the Shield next week. I assume that they will have some sort of dusty finish so that they can do that match on pay-per-view - it would make no sense to do a match like that on TV. They cut to a Ryback inset promo. He basically explained that he was angry that Cena had the greatest moment of his life at Mania and he had his worst. With the way that this promo fell it seems as though it was inspired by those Bully Ray packages on Impact. They showed clips as Ryback said that Cena never helped him out when he was killed by The Shield (six times apparently). He called himself the biggest threat to Cena's title reign ever. I really liked this. Ryback obviously isn't a good promo, he does those bizarre movements with his mouth, and sometimes even his ears, but this was so well produced and straight to the point that it didn't matter. I don't really know how positively people reacted to it though. Barrett and R-Truth made it out for a match for a non-title match. It was really strange, because the R-Truth hit his finisher and the announcers called it like it was a nearfall, when it was in actual fact the finish - everyone else seemed pretty stunned too. Maddox and Vickie were speaking backstage saying that Del Rio couldn't compete when Teddy Long came by. Long suggested that Swagger would face Ziggler later on and that he had made the match. Obviously this will further the Long/Booker angle. Cody Rhodes and Damien Sandow came out for a tag match against Khali and Marella with Hornswoggle and Natalya. Marella landed the cobra on Sandow, Rhodes fled in fear, but shenanigans out on the floor led to Sandow grabbing the rollup victory. There was a trailer for probably the most phenomenal thing on the show - a mobile game called Rockpockolypse.

Lawler was in the ring showing clips of everyone doing the Fandango Tango from all over the internet. Fandango made it out to no humming. Fandango asked Lawler to move his hips, he left to the announce table. Fandango turned complete face asking people to come Fandangoining with him. They milked it as much as possible getting the people to say his name. He killed the fun saying that they could all "Fandango"

themselves, because they couldn't pronounce his name. This segment died. Cena was backstage with Matt Striker saying that he would like to meet Ryback face to face later on. Swagger and Ziggler made it out for a match. Naturally Ziggler played the face. Swagger pinned Ziggler clean after hanging him up and grabbing a rollup. I liked the fact that they did a clean pin to set up a three way for the title, but there is also the fact that Ziggler is now the champion and isn't the strongest due to prior loses to take into accounts. Del Rio went after Swagger on the entrance ramp after the



match, throwing him into the WWE sign and locking in an armbar over the stage. I enjoyed this angle. Some tweets from the Rock were shown. Sheamus was standing

by for an interview with Striker backstage when Henry ran by for a spear out of nowhere through the interview set - I love Mark Henry. Punk and Heyman made it out. Given that Punk wasn't on the show last week, due to it being the post-Mania RAW and WWE not wanting him to get a babyface reaction, this was the first time that we had seen him since Mania. Punk grabbed the mic, and waited quite a while before finally speaking up, something that would have been far more effective if they didn't have the announcers talking over the silence. He said that he was always looking to the next hurdle, whether it was defending the title or challenging the Rock. The one thing that he could find bigger than those two challenges was beating Undertaker at Mania. Another large portion of silence followed, which was filled with loud dueling chants for Punk and Undertaker. Punk gave Heyman the mic and walked off leaving him stunned; walked off to the back taking the long way around. This angle definitely has potential, especially if they are keeping Punk away for a long time. Booker and Teddy were arguing backstage now that Swagger defeated Ziggler, and he announced a triple threat match.

Kaitlyn was in the ring for a match against Nikki Bella. She had a decent match for Diva's standards with Nikki/Brie Bella winning when they did the switch at the end of the match with Brie coming in for the pin. Cena made it out for his main event segment confrontation with Ryback. There was a very brief technical snafu with the Shield preparing backstage. He was his usual Cena self and he told Ryback to come out which he did. Cena said that he made a challenge last week, but instead waited until Cena's back was turned. He then proceeded to call Ryback's video boring. Cena asked if Ryback knew who he was dealing with Orton, Michaels and the list went on. He said that Ryback lacked "the space between [his] ears and the [space] between his legs". This led to Lawler whispering "did you see what I saw earlier?" and Bradshaw

replied "I know what I saw"; obviously trying to cover up for the Shield issue. Cena removed his shirt and asked if Ryback had what it took to earn a championship. They had a face off and Ryback left the ring. The Shield's music hit and out they came through the crowd. Reigns looked inquisitively at Ryback on the ramp. The story that they told was that Ryback abandoned Cena like he had been abandoned. The Shield shifted their attention to Ryback after Cena had been destroyed, but he walked to the top of the entrance way, which was the A okay for triple powerbomb to close the show off.

RAW Ratings for April 15th 2013

The April 15th edition of Monday Night RAW from Greenville, South Carolina did the lowest overall rating for any edition of Monday Night RAW since football season, with a viewers per home number that was once again down from the year-long



average. The show was down roughly 10% from last week's show, which in all honesty is perfectly acceptable given that last week's show was the post-WrestleMania show, which

normally does a really good number. One noticeable thing that I saw when looking through the ratings for Monday was that the 'O Reilly Factor was significantly up from usual drawing 4.83 million viewers, but that was obviously due to the Boston Marathon bombing – regardless, it landed up being the number one show for the night on cable.

The opening handicap match between Orton, Sheamus and the Big Show opened up at a 3.06, which is really weak for the opening segment, which normally does a great rating – then again why they chose to open with that match I don't know. The following segment where Lesnar destroyed 3MB and Heyman cut a promo gained 113,000 viewers. The segment following the opening rarely gains viewers, but given that this what Brock Lesnar and the show started off on a bad foot this didn't surprise me. The title change with Kingston beating Cesaro lost 111,000 viewers, which is unfortunate, albeit expected. A recap of the Ziggler cash in from last week lost a further 10,000 viewers. Then the Ziggler segment with Del Rio with Swagger and Colter coming out gained 241,000 viewers at 21:00 to a 3.23 quarter – decent for that spot, but not great by any means.

The 20:00 to 21:00 hour drew 4.185 million viewers (a 1.47 and 1.863 million viewers in the 18-49 demo, placing it third for the night overall).

In the post-21:00 segment the Daniel Bryan & Kane match against the Prime Time Players together with the Ryback taped promo gained 33,000 viewers, which is good for the post-21:00 time slot which normally showcases a drop-off, but in the same vein as the opening segment they weren't really coming off of a high either. The Barrett/Truth match with the title change lost 397,000 viewers. The Rhodes' Scholars versus Santino & Khali match lost a further 84,000 viewers. Then in the 22:00 segment the Fandango interview gained 69,000 viewers to a 2.95 quarter, which is really bad for the 22:00 time slot, and they really should have showcased a big gain coming off a chain of loses like that.

The 21:00 to 22:00 hour drew 4.236 million viewers (a 1.58 rating and 2.004 million viewers in the 18-49 demo, making it the number one hour for the night).

In the post-22:00 segment Dolf Ziggler versus Jack Swagger lost 232,000 viewers, which wouldn't be a bad loss if it was following the usual 22:00 viewer spike. The Punk interview gained 344,000 viewers, a success even if they were coming off a series of big loses. The Kaitlyn/Bella match gained 20,000 viewers and the overrun segment with Ryback and John Cena gained a good 647,000 viewers to a 3.53 overrun.

The 22:00 to 23:09 hour drew 4.026 million viewers (a 1.56 rating and 1.972 million viewers in the 18-49 demo, placing it in the second spot). The ratings for each demo were as follows: a 2.6 in males 18-49, a 2.0 in male teens, a 1.0 in females 18-49 and a 0.8 in female teens. I would consider this week's rating a disappointment, but one rating doesn't tell a complete story, and ultimately we are really going to have to look at the pay-per-view buys for Mania and beyond to grasp the product's current popularity.

WWE –NXT
April 17th 2013 – Full Sail University, Florida.
Ben Carass.

A well-produced video hyped the Rollins vs. Graves Lumberjack match as the main event; it showed the set up last week and incorporated footage from their previous encounter, plus had the obligatory clips of The Shield destroying guys.

Tony Dawson and William Regal were back on the call this week; Regal said he was hanging his boots up for a while after the war he had with Ohno. Justin Gabriel appeared and Dawson did the annoying WWE commentator thing of bringing up an esoteric fact about a wrestler that has nothing to do with anything: Daniel Bryan “doesn’t own a TV”, “Antonio Cesaro “sleeps on the floor” and apparently Gabriel can “juggle balls of fire”. Leo Kruger made his entrance, although for some reason he didn’t get the spotlight gimmick he had a few weeks ago which was a downer.

Justin Gabriel vs. Leo Kruger

They started out trading chops then Gabriel took over and worked on the arm; Leo hit a spinebuster for a two count and got the heat briefly, however Gabriel came back with a monkey flip then threw a couple of kicks to the arm. Gabriel connected with a splash in the corner, but Leo cut off a springboard attempt and followed up with a big lariat to get a two count. Gabriel countered the London Dungeon and applied a Fujiwara-armbar, which Regal actually called, but Leo made the ropes. Gabriel went for the 450 and got crotched on the top then after a long battle for position Leo countered a sunset bomb out of the corner and delivered a double stomp. Leo locked on the London Dungeon, which I think Dawson called the “GC3”, and got the tap.

Leo Kruger defeated Justin Gabriel via pinfall, at 7:08.

This was another solid outing from these two and they told a different story from their previous two matches. Gabriel looked strong throughout and the heat spots were so brief that I assumed early on that Leo was going over. That’s not a negative comment at all, since the babyface should look strong even in defeat. I have no problems with the feud continuing, however it all started with Leo going after Tyson Kidd and nobody even mentions that anymore, so forgetful people like myself have to think long and hard about why they are actually wrestling. Now all we get is “they have been long-time rivals from South Africa”, which is fine, but would be more effective if each of them could tell their own side of the story.

A promo hyped the “Clash of the Champions” episode next week then they showed NXT’s involvement in the WrestleMania weekend. It was a really nicely done video and made the NXT guys seem like big stars, however they inexplicably showed Paige and Summer Rae signing autographs together. It featured The Shield in the locker room before their six-man at Mania; during a signing session, Rollins said “last year we were down there (WrestleMania Axxess) getting beaten up at 8 o’clock in the morning”. Rami Sabei appeared for a split second with Adrian Neville then some wackiness with Xaiver Woods occurred. We saw Big E. Langston walk through the Gorilla position for the first time at an empty MetLife stadium then more footage of The Shield backstage; Rollins said he bought a ticket for WrestleMania 26, because he knew that would be the last Mania he would ever go to as a fan. The package ended with stills of Big E. during the Tag Title match and a shot of fireworks exploding above the stadium.

Paige was with Renee Young in the back and Renee asked her what was going on with Summer Rae. Paige scoffed at Summer’s “curling iron” excuse last week then challenged her to a one-on-one match and claimed Summer didn’t have a tough bone in her body. Summer hit Paige with a cheap shot from behind and said “who’s running now; I accept”.

This would have been more effective had we not just see the two sat next to each other laughing and signing autographs.

Bayley made her way out then Emma did her goof dance on her way down; Emma successfully skinned the cat in the ring, which got a mild pop from the crowd, and she celebrated her triumph.

Emma vs. Bayley

The fans were behind Emma from the start; Bayley took over after a dropkick then grabbed a chinlock, which furthered the people's support from Emma. Bayley kept the heat on with a neck crank, but Emma avoided a splash in the corner then applied the world's slowest tarantula. Emma delivered a catapult and rolled through into a Muta-lock to get the tap-out.

Emma defeated Bayley via submission, at 3:10.

This was fine; it had the potential to be good, but just didn't get enough time. I guess Emma is a babyface now; the only way this can work and not turn her into a total comedy geek is if she is a goof outside of the ring and when the bell ring she turns into a serious badass worker. Being trained by Lance Storm, I imagine she would have no trouble in doing so.

Yoshi Tatsu hit the ring for the next match; Bray Wyatt showed up to put Yoshi out of his misery and was accompanied to ringside by The Family.

Yoshi Tatsu vs. Bray Wyatt w/ The Wyatt Family

Yoshi tried to use his speed, but he was too much of a geek and Wyatt flattened him with a crossbody. Wyatt hit a running splash in the corner then got the pin after his swinging inverted STO.

Bray Wyatt defeated Yoshi Tatsu via pinfall, at 1:20.

Wyatt hit his finish again after the match then grabbed the mic and took a seat next to his victim. Bray said the destruction of Yoshi was a message and there was no man in the locker room greater than him; he rambled about being the "eater of worlds" and kissed Yoshi on the forehead before leaving with The Family.

Wyatt is terrific in his role and the conviction in his performance is quite remarkable. I still have no idea why he lost to Bo Dallas a month or so back; nobody has even mentioned it and Bo hasn't benefited from being the first guy to beat Bray. I guess they just want us to forget all about it and Wyatt killing Yoshi is a way of building him back up. Although, in two weeks he does the job for Jericho, so maybe I spoke too soon on the rebuilding.

Some Lumbergeeks surrounded the ring for the main event; Jake Carter, Axl Keegan and Scott Dawson were just a few of the guys present. Corey Graves was out first then Seth Rollins came through the crowd without Ambrose and Reigns.

Lumberjack Match: Corey Graves vs. Seth Rollins

Rollins teased going to the floor a couple of times, but thought better of it then Graves went to work on the knee. Rollins cut Graves off on the second rope with an enzuigiri

and Corey spilled to the floor; the geeks rolled him back inside. After the break, Rollins scored with his one footed dropkick and worked a body scissors then a camel clutch. The Lumberjacks got behind Graves and he fired back with some shots then landed a boot to the face, however Rollins cut him off with a reverse STO into the turnbuckle. Graves avoided the big knee off the top and landed a jumping knee strike of his own to start a comeback then wrenched the leg of Rollins, who rolled to the floor. The Lumberjacks put him back in the ring rather tenderly; Graves delivered a Dragon screw off the second rope and Rollins went back to the floor. The Lumberjacks were a little more aggressive in throwing Rollins back inside this time. Graves hit a gourdbuster, however Ambrose and Reigns showed up; the two Shield members proceeded to beat up all 12 Lumberjacks, then Reigns fought off three while Ambrose hit Graves with a clothesline. Rollins scored with the shiranui to get the victory.

Seth Rollins defeated Corey Graves via pinfall, at 7:19.

After the match, Regal was yelling about how The Shield had taken out 13 men; Ambrose, Rollins and Reigns stood tall in the ring as the show went off the air.

The match was fine; both guys are solid workers, however the finish was a little telegraphed. Why else would the Lumberjacks be a bunch of nobodies, seriously there were at least 3 guys I had never seen before, unless The Shield were going to run in and kill everyone? Still, I'm not complaining too much, but they ran the risk of making NXT look completely inferior since Graves is not getting a redeeming win anytime soon over Rollins. Although, I'm assuming he's still a heel in storyline and just played the babyface role for this match.

This was a decent show on the whole; the opener was quality, the main event was good and the WrestleMania video package was nicely done if you ignore the lunacy of having Paige and Summer sit next to each other. Next week is the "Clash", where we just get a bunch of random title matches. One of the matches taped for the show was Cesaro vs. Neville for the US title, so unless there is a massive oversight, I wouldn't expect to see this encounter. As noted, in two weeks Jericho vs. Wyatt is the main event and the first Paige vs. Summer one-on-one match occurs, which should turn out to be a good show, even if the wrong guy goes over in the main event.

TNA Impact April 18th 2013 American Bank Center, Corpus Christi, Texas

Overall Thoughts:

In what seems to be a general trend, I did not enjoy this week's edition of Impact nearly as much as I did the live show last week, and that isn't to say that it was intrinsically bad, but I wouldn't call it a great show or even a good show by any means. My main problem with this show was pretty much the same problem that I have had with each Impact I haven't enjoyed for the last nine months or so – there was simply too much Aces & Eights involvement for my liking. In the past the gimmick used to be that the Aces & Eights would run down and attack a member of the Impact lockerroom, and they would maybe set up a match here and there, but now it seems

like they are setting up a handful of injury angles every week, and that is way too much for any show and for any promotion, let alone a company like TNA who have been lacking in the babyface department for years. They did keep Styles strong, which is a huge positive, but even if they do hit a home run when it comes to the build to this year's Bound for Glory, one lone wrestler does not a promotion make. Apart from that it was a decent show, there was nothing really good on the show, but there were few segments that were truly terrible – truth be told this was a missable show, in spite of the number of supposedly big angles on the show.

There was a graphic with TNA sending their condolences to the victims of the Boston Bombings. They opened the show up with a video of Jeff Hardy being stretchered out before a recap of last week's main event, together with backstage footage and Hogan's regret being aired. Bischoff and Briscoe asserted that they could take on Angle, Devon wanted them to be sure; the only thing that mattered was that they accomplished the



job. Bischoff and Briscoe made their way down to the ring, and they aired a very well produced video package for the handicap match. Angle was in control before the break, but Briscoe landed a low blow behind the referee's back to give the Aces & Eights the

advantage - "you can't wrestle chants" ensued for the heat. Angle made his comeback landing suplex after suplex - he landed a double suplex on both men, which was fine, the strange bit was that Hebner assisted in the suplex by breaking Brushhoff's grip on the ropes with his foot. Brown ran out to ringside and threw Bischoff the chain for a Mr. Anderson assisted chain shot for the win. After the match Briscoe and Bischoff landed a double powerbomb, which felt like a cheap Shield knockoff. Anderson got on the mic and listed the names that they had defeated, and he reminded Styles about his offer. Williams and Ion were interviewed about the new three-way format.

Ion, King and Williams made it out for an X Division title three-way. King has slightly less generic music by TNA standards. The most notable part about the match is that TNA have officially found something to replace the voices from within Jeff Hardy's head. Basically they have a new camera for the X-Division, which I would have been fine with, if it wasn't mounted on the head of the referee; a completely wacky idea. Ion broke up a pin on King following the Canadian Destroyer. If you thought that the Kevin Dunn "rumble camera" was nauseating...well, you have to experience this. Despite the fact that Williams was in there, and he is a good worker,

this was once again your typical X-Division three-way that nobody cared about. They were beginning to grab the fans at least to some extent towards the end, but King shot in with a dropkick on Williams who had the cloverleaf locked in on Ion for the win. There was an interview with Magnus backstage, and he stated that he would take Devon's X Title. Hemming and Brooke Hogan were hyping the Knockout's website that is going to launch soon. Mickie James and Brooke Tessmacher were brought in next, the funny thing was that Hogan said that Tessmacher and James had both been working hard when they have both been off the TV cycle for a while. Brooke and other Brooke hugged with Tessmacher stating that she would be there for Hogan. What made this even worse was that when Tessmacher said that she was there for Hogan, Hogan stated that he was "a jerk" in the most jolly and unconcerned manner possible. Magnus made himself out for his TV title match, but before he could make it to the ring there was a three way beatdown with Devon, Knox and DOC. They chokeslammed Magnus on the apron until Joe made it out for the save. After the break Joe cut a fiery promo saying that he had a match with Devon later on. They aired this week's Styles recap.

There was a Velvet Sky injury video. Tessmacher made it out for a number one contender's match with Mickie James. Once again ODB was the referee for the match, which makes large portions of the match impossible to take seriously. James pinned Tessmacher with a rollup after an exchange of pin attempts in an average match. AJ Styles was backstage in a hoodie with Daniels and Kazarian - Styles was his solemn self while Daniels and Kazarian were as jovial as ever. Devon approached Park backstage, and was clearly impersonating a cheap mob movie. Ray clocked Park from behind and they choked him out with a chain before throwing him into a running shower. There was a good Mickie James promo saying that it was her time to shine. Storm was backstage getting ready for his match with Styles. Daniels and Kazarian made their way down to the ring for a promo spot. Daniels revealed their new t-shirts and said that their movie was in production with Morgan Freeman playing Dixie Carter. They offered Styles a shirt and they challenged Hernandez and Chavo to a Tag Title match. Aries and Roode came down to interrupt the closing gimmick. Daniels said that Roode's opinion was only worth three quarters of his, because he is Canadian. Kazarian called Aries a dirty vegan, which led to both men bickering back and forth - it was awesome. Daniels and Kazarian fled when Hernandez and Chavo came down to attack Roode and Aries from behind - what great baby faces they are.

There was a video montage of members of the TNA roster, both heel and baby face commenting on Hardy and the future of TNA. I really liked the way that it was done, as having heels, like Roode and Kim, included in the video really helped to make it feel legitimate and real. Morgan was backstage saying that Hogan wasn't there and he began to list Hogan's "failures". Devon and Joe made it out for a TV title match. Devon had the heat on Joe for a prolonged period of time, right on queue the Aces & Eights ran out, Joe had Devon up for the muscle buster, but was struck with a chain by Anderson. I am all for having dastardly heels, but this was sheer overkill - in some ways they are doing the NWO thing, but worse, because the Aces & Eights aren't viewed as nearly as cool as the NWO was. All of the babyfaces on the roster have been made to look bad, which isn't going to help anyone when they already lacked fresh faces. After the match Anderson landed a hammer shot to the face of Joe.

Styles and Storm made it our for the mainevent with Storm going after Styles on his way to the ring. Despite the fact that Storm has been the aggressor in the angle Styles worked as the clear heel. Daniels and Kazarian walked out onto the ramp in the last five minutes of the match or so. Storm landed the code breaker and went for the superkicked, but Styles locked in a modified heel hook type submission for the win to the chagrin of Daniels and Kazarian who stormed the ring. Styles laughed, but then



laid both men out, the Aces & Eights then made it out, attacked Storm, Daniels and Kazarian, but Styles walked out with his back turned during the beatdown. Ray cut a promo saying that they were the ones that killed their heroes and he was the one

who took out Jeff Hardy. His brothers were the one who took out the other three men in the ring. Ray said that they had no heroes left, and they had become the victims - the man to blame was Hulk Hogan. Ray called Hogan out for next week and he wanted to tell him to his face why his heroes were victims. The Aces & Eights were left victorious to close the show off.

WWE SmackDown – April 19th 2013.
Thompson-Boling Arena: Knoxville, TN.
Ben Carass.

The recap this week ran down Jack Swagger attacking Alberto Del Rio before his rematch with Ziggler on Raw then showed Swagger getting the win over Dolph and the post-match attack by Del Rio. The narrator also set up the Big Show/ Mark Henry vs. Sheamus/ Randy Orton tag team main event.

Fandango appeared to some sweetened crowd noise and they found a few people “Fandango-ing” in the crowd. Cole and Josh put over the craze as the hottest thing in the history of the plant; JBL was all business and put Fandango over for beating Jericho at Mania.

Fandango began to sleaze on Lilian Garcia; he asked her if she had ever, “made moves on anyone” then asked if she had ever “Fandango-ed”. He began to twirl her around and Lilian looked surprised, but slightly aroused; Fandango held the ring announcer close, dipped her, looked into her eyes and said: “Lilian that was absolutely terrible”. Fandango dropped the suitably embarrassed Lilian then told her she was a beautiful woman, but there was nothing beautiful about the way she danced. He claimed she was just like all the fans that butcher his name and make fun of his dance then asked if she could at least pronounce his name correctly. Santino Marella came out to save Lilian; he made fun of Fandango’s name and told him he was not a very nice person. Santino admitted Fandango had some good moves and said that dance looked like fun then talked about the cheerleaders doing it on YouTube. Santino pulled out the cobra and informed “Fandangle” he was going to do a “two-step all over his face”. Santino did a wacky dance as Fandango’s music played; Lilian applauded and Fandango actually backed off into the corner as Santino did his thing. Fandango had seen enough and charged at Santino, but ended up being low-bridged over the top rope. Cole said the two would wrestle after the break.

This was something else and hopefully a one-off. I was entertained by the absurdity of Lilian being surprised by the dance moves she was forced to perform, even though they would have been impossible to execute without some cooperation. Also, Fandango backing off in the corner while Santino danced was an amusing touch. Having Fandango claim the people are mocking him with the dance is a smart move since he is staying heel; if they turned him this soon and had him embrace it, he would be a comedy geek for the foreseeable future. It will be interesting to see the quarterly ratings for this show, as I would like to see the response WWE got from viewers by putting Fandango and Santino in the opening segment.

Santino Marella vs. Fandango

Cole talked about what kind of reaction Fandango would get from the London crowd next week and JBL claimed the Premier League played his song at all their games. Shocker, pro wrestler tells a lie, but that is not true at all and as far as I can tell only Everton FC (a team in the North West of England) played the song one time. Fandango got the “you can’t wrestle” treatment while he was dominating Santino and getting the heat; Santino tried to kip-up a couple of times, but was unsuccessful then finally managed it on the third attempt. Santino went into his comeback and set up for the cobra, however Fandango countered into a swinging reverse STO to get the victory.

Fandango defeated Santino Marella via pinfall, at 3:12.

After the match, the dancer got in the ring and did the splits as Fandango told everyone how to say his name.

There wasn’t much to the match really; Santino sold for the heat, did his goofy comeback then Fandango pinned him. After a win over a big name like Jericho, this didn’t really accomplish a whole lot.

In the GM's office, Booker T was giving Teddy Long an earful about booking Zigler vs. Swagger on Raw; Teddy claimed he was just trying to help the Booker man out. Big Show walked in and thanked Teddy for giving him a tag team partner tonight, unlike Book who forced him to wrestle Orton and Sheamus in a handicap match. Show gave Teddy a fist-bump and walked out; Booker gave Teddy the bug-eyed stare, but Teddy told Show to "hold-up" and followed the giant out of the office.

If Booker is supposed to be the babyface, why has he been acting so harshly to Teddy? Also, Teddy giving Show a partner is not a heelish thing to do at all; if anything, Booker is the bad guy for booking a handicap in the first place. This angle makes no sense.

They showed Kofi Kingston winning the US Title on Raw then Josh hyped Kofi vs. Wade Barrett in a Champion vs. Champion match. Kofi made his entrance first and Wade followed; Cole put over Barrett's title defence over Justin Gabriel on Main Event.

Champion vs. Champion Match: Kofi Kingston (US Champ) vs. Wade Barrett (IC Champ)

Kofi landed a hurricanrana early and continued to shine with his speed; Wade took a snug kick to the face, which cannot have been fun then Kofi hit a springboard splash for a two count. The transitional spot came when Wade sent Kofi off the top rope to the floor with a big boot; Barrett landed some shots on the outside then set Kofi into the announce table. Back in the ring, Wade got the heat; Kofi showed some hope with a few strikes, but Barrett shut down each attempted comeback. Kofi fought up from a chinlock, only to be cut off by an inverted sidewalk slam type move, however Kofi countered a cocky cover from Wade and hooked a crucifix pinning combination for the three count.

Kofi Kingston defeated Wade Barrett via pinfall, at 5:26.

It's a pity that neither belt means anything and in fact are nothing but burdens to the guys that hold them, because this was a fun little match and given more time it could have been very good. They really need to consider unifying the two secondary titles; at least that way only one talented mid-carder would be buried every week, instead of two.

A recap of Mark Henry doing what he does to Sheamus last week on SmackDown then again on Raw aired; Renee Young approached Henry in the back and asked why he attacked Sheamus. Henry said "because I can and that's just what I do"; Sheamus charged in and speared Henry into a guardrail and an assortment of pipes then stated, "that's what I do, fella".

This was a well-done little segment; a babyface giving the heel a taste of his own medicine is always good stuff to me.

Del Rio vs. Ziggler vs. Swagger is in fact taking place at Extreme Rules and after a video package setting up the match, Josh hyped the three-way at the PPV.

Ricardo Rodriguez introduced Alberto Del Rio; Cole said he would take on Jack Swagger after the break. Zeb Colter accompanied Swagger down for the WrestleMania rematch.

Alberto Del Rio w/ Ricardo Rodriguez vs. Jack Swagger w/ Zeb Colter

Both guys were selling from Raw; Del Rio's knee and Swagger's elbow were taped up. They set out the story nicely, with each going after the other's injured body part early. Del Rio hurt his knee upon executing a leapfrog and Swagger went after the leg; Alberto countered the ring post spot he took on Raw and threw a kick to the injured arm. Del Rio sent Swagger's arm into the steps, before taking it back inside the ring. Swagger reversed a suplex then hung Alberto's leg up over the top rope to start the



heat. Swagger worked over the leg after the break; Del Rio showed some hope with a kick to the arm then came off the second rope, but Swagger caught him in mid-air with a shoulder block to the knee. Del Rio got

another hope spot in with a crucifix, however Swagger cut him off with a clothesline and went back after the leg. The crowd finally got behind Alberto, who missed his step-up enzuigiri and Swagger got a two count off his big single-leg; Del Rio rolled to the apron and used the ropes to lock in the cross armbreaker. The ref broke the hold then Swagger took out Alberto's knee with a kick and yelled "we the people" repeatedly. Del Rio started his comeback and hit a tilt-o-whirl backbreaker, but sold his own knee then caught Swagger with his double-knee backbreaker for a two count. Swagger countered the cross armbreaker into the patriot lock and Del Rio made it to the ropes, only to take a Vaderbomb for a two count. Alberto countered a second Vaderbomb then tried for the armbreaker again, but Swagger sent him for a ride through the ropes. Back inside the ring, Del Rio landed a superkick for a near fall. The finish saw Swagger apply the patriot lock and Alberto counter into the armbreaker; Swagger stacked up Del Rio for a two then Alberto hooked a messy inside cradle to get the victory.

Alberto Del Rio defeated Jack Swagger via pinfall, at 17:06.

This was a good effort from both guys and they told the story of each selling their injury from Raw admirably. It did feel a little long, but I'm not complaining as, other

than the main event, last week was nothing but 3 minute matches. Del Rio looked strong in toughing it out in a gruelling match with an injured leg and the win was necessary in getting some steam back on him after dropping the strap to Dolph. Swagger also came across rather well, as he constantly shut down Del Rio's comebacks and looked good during the heat spots. I'm not sold on the three-way yet, but they have got a long time to build and come up with something good; hopefully that won't involve all three guys trading wins every week.

After the Raw rebound, Cole and JBL talked about the possibility of Cena vs. Ryback then a video from The Shield interrupted them. Ambrose said they created a Raw moment nobody would forget, especially John Cena; Rollins mocked the "you can't see me" deal and Reigns said that didn't work anymore, because they could see him just fine when he was flat on his back. Rollins claimed Ryback didn't help Cena on Monday because he knew what justice felt like then Ambrose said Ryback wanted no part of The Shield and the look on his face was similar to The Undertaker when they confronted the Deadman. Ambrose stated Taker was terrified of The Shield then declared Undertaker may be undefeated at WrestleMania, but The Shield are undefeated period and said they would prove Taker is not immortal this week on Raw. Rollins added Undertaker had run WWE for 20 years, but his time was now up and Reigns closed with "believe in The Shield".

The quality of The Shield's backstage promos has increased, which is a shame because I thought the static filled videos they produced added a unique edge to them. Apparently now they just come across a top-of-the-line, high quality TV camera lying around in the back; it's not a big deal, but still worth pointing out. They delivered their lines with quality as always and Dean Ambrose cutting a promo on The Undertaker was a joyous thing to behold.

The Great Khali, Natalya and Hornswoggle came out for a six-person tag; JBL said Horny was going to have a "stepladder match" at Extreme Rules. Cole replied, "keep going, we've got ten seconds until commercial". After the break Primo, Epico and Rosa were in the ring; Rosa gyrated, which is always fun to see then they cut to an "earlier today" bit. In the parking lot, Hornswoggle, with Khali and Nattie as his passengers, was set to pull into a parking space; Primo, Epico and Rosa, who had their own entrance music blasting out of their car, snuck in to steal the spot. Natalya immediately got out of the car and hilariously said to herself, "stay calm, Nattie" then told Rosa they had stolen their spot. Rosa said the space wasn't reversed for freaks and Nattie said she would rather be a freak than whatever the three "loser" heels called themselves. Everyone bickered until Khali entered the shot and he made the universal symbol for "loser"; the heels were outraged and left muttering something in Spanish. Nattie and Hornswoggle said, "in your face" then Khali high-fived his woman.

This was so terrible that I was dying with laughter. Although, I'm not sure why the faces were pleased with what happened, after all they didn't get their parking spot.

The Great Khali, Natalya & Hornswoggle vs. Primo, Epico & Rosa

Rosa jiggled at Nattie, which earned her a slap in the face then Nattie tried for the sharpshooter. Rosa got to the ropes then stomped Nattie down in the heel's corner; Rosa got the heat on Nattie with a neck-tie; Nattie came back with a clothesline and made the tag to Khali. Primo and Epico came in, but Khali hit them both with overhand chops in the corner. Khali dropped Primo with his skull chop of doom and Hornswoggle grabbed Rosa's leg from the outside; Rosa chased Horny around ringside and ran into a discuss lariat from Nattie. Khali planted Epico with the treeslam for the finish.

The Great Khali, Natalya & Hornswoggle defeated Primo, Epico & Rosa via pinfall, at 2:49.

The wacky group of babyfaces danced after their victory and JBL told Matthews to go join them, because he didn't belong at the announce desk.

The match was pretty awful; Rosa maybe a pro when it comes to writhing around, however she never seems to improve a lick in the ring. I still enjoyed the so-bad-it-was-good video beforehand though.

They showed CM Punk's walkout promo on Raw; Cole brought up the statement from Paul Heyman they read on Main Event then he and Josh talked about Brock Lesnar issuing the challenge to Triple H on Raw. After the break, footage of Brock killing 3MB and Paul E. setting up the cage match aired.

Mark Henry showed up first for the main event then Big Show joined his partner; after another break, Randy Orton and Sheamus made their way out. Cole talked about Teddy Long booking the match and said Booker T was not happy about it; JBL said he had known Teddy for 20 years and could not trust him.

Randy Orton & Sheamus vs. Big Show & Mark Henry



Henry squared off with Sheamus and the two jaw-jacked for a while then Henry tagged Show in. Show did Sheamus' clubbing forearms spot, but Sheamus hung Show up on the top rope and showed the giant how it is done. Show landed an ugly superkick, but missed

an elbow and Orton came in with some shots. Show shut him down with a sidewalk slam; Henry entered and got the heat on Orton with a bear hug. Show kept the heat on Randy with some methodical blows, but Orton countered a chokeslam into a DDT and made the tag. Sheamus fired up on Show and hit the giant with white noise then set up

for the Brogue kick; Henry caused a distraction and Sheamus dropped him off the apron, however Show connected with a spear for the transition. After the break, Sheamus fought from underneath and was cut off by a clothesline; Show kept the heat on with the final cut and a bodyslam. Henry came in to work the dreaded nerve hold; Sheamus fought out, but was cut off again by a big boot. Show tagged in and after some shots, worked another nerve hold; Sheamus hit a chop block for the double-down then made the hot tag. Orton ran wild on Henry and connected with a DDT, however Show prevented the hangman with a cheap shot. Henry tagged out, but Orton caught Show with the hangman's DDT and set up for an RKO; Henry took out Randy with a body check then Sheamus speared himself and Henry through the ropes to the floor. In the ring, Show planted Orton with a chokeslam for the pinfall, as clean as a whistle.

Big Show & Mark Henry defeated Randy Orton & Sheamus via pinfall, at 14:58.

Henry and Show celebrated at the top of the ramp and Cole hyped Raw from London on Monday night.

*This was an average main event; there was nothing wrong with it and I suppose Show needed the pinfall after being beaten up by two guys, but it wasn't anything special. The same could be said about the entire show if I'm being honest. I'm into the idea of Henry vs. Sheamus; if Henry is going to be fed to Cena, which I would be against but I can see them going that way eventually, then a win over the number two babyface is the perfect way to get him there. Even if Henry is not moving onto Cena, I imagine Sheamus will be able to get a much better match out of him than Ryback managed. When one of my top five moments of the show includes a wacky two minute video with Khali/Nattie/Hornswaggle and Primo/Epico/Rosa then that should tell you how little there was to get into. Del Rio/Swagger was solid, Barrett/Kofi was fun and The Shield promo was great. Now that I think about it, there was more decent content than bad stuff here, but saying that there wasn't much else to the show. The bizarre opening segment and the stuff setting up Teddy's heel turn are about all that is left after all the recap videos from Raw. If you're into lengthy *** level TV matches then I suggest you check out Del Rio/Swagger, other than that there is not much else I would recommend.*

Bits & Pieces

Rami Sebai, the former El Generico, has officially been given a name in WWE developmental - Sami Zayn. Generico was originally wrestling under the mask in his first match or two and then transitioned to using his real name, which obviously wasn't a permanent move, as the WWE likes to own the names of all of their newer performers for legal reasons. As for the name itself, it is slightly above your average WWE developmental name, but only just.

Speaking of El Generico, a fan on RAW who was holding a "RAW is Generico" sign sitting hard camera side was moved out of view by security. The sign was visible on TV and while they didn't confiscate the sign there were people upset about it. On

some level I can understand why they did it, although the reality is that it probably wouldn't have hurt anyone if he remained on camera.

On a historical note, the man who killed arguably the biggest star to anyone one population in the history of pro-wrestling, Rikidozan, died on April 8th. Katsuji Murata (74), has been a long time suffer of diabetes, and was (obviously) a former member of the Yakuza.

Next Week's Issue

Unfortunately we were unable to cover the pre-Invasion Attack New Japan show in this week's newsletter, but next week we will be covering that show, plus all of the news from the week, show reports and more!

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