



### **Cubed Circle Newsletter -- G1 Climax...The Happiest Time of the Year!**

So you decided to forsake the G1 for a while, and read this newsletter after last week's...dare I say...terribly mediocre issue? I don't know why you would do such a thing, but good on you. You picked a great week to do such a thing, as we have a jam packed issue for you this week covering tons of news and matches from the 23rd G1 Climax, Mark Robinson looks at PWG's 'Is Your Body Ready' DVD, more G1, we look at RAW, the ratings, iMPACT, Ben Carass covers SmackDown and NXT, yes, more G1, the news and more! And with all of that out of the way, have a great week and enjoy the the last couple of days of the G1 Climax...it's sure to be great!

--Ryan Clingman, Cubed Circle Newsletter Editor

### **News**

#### **G1 Climax 23 -- One of the Greatest Wrestling Tournaments of All Time, Ongoing?**

For people that have been following Japanese pro-wrestling for a long time there is little doubt over the quality and depth of the current New Japan roster. It is hard to dispute it as the best pro-wrestling roster on the planet right now, both when it comes to potential stars, workers, diversity and potential big matchups. However, after the first seven nights of the 23rd G1 Climax tournament, there is little doubt, certainly in my mind, that this isn't simply one of the greatest rosters in modern day wrestling, but it may very well be one of the best collection of pro-wrestlers that we have seen collected in one place in many, many years.

Early ticket sales for the G1 Climax have, historically speaking, been a great barometer for the momentum of New Japan's roster. If the tickets sell fast, before the cards are announced, then you can point to the depth of the roster as a whole as a major drawing card. If you see ticket sales moving slower and then picking up you know that individual matches are the ones drawing the crowds, and given the fact that a few months ago we clearly experienced the former, this roster is hot.

However, this goes beyond the business aspects of wrestling, and even more into its artistic element, as not only did New Japan perform well at the gate for all of their major G1 shows, but

they also managed to put on a series of blow-away shows, featuring multiple match of the year candidates, all performed in completely different styles; and interspersed between numerous lower tier matches that on most normal shows would easily steal match of the night. And they are doing this night after night, day after day, for what has been a week at this point. Making for what may be remembered as one of the greatest tournaments in the history of the business.



At the time of writing I have seen the first five nights in their entirety, and I am about to move into night six, and out of those five shows, three matches in Tomohiro Ishii/Tanahashi from Korakuen Hall on night two, Kota Ibushi/Nakamura from Osaka on night four, and Ishii/Shibata also from Osaka on night four have been candidates for the best match of 2013. After the second show from Tokyo few would have predicted anything better than Ishii/Tanahashi, a match that had a red hot crowd and served to elevate Ishii above the level of a simple midcarder, but Nakamura and Ibushi met them with a match possibly at the same level, and then Shibata and Ishii looked to steal the spotlight away from just about every match that we have seen in 2013.

Looking at Ishii/Shibata through the eyes of a pure North American traditionalist the match didn't make sense at points; and would probably be viewed as a match that was good, but not necessarily great. However, look at it through the eyes of a puroresu fan and you have something truly remarkable, perhaps one of the better matches that we have seen in many years. It was by no means a Suzuki/Tanahashi or Tanahashi/Okada like story, in that it wasn't universal, and was in essence a very Japanese tale. However, that was what made the match so utterly fantastic.

Fighting spirit, determination and will to go to war (so to speak), are the themes that make Japanese pro-wrestling what it is, and that was essentially what this match was. It started off in a manner that can only be described as Frye/Takayama esque, in that the two shot out of the gate with kicks and furious forearms, before the two proceeded to intentionally take strikes from one another attempting to prove what they. It was in some ways very similar to the stories told by Tsuruta and Tenryu in the late 1980s, coming out of the gate at a breakneck speed. However, the primary difference between the two is that this match didn't slow down...not for a moment.

The above would mean very little if the crowd didn't care for the match, but that was not the case, in fact one of the most striking things was that before either man's music hit...no, before the graphics even came up, the crowd popped. Whether it was due to the anticipation for what they knew was coming next, or something completely different it was something special, and the key thing is that they kept that heat throughout the match. They also did something here that you wouldn't have been able to do outside of the G1, in that they beat Shibata in the end, which was the perfect culmination to the story. Had this match taken place as a part of a straight show, and you would have ended up with a situation similar to that of Cena/Lesnar.

Many have called this one of the great pro-wrestling matches of all time, including Dave Meltzer. Would I go that far? I don't think so. As looking back through the history of Japanese pro-wrestling and wrestling, in general there were matches that I felt were better -- for my money a match like Tsuruta/Misawa is still in a different league. However, when it comes to matches that exemplify the art form so beautiful this would have to be on the same level as Misawa/Tsuruta.

What made the Osaka show so extraordinary was the fact that the Shibata/Ishii classic wasn't the only match on the show worthy of tremendous praise. In fact there were two other great matches on the show (not as good as the match that we just spoke of, but still very good), Togi Makabe and Kazuchika Okada, which was a match not on the level of their Dominion IWGP title battle, but still very good, and a super unique contest from Kota Ibushi and Nakamura.

The Nakamura/Ibushi match was the mainevent of the show, and even after seeing so many great matches, just one after the other, the Osaka crowd in the Bodymaker remained hot. I am usually someone that criticizes a lot of what Ibushi does from a selling and psychology aspect, but the majority of the issues that you usually see from Ibushi matches weren't there for this one; whether or not that was due to Nakamura I do not know. The story towards the closing stretch was that Nakamura needed two middle rope Boma Ye and one regular Boma Ye to put Ibushi away, with Ibushi kicking out of two Boma Ye at one. The finish made Ibushi look better in losing, which was the case with a lot of the matches from these shows.

Of course one of the criticisms of the G1 that has been thrown around just about every year since Jado & Gedo first emerged as the booking team, is the parity aspect of the tournament. The top stars usually lag behind for the majority of the early going, allowing midcard stars to grab a lead before the majority of them lose in later nights. In that way you still have the younger stars looking good by beating top stars, and you don't degrade your top talent either. However, this

isn't like one of the most well remembered tournaments, the 1991 G1 Climax, where Riki Chosu, the company's top star at the time, lost to everyone else in the tournament thereby creating new stars like Hashimoto and Mutoh very quickly. The top stars lose to everyone, and therefore it can be debated whether or not the effects of these victories are really felt as strong as they should be.

I tend to think that because of the work involved, particularly in the matches that Ishii won against Tanahashi and Shibata, together with the stories weaved throughout, they serve to make new stars.

The larger issue here is the problem of the actual work, not that the work isn't good, but rather the fact that it is too good. I don't think that they are burning out the audience, although they are setting the bar higher and higher. However, what they are doing is opening themselves up to injury, and that has already happened in the case of Tenzan and Goto. Tenzan suffered cracked ribs at the hands of a bad landing in his August 7th match with Naito. Goto is also out of the tournament with a broken jaw, which poses serious consequences when you are dealing with a tournament as meticulously booked as the G1 Climax. Making matters worse is the fact that you still have guys in there like Tanahashi, Nakamura, Naito and Nagata who weren't 100% coming in, which just has me hoping for the best.

The scary thing about the tournament so far is that we haven't even seen nights eight and nine yet, and given that those shows both feature stellar lineups in a building as synonymous with great matches as Sumo Hall, there is very little doubt in my mind that we will get quite a few more incredible moments out of the G1. I suspect that Nakamura and Shibata will be meeting in the finals with Nakamura winning to go on and face Okada at the Dome. One can only imagine how good any of those proposed matches could be.

What's even better news for those of you (most) that weren't willing to fork out a small fortune to purchase all nine nights, New Japan is putting the final night up on a separate Ustream channel for \$30, which is less than they charged for the Tokyo Dome. I will save the whole long spiel about the rest of the tournament for next week's issue, but until next week...you should probably try digging through all of those great matches in your backlog.

## **Reports**

### **New Japan Pro-Wrestling G1 Climax Night One August 1st 2013 Act City Hamamatsu, Hamamatsu, Japan**

Overall Thoughts:

While this was far from the best show out of the first five nights of the G1 Climax, New Japan's first night was still a great show. There was not one bad match on the show, and there were three very good ones, and whilst this was not a Tokyo or Osaka crowd, the Hamamatsu fans were still into everything on the show. Thumbs up for the first night.

Kidaani, Nogami and Chono were on commentary, which was quite the combination.

#### 1. G1 Climax B Block Match

Kota Ibushi vs. Toru Yano

Yano made it out shilling his DVD. In typical Yano fashion Ibushi was attacked before the bell and taken down to the floor. Of course the turnbuckle pad was removed and Yano continued his assault through the crowd. Back in the ring and Ibushi was whipped into the exposed turnbuckle. Ibushi fired back with some forearms, but was pulled down by his hair. Ibushi got his first big spot of the G1 in, landing a springboard moonsault to the floor followed by a standing phoenix splash and moonsault. Yano got a cradle off of a splash for a good nearfall, and then grabbed a rollup after an exposed buckle shot; Ibushi kicked out. Yano continued his flurry of dastardly tricks, but Ibushi landed a pele and deadlift German for two. Ibushi then landed his phoenix splash opening his G1 career up with a pinfall victory 07:32.

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#### 2. G1 Climax A Block Match

Tomohiro Ishii vs. Lance Archer w/ Taka Michinoku

Ishii tried to take Archer down with a shoulder block or two, but failed. The visual of Ishii trying to chop Archer down was tremendous, as the height discrepancy between the two was vast. Archer worked over Ishii, Ishii landed a lariat, but still Archer didn't go down. Ishii landed a brainbuster, and followed it up with a bridging German, both for two. Archer landed a middle rope splash for two, Ishii fired back with a headbutt, but was quickly dropped with a powerslam and chokeslam for two. Archer went for the crucifix bomb, but was caught with an enzuigiri. Archer went for a moonsault, Ishii stopped him briefly, was pushed off, but then leapt back up with headbutts and a superplex. Ishii finally got a big lariat that allowed him to take Archer off of his feet, they exchanged counters, and Ishii kicked out of a neckbreaker, which got a very good reaction. Archer then landed a top rope crucifix bomb for the win in 10:43.

\*\*\* 1/4

#### 3. G1 Climax B Block Match

Hiroyoshi Tenzan vs. Shelton 'X' Benjamin

Tenzan shook hands with Chono on his way to the ring. Tenzan and Benjamin had a forearm exchange, but Tenzan unloaded with Mongolian chops. Benjamin grabbed his first advantage with a big superkick. Benjamin went for a suplex out on the floor, but Tenzan countered with one of his own. Benjamin gained the advantage again in the ring and landed a spinning heel kick. Tenzan responded with one of the same. Tenzan went to the top rope, Benjamin shot off, landed some headbutts, but missed the diving variant. Benjamin in the end landed the pay dirt for the win in 08:20. This was the weakest match if the show.

\*\*1/2

#### 4. G1 Climax A Block Match

Katsuyori Shibata. vs. Davey Boy Smith Jr.

They did a lot of smooth holds, submission attempts and switches early on. The holds and ring work ended when Smith landed an uppercut and slam. Shibata perched Smith on the top rope. Smith soon threw Shibata's head into the announce table, leading to a full strike battle once Shibata was back in. Shibata got the better of the exchange. Smith locked in an ankle lock, which he transitioned into a sharpshooter. Shibata kicked out of a back suplex. Smith went for a powerbomb, but was caught in a gogoplata. He went for the Rampage Jackson spot, but fell to the mat for the PK, giving Shibata an opening night victory in 09:06.

\*\*\* 1/2

#### 5. G1 Climax B Block Match

Tetsuya Naito vs. Yujiro Takahashi

Naito's knee seemed to be in better shape than it has been over the last month or so. Naito landed two big enzuigiris and a dropkick, followed by a bridging German for two. Naito proceeded to slap Yujiro on the top rope, but Takahashi responded with a low blow. Yujiro followed this with a stiff Olympic slam and German suplex for two. Takahashi then landed Tokyo pimps for the win in 09:30. Very fun match from both sides.

\*\*\* 1/4

#### 6. G1 Climax B Block Match

Minoru Suzuki vs. Yuji Nagata

They traded leg kicks before Suzuki caught Nagata with a slap off of a break. Suzuki locked in a knee bar on the apron and took Nagata out to the floor, before landing a chair shot to the same leg. Nagata slapped Suzuki in a kneebar, but Suzuki responded by pulling a face and holding on until Nagata made it to the ropes. Nagata landed some elbows, Suzuki responded with laughter. This humor was short lived however, as Nagata landed a dropkick to the leg. Suzuki did his usual kick spot, where Nagata sits up after each kick, but Nagata caught the leg. Suzuki locked in a kneebar and went after the leg again. However, Nagata went for his armbar, Suzuki almost made it to the ropes, but Yuji landed an arm breaker and locked in the demon armbar. Suzuki landed a slap, and called for Nagata to enter into a slap battle. Nagata obliged, and was dropped with a quick 1-2. Suzuki locked in a sleeper. Nagata faded, but still had enough in him to kick out. Suzuki went back to the sleeper, and Suzuki went for the Gotch piledriver. Nagata blocked, and was caught with a knee. Nagata landed a big kick and slap. He then landed an exploder for the win in 14:34. Was this the best Suzuki/Nagata match ever? No way. But, it sure was another great edition in their never ending series.

\*\*\* 3/4

#### 7. G1 Climax A Block Match

Hirooki Goto vs. Togi Makabe

Goto went after the taped up leg of Makabe. Makabe worked over Goto, gave him the finger, and

was knocked down by a lariat in response. This led to a very fiery elbow exchange culminating in a powerslam from Makabe. Goto landed the fireman's carry over the knee neckbreaker. Goto ducked a lariat, and was caught with a huge one from Makabe. Goto took the spider suplex and was caught with the king kong knee for the win in 11:20.

\*\*\* 1/4

#### 8. G1 Climax B Block Match Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Karl Anderson

Anderson grabbed Nakamura's hair in a heelish manner at the start of the match. Nakamura missed a knee in the barricade, and was dropped down with a knee from Anderson. Anderson continued the assault by clawing at the mouth and nose. Nakamura hit some knees in the corner. Anderson ducked a high kick, but was caught with a spinning heel kick. Anderson responded with one of his big sit down powerbombs. Nakamura landed a liger kick, but was caught with a dropkick on his way off the top. Nakamura kicked out of a gun stun, and Anderson did the rainmaker pose. I don't know what Nakamura countered the gun stun into, a dropkick to the back of some sorts, but it looked great. Anderson landed a leg lariat, but Nakamura sat back up. Anderson went for the Bernard driver, which led to a flurry of counters. Nakamura kicked out of the gun stun at one, and then the Bernard driver at two. Anderson then landed a huge gun stun for the win in 12:54.

\*\*\* 3/4

#### 9. G1 Climax A Block Match Hiroshi Tanahashi vs. Satoshi Kojima

The fans were heavily behind a Kojima going in. Kojima took Tanahashi down with a big DDT on on the apron. The two exchanged chest slaps, a battle transitioning into the Kojima chops in the corner. Tanahashi stopped the flurry half way playing the subtle heel, but Kojima was able to finish it. The two went back to a roaring strike exchange, this time Tanahashi got the better of it with a roaring slap. Kojima went for the cutter, but it was countered into the sling blade. Kojima responded with a DDT. Tanahashi made it back in at the count of 18 and was deadlifted in with a brainbuster. Tanahashi blocked a lariat, went for one of his own, but Kojima inturn blocked that one and landed one of his own. However, he couldn't make it to the pin in time. Tanahashi landed his usual closing sequence, but Kojima got his knees up off of a high fly flow and landed a lariat to the back of the head. They went back and forth Tanahashi would duck the lariat, Kojima would shoot back up, but Tanahashi slipped and Kojima landed a huge lariat -- tremendous exchange. Tanahashi kicked out, but Kojima landed another lariat for the win in 16:07. Something weird went on with the finish, because it looked like Tanahashi had his shoulders up, but he didn't, which made it look like a nearfall. Tanahashi is a professional and does jobs, so I doubt it had anything to do with him not wanting to lose clean. Plus this is the G1 and that's what happens, so I don't know what this was about.

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#### 10. G1 Climax A Block Match

## Kazuchika Okada vs. Prince Devitt

Okada was distracted out on the floor by Fale, who was staring him down. This allowed Devitt to sneak behind Okada with a dive off of the apron and flying dropkick. Devitt resorted to Yano level tactics by whipping Okada into an exposed buckle. Devitt went after Okada with a chair, and worked over the arm and shoulder. Okada managed to spike Devitt with a DDT for a double down. Okada called for the rainmaker, but Devitt countered and landed a big corner dropkick coupled with a foot stomp to the back. He followed this with an over the shoulder belly to back neckbreaker. A strike exchange followed. Okada went for the rainmaker, but Devitt landed the Bloody Sunday for two. Devitt then landed a flush footstomp to the belly and went for the tombstone, but Okada countered into one of his own. Okada went for the rainmaker, but poor Red Shoes was thrown in the way. This brought Fale in, Gedo attempted to make the save chair in hand, but Fale laid him out with the spike. Okada was out after a chokeslam, but managed to kick out at two. A second Bloody Sunday attempt didn't work, so Okada was sent into the buckle face first still for two. Okada went for the rainmaker, it was countered, Fale landed a chairs shot from the floor, and Devitt pinned Okada after dropping him with a Bloody Sunday right on his head in 12:56. After the match Devitt said that he didn't care about the G1 or the IWGP title, which was stupid. The match was good and made Okada look great in losing as he almost overcame the odds numerous times, still, I hope this doesn't lead to a third match.

\*\*\* ½

## **New Japan Pro-Wrestling G1 Climax 23 Night 2 August 2nd 2013 Korakuen Hall, Tokyo, Japan**

New Japan followed up their great opening night of the G1, with what for my money, was the second best out of the first five nights -- night two from Korakuen. Just like all the other shows from the G1 there was not one bad match, and unlike most three hour shows, never mind the second three hour show in two days, it didn't drag at all. The Korakuen crowd was sold out with an attendance 2,015 fans, which means that there was literally no room. They obviously had to turn people away given the size of the venue. This was better than anything that any other promotion has put out this year.

The show opened with a G1 Climax B Block match with Karl Anderson (0-1) taking on Shelton Benjamin (1-0), accompanied by Taka Michinoku. Anderson played the larger of the two heels, biting the head of Benjamin and choking at times. They also had a very nonchalant, almost comedic, slap exchange at one point. Anderson ended what would have been a fun TV match, and what was a good opener, with the gun stun in 06:28 (\*\* ¾).

Next up was another B Block match with Hiroyoshi Tenzan (1-0) taking on Yujiro Takahashi (1-0). Takahashi landed a very spontaneous tope, and avoided Tenzan's first moonsault attempt. Takahashi then landed a moonsault of his own for the count of one, which was something that New Japan has been doing far too much throughout this tournament. Yujiro couldn't get Tenzan up for the Tokyo Pimps, and landed a second moonsault for the win in 09:07; more fun than you would expect (\*\* ¾).



In the next B Block match, Yuji Nagata (1-0) took on Toru Yano (0-1). Not surprisingly they kicked off with a brawl, which Nagata got the better of. There was a lot of comedy thrown in here with Yano trying every trick in the book. My favourite spot came when Nagata was whipped towards the referee, which ended in a very anticlimactic manner with the crowd booing. Nagata got his second consecutive win with a backdrop for the win in 06:46 (\*\*\*).

In the first A Block match of the second night Prince Devitt (1-0) with Fale went up against Lance Archer (1-0) with Taka Michinoku. I enjoyed the story of the match, as they had the big monster bully heel, versus the little scheming heel, which I found really fun. They played up the size difference early on, but Devitt got the advantage off of a Fale distraction. Devitt worked over Archer's leg the entire match, but Archer survived everything that Devitt could throw at him, chair shots, turnbuckle shots etc. Finally with the assistance of Michinoku, Archer took Fale out and landed his chokeslam and crucifix bomb for the win in 08:14; very fun. (\*\*\*) ¼)

Next was a G1 Climax A Block match pitting veteran, Satoshi Kojima (1-0), monster shooter Katsuyori Shibata (1-0). This match was really intriguing, as they basically had Kojima play the part of the grizzled veteran with the odds stacked against him getting destroyed by the younger, stronger and more skilled Shibata. The big key spot was when Shibata landed some shots out on the floor and looked to take the countout, but Kojima ran back in clipping the back of the leg. There was an awesome closing sequence where Kojima ducked the PK, landed a lariat to the back, and then killed Shibata with a big lariat to the front turning him inside out for the win in 09:40 --fantastic match. (\*\*\*\*) ¼)

Togi Makabe (1-0) and Davey Boy Smith Jr. (0-1) with Taka Michinoku were up next. The match felt like an absolute struggle from start to finish. Smith pinned Makabe with the jumping powerbomb in 10:13. (\*\*\*) ¼). Up next was a G1 Climax B Block match with Kota Ibushi (1-0), taking on Tetsuya Naito. This match started a tournament long theme of Naito being a complete grouch trying to prove himself against everyone, young and old. There were some great exchanges towards the end, with the only negative really being Ibushi's selling of the leg. The best spot of the match by far was when Ibushi landed an elbow, Naito blew it off, and then killed Ibushi with slaps. Ibushi pinned Naito with the Phoenix splash in 13:16. (\*\*\*\*).

Nakamura (0-1) made it out for another B Block affair against Minoru Suzuki (0-1). They had one of the best slap battles that I have seen in a while with Suzuki ducking all of Nakamura's strikes, and landing flurry upon flurry of his own. Nakamura ditched the springboard Boma Ye from his arsenal, which he simply couldn't seem to hit, for a middle rope one that works just as well. There were some great submission exchanges in here too. Suzuki got the win with the Gotch piledriver 13:14 to cap off an awesome match. (\*\*\*\*) ¼)

In a rematch of one of Kazuchika Okada's (0-1) only IWGP Heavyweight title defenses from last year, he went up against Hirooki Goto (0-1). There were tons of rainmaker counters in here, and at one point Okada rolled through out of a rainmaker counter into the Red Ink, which was just great. There was tons of awesome stuff in here, and while it wasn't as good as their match from

last year, it was close. Goto pinned Okada with the Shouten Kai in 12:43. (\*\*\*\* ¼)

Finally, there was the match that stole the show, and came close to stealing the first few nights of the tournament, Hiroshi Tanahashi (0-1) versus Tomohiro Ishii (0-1). Tanahashi as he is one to do, was so phenomenal at playing the subtle heel, and because of that the match felt like it could have been a big mainevent anywhere. The one spot that I think everyone will remember from this match, was when Ishii seemed like he was going down, but landed a backwards headbutt and enzuigiri, which caught everyone off guard. Ishii pinned Tanahashi with a Steiner screwdriver of all things in 17:42, which was the best way to end this story. Up until night five this was the second best match of the tournament -- incredible. (\*\*\*\* ¾)

### **New Japan Pro-Wrestling G1 Climax 23 Night 3 August 3rd 2013 Aichi Prefectural Gymnasium, Aichi, Japan**

Overall Thoughts:

This was a middle of the road show when it comes to the G1 this year. In other words it was very good, but not blow-away great like some of the other shows. Every single finish was very predictable, but it was still a fun night

The show opened with a B Block match between Kota Ibushi (2-0) and Karl Anderson (1-1). Once again Anderson executed some of his now standard heel tactics, biting, clawing, choking. The nearfalls in this match were very good with Ibushi taking multiple powerbombs and gun stuns. It was a fun clash of styles with Ibushi getting his third win with the phoenix splash in 09:52 leading to his match with Nakamura on the next night's show. (\*\* ¾)

Another B Block match followed, Yujiro Takahashi (2-0) versus Shelton Benjamin (1-1) with Taka Michinoku. They played off of the Yujiro ladies at ringside quite a bit. There were no nearfalls or anything, and Yujiro continued his win streak with the Tokyo Pimps in 07:58 (\*\* ¾). In an A Block match Prince Devitt (1-1) with Bad Luck Fale went up against Tomohiro Ishii (1-1). There was tons of the usual interference as you would expect, but what you wouldn't have expected would be a top rope Ishii senton to the floor! Both men battled for their respective head drops, and Ishii was caught with a foot stomp. There was a ref bump, Devitt grabbed a chair, Ishii ducked, but he was caught with a big shot to the back of the head. Fale landed a chair shot off of a distraction, but Ishii kicked out of the Blood Sunday. Devitt then landed another Bloody Sunday for the win in 10:28 (\*\*\*\* ¼).

Veterans faced off when Minoru Suzuki (1-1) took on Hiroyoshi Tenzan (1-1). Even with Suzuki in there Tenzan was very limited. They had a light brawl in the crowd, Suzuki couldn't get Tenzan up for the piledriver, and was caught with the moonsault for the win in 11:46; one of the tournaments weaker matches (\*\* ¼). In another Tetsuya Naito (0-2) grouch match, he took on Yuji Nagata. It was on from the moment that Naito slapped Nagata off of a break. Nagata just let Naito slap him before kicking the injured leg in such an old bastard move; amazing. Naito slapped Nagata in the knee bar. Nagata unloaded with kicks to the chest. Naito was very angry,

and kicked out of a backdrop before landing the stardust press for the win in 11:40 (\*\*\*) ¾) earning the Nagata handshake. I loved this match.

IWGP Heavyweight champion, Kazuchika Okada (0-2) with Gedo, faced off against Lance Archer with Taka Michinoku. Okada was worn down for the entire match. He finally went for the rainmaker, Archer countered, but Okada grabbed the Red Ink. Okada got drilled with a chokeslam for two. Archer went for the crucifix bomb, there were tons of counters, Archer got the inverted DDT, but Okada kicked out again. This allowed Okada to land the dropkick and rainmaker for the win in 11:26 (\*\*\*) ½). Shinsuke Nakamura (0-2) went up against Toru Yano (0-2) for Nakamura's first win of the tournament with the Boma Ye in 11:36 (\*\*\*) ¼).

In the next Block A match Satoshi Kojima (2-0) went up against Hirooki Goto (1-1). They had some big elbow exchanges and battles of strength early on. Watching Kojima here and throughout the tournament was like a throwback to 2001. Goto pinned Kojima with the Shouten Kai in 13:07 (\*\*\*) ½). Shibata (1-1) faced Makabe (1-1) in an important rematch from the Dome, since it was a match that Shibata shouldn't have lost. They exchanged some big stiff shots. Shibata won with the PK after an exchange of nearfalls in 07:23 -- I liked this better than the Dome match (\*\*\*) ¾).

In the mainevent Hiroshi Tanahashi (0-2) faced Davey Boy Smith Jr. (1-1) in a rather fresh matchup. The match started to pick up after Tanahashi kicked out of a bridging suplex and went after Smith's knee. It looked like Tanahashi was going to counter the powerbomb, but he was caught with a jumping powerbomb for two! Soon after Tanahashi landed the slingblade and high fly flow for the win in 14:35; a very good mainevent (\*\*\*\*) ¼).

### **New Japan Pro-Wrestling G1 Climax Night 4 August 4th 2013 Osaka Bodymaker Coliseum, Osaka, Japan**

Overall Thoughts:

As I mentioned earlier, this show was basically the equivalent of the Tokyo Dome in match quality, and may in some ways may be a better show. Of course, it didn't have the spectacle that the Tokyo Dome had, but it had one match that was better than anything on that card, and another that came close to equaling the best that the Dome had to offer. This is a show of the year candidate and must see.

#### **1. G1 Climax B Block Match Yujiro Takahashi (3-0) vs. Toru Yano (0-3)**

Takahashi made it out with some scantily clad women, which has become his gimmick as of late. Yujiro didn't wait for Yano to get in the ring and shot out with a dive after landing an elbow. Of course the usual Yano brawling ensued. However, the big story of the match was that Yujiro was able to beat Yano at his own game, making Yano the sympathetic babyface. This built to an awesome Yano comeback sequence, before he was taken back down with a lariat and fisherman's

suplex. There is no beating Yano however, as he proceeded to send Yujiro into an exposed turnbuckle numerous times. The referee halted a Yano groin shot, leading to a ref bump. Yano ducked a chair shot and did the old Eddie Guerrero spot before landing two low blows and a rollup for the win in 07:04. This match just told a really fun story, with Yano, the guy who has no points, finally getting the win after the cockier, better looking heel attempted to beat him at his own game.

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## 2. G1 Climax B Block Match

Karl Anderson (1-2) vs. Hiroyoshi Tenzan (2-1)

The Osaka crowd was super behind Tenzan from the onset. Anderson got some heat by doing Mongolian chops of his own, and went to his biting spot in the corner, which has now become a staple. In fact, he even bit the head of the referee, and I too have no idea how that was allowed. They went back and forth with just about every move that Anderson landed early on being a dirty one. Tenzan eventually grabbed an anaconda vice, Anderson made it out, but was slammed back into it. Anderson made it to the ropes. Anderson avoided the moonsault, but had his gun stun countered with a headbutt. Tenzan then went for another anaconda vice slam, but Anderson hit the gun stun in midair for the win in 09:55. Having ref bumps this often really isn't a good thing, and given the nature of New Japan rules they could have done all of the cheap spots with the referee in there. With that being said Anderson squeezed a good match out of Tenzan here.

\*\*\* 1/4

## 3. G1 Climax B Block Match

Shelton 'X' Benjamin (1-2) w/ Taka Michinoku vs. Yuji Nagata (2-1)

On Nagata's way into the ring, Benjamin leapt up onto the top turnbuckle and delivered a belly to belly suplex, which was a good spot to kick the match off in an unexpected manner. Benjamin landed his float over neckbreaker for two. Taka landed some shots behind the referee's back on the outside. Nagata was accepting none of this and ran wild on Benjamin with a flurry of kicks, and an exploder for two. Benjamin answered Nagata with whip kick, and a sloppy looking German suplex before locking in an ankle lock. Nagata landed a backdrop after a submission exchange, but Benjamin kicked out. Benjamin caught a high kick, which allowed him to grab the ankle lock for the submission win in 08:17. Benjamin has really stepped up for the G1 this year, and it showed here. Great stuff from both men.

\*\*\* 1/2

## 4. G1 Climax A Block Match

Davey Boy Smith Jr. (1-2) /w Taka Michinoku vs. Satoshi Kojima (2-1)

Smith showcased his power early taking Kojima down with a big shoulder block. Kojima decided to showcase his lariat however, and knocked Smith over the top rope setting up a DDT on the apron. Back in the ring, and Smith was in control again with the help of a shot or two from Taka. Smith was throwing expletives and phallic hand gestures left and right. Kojima

landed his chops, punched Taka out, and landed a top rope elbow for two. Kojima won a heated strike battle, but Smith locked in the sharpshooter. Kojima made it to the ropes. Kojima landed a cutter countering a powerbomb attempt, and landed a huge brainbuster for two. Kojima went for a lariat on Taka out on the apron, which allowed Smith to bend the injured arm and land a tiger suplex only for two. Kojima went for his big elbow, it was blocked, but he landed it anyway for two. Kojima landed another lariat, but Smith landed a boot and got Kojima straight up for a powerbomb for the win in 11:43. This was another tremendous match from these two. Kojima has been amazing as of late, and has had a similar run to Tenzan in 2011, only better. Still, I think people haven't been giving Kojima enough credit for years as he can still go.

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#### 5. G1 Climax A Block Match

Tomohiro Ishii (1-2) vs. Katsuyori Shibata (2-1)

The crowd popped before either man even made it out, as they realized what match they were about to see. Both men shot out and started murdering each other with elbows as the crowd went crazy. Shibata landed a big boot in the corner, Ishii responded with a lariat. Both men were against the ropes due to the damage that they had endured in the last thirty seconds. Another forearm battle. Both men got down to one knee showing how much they could take allowing the other to hit them -- the crowd was popping big for all of this. Ishii tried to keep up with an exchange, but couldn't as he sold the shoulder. Shibata bludgeoned the man in the corner, but Ishii screamed in his face. More death...Shibata delivered a sick flying dropkick in the corner. Shibata landed kick after kick to the chest of Ishii picking him up each time. Ishii wouldn't give in, landing a big powerslam. It was Ishii's turn to deliver the punishment as both men went down. Shibata caught an attempted PK from Ishii and landed a monster lariat. Shibata locked in a super high angle Boston crab, but Ishii made it to the ropes. An STF followed. To the same result as they went into a German suplex exchange culminating in an Ishii lariat. Ishii called for more, and the two exchanged forearms again. Shibata landed a kick to the chest, Ishii kicked out at one. Ishii landed a lariat, but Shibata too kicked out at one. Trying to get up... both men killing each other with elbows. Ishii landed a headbutt, Shibata responded and both men collapsed --vegetables by 40. Shibata made it up at eight and grabbed a sleeper...Ishii was gobbing everywhere. He made it to the ropes, which led to a super fast paced battle of death...one counts! Ishii landed the brainbuster and got the win to end a match.

\*\*\*\*\*

#### 6. G1 Climax A Block Match

Hirooki Goto ( 2-1) vs. Lance Archer (2-1) w/ Taka Michinoku

Archer overtook Goto with his power, but Goto, bleeding from the mouth, managed to take Archer down with a big lariat. Archer countered the Shoutem Kai, and landed an inverted DDT. Archer landed a full Nelson suplex also for two. Archer went for a top rope crucifix bomb, but Goto got off of the shoulders and landed a lariat followed by the Goto Shiki for the win in 08:35.

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### 7. G1 Climax B Block Match

Minoru Suzuki (1-2) vs. Tetsuya Naito (1-2)

The fans dual chanted with chants of "Minoru" and "Naito". Naito continuing his war against the everyone slapped Minoru in the face. Suzuki responded with laughter and kicked Naito in the leg, which I though was simply tremendous. Suzuki wore Naito's leg down on the outside, and did some exercises in the ring waiting for Naito. Naito did the same spot that he did with Nagata in the previous match slapping Suzuki in the figure four, but this time the two pulled tongues at each other. Suzuki called for more slaps and Naito went wild with slaps, but Suzuki simply responded with one putting Naito back in line. He then teed off in the corner. Naito landed a senton for two. Naito went for a dropkick from the top, but was caught in a kneebar. Suzuki landed a kick to the chest and went back to the same hold. Naito finally made it to the ropes after attempting to break the hold. Suzuki continued with slaps, Naito attempted to respond, but was caught in a sleeper. He attempted to make it out, but Suzuki had it locked in again. Naito began to fade, Suzuki went for the Gotch piledriver, but Naito blocked it. Naito landed a slap, Suzuki one of his own, but Naito landed an enzuigiri followed by a flying forearm and missile dropkick to the back. Naito then landed an extraordinary stardust press for the win in 16:19.

\*\*\*\*\*

### 8. G1 Climax A Block Match

Prince Devitt /w Bad Luck Fale (2-1) vs. Hiroshi Tanahashi /w Captain New Japan (1-2)

Prince Devitt made it out on Fale's shoulders as usual, but this time with a 'Real Rock n Rolla' guitar. Tanahashi in response made it out on the shoulder of Captain New Japan! Devitt attacked Tanahashi from behind and wore his jacket for a while! There was a lot of Fale interference early on. Devitt placed Tanahashi on a couple of chairs on the outside and landed a double footstomp. Devitt played off of the classic Tanahashi/Suzuki match by playing the guitar off of Tanahashi's ribs. Devitt went for a springboard, but was slapped to the floor allowing for a nice and safe high fly flow onto he and Fale. Tanahashi kicked the referee during an attempted full Nelson from Tanahashi, this brought Fale in. New Japan tried to make the save, but Tanahashi was laid out with a Samoan Drop and multiple chair shots to the midsection leading to a double footstomp on the chair. Devitt was then sent into the exposed buckle for a straight jacket suplex for two. Tanahashi landed the high fly flow to the back, and went for one to the front, but Fale jumped up on the apron. New Japan, the referee, and Fale were all caught in a tangle. This allowed Devitt to get the knees up and Anderson to run in with a gun stun and Devitt to land the Bloody Sunday for the win in 11:07. I understand that it is all part of the story, but the issue with the Bullet Club is that the matches really can't go past a certain level, which is a shame.

\*\*\* 1/2

### 9. G1 Climax A Block Match

Kazuchika Okada (1-2) /w Gedo vs. Togi Makabe (1-2)

They started off in a face off playing off of their really good Dominion match. A forearm battle

ensued. The entire match was focused around Okada working over Makabe's lower back, which was taped up. Makabe finally caught an Okada boot, and landed a lariat. He landed his shots in the corner, but Okada managed to hit his elbow and did the rainmaker pose. Okada went for the rainmaker, but was taken down with a lariat. There was another forearm exchange. Makabe landed the bridging German and powerbomb, but Okada kicked out again. Makabe shoved Okada's head into the ringpost in order to land the spider German suplex, but Okada avoided the king kong knee. Okada landed a dropkick to the back of the head and went for a tombstone, Makabe countered, but he landed a dropkick. Makabe countered the rainmaker and landed a death valley driver for two. Makabe landed a pair of lariats and countered the rainmaker into the same full Nelson suplex as at Dominion, and it got the same sizable pop. Makabe then landed a lariat and went to the top rope and landed the king kong knee drop for the win 13:55. I really didn't expect Makabe to win here, both from a point and title shot perspective, but it will lead into their plans and while it wasn't as good as their title match it was still great.

\*\*\*\* 1/4

#### 10. G1 Climax B Block Match



#### Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Kota Ibushi

Both men started off in striking stances and felt each other out. Nakamura kept Ibushi grounded, Ibushi went for a dive, but Nakamura shot in with a kick dropping Ibushi to the floor. It was there where he was sent over the barricade. Nakamura landed a guillotine knee on the apron, and followed up with a knee drop in the ring. Nakamura slapped Ibushi, Ibushi responded with a few chest slaps in defiance, and Nakamura retaliated with knees. Ibushi landed a pele kick, and springboard dropkick. Ibushi landed a standing shooting star press followed by a moonsault for two. Ibushi landed an Asai corkscrew Moonsault! Ibushi went to the top, but was caught with a high kick and knee for two. Nakamura dropped a big knee to the back of the head. Ibushi caught a highkick and landed some fiery elbows. Nakamura responded with a series of his own, but Ibushi unloaded with a flurry of kicks. Nakamura landed a back cracker and locked in a sleeper with legs hooked. Nakamura went for the Boma Ye, but Ibushi countered and what followed was a

super fast paced pin exchange. Nakamura went to the top and was caught with the springboard frankensteiner. Ibushi followed with a highkick setting up for a sit out powerbomb for two. Nakamura got the knees up off of a Phoenix splash, and landed a Boma Ye to the back of the head, but couldn't make it to the cover. Nakamura bullied Ibushi with frustrated stomps in the corner. Ibushi stood in defiance and unloaded with wacky palm strikes. Nakamura had his strikes blocked, and Ibushi landed a lariat before doing the Undertaker taunt and landing a highkick for the count of two. Nakamura then landed a top rope Boma Ye followed by another, and one on the mat for one! For one! For one! For one! Nakamura then landed a final Boma Ye for the win in 19:18. This was Ibushi's best match of his career.

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### **New Japan Pro-Wrestling G1 Climax Night 5 August 6th 2013 Ishikawa Industrial Exhibition Hall #3, Ishikawa, Japan**

Overall Thoughts:

Night five of the G1 felt distinctly different than the other four mainly due to the crowd. It wasn't like the crowd was awful, because they did react, but they didn't react to the same extent as the other crowds did, and as a whole this show simply felt more like a house show than anything else, which wasn't the worst thing that could have happened, as they needed a cool down show.

Tomohiro Ishii (2-2) and Satoshi Kojima (2-2) kicked off the show with a rematch of a great match that they had a couple of months back. They had some big elbow battles, and somewhere somehow during the match, Kojima was legitimately knocked out, which made the match lose steam. Kojima put Ishii away with a lariat in 11:20 (\*\*\* ¼). Yano (1-3) and Tenzan (2-2) were up next. As you may have guessed there were in fact wacky Yano antics for most of this match. Tenzan almost missed the moonsault again, which is a move that he really needs to cut down on, at least for the G1, as his knees are taking some punishment. Regardless, he pinned Yano with it in 08:39 (\*\*).

Shibata (2-2) and Lance Archer (2-2) with Taka Michinoku had an intriguing match. Shibata won with the PK following multiple transition spots in and out of the crucifix bombs in 06:41 (\*\*\* ¼). Naito (2-2) and Benjamin (2-2) with Taka Michinoku were up with a B Block match. There was one point where Benjamin landed a monster of a superkick, but the crowd didn't react much, still the gif is out there if you haven't seen it. Naito won with the stardust press in 08:36 (\*\* ¾). Another B Block match followed with Minoru Suzuki (1-3) versus Karl Anderson (2-2). Suzuki grabbed multiple armbar on the outside, and did his usual gimmicks, laughing, slapping, all that great stuff. He then put Anderson away with the Gotch Piledriver in 10:40 (\*\*\* ¼).

Veteran, Yuji Nagata (2-2), looked to end Ibushi's (4-0) winning streak. This meant that we got more young star versus veteran action. They had a couple of fiery strike exchanges. Nagata grabbed an awesome transition into the demon armbar. Ibushi landed the sitout powerbomb for two. Ibushi and Nagata battled on the top where Nagata landed an exploder from the top only for two. Nagata dropped Ibushi right on his head with a backdrop all for two, but he then landed a



bridging variant for the win in 13:49 (\*\*\*) ½). Shinsuke Nakamura (1-3) pinned Yujiro Takahashi (3-1) after kicking out of a deadlift German and landing a Boma Ye in 10:47 (\*\*\*).

Okada (1-3) went up against Smith (2-2), and kicked out of a powerbomb at one point. Smith went for it again towards the end, but Okada countered landing a dropkick, tombstone and rainmaker for the win in 13:33 (\*\*\*) ½). In another A Block match Prince Devitt (3-1) with Bad Luck Fale, as always, went up against Hirooki Goto (3-1). They built to a big spot early on where Devitt went into the exposed turnbuckle. There was a ref bump and Fale came in, he was caught with a headbutt, but was spiked anyway. There were chair shots, and Goto took a Samoan drop for two. However, Goto still managed to land the Shouten Kai for the win in 13:37 (\*\*\*).

In the main event A Block match Hiroshi Tanahashi (1-3) went up against Togi Makabe (2-2). They had some very good spots, including Makabe kicking out of a straight jacket suplex, Makabe missing a knee, Tanahashi missing a high fly flow and Makabe getting the knees up off of a high fly flow. Tanahashi landed the new staple which is the styles clash and high fly flow for the win 13:37 (\*\*\*) ½). This match could have been really great in a different venue.

### **PWG Presents: Is Your Body Ready? 15th June 2013 By Mark Robinson Reseda, California – SUPER NO VACANCY**

Commentary: Excalibur and whoever the hell shows up.

It's time to sit down with everyone's favourite North American independent wrestling company. As PWG presents Is Your Body Ready? With a main event of Adam Cole and Sami Callihan in a one hour Iron Man match for the PWG heavyweight championship. This would also be Callihan's PWG swansong before heading off to Florida to meet up with that other guy called Sami.

#### **1. The Unbreakable F'n Machines (Brian Cage & Michael Elgin) Vs. RockNES Monsters (Johnny Goodtime & Johnny Yuma)**

Cage is so freakishly enormous that it's bordering on Strongman levels of muscular tone – standing next to Yuma only added to the absurdity. The match started with the monsters attacking their foes from behind. This led quickly into an attempt at stereo suplexes, which, unsurprisingly, didn't go to plan. Cage still moves around well for a guy of his size – but I mean, just look at the size of him! Things quickly spilled to the outside, and we had our first interaction with the audience – or by that I mean a face full of Elgin. Back in the ring JOHNNY YUMA had the OFFENCE on BRIAN CAGE. Just think about that for a second. Goodtime tagged in and showed off just what a fountain of charisma that he is. He moves around like an unhinged maniac, not unlike one Dean Ambrose. In what might have been a first: Yuma slingshot over the ropes into the arms of Cage and Elgin, Goodtime went for a suicide dive, but the machines threw Yuma through the ropes at Goodtime. Goodtime picked up Yuma for an assisted Ace Crusher on Elgin, which looked really cool. Both teams traded varying degrees of innovative offense, and to

be quite honest, they went for the home stretch of the match about five minutes. Goodtime got out of a potential 360 powerbomb of death, only to be rewarded with a hellacious backfist to the face. In the end, Yuma got murdered with a discus lariat, was powerbombed into Goodtime in the corner, and finally planted with a 360 powerbomb. \*\*\*1/4

A fun start to the show. Elgin and Cage are always going to be fun to watch when flinging smaller men around. And while the RockNES monsters are still seemingly on the backburner, they never fail to entertain with their offence and Goodtime's charisma.

## 2. Davey Richards Vs. Kyle O' Reilly

We get fist bumps of respect to start us off, a little bit of a feeling out process and then Reilly slaps on an armbar within the first thirty seconds. We had some chain wrestling which is always good times between these two. A little while after, things began to pick up, and a quick exchange saw both guys go for a kick but manage to grab the opposing wrestler's leg. Because this is PWG, the only practical way to get out of this was through 2/3 rock, paper, scissors – tremendous. 'Sleazy Richards' made his triumphant return during a Muta lock. Richards damn near caved in Reilly's chest with a penalty kick while on the ring apron, which proceeded into both men trading kicks outside the ring as well. Reilly was focusing on the left arm of Richards throughout the match, with a variation of armlocks and kicks that Richards went in and out of remembering to sell. Later on in the match, Reilly went for a flurry of offense, finishing up with a sweep, but Richards damn near killed Reilly with a kick to the back of the head. He went for a diving headbutt but got caught in a triangle choke. Richards hit a tombstone piledriver, followed up by a top rope double footstomp. O' Reilly kicked out of two, but that time keeper rang the bell – probably because A TOMBSTONE PILEDRIIVER AND A DOUBLE FOOTSTOMP OFF THE TOP ROPES SHOULD BE A MATCH FINISHER. I digress. The match continued with O' Reilly hitting Richards in the head multiple times, with the coup de grace being a vicious brainbuster – which, of course, Richards kicked out of. Thankfully, Richards tapped out from the cross armbreaker straight afterwards. \*\*\*\*\*

Look, the match was an exciting affair, and it would be unfair to not give props to both guys for the effort put in. But it's just as hard to get yourself completely immersed in a match where a bunch of sequences hit, do not lead to the end of the match – and Richards is prone to this issue. Still, Reilly came off as a big deal after this, and Callihan (on commentary) pointed out that between this match, and beating him on the last show, he was deserving of a title shot,

## 3. Chuck Taylor & Johnny Gargano Vs. Dojo Bros (Eddie Edwards & Roderick Strong)

The ring bell seems to be having a night off. Strong and Gargano started off with your usual flurry of technical exchanges and pinfall attempts. INDY STANDOFF. We had tags, with Taylor was trying his damndest not to fall victim to an Edwards chop. Unfortunately for Taylor he couldn't stay for long. I'm pretty sure Taylor has bulked up (by Taylor's standards) recently. In a genius move, Taylor put on Gargano's entrance hoodie to resist anymore of Edwards' chops. Strong retaliated from a double Garvin stomp by chopping Taylor in the dick, so Taylor – like a

12 year old – bit Strong on the back of the leg. He did hit an Okada-esque dropkick though. In typical tag team fashion, everything broke down. Strong used the ring apron to hit a backbreaker on Gargano. He was also unlucky enough to be pummeled with a double flapjack and double chops – poor bastard. Taylor hit a fiery babyface hot tag, and a HYUUUGEEE tope over the top ropes. He also channeled his inner Dwayne Johnson to say a few choice words on the announcer’s headset. Both teams just went all out from here beating the holy hell out of each other. Eventually, Taylor got ruined by a double foot stomp and Strong hit the Orange Crush Backbreaker on Gargano for the W. \*\*\*3/4

A very good match between both teams, that took a little while to get going, but was enjoyable by the end. Not much more to add here!

#### 4. Kevin Steen Vs. Drake Younger

Oh boy.

So this didn’t take long to break down into completely mayhem. Younger flew off the top rope with a front flip to the floor below. He landed with perfect form – 4 for the lift, 5 for execution. Steen spent a good portion of the match arguing with a fan – as he tends to do. I hope Steen goes into stand-up comedy when his wrestling days start to wind down. Anyway, there is a match going on here. Younger went for the 10 punches in the corner, but Steen reversed into an F5. Steen had full control at this point, even hitting a gorgeous overhead belly-to-belly suplex. This was by the most dickish Steen has been in a while. Younger hit a half-nelson suplex, which looked like it SUCKED for Steen. Steen reversed a cross body into an air raid crash. Steen took too long up top when going for a swanton and paid with Younger’s knees in his back. Younger hit ANOTHER half and half that didn’t look any more fun for Steen to take. So Steen hit a sleeper suplex that flew Younger out of the ring and then tried to powerbomb Younger onto the apron. That didn’t work and Younger hit a trademark moonsault to the floor below – as usual, showing how absolutely insane he is. They had a wild brawl around the ring (what, you was expecting a Flair/Steamboat tribute?) that ended with a F\*\*\*\*\* DEATH VALLEY BOMB OFF THE APRON TO THE CHAIRS AND FLOOR BELOW. I didn’t want to swear, but Excalibur did, so I feel it is acceptable. The ref took a bump, Steen hit a Package Piledriver, but no 3-count could be administered. Adam Cole decided to show his pretty little face and planted his belt into the face of Steen. He went to do the same to Younger and got destroyed with a Drake’s Landing for his troubles. Out of nowhere, Drake managed to pin Steen with a backslide (of all things) for the victory. \*\*\*3/4

These two just destroyed each other. Find a gif of that Death Valley bomb, if nothing else. It did seem more in place to further the story along between both men and Adam Cole (which is why we have a triple threat on the next show between all three.)

#### 5. The Young Bucks Vs. AR Fox & Samuray Del Sol

Recapping this is likely to suck.

The boys with no respect for Booker T are in a particularly garish shade of neon purple this evening. Nick Jackson and Chicago's greatest luchadore, Samuray Del Sol started proceedings. And the best way to describe Del Sol is 'frighteningly fast', with an answer for just about any spot you can think of. Fox tags in and isn't quite as smooth. He managed to not break his neck within the first five minutes, which is an improvement. The Bucks and Del Sol had the first of many, many absurd exchanges. Things slowed down as the Bucks had the heat on Del Sol, which is for the best, as Del Sol tends to overact in his selling. Fox had a mini hot-tag, taking time to throw in a modified Ace Crusher. Fox than did his usual 'add five moves to a move that didn't need four moves to begin with' which ended in a nasty bulldog. The heat was then transferred onto Fox, with the typical assortment of kicks and back rakes. The good thing about the slow points in these matches is Chuck Taylor on commentary – there's never a dull moment in PWG. Matt Jackson did the cartwheel-backflip-undertherope-backrake combo. AR Fox did some weird snapmare/crusher combo, which was either horribly botched or Nick sold like a champ. Eventually Del Sol made the hot tag, and what a glorious hot tag it was; flying around the place like a maniac and being the right spot for everything – which also included a double hurrincanrana on both Bucks at the same time. Del Sol hit a ridiculous flip to the outside and Fox followed up with an inside-out senton – Taylor was jealous of everyone involved. Fox hit a 450 splash after a whole bunch of moves and again the timekeeper rang the bell too early – I'd argue he was just as justified as he was in the Richards/Reilly match. Things just went f\*\*\*\*\* mental from this point on. Fox and Matt had a slugfest until Fox hit a move that I don't even know how to describe. Somewhere in here, Fox managed to land on the neck of his neck again. About 275 super kicks were hit. Del Sol went for a reverse hurrincanrana, but Nick dodged out of the way and hit it on his own partner, which was a really cool looking spot. Del Sol kicked out of a tandem Tombstone pilderdriver, which is where I lost interest – and so did the crowd. Thankfully the ending came straight after with 'More Bang For Your Buck. \*\*\*3/4

Your typical PWG highlight reel. A fun match, but Fox does everything possible to annoy me as an indie wrestler. Which is not a knock on his athleticism, but man it gets annoying at times. Still, a fun match, and I look forward to seeing what Del Sol does in NXT.

#### 6. Ironman Match for the PWG World Heavyweight Championship Adam Cole (champion) Vs. Sami Callihan (challenger)

There is no a chance in hell that I'm recapping this entire thing. All you need to know is that they worked to the bone for the entire sixty minutes, and both guys put on a well executed, compelling Ironman match. Cole was just fantastic in being the biggest prick heel you've seen, and it still amazes me that WWE simply didn't see anything him – still, there's plenty of time.

Cole ended up winning 6-5, having to survive the last few minutes while tangled up in a stretch muffler. \*\*\*\*1/4

Overall, PWG pulled off another enjoyable affair here. While nothing managed to touch anything from the All Star weekend DVD's, there's still plenty here to sink your teeth into, and there are

storylines that will continue forward into their next event, Ten, which is likely to have some serious MOTY candidates.

### **WWE Monday Night RAW August 5th 2013 Resch Center, Ashwaubenon, Wisconsin**

#### Overall Thoughts:

Following last week's mediocre taped edition of RAW in the wake of the recent WWE foreign tour this week's show was a disappointment. It was the penultimate show building to SummerSlam, and instead of truly focusing on the Cena/Bryan conflict, they instead switched a lot of the attention over to Vince and company, which dragged many of the key segments down in the end. Throughout the night they referred to the Daniel Bryan makeover in the opening segment, but the fact that Bryan showed up in the same get up for the main event (and even showed up in the first place looking like that), made no sense if he was so defiant. Cena attempted to cut a fiery babyface promo, but ended up coming off as a WWE elitist and his promo wasn't very well received at all. The only thing that was really done well on the show was the Punk/Lesnar segment, but everything else, including the Shield segments, fell short due to either logical inconsistencies, or bad material.

Stephanie McMahon was in the ring to open the show with an awful performance. They aired a wacky video of Bryan becoming a corporate man, getting a pedicure, combing his hair, eating meat, dawning a suite, and working out. I have no idea what the latter had to do with anything. He made it out in a suit, the fans were not very impressed. He said that the company didn't want someone like him even in that state, they wanted someone to sell merchandise; a guy like Cena. Didn't Vince wish spontaneous combustion upon him last week? He said that Cena was an entertainer and he was a wrestler to more yes chants. He screamed that he was a wrestler. If Cena were to be fired tomorrow he would go back to his mansion and never wrestle again. However, if he was fired he would be seen in every armory and gymnasium in the country wrestling in front of fifty people, because he loves wrestling and the fans do too. That's why he would wear a suit for now, and do what the company wanted for now, because at SummerSlam he would tap Cena out. This brought Vince down. Vince botched the name of his company numerous times. He called Bryan a dwarf, said he had a physique like a toothpick...he was like a miniature Mick Foley. He said that he had great influence over him becoming champion; no kidding. Vince wanted Bryan to cut the beard, and he got a barbers chair brought down. Bryan started a no chant in response. Vince called for Bryan to take his first step and tried to manipulate Bryan into the chair. Wade Barrett of all people was brought down to shave Bryan's beard. Vince claimed that Barrett's grandfather used to be a barber. However, Bryan was having none of it and shaved Barrett's beard instead. Bryan walked to the top of the ramp, and said that he would be who he had always been; he would be WWE champion. He then tore the jacket off to reveal a "beard is here" shirt. This segment went forever, and really didn't accomplish much in terms of SummerSlam build. They are clearly high on the idea of making Bryan out to be the underdog through a lot of this name calling and gimmickry, but I don't know how much of it is really helping him get over as a likeable babyface.

Ricardo was brought out returning from a "severe injury". Del Rio then made it out for a match with Van Dam. Miz was on commentary and was as incredibly annoying as ever. Ricardo placed the bucket in the corner, but Del Rio was sent into it for a Van Dam rollup for the win. After the



match Del Rio laid Ricardo out with a superkick, and landed bucket shots on Ricardo; something that no one in their right mind can take seriously. Del Rio then wedged Ricardo's head between the steps and landed a dropkick. I have no idea what this means for Ricardo, as his partnership with Del Rio is basically the whole act. Rhodes was in the ring with a box for Sandow, and a recap of the entire Rhodes/Sandow saga aired. He pulled out a dripping wet briefcase full of pond weed and such out of the box. Rhodes put the case down and left the ring, but as soon as Sandow slid Rhodes cleaned him out. Rhodes grabbed the contract and threw Sandow the case. Not one person cared about this segment. Ryback and Mark Henry were out for a WrestleMania rematch, and Ryback took the count out. Oh, how I despise this stupid gimmick. The Bella's were shown preparing backstage, and did some cheap Total Divas product placement, talking about how good the ratings were. Eva Marie came by, and Good God was she bad. Nattie walked past and slapped one of the Bells before walking off.

Cena made it out cutting a serious promo in his rapper voice. He said that he would always be the man that he is. He talked about how he had come back from injuries, and showed his gigantic swollen elbow. Cena said that Bryan is more comfortable wrestling in gymnasiums, because he wouldn't hold the title. He would never wrestle anywhere else because of how much he loves the WWE. What a terrible thing to say. He tried to get the fans to chant "you can't wrestle", instead they chanted "boring". He said that if Bryan lost he would have to look himself in the mirror and admit that he wasn't that good. This brought Randy Orton out, and Cole tried to hype his entrance up as though he was cashing in; I can't believe that anyone thought this to be the case.



Orton said that Cena was always aware of the target on his back, but never the one right in front of him. This brought the Shield down to the ring. Bryan ran out and slid in for the save, and yes chants. Maddox then made it out and booked a six-man -- yay! They were trying to do a serious Cena promo here, which I am all for, but he just came across as unlikeable more than anything else. Tons of Funk made it out after the break for a match with the Wyatt's, which really should have been built up bigger. Harper landed a big lariat allowing for Rowan to pin Clay. Wyatt landed his neckbreaker on Clay, and cut the usual Wyatt promo before Kane's pyro hit. Kane appeared on the tron and said that the Wyatts wanted to maim and disfigure everyone for their own gain. He did the same thing for his amusement, and at SummerSlam they would see why he was the devil's favorite demon, and no one would be able to save him from a ring of fire at SummerSlam. So this is either an inferno or Johnny Cash inspired match.



Matthews was backstage with Punk. Punk was asked his thoughts on Axel, but he instead talked about Mr. Perfect and Bobby Heenan. He said that Perfect still had a brain under Heenan unlike Axel, and he was coming for Heyman. The beast would be neutered at SummerSlam, a line that I personally wasn't a big fan of. Kaitlyn was out for a match with a heel Layla. An inset promo aired from Layla. She explained her motives; it was cringe worthy. Kaitlyn landed a backbreaker, but out came AJ skipping down to the ring. This allowed Layla to get the cover. There was a great trailer for the new ECW Unreleased DVD. Christian had a quick match with Slater pinning him with the spear. CM Punk made it out for a match with Axel, and as soon as Axel came out Punk went after Heyman. Heyman fled, which gave Axel the advantage out on the floor. Punk landed a big topé before the break. Punk landed a highkick, and grabbed Heyman through the ropes for the DQ. Managers are grabbed by wrestlers all the time, and this was a DQ why? This brought Lesnar down. Axel pulled Punk to the floor, but was caught with a GTS. Brock ripped a chair from the hands of Punk. Punk disarmed Lesnar and took him out with a

flying knee. However, Lesnar landed a big belly to belly. Lesnar brought Punk into the ring for an F5, but Punk fought back with a chair. Punk looked to go after Heyman, but was caught with an F5. Heyman screamed for Brock to hurt Punk and he unloaded with the chair laying Punk out -- this was another fantastic angle building to their SummerSlam match. Renee Young was backstage with Heyman and crew. Lesnar said that he was the best of the best and the beast. He told Heyman to say something stupid. Heyman delivered a message saying that Punk wouldn't make it to SummerSlam, because next week it would be Punk/Heyman one on one. I don't like the idea of this match, since it is so obviously bait that it makes Punk look stupid. In fact, the announcers pretty much told us that on the show.

Fandango was out with a returning Kofi Kingston, now wrestling in tights. For what it's worth Kingston won his return match with a trouble in paradise. Hunter was on the phone backstage. Stephanie was crying because she was attacked by Vince, because the opening segment was a car wreck. A car wreck that was, but this was possibly worse. HHH said that enough was enough and was fired up saying that he was going to stop Vince. There was a really good SummerSlam video package. Colter was in the ring with Swagger and Cesaro. He got some cheap heat. The Usos were their opponents for the night, and they had a fun match. Colter landed a right hand allowing for the neutralizer from Cesaro for the win. Big E. and Ziggler were out for a match, which was rather strange since they are wrestling on the PPV. Kaitlyn ran down to take AJ out, they ran into the ring, distracting Ziggler allowing Langston to land the big ending on Ziggler for the win. Now this wasn't a DQ why? There was a wacky trailer for a reality show called 'Summer Camp'. They interviewed two people from the show. Bryan, Cena and Orton were out for their six-man against the Shield. Like in some of the other Shield matches this year, they built to the Cena tag, but the referee didn't see it. Bryan at one point grabbed the yes lock, but the Shield broke it up and were DQ'd, which made no sense given that we see breaks like that all the time. Orton laid Bryan out with an RKO, and JBL said that Orton should cash in obviously confused. Orton and Cena cleaned house, but Orton gave Cena an RKO. Orton grabbed the briefcase teasing a cash in, but the Shield walked back, so Orton decided against it. Still, Reigns speared Cena, and Ambrose laid Bryan out and Orton did nothing. Bryan then took the triple powerbomb to close off the show.

### **RAW Ratings for August 5th 2013**

Monday's edition of RAW was up slightly from the week before, drawing a 2.96 rating and 4.18 million viewers on average across the three hours. Viewers per home, which has generally been a failing metric over the past few months was up slightly, and all in all this was the best rating since May 20th. The details below are rather vague, but still give a general representation of how the segments did overall.

Rob Van Dam versus Del Rio didn't move much. Ryback versus Henry was up slightly. The John Cena promo at 21:00 showed a good 420,000 viewer gain. The 20:00 to 21:00 hour drew 3.97 million viewers (a 1.4 rating and 1.771 million viewers in the 18-49 demo, placing it in the eighth spot for the night behind hour three), which I would consider good. In the post-21:00 segment the Wyatt Family's debut match against Clay & Tensai lost around 280,000 viewers,



which is fine for that segment. Surprisingly the Christian/Slater match and Layla/Kaitlyn match both showed a small increase. Unfortunately the best segment on the show, which was the CM Punk/Lesnar brawl and Axel match, only showed a small gain at 22:00. The 21:00 to 22:00 hour drew 4.38 million viewers (a 1.54 rating and 1.954 million viewers in the 18-49 demo placing it fourth for the night behind 'Return of Jaws', 'Voodoo Sharks', 'T.I & Tiny' and 'Love and Hip-Hop'). Fandango and Kingston in the post-22:00 spot dropped drastically, but we have no number. The Usos versus Cesaro & Swagger stayed even. Then in the final segment of the show the Shield versus Bryan, Cena & Orton gained around 700,000 viewers to a 3.4 overrun, a rating that I would consider good. The 22:00 to 23:08 hour drew 4.18 million viewers (a 1.45 rating and 1.836 million viewers in the 18-49 demo, seventh behind 'Married to the Game 2'). The demos for the show this week were unfortunately unavailable.

## **WWE – NXT**

**August 7<sup>th</sup> 2013 – Full Sail University, Florida.**

**Ben Carass.**

A promo package informed us it was "Face-off week" on NXT and they hyped Dean Ambrose vs. Adrian Neville for the US Title, Emma vs. Summer Rae in a dance-off, plus Bo Dallas vs. Leo Kruger for the NXT gold.

Byron Saxton announced that Tyler Breeze had entered the building, which had nothing to do with anything, then Adrian Neville showed up for his title shot. Dean Ambrose appeared on his own for the opener. Tom Phillips and Alex Riley were on the call; Riley claimed all the main roster workers were sat around monitors and peeking through the curtain when Neville was in the ring during his recent house show stint.

### **US Championship Match: Dean Ambrose (C) vs. Adrian Neville (NXT Tag Champion)**

Neville shone with his elusive speed and went up top early; Ambrose rolled to the floor and scored with a clothesline for the heat spot. After the break, Neville showed some fight with some kicks, but Ambrose tied him up in the ropes and delivered a dropkick for a two count. Neville escaped a bow-and-arrow, however Dean kept the heat on then landed a float-over suplex to get another two. Neville fought up from a chinlock and avoided a charging Ambrose, who took the ring post spot, then scored a springboard cross-body for a near-fall. Adrian started his comeback and took Ambrose over with a hurricanrana; Dean rolled to the floor, but Neville wiped him out with a twisting plancha. Finish saw Neville hit the British Airways and make the cover, however Rollins and Reigns hit the ring to break up the pin, causing a DQ.

*Adrian Neville defeated Dean Ambrose via disqualification, at 6:48 (TV Time).*

The Shield put a beating on Neville and left him in a heap; Corey Graves and Xavier Woods ran down, but the Shield backed off and headed up the ramp.

*This was fine, but both guys are capable of much better; I suppose they were short on time and*

*probably were told not to go overboard by the agents, as this sets up a six-man next week with the Shield vs. Neville, Graves & Woods. The run in from Rollins at the end was well concealed by the production guys, as you had no idea Seth was going to make the save until he was already in the ring.*

Enzo Amore and Big Cass were in the locker room with Scott Dawson and Sylvester LeFort. Enzo and Cassady were bragging about what they did to Mason Ryan then they told Dawson he would crush the S.A.W.F – Soft Ryan in their match later on. Dawson said it was going to be a cakewalk and Sylvester added that the only thing that mattered was the money; the two walked away leaving the two Jersey boys. Enzo and Cassady continued to talk about how they would not miss Dawson vs. Ryan for anything, however for the second week in a row, CJ Parker showed up in the background for no reason whatsoever.

Summer Rae came out in one of her ballroom dresses then Emma danced her way down to the ring. Byron Saxton went over the rules; you know the deal by now: they both take a turn at dancing then the crowd “votes” on the winner. Apparently, Summer demanded to go first and she did a very short little routine then Emma retaliated with an intentionally bad jig. They went back and forth some more, with Summer trying her best with her ballroom moves and Emma goofing around with stuff like the funky chicken and “the advanced shopping trolley”. Summer called for the music to stop and claimed Emma was making a mockery of the art of dance, so she called for her “real music” to be played. Fandango’s theme played and Summer dropped into a split then told Emma to beat that. Emma asked for her music and she did her ridiculous “Emmalution” bit. Byron polled the fans; the people booed and chanted “no” at Summer then they popped big and chanted “yes” for the oddball babyface. Emma started to dance again, however Summer was outraged and she went on the attack then delivered a leg-drop inverted DDT.

*This was a typical contest segment and was actually quite entertaining. Still, I would prefer the number one contendership be awarded by winning a match.*

A vignette for Leo Kruger aired. He said all the kids at his school laughed at baby Leo, however after he beat Bo for the NXT Title, all the little kids would be laughing at Bo Dallas.

*Not quite sure what this was all about. I thought Leo was a merciless hunter, not a guy that complains about having no friends as a child.*

Danny Burch was this week’s no-hoper; Tyler Breeze made his drawn-out entrance and the crowd chanted “that was awesome”; it wasn’t.

### **Tyler Breeze vs. Danny Burch**

Burch got a couple of shots in, but Breeze landed an enzuigiri then stopped to take a picture of himself and followed up with a spinning heel kick to get the pin.

*Tyler Breeze defeated Danny Burch via pinfall, at 0:44.*

Breeze took another snap of himself posing on his fallen opponent then he headed up the ramp, while on the Tron we saw an image of his smart phone which showed Tyler mugging for the camera.

*The crowd seemed more into Tyler this week than last, which is bizarre since it was the same people in the arena. However, I'm still not sold on this gimmick. I'm not opposed to a wacky gimmick here and there, but I just can't take the idea that a male model would want to become a pro wrestler in his spare time, seriously. Maybe it will grow on me, after all I was down on the whole Fandango idea at first and now I'm at least lukewarm on that whole thing. To me, gimmicks like this are, and always will be mid-card acts that will rarely see a main event.*

Bo Dallas joined Renee Young in the back. Bo acted cocky about pinning Antonio Cesaro and even called Antonio a "good kid, with a bright future". Dallas blamed Sami Zayn for Leo Kruger pinning him last week then he told Renee he would take care of Kruger. Bo walked off, singing "don't stop Bo-lieving".

*How is this guy not a heel? I suppose in a strange post-ironic way he is, but still nobody needs that level of human psychology on a developmental wrestling show.*

Phillips told us that Emma would not be cleared to face Paige next week and Summer had been put into her spot. There was no explanation given as to why Dusty Rhodes would reward a heel for such dastardly behaviour then Bryon Saxton informed everyone that Tyler Breeze had left the building.

*So that dance segment was an utter waste of everybody's time.*

Leo Kruger got a babyface reaction on his way down for the main event then Bo Dallas received one or two high-pitched yelps during his entrance.

### **NXT Championship Match: Bo Dallas (C) vs. Leo Kruger.**

Leo stalled on the floor at the start then used the referee as a shield, which allowed him to land a boot and go on the offensive. Bo came back with some dropkicks and got a two count off a northern lights. The fans chanted "boring" as Bo worked a wrist-lock then they got behind the heel and popped big when Leo delivered a clothesline over the top. Leo got the heat after the break; Bo showed some fight, but Leo shut him down with a big Irish-whip. Kruger tried for a superplex, however after a long battle for position, Bo landed a clothesline off the second for the double down. Dallas started his comeback with forearms and delivered his tornado bulldog for a two count then got another two off an inverted DDT. Bo unloaded with some shots in the corner then strangely Leo Hulked up and started a babyface-like comeback off his own, punctuated with a spinbuster. Kruger hit his open-hand clothesline for a near-fall then he applied the London dungeon; Bo got to the ropes. The finish saw Leo landed some shots then he came off the top with a splash, but Bo got his knees up and applied a wacky standing, inverted armbar type hold to get the tap-out.

*Bo Dallas defeated Leo Kruger via submission, at 10:04 (TV Time).*

Bo celebrated with his house show steam machine and he stood tall in the ring as the show went off the air.

*This was a pretty solid outing from both guys, however the way they are booking Bo Dallas is quite mindboggling. It's all well and good booking him as an over-the-top babyface in order for him to actually be a heel, but when he wrestles a match like an underdog babyface fighting off a vicious heel the whole thing becomes completely redundant. The people that actually like Bo are eventually going to be turned off by his arrogant promos and the people that hate him are not going to get behind him just because he sells for 90% of a match. I bet creative thinks they are being super cute and intelligent by booking Bo like John Cena, but they are not: the whole thing is absolutely ridiculous.*

*We got a much better show here than the abhorrent drivel they tried to pass off as a wrestling show last week. Although some of the same campy garbage that ruined that show was present here, with the dance-off and the whole Tyler Breeze gimmick. If I'm being honest, this episode was not great, but the main event was good and if you want to see Pac vs. Jon Moxley WWE style, then check out the opener as well. Or just wait for the six-man next week, which almost certainly will be worth tuning in for.*

**TNA iMPACT August 8th 2013**  
**Kay Yeager Coliseum, Wichita Falls, Texas**

Overall Thoughts:

This wasn't a bad show, but certainly wasn't a good one either. The main event was fun, but nothing to write home about, and the majority of the interview segments were unmemorable. There was the whole Bad Influence break up and Bobby Roode unification, but other than that and a couple of good Bully Ray moments the show was almost entirely mediocre. There were a few bad spots on the show, particularly the opening portion with Brooke and Sabin, which was dreadful. No explanation was given at all to why Taz and Anderson hijacked commentary, nor was there any reason given for Hogan being off the show, but then again in TNA people really do disappear and reappear all of the time, and nobody takes any notice. In one sentence...watch the G1 instead.

The show opened with Taz and the Aces & Eights basically telling Tenay to get off of a commentary for the night. Why? Because they are mean biker folk. Ray came out, and Borash was at the desk. Taz yelled at Borash that it was his desk, which I found comedic for whatever reason. Ray threatened to slap Ortiz' face. He said that he was part of the greatest team of all time, and was shocked that Hogan had the audacity to not tell him what tag team they were facing later on. He called Sabin out for the signing, and out he came. Sabin uttered the line "your eyes are brown and your breath smells like feces". I can't believe that I just typed that. They lost

me there. Ray wanted to sign the contract. Brooke came out, and Ray asked for the music to be shut off -- he was tired of hearing everyone's music. A great line. She read the contract, with a stipulation stating that if Ray didn't win he would not get another shot ever again. Ray said that he wouldn't get bullied by a Hogan. Brooke said that Ray didn't want the world to find out that he was all talk and very little action, just like in their marriage. Who wrote this material? Joe made it out for a BFG series match against Jeff Hardy. From the opening segment onwards they had a three man announce booth of Borash, Taz and Anderson. Somehow Borash was very calm and everyone was very civil during this takeover of the commentary table. Hardy got the win after Anderson sat up at the announce table for a distraction. A very mediocre TV match.

Daniels was backstage questioning Kazarian's upheaval last week. He called himself the leader, and said that it was his time and he would show that in the ring. Magnus was out for a match with Anderson. Towards the end of the match Anderson looked to be going for the finish, but Roode came in and nonchalantly laid Anderson out with a chair, costing Magnus the victory. This also means that Magnus loses 10 points, and I could see this becoming the gimmick over the next few weeks, causing Magnus to lose all of his points...I hope not. Roode said in a backstage promo that he changed the landscape with that win, and that was the beginning. Hebner was interviewed backstage, when Magnus came by saying that he knew that Hebner was just doing his job. Magnus said that he would get those points back and left. Robbie E and Jesse were casually discussing how they let Tara go. James came by telling them to leave the match to her. A recap was shown of the Ortiz debut last week, and he was quickly shown backstage. The Mafia came by Sabin in the back. Sabin said that he had a plan that he wanted to talk to them about. Tito Ortiz made it out I very generic music. Surely, they can find some indie artists to do some cheap entrance music of better quality. Ortiz got through exactly one and a half sentences before Angle made it out. They had a face off, and Angle did just about the exact same promo as he did with Rampage. Ray made it out next, and said that he had the ability to take either man out. He introduced himself as the guy to smack Ortiz in his "stupid face" if he were to get in his way and walked off. Well that was uneventful.

Mickie James and the Bro Mans made it out for their mixed tag match against ODB, Storm and Gunner. Storm landed an earth shattering superkick on Jesse. E was pinned when Storm and Gunner landed their power slam/neckbreaker for the win. Kim ran in and laid ODB out, Storm and Gunner didn't do much for the most part. Just as Kim was removed, James ran in win a cheap shot. Kazarian was interviewed backstage, and he said that it wasn't about Bad Influence it was about he and his family. Really great promo this was. Ray and Devon were backstage trying to work out if they were 23 or 24 time tag team champions. Daniels and Kazarian were in the ring for their BFG series match. They had a couple of awesome exchanges. However, they at the same time left the ring staring at Earl Hebner with their arms around each other for a double count out. Usually I am not a fan of finishes like that, but Daniels and Kazarian are so good that this really worked. Roode made it out with a chair again, but was let in the ring by Daniels and Kazarian . He talked about the big debuts in TNA this year. Because of all the things going on people forgot about the three of them. They called themselves a new force, and one of them would win the BFG series.

*Ortiz was asked what his motives were, but all he did was insinuate that he would be at Hardcore Justice next week. A promo hyping the Mafia/Aces & Eights tag match next week aired. Team 3D made it out, and it looked like Sabin was making it out with Sting, but Angle jumped the Aces & Eights from behind. There was a very fun closing stretch for this with all four men going at it with a bunch of nearfalls that the crowd was into. Angle took the 3D, and Devon got the tables...the crowd was loving this. Ray was sent through the table in the corner and was caught with a crossbody for the win in a finish that had the fans high fiving each other with glee -- a good TV mainevent. However, I have a feeling that Sabin in losing next week.*

**WWE SmackDown – August 9<sup>th</sup> 2013.  
BMO Harris Bank Centre: Rockford, IL  
Ben Carass.**

Randy Orton came out for the opener; he remembered his briefcase this week and they showed clips of Randy hitting some big moves in the three-way last Friday. Cole and JBL talked about Randy telling John Cena, “the champ is here” on Raw then Rob Van Dam made his entrance.

**Rob Van Dam vs. Randy Orton.**

A fan in the front row played Bill Alfonso and he led the crowd in a chant of “RVD” while repeatedly blowing a whistle, sadly he didn’t have the rodent-like charm of Fonzie and he was just annoying. Things started out even with Van Dam landing a spin kick and Orton landing a dropkick; Randy side-stepped RVD and he went over the top to the floor. Apparently the aforementioned fan fell victim to the crowd police, as a disgruntled voice could be heard stating, “they took my whistle!” After a brief brawl, Van Dam draped Orton over the barricade and scored with his spinning leg-drop off the apron as the high spot before the break. Randy was in control when we joined things again; Van Dam went to the top rope, however Orton cut him off and sent him flying into the barricade. Randy delivered a belly-to-back onto the rail then worked his trusty chinlock; RVD fought up to make a comeback and he got a two count off a split-leg moonsault. Rob came off the top with a cannonball, but Orton countered a monkey-flip out of the corner to hit his inverted headlock backbreaker off the second rope. Randy started his comeback routine then tried for the hangman DDT; Van Dam escaped and got a two count off a northern-lights. Orton caught RVD with a dropkick on the apron and followed up with the hangman; Van Dam countered the RKO then did his wacky leg-scissors roll-up for a near-fall. The finish saw RVD land rolling thunder then he tried for the five-star frogsplash; Orton rolled out of the way and connected with an RKO to get the win.

*Randy Orton defeated Rob Van Dam via pinfall, at 10:25(TV Time).*

Cole and JBL put Orton over for his victory then they played up the fact that Cena and Daniel Bryan should be weary going into SummerSlam.

*It’s always great when SmackDown starts with a good pro wrestling match, and this was a very good TV match. The crowd were into the whole thing, the finish was hot, plus both guys looked*

*decent and they worked very well together. The fact that Cole and JBL were trying so hard to sell the idea that Orton will cash in at SummerSlam leads me to believe that isn't going to happen and Cena will walk out with the belt. I'm not ruling it out by any means, but how many times have we seen guys with the contract say they were going to cash it in and they held onto the thing for months. I do expect Randy to be the first to cash in however, as two guys running around with a briefcase is just too much for me and I expect the winner of the Sandow/Rhodes feud to hold on to the blue case for quite some time.*

Cole hyped Christian vs. Del Rio for tonight then JBL tried to sound excited about Miz TV with AJ. The WWE Rewind showed AJ costing Kaitlyn the match with Layla on Raw.

*Bring back Slam of the Week is what I say.*

Miz brought out AJ and Big E. for his talk-show segment and footage of Big E. pinning Dolph Ziggler on Raw rolled. Miz asked what the relationship was between the two; AJ said Big E. was there for her and called him a "really nice friend". AJ stated Big E. was her best friend and she awkwardly fist-bumped Langston, who just stood there with indifference. Miz didn't buy the "friends" line and he began to list guys like John Cena, Daniel Bryan, CM Punk, Kane and Dolph Ziggler, all of which were previous "friends" of AJ. The Divas Champ told Miz that he didn't understand how many times she had her heart broken, but Miz informed AJ that the problem was her and not all the guys she had been with. AJ claimed each of her exes deserved all the crazy things she did to them, because they tricked her into loving them, and then left her. She said even Kaitlyn had left her, but the one thing that would never abandon her would be the Divas Championship, unlike that selfish, bleach-blonde, small little man, Dolph Ziggler. Dolph came down to the ring; he told AJ she was just like all the other girls who couldn't get over him, but AJ, in her crazy voice, claimed Ziggler was the one who was not over her. Kaitlyn showed up and wanted to know what AJ's problem was with her and Ziggler; Dolph stated that nobody even cared about AJ anymore and said he never wanted to see Big E. again. Everybody bickered then Miz told them to shut-up; he explained that since he was the host of SummerSlam, he had the power to book a match and surprise, surprise, he booked Dolph & Kaitlyn vs. AJ & Big E. Kaitlyn said she couldn't wait to slap the crazy right off AJ's face; AJ went nuts and the two women started to brawl. Big E pulled Kaitlyn off AJ, but Ziggler planted him with a Zig-Zag then Kaitlyn finished off AJ with a spear.

*This segment was no good and Miz booking a match just devalues the role of the actual authority figures, who are pretty useless at this point anyway. Dolph was slightly less annoying as a babyface here, although that could be due to Kaitlyn and the Miz, two of the most contemptible faces on the roster, being involved and acting their usual odious selves. By keeping silent, Big E was the most likeable character out of everyone.*

We saw Daniel Bryan shaving Wade Barrett on Raw and Cole hyped the two in a match later on; next they aired a Wyatt Family vignette then showed a hefty amount of Punk vs. Axel from Raw, including the brawl with Brock Lesnar. Cole told us there would be an exclusive interview with Brock later on.

Alberto Del Rio was in the GM's office, complaining about having to face Christian tonight. Vickie Guerrero told him he disrespected her by choosing Ricardo Rodriguez as his SummerSlam challenger. Del Rio said Ricardo didn't matter anymore, but Vickie told him what he did to Ricardo on Raw, and Christain last week was despicable, which is why she booked the match with Christian tonight. Alberto sarcastically informed Vickie that if he got injured then he might not be able to defend his belt at SummerSlam; Vickie said she was willing to take that risk. *I hope they aren't hinting at a turn for Vickie. She has been sympathetic to the faces and stood up to the heel Del Rio for two consecutive weeks now. Perhaps they just want to get her over as a no-nonsense GM, but she gets the easiest heat in the world by just saying two little words, which is why I would keep her a strong heel, even though the heel GM has been played out for years. Or maybe the idea is that Del Rio is such a heel that even Vickie is disgusted with him.* Fandango made his entrance with Summer Rae then Kofi Kingston made his return to SmackDown for a rematch from Raw.

### **Kofi Kingston vs. Fandango w/ Summer Rae**

Kofi got some shine in briefly, but Fandango dumped him over the top and delivered a suplex on the floor. Fandango got the heat; Kofi fought up from a chinlock and Fandango took the ring post spot, which was the transition for Kofi to make his comeback. Fandango rolled to the floor and Kofi went up top; Summer stepped in front of her man, but Kofi dove off the apron anyway with a crossbody to Fandango. Summer shrieked and leaped out of the way then she began to sell her ankle, much like the way she did in that dance contest segment with Jericho several months ago. Fandango took advantage and sent Kofi into the ring post; Summer jumped to her feet and began to dance then Fandango rolled Kofi inside and hit the Tennessee-jam for the finish.

*Fandango defeated Kofi Kingston via pinfall, at 4:55.*

*This was nothing special, but it was fine for what it was. I would also encourage Summer Rae to get involved in more of Fandango's matches, as it's a basic heat getter. However, it must be terribly frustrating to be Kofi Kingston. He returned with no hype at all and seems to have been thrown right back into the mid-card with a parody finish programme with Fandango.*

Daniel Bryan was walking down the hall in the back; Renee Young approached him and asked what he thought of the corporate makeover he received on Raw. Bryan told her that Vince asking him to shave his beard was the breaking point, so he shaved Wade Barrett instead then he stated that despite what John Cena said, he never changed who he was to get to the WWE. Bryan said he would beat Cena for the belt at SummerSlam then declared, "the beard is still here". After the break, they rolled the finish of Cena, Bryan & Orton vs. The Shield. Cole talked about how Orton nearly cashed in the briefcase then Daniel Bryan appeared for his match. A cleanly shaved Wade Barrett came out with some clippers and they showed the Raw angle again.

### **Daniel Bryan vs. Wade Barrett**



Bryan did the Tiger-wall-flip early then threw some kicks; Barrett quickly shut him down with a clothesline over the top. Wade sent Bryan into the barricade and the steps then tied up Bryan in the ropes and threw some knees. Believe it or not there was a small “American Dragon” chant; Barrett landed a boot to the face and got some more heat. Bryan landed a drop-toe-hold into the turnbuckle for a hope spot, however Wade shut him down with a huge Traylor slam to get a near-fall. Barrett went to the floor and grabbed his clippers; Bryan fought off the attempted mid-match shaving and came off the apron with a flying knee. The finish saw Bryan come off the top with a diving headbutt then he slapped on the Yes-lock for the tap-out.

*Daniel Bryan defeated Wade Barrett via submission, at 4:11.*

Bryan placed the clippers on the steps, stomped on them then led the crowd in a “Yes” chant. He stated the beard was here again. Cole and JBL put Bryan over; they said Bryan had been on one of the hottest streaks in recent memory and asked if he could make Cena tap to the Yes-lock. *A good showing here for Bryan; putting him over guys in 4 minutes is a good way to build him up for SummerSlam. Although I have no idea what they do for a finish. There is no way Cena is tapping and Bryan getting pinned clean doesn't seem ideal either. Of course Orton could show up and cash in, but as I mentioned, I'm sceptical at the moment on that one; I'll see how they book Orton on the go-home shows and make my assessment then. If Bryan is to take the pin, then a near 40 minute classic, in which it is clear he pushed Cena further than anyone ever has before, would be a way to put him over even in defeat.*

Damien Sandow was with Renee in the back. She showed him the footage of Cody Rhodes sending his briefcase for a swim in the Gulf of Mexico then began to ask him a question, but Damien gave her the old, “silence!” Sandow said Cody was a thief and stated they would resolve their differences at SummerSlam then claimed he had a solution to his briefcase being destroyed. He pulled out a slick, brown leather briefcase which contained a brand new, legally binding contract for a World Title match. Damien stated Alberto Del Rio needed to take notice, because when he cashes it in he would become, “World Champion of the unwashed masses”.

*Damien is so good, it's a shame that this feud with Cody is positively arctic.*

Another vignette recapped the Wyatt Family/Kane angle then Kane marched down the ramp for a three-on-one handicap match with 3MB.

### **Kane vs. 3MB**

Cole explained that Kane would face Bray Wyatt in an Inferno match, however I guess the term “inferno” isn't PG or something, because he called it a “ring of fire match”. Kane took care of the geeks at first, but McIntyre caught him with a boot to the face then Drew and Jinder held Kane for Slater to get some shots in. Kane nailed Slater with a big boot then dumped all three goofs over the top and beat them up on the floor. Slater took a ride over the announce table then Kane planted Jinder with a chokeslam to get the pin.

*Kane defeated Heath Slater, Drew McIntyre & Jinder Mahal via pinfall, at 1:34.*

The arena went dark and a rocking chair appeared on the Tron. Bray Wyatt took a seat and told Kane he liked his style for choosing the inferno match, however he said Kane had failed to grasp what was going on. Wyatt stated that Kane's fire could not control the souls of his brothers and said Kane would be trapped inside the ring with a monster then added the fire was afraid of him, because it knew it could never hurt Bray Wyatt. Bray said he had a secret and he claimed he was already dead; the Family stood behind their leader, Rowan in his lamb mask and Harper with the lantern. Kane did his turnbuckle pyro spot to close the angle.

*The match accomplished little besides Kane proving he can beat up three geeks that aren't the Wyatt Family. Whoever had the bright idea of making Bray's debut match an inferno match needs to answer some serious questions. Like what on earth were they thinking? I have seen every single WWE inferno match and every last one of them has been a stinker. I guess this is a way to put Wyatt over without pinning Kane, which leads to the question: why can't Bray just pin Kane with or without some interference from the Family then build to a gimmick match?*

The exclusive interview with Brock Lesnar aired. Brock was shown in black and white, staring directly at the camera and they spliced in clips to help tell the story. He said he never liked Punk and the match at SummerSlam was personal then he stated the "corporate idiots" were calling the match, "the best vs. the beast", but Brock declared, "the beast is the best". Lesnar claimed Punk thinks he's a tough-guy, because he tapes his fists and takes MMA classes for beginners at his local gym then declared there is no personal jealousy, as Punk had never been NCAA or UFC Heavyweight Champion. Brock declared he was the Undisputed WWE Champion back when Punk was wrestling for 100 people in high-school gyms, although he did give Punk some credit for holding the belt for 434 days, but noted that Punk had never faced anyone like him before because there is nobody like Brock Lesnar. Brock ended by saying Punk would find out at SummerSlam what it feels like to be victimised by the beast.

*This was a pretty good UFC style package and the clips they spliced in really added to the story. Brock is not the best talker in the world, but if he has to speak then packages like this are the best way to go and he was perfectly decent here.*

A graphic hyped CM Punk vs. Paul Heyman for Raw then Christian came through the curtain for the main event; after a break, Alberto Del Rio hit the ring for the non-title match. They showed Alberto killing Ricardo on Raw.

### **Non-Title Match: Christian vs. Alberto Del Rio (World Heavyweight Champion).**

The crowd were more interested in chanting "JBL" than paying attention to the basic opening spots at the start; Christian dumped Del Rio over the top and scored with a baseball slide, which sent the champ into the announce table. After the break, Alberto countered a tornado DDT and landed a double-stomp to the back then tried to use the ring post to crotch Christian, however Christian used his legs to send Alberto's face into the post. Christian came off the top with a crossbody, but Del Rio side-stepped and sent him into the barricade to start the heat. Christian

got some shots in then Alberto went for a superplex; they fought for position on the turnbuckle and finally both guys spilled off the top to the floor as the lead-in spot for the second commercial. Alberto had the heat again when we came back and he delivered a dropkick of the second rope then applied an armbar with the use of the ropes; (Alberto needs to watch some Minoru Suzuki tapes to see how this move is supposed to be done). Christian cut Del Rio off on the top then delivered a super-rana for a near-fall and the double down. Christian started his comeback and got another two count off a crossbody from the second rope then he went for the killswitch; Del Rio escaped to land a tilt-o-whirl backbreaker for two then after some nice



transitions Alberto got another two following a double-knee backbreaker. Christian's near fall came when he avoided the short superkick and delivered a spear; Del Rio begged off, but quickly went back on the attack and sent Christian into the ring post. Alberto went for the cross-armbreaker and Christian rolled through into a three-quarter nelson for a two count. The finish came when Del Rio landed his superkick, however Christian managed to hook an inside cradle to get the three count.

*Christian defeated Alberto Del Rio via pinfall, at 13:23 (TV Time).*

Del Rio went crazy and complained to the ref then he got back in the ring, only to be planted with the killswitch. Christian slid out of the ring and headed right for the back, which was Damien Sandow's cue to run out with the briefcase; he handed it over to Mike Chioda, however Cody Rhodes appeared on the top rope and took out Damien before he could officially cash it in. Rhodes hit Sandow with Cross-Rhodes. The show closed with a stare down, with Cody on the ramp and Sandow down in the ring, clutching his briefcase.

*First things first; just like the opener, the main event was a great TV match. Still, as good as it*

*was I would have held off until SummerSlam, but that's WWE booking mentality for you; they give us a match 9 days away from the PPV, where we are expected to pay for it again. I suppose it won't make a difference to the bottom-line, but that's another non-title loss for the World Champion, which is rarely a good idea. Also, I thought for sure after Rob Van Dam beat Del Rio on Raw we would be getting a three-way, which looks unlikely now since Van Dam lost to Orton. So that means they booked RVD to go over the World Champion simply to get his win back and to split up Alberto and Ricardo. The post-match deal with Sandow and Rhodes was fine, however I do wish they would let us know if the briefcase will be on the line or not. Personally, I don't see them switching the thing in a singles match, especially since Sandow just debuted his fancy new briefcase, but hey I've been wrong plenty of times before, so it wouldn't shock me if they give it to Cody to try get him out of the funk he is currently in as a babyface that gets no reaction. All things considered, this was a good edition of SmackDown. The bookended matches at the top and end of the show were top draw TV outings plus Daniel Bryan had a fun little match with Wade Barrett and we got an awesome promo from Brock Lesnar. Additionally, they also furthered the Kane/Bray Wyatt story and told us about the inferno match. When there is only one bad segment (Miz TV) and a passable match (Kofi vs. Fandango), which also appeared to be leading to something, I would give this show a big thumbs up.*

### **Bits & Pieces**

If things weren't bad enough for TNA, Kurt Angle, who is apart of their Mainevent Mafia/Aces & Eights angle at the moment, was arrested for a DWI and admitted himself into rehab after driving back from the August 1st TV tapings. Usually, TNA, and most promotions for that matter, would do an angle explaining this, but given that Angle isn't present they are probably going to have to explain it away by saying that the Aces & Eights kidnapped him or something -- I simply can't see them announcing this on TV.

In a rather unfortunate story, Sheamus will be out anywhere between 4-6 months after suffering a shoulder injury at Money in the Bank. He was apparently trying to work through it and injured it in the same spot that bruised his leg at Money in the Bank. He had sharp pains running down his leg during the South African tour, and this is surprisingly his first ever surgery.

All Japan owner, Shiraishi, in his infinite wisdom has decided to replace the current Triple Crown belts, with a single unified belt. The original belts were given to the widow of Giant Baba, Makoto Baba, the Dragon Lady, and a new belt was introduced at the August 9th press conference.

BJ Whitmer suffered a very scary neck injury on the August 3rd ROH show in Toronto after taking a piledriver on the apron from Mike Bennett. He suffered no fractures or breaks, but it isn't known how long he is going to be out yet. Suffice to say a piledriver on the apron is a terrible idea. In other ROH news, the ROH tag titles changed hands again at the August 3rd show in Toronto, when the American Wolves beat the Forever Hooligans. The story is that the Wolves (Eddie Edwards & Davey Richards), are trying to get into WWE and so haven't signed a deal with ROH yet -- so yet again, they have champions that they don't have under contract.

## **Next Week's Issue**

We have another big issue coming up next week as we look at the final four nights of the G1 Climax, preview SummerSlam, review Hardcore Justice and more!

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