



## Cubed Circle Newsletter 201 – We're Not Dead

Given the absence of a newsletter last week following our 200<sup>th</sup> issue the week prior new readers could be forgiven for thinking that we were on an unannounced extended hiatus. However, as long-time readers will know this newsletter, if anything, is vulnerable to technical difficulties, even ones as trivial as the loss of a laptop charger on holiday. However, after a week off not only are we back with a double issue featuring our last piece of G1 coverage, two weeks of NXT, Mid-South from 1982, and two weeks of RAW featuring Sting, but we also have the debut of a brand new column – the Pro-Wres Digest! The goal of the Digest is to encapsulate the week that was in pro-wrestling in 3-4 pages, providing a TL;DR of sorts for those unable to devote enough time to following every news story that breaks in a given week.

– Ryan Clingman, *Cubed Circle Newsletter Editor*

### **The Pro-Wres Digest for September 6<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup>.**

*Ben Carass.*

On Friday September 4<sup>th</sup>, John Cena was thought to have suffered an injury during a house show match with Kevin Owens in Hampton, VA. Amazingly, it wasn't the springboard stunner that went wrong but another move John Cena should not be attempting, the code/infrared. Cena went for the move and Owens kind of just fell down on his chest; imagine an axe-guillotine driver but with Owens losing his balance too. When the report first broke, people were freaking out about Cena possibly suffering a neck injury, since they did stop the match for the referee to check on Cena and they went right to the finish after he was checked out. It was probably no fun having a 260lbs man landing on your chest like that, however the whole thing seemed to be blown way out of proportion, as Cena worked the next night against Owens in Charlottesville, VA. We have no word on whether Cena attempted the code/infrared again the next night. Cena worked RAW and looked fine during the six-man man event, however he was pulled from the weekend house show loop, presumably as a precaution. He is still advertised for the go-home RAW for Night of Champions.

Unfortunately for those who can't get enough of early 2000's catfights, Lana (CJ Perry) suffered a serious injury prior to the house show event in Fairfax, VA. Word is she was working out in the ring before the show when the injury occurred. WWE.com reported that X-rays showed a "Colles fracture" and Lana's wrist was put in a splint. Lana was scheduled to appear with Dolph Ziggler in a match against Rusev at the September 6<sup>th</sup> show in Fairfax, however when she didn't appear Rusev cut a promo about how Ziggler's actions on RAW were the reason why Lana wasn't there. On TV they were building towards a mixed tag with Ziggler & Lana vs. Rusev & Summer Rae, but clearly that is not going to happen now. So you know what that means: another Ziggler/Rusev singles

match at Night of Champions! Lana underwent her surgery on Thursday and is expected to be out “up to four months” according to WWE doctor, Chris Amann.

Long-time Japanese Joshi star and fanboy favourite, Kanako Urai : aka KANA, was officially announced as a WWE contracted talent on Tuesday. WWE sent out a press release confirming what many assumed when Kana appeared at ringside at the NXT Takeover show in Brooklyn. She was actually signed in early August and is expected to be on NXT TV imminently. Unlike Dark Angel (Sarah Stock), who has been signed exclusively as a trainer, Kana, who will be 34 on September 26<sup>th</sup>, is going to be on-screen talent and will be the oldest female under a developmental contract. I’ll believe a legitimate Kana push when I see one, however getting her in the Performance Centre and out on the road with the likes of Dana Brooke, Eva Marie & Alexa Bliss is only going to help the next crop of NXT women, who at the moment are a million miles away from reaching the level of their predecessors. Kana spoke with Brian Fritz about the signing and said she had “accomplished all there is to accomplish” and was “looking for a new challenge.” It looks like she already knows the way to get in with the right people in the company, as she also told Fritz: “[HHH] has been my favourite WWE Superstar of all time” and “I want to make him proud.” Smart girl. It was announced on Thursday at the NXT tapings that Kana will be taking the name of legendary Crush Gal, Lioness Asuka. Kana will use the “Asuka” name in WWE, which is a pretty cool nod to history that I’m sure went over 90% of people’s heads in the company.

Sanity has finally prevailed for Kurt Angle, who announced on Mark Madden’s radio show on Tuesday night that he would not be resigning with TNA when his current deal runs out at the end of the year. Angle revealed that he would be “taking a break” from wrestling once he is done with TNA and let’s hope he is serious this time and not just playing hardball in order to get a better deal. Angle’s neck has been thrashed for damn near 20 years and he arguably should have retired at least a decade ago, but it’s well known that Angle would like to go back to WWE before he hangs up the boots. Unfortunately for Angle, Vince McMahon has been quoted countless times saying, “An Olympic gold medallist isn’t going to die in our ring” and the older Angle gets, the more unlikely a return to WWE becomes. Maybe if Kurt takes some time off and heals up as best he can then he might be able to pass a WWE physical and come in as a special attraction or for a one time deal like a retirement match. Angle is scheduled to appear at Bound for Glory on October 4<sup>th</sup> and a handful of house show events before the end of the year. He is also advertised for TNA’s annual UK tour in January from January 29-31, so it looks like he’ll be still doing TNA shows until early 2016.

TMZ broke a wacky story on Tuesday about Paige & Alicia Fox being ejected from a restaurant bar in Baltimore, MD. The deal, apparently, was some “barflies” (perhaps Barfly #2) were harassing the women and taking unsolicited pictures of the two. “An altercation of sorts” went down (fine reporting), drinks were thrown and all the culprits were ejected from the establishment. If I had to guess, this was likely an angle for Total Divas, as this season has already seen a couple of altercations happen in bars/restaurants. Feuding wrestlers going out to a bar together? Somebody get Bill Watts on the phone! This wouldn’t fly in the 80’s!

After the Zahra Schreiber debacle, you would think people in WWE would go through their social media accounts to make sure nothing embarrassing is dug up from their past. Well, sadly for Nhooph Al-Areebi (her developmental name is “Jasmin”, however she has been nowhere near NXT TV) a similar incident occurred when tweets of a racist nature were found on Twitter by someone who clearly had nothing better to do. Unlike Schreiber however, who foolishly tried to defend her Nazi memorabilia gimmick, Al-Areebi was not fired and instead the company released this utter BS statement: “WWE conducted a thorough investigation and has determined that Nhooph-Al Areebie's Twitter account was used without her knowledge when she was 16 and 17 years old. Jasmin

remains apologetic for any offensive remarks that were made.” So basically, Mark Carrano’s PA sent Al-Areebie an email asking what happened and Nhooph replied something along the lines of: “It totes wasn’t me, like 4 realz. Thnx 4 believing me, u guyz r supes amaze. Kiss Kiss. xoxox.”

Next weekend will be one of the biggest and packed of the entire year, as WWE, ROH, CMLL, NOAH and even Bellator running big shows. WWE Night of Champions is headlined by John Cena vs. Seth Rollins for the US title & Seth Rollins vs. Sting for the WWE World title on 20/9. ROH All Star Extravaganza takes place on 18/9 and features Jay Lethal vs. Kyle O’Reilly for the ROH World title. Lethal will also be pulling a double header, like Rollins, and working two matches on the same night as he also defends the TV title against Bobby Fish. CMLL’s 82nd Anniversary also takes place on 18/9 from Arena Mexico and is headlined by Atlantis vs. La Sombra in a mask vs. mask match. The CMLL Anniversary show over the last couple of years had two great matches, with Sombra beating Volador Jr for his mask in 2013 and Atlantis taking the mask of Ultimo Guerrero last year in one of the most memorable moments in the history of lucha libre. The word this week from Dr Lucha is that Atlantis could very well lose his legendary mask after 32 years, which would certainly be a huge deal. Other than maybe Rush, La Sombra, at 25 years old, is arguably the perfect choice to take the mask of Atlantis and potentially become the face of the promotion, which is in serious need of a facelift. NOAH will be running Great Voyage in Osaka on 19/9 and the top matches should be worth checking out. The Killer Elite Squad will defend the GHC Heavyweight Tag titles against War Machine, Daisuke Harada challenges Taichi for the GHC Jr title and the main event sees Minoru Suzuki defending the GHC Heavyweight title against Takashi Sugiura.

Hulk Hogan has landed himself a new gig as the Brand Ambassador for third-rate fantasy sports site, FanPicks.com. I think it says more about the website that they would associate themselves with Hogan after the debacle of the last couple of months. If you are interested in reading a bunch of corporate jargon, FanPicks released a statement calling Hogan a “global icon” and that “we all make mistakes and deserve second chances.” The only thing missing from the statement was that Hogan slammed a 10ft giant in front of 100,000 people.

There is a weird situation going on with Randy Orton. On RAW he was the victim of a beatdown from the Wyatt Family and naturally I assumed it was an angle to set Orton up as the partner of Roman Reigns and Dean Ambrose at Night of Champions. However, PWInsider reported on Friday that the plan was for Orton to be written off TV for a couple of weeks. Orton is still advertised for the weekend house shows, but that doesn’t really mean much as the WWE aren’t concerned with false advertising when it comes to the house shows. Conversely, Dave Meltzer reported in the F4W Friday update that he was told Orton would be working the house shows and also be on RAW from Memphis, TN on Monday.

So back in May, Dave Meltzer, the world’s most respected pro wrestling journalist, reported that Destination America would not be renewing TNA’s contract when their deal expired at the end of September. In typical TNA fashion, the talent were kept completely in the dark about the situation and a bunch of overly-sensitive TNA hardcore fans (yes, unbelievably such a thing exists) decided Meltzer was public enemy #1 and accused him of having a vendetta against the company. Nothing has changed it seems since May, as neither TNA, nor Destination America have made any kind of announcement about a new deal. There are no more iMPACT tapings scheduled at the Impact Zone and the final episode was scheduled to air on September 30, however iMPACT is still being advertised on the Destination America website for October 7 in its usual timeslots. Despite being already taken off the air in several international markets where they received distribution through Discovery, TNA still has commitments for shows to air in other international markets, namely the UK. They could always throw together a best of or a clip show for a week, maybe two at the most,

but they can't just air old shows in the markets they still have clearance, because viewers will tune out in their droves. F4Wonline reported that negotiations are taking place for some TV tapings to take place in India in late November, but nothing is final at this point. If the company can stay alive long enough to reach the UK tour in January then you would think they would tape whatever they can in front of some of the largest houses TNA draws all year long.

## **NJPW G1 Climax 25 – Leaving a Legacy?**

*Ryan Clingman*



Following the conclusion of the 23rd G1 Climax in August of 2013, there was a large contingent of the NJPW fan-base, at least outside of Japan, perhaps even a majority, lauding the tournament as the greatest in pro-wrestling history – and if not in pro-wrestling history, certainly in the recent history of wrestling in Japan. In 2014, however, the company arguably topped themselves with a tournament that was, booking wise, far superior to that of 2013, with wins and losses meaning a great deal more than they had the year prior, and, once more, some of the very best matches of that year. The stacked cards night on night were most certainly an integral part of the tournament experience, with all but an insignificant minority of the nights composing the tournament producing a handful of great matches, with many more baring far more than just that. It was due to fresh memories of two of the greatest pro-wrestling tournaments of the last several decades that hopes were, as in 2014, outstandingly high for the 2015 tournament. And with the tournament now over, a natural question to ask would be one of whether it succeeded in meeting these expectations.

As one would justly expect from a tournament spanning 19 days and involving 20 participants split between A and B blocks, the answer to this question is highly subjective, and even so, probably won't hold a Boolean value for most. First, my expectations coming into the show should be stated. As unfair as this may have been, even if it wasn't stated explicitly, I expected the company to match what they had done in 2014, perhaps even surpass it given the right circumstances. I was

prospectively positive on the switch to split block shows, each only featuring five G1 matches, as theoretically this would have provided those mending old wounds time to recover between events. I was thus expecting blow-away shows, nuclear crowd reactions, and some of the best matches of the year, but in reality experienced something quite different.

In general, only one of these propositions was satisfied during the course of the tournament – we received a collection of matches at, or at least very close to, match of the year level. Kota Ibushi and Katsuyori Shibata, in a highly anticipated match-up in-front of a fairly small crowd, tore the house down on night seven, and Ibushi performed close to as well on the opening night opposite Hiroshi Tanahashi. Ishii and Honma also delivered on the promise of their blow-away performances during the 2014 tournament, and 2013 G1 in the case of Ishii. The finals, and semi-finals, also produced matches that will undoubtedly receive a large percentage of the match of the year vote in the Wrestling Observer Newsletter Awards, and may even win – the final match of Tanahashi versus Nakamura in particular.



In spite of this major victory in terms of match quality, unfortunately, the 19 day format did very little to decrease the injury rate, and dampened crowd reactions to a large extent. Perhaps, it should be stated more explicitly that, generally speaking, the buildings that you would expect the largest reactions from, Korakuen, Sumo Hall, the Sun Plaza, and surprisingly, even Fukuoka delivered just as they would for any other major show. But, with 19 dates to book the company was also forced to resort to running G1 shows in some of their house show venues, the Hokkaido, Takamatsu, Aichi, and Iwate-type buildings. What this ultimately resulted in was technically great match-ups that would have been titanic in Korakuen or Osaka, coming off as just a few steps above "pretty good" in execution. And, of course, the single show at the Bodymaker Coliseum was also fairly disappointing in terms of crowd response. This trend, should it continue for a few more years, may result in the resurgence of a mind-set which was fairly common amongst New Japan fans several years ago, in the pre-iPPV G1 era – the view that most G1 matches outside of the semi and grand finals act as but a teaser for future matches, and serve a purpose far removed from the

spectacles of recent years.

The probability of this happening, however, is slim, as with New Japan failing to draw well on all of the 19 nights, with the final night at Sumo Hall being the only one of the three to sell-out, I would expect a return to a less adventurous model in 2016. Of course, the 19-day format, whilst intended to help further the expansion and growth of the product, also sought a secondary purpose – to, like the reforms of the 2014 edition of the tournament, curb the injuries and physical toll of the

tournament on the performers, particularly those past their physical prime and already in fairly rough physical shape.

The number of G1 only matches was halved from an entire card of ten matches down to one of five supported by an assortment of multi-man matches. I was a proponent of this idea leading into the tournament, and even after viewing its first couple of nights. Theoretically, this structure would allow for the next night's matches to be built to using trios or tags, and of course, the off-nights would be fairly light on the bodies of the wrestlers in each block. However, in practice, the multi-man matches in the first half of each show were patterned and became at times fairly indistinct from one another structure wise. What this means is that participants still had to work nine G1 matches, but also worked an additional ten matches that, whilst producing less compelling cards, didn't do so by easing the work load to any great extent.

The largest injury story during the tournament was the elbow injury of favourite Shinsuke



Nakamura, who was rendered unable to compete in his tournament match opposite Michael Elgin, as well as in two non-tournament matches. Additionally, this injury may have contributed to what was a rather inconsistent, and at times even disappointing tournament for Nakamura. Katsuyori Shibata came in injured, but thankfully fighters heal faster than normal men, and he seemed to have recuperated by the time his major matches against Ibushi and Tanahashi rolled around. As is seemingly the case every year, Hiroyoshi Tenzan in his 20th G1 appearance seemed to be more physically strained than usual, and unlike in his 2014 run, was unable to turn back the clock, even against AJ Styles, who he had a surprisingly great match with last year. The G1, as a top-tier working tournament over the last several years should probably see someone like Tenzan replaced in 2016, given his physical unreliability, and the fact that due to a need to keep the Bullet Club involved, the average work-rate of the pool already drops with Gallows, Fale, and Takahashi involved. Given that this was his 20th tournament, I see no reason to see him continue, unless, of course, he wishes to tie the tournament into a retirement run of

some sort, although I expect to see Tenzan limping through undercard comedy matches for the foreseeable future, which is perfectly fine with me if he is physically capable and it earns him a decent living.

Some would say that, evident from the above, is the fact that the 2015 G1 Climax was not the tournament that two predecessors were. However, it should be understood that it was also a

different kind of tournament when compared to those of the recent Gedo/Jado era. It was a marathon building to a crescendo on the final night, as opposed to the single continuous high note of the 2013/4 tournaments. Even so, the business markers show that despite good intentions, the 2015 tournament simply wasn't as big as tournaments booked using other models. This isn't to say that the tournament was a failure, or even that it wasn't very good, but rather that despite the tournament's collection of outstanding matches, as a collective, it didn't match the two prior tournaments. Still, this is more a testament to the strength of the 2013 and 2014 tournaments than it is an indictment of the 2015 one. With as much hyperbole as there is on the internet it is fairly easy at times to forget how much weight a statement such as "greatest tournament in the history of pro-wrestling" carries. If the tournament bearing this title was topped every year without end, then perhaps the initial decision to create such a label would be misguided – and perhaps it is regardless. However, the prevailing point here should be that creatively speaking, the G1 Climax of 2015 produced some resounding successes, but those successes were padded with so much mundane filler than the potency of the total package was diluted.

In short, the 2015 edition of the G1 Climax was a very good tournament, just not the third in a line of legendary ones for which was hoped.

G1 Climax Awards 2015:

**Tournament MVP: Kota Ibushi** – Tanahashi may have had a slightly larger collection of stand-out matches during the 25th G1 than Kota Ibushi, but no one wrestler during the 2015 G1 was able to adapt to and enhance the working styles of others more than Ibushi. Even more so than in his 2013 run, the Kota Ibushi G1 match catalogue should stand as a testament to the transformation Ibushi has made over the past several years – from a spotty/flippy junior who could be carried to a great match, to an all around outstanding worker, who can now do for others what was done for him in much of his pre-2013 career.

Runners Up: Hiroshi Tanahashi, Tomohiro Ishii

**Match of the Tournament: Kota Ibushi versus Katsuyori Shibata:**

Runner Up: Hiroshi Tanahashi versus Shinsuke Nakamura

**Best Show: August 12th Korakuen Hall Night 1** – One of the major pratfalls of this year's tournament was the lack of great shows, but the August 12<sup>th</sup> Korakuen show was fantastic in the second half, as was the final night at Sumo Hall from top to bottom. Few entire nights of the G1 will be remembered on my part, but August 12<sup>th</sup> from Korakuen and August 16<sup>th</sup> from Sumo Hall will definitely stick for quite some time.

**Fighting Spirit Award: Michael Elgin** – There were some groans at the announcement of Michael Elgin for the 2015 G1, but Elgin silenced the majority of critics through his ability to get over with the Japanese audience using his physical charisma, and memorable matches against the likes of Tomohiro Ishii, Tomoaki Honma, and Kazuchika Okada. Elgin is someone that we need to see back in New Japan.

Runners Up: Tomoaki Honma, Tomohiro Ishii

**Lazy Heel Scum Bag Award: Tetsuya Naito** – The new Tetsuya Naito is awesome and must continue forever. That is all.

**RAW Ramblings – August 31<sup>st</sup> 2015.**

**Amalie Arena: Tampa, FL.**

*Ben Carass.*



**Hulk Hogan** breaking down and begging for forgiveness on Good Morning America, **Bram** arrested on domestic abuse charges and suspended from TNA, **Zahra Schreiber** (**Seth Rollins** girlfriend, the one he sent nude pictures to) fired from WWE for insensitive comments on social media and posing with Nazi memorabilia and, on top of all that, a crazed man who apparently was obsessed with a female under contract to WWE was shot outside the Performance Centre in Orlando, Florida and is now in a “critical, but stable”, whatever that means, in hospital. Obviously, comparing real life incidents, especially those involving domestic abuse and a man being shot, to a make-believe, scripted television show is irresponsible and completely asinine, however that is exactly what I am going to do. All of this news broke on Monday and due to work commitments I didn’t learn about any of this until a couple of hours before RAW went on the air. So after trawling through countless online reports trying to catch up on all these crazy developments, I shut my laptop and settled in to watch RAW. What followed was three hours of the most insipidly dull, coma-inducing, complete waste of time pro wrestling shows since the days of **Vince Russo** booking the three hour Nitros. I mean this show was torturous. If they continue to book shows like this with football season starting in two weeks then they are going to take an enormous ratings hit.

There were a couple of show-long storylines, none of which were very interesting and certainly didn’t make me want to see any of the participants involved fight each other at Nigh of Champions. **Sting** opened the show with an in-ring promo; he basically said **Seth Rollins** wasn’t as good as **HHH** and closed by calling **Rollins**, “Half the man” **HHH** is. Because **Sting’s** promo was written by a bunch of clowns that have no idea about anything, the fans didn’t care at all and even boed **Sting** every time he put over **HHH**. Later, **Seth Rollins** appeared in a backstage skit with **Stephanie** and he wanted to know where his statue was, however the main point was that **Rollins**

was upset that **Sting** said he wasn't in the same league as **HHH**. Main event segment saw **Rollins** call out **Sting** in order to find out what happened to his statue. He made a remark about being better than **HHH**, so of course **Stephanie** had to come out and yell at junior for saying mean things about daddy. Eventually, **John Cena** showed up and challenged **Rollins** to a US title rematch at Night of Champions. **Stephanie** booked the match then **Sting** came out on the stage to stand next to **Cena**. – So let's recap: **Sting** is trying to get inside **Rollins'** head with **MIND GAMES** by causing a rift between **Rollins & HHH**, whom by the way **Sting** noted more than once on the show had beaten him at WrestleMania. Since **Sting** lost to **HHH**, does that make him half the man **Rollins** is and a quarter of the man **HHH** is? **HHH vs. Rollins** will be a big deal when it happens, but I have no idea how any of this makes anyone want to see **Sting vs. Rollins**.

**Dolph Ziggler w/Lana** beat **Rusev w/Summer Rae** in a SummerSlam rematch via DQ when **Hot Summer interfered** at 14:20. Match was boring and the fans, as they were for most of the night, were dead. **Hot Summer** and **Lana** had another 1999 catfight then **Dolph** and **Lana** kissed. For whatever reason, this mid-card high school romance program that nobody cares about was given a show-long angle. **Renee** interviewed **Dolph** in the back and he told **Summer** to stay out of his matches; in the background we saw **Hot Summer** sneak into **Ziggler's** locker room. – I'm sorry, but the idea that **DOLPH ZIGGLER** has his own private locker room immediately killed any



believability. Later on, **Summer** emerged from **Dolph's** locker room, screaming and running down the hall. **Ziggler** came out in a towel, looking like **Val Venis 2.0** and tried to look confused. So, then we got **Lana & Ziggler** in a backstage skit and this was just awful. Basically, **Lana** was upset because **Summer** caught a peak of **Dolph's** junk, not that her boyfriend has just been sexually harassed at work. Finally, **Renee** interviewed **Lana** and showed her footage of **Summer** cutting a promo. **Summer** acted like she enjoyed seeing **Little Ziggy**, so why she ran away screaming I have no clue, and said that **Dolph** insisted he undressed in front of her. **Lana** didn't say a word and walked off looking angry. – Not only have none of the writers ever been in a real fight or a heated argument, but it appears like none of them have ever had a real relationship with a woman. **Lana** is upset because **Summer** saw **Dolph's** wang? It's pathetic. Plus, **Lana** looked so gullible and stupid for not believing her boyfriend, who rightfully should launch a sexual harassment claim, which at this stage I think I would rather see than whatever garbage they follow up with.

How did they screw up the Diva's Revolution this week? Well, they had **Team PCB** compete in a Beat the Clock series to see who would be the #1 contender for **Nikki Bella** at Night of Champions. **Becky Lynch** beat **Alicia Fox** in 3:21, **Charlotte** beat **Brie Bella** in 1:40 and **Paige** failed to beat **Sasha Banks** in under **Charlotte's** time and **Charlotte** was declared the #1 contender. **Nikki Bella** cut one of her usual, lifeless android promos about becoming the longest reigning Divas champion of all time and she unveiled a **Bella-Tron**, which is basically the **Santino Marella** Honk-O-Meter. Another unfathomably stupid booking decision saw **Braun Strowman**, in his TV debut, wrestle **Dean Ambrose** in a singles match. It only went 3:20 and **Ambrose** won via DQ when **Bray Wyatt** attacked him, but how could they get it so wrong with **Strowman** on week two? All you need to do is protect the guy in six-mans and have him kill men for at least 2 months until he is ready to do something else. **Strowman** choked out **Ambrose** with his standing Kata Gatame then **Wyatt** laid out **Roman Reigns** with Sister Abigail. – This **Wyatt** feud is death for **Ambrose** and **Reigns**. Unfortunately it appears to be continuing and if I had to guess, I can see them bringing back **Erick Rowan** to be **Ambrose & Reigns'** back up, which would be awful.



**Assorted Refuse:** **Ryback** retained the IC title over **Big Show** with the shellshock in 7:20; **Miz** was on commentary and he distracted **Show** for the finish. Feud must continue! **Kevin Owens** pinned **Cesaro** clean with the pop-up powerbomb at 16:05. Good, solid match as you would expect between these two, but like I said in the SummerSlam report, neither of these two men need to be losing matches at the moment so booking them in a rematch was quite foolish. At least they didn't go 50/50 and give **Cesaro** his win back. **The Dudley Boyz** over **New Day (Big E & Kofi)** w/**Xavier Woods** in a non-title match at 12:40. **Prime Time Players** were on commentary and they were upset that the **Dudleys** blew them off during a website interview or something. Match was fine; I would have had the **Dudleys** win a few matches to earn a title shot instead of just coming straight in and beating the champs in a non-title match, but that's what WWE do. At least they saved **New Day** going through a table this week, although **Xavier** did get put through one last week.

**WWE NXT – September 2<sup>nd</sup> 2015**  
**Full Sail University: Winter Park, FL.**  
*Ben Carass.*



The **Dusty Rhodes** Tag Team Classic got under way this week and the show opened with a video package putting over the tourney as a tribute to Dusty.

**Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic Tournament Round 1: The Ascension vs. Baron Corbin & Rhyno.** – **Corbin & Rhyno** over in 5:38. **Ascension** were over like returning heroes, which is hilarious. I believe the fans chanted, “Don’t go back”; sound advice. They even worked like faces and **Corbin** sent **Viktor** into the post for the heat spot. **Viktor** sold then **Konnor** ran wild off the hot tag and the **Ascension** set up for the Fall of Man. **Corbin** distracted **Viktor** and **Rhyno** pinned **Konnor** with the gore. – I don’t think anyone wondered what it would be like if the **Ascension** worked as babyfaces, but we found out anyway. It was just weird.

**Neville & Solomon Crowe** were with **Devin** in the back. They were happy to be partners and excited to be in the **Dusty** Classic. The **Nia Jax** vignette aired; she’s “coming soon.”

**Alexa Bliss vs. Blue Pants** – Bliss over in 3:29. Match was pretty much a squash for Bliss, who beat up Pants immediately like a total jobber, which I suppose she is. Pants made a small comeback and landed a Northern Lights. Bliss cut her off and won with the Sparkle Splash.

Of all people, **William Regal** was with **Johnny Gargano & Tomasso Ciampa** in his office. **Tyler Breeze** stormed in and demanded to be a part of the **Dusty** Classic. **Regal** actually used **Gargano & Ciampa**’s indie names, which proves they are not under a contract, and he chastised **Breeze** for interrupting his meeting with two of the “hottest free agents” in the world. As punishment, **Regal** booked **Breeze & Bull Dempsey vs. Gargano & Ciampa** next week.

**Emma** cut a pre-tape promo after last week’s botched finish; she said there would be no Divas revolution without her.

**Apollo Crews vs. Martin Stone.** – Crews over in . Another enhancement win for Crews, who showed off his power and agility. Again, for reasons unbeknownst to me, Crews sold for way longer than he should have just like his debut, before landing his jumping enziguri. Crews won with his Press-slam/Standing moonsault combo.

**Jason Jordan & Chad Gable** were with Devin. Jordan said they were ready for their match against Neville & Crowe. Gable claimed there were on their way to the finals and that Neville would crash and people would forget Crowe ever existed. Gable successfully got Jordan to say his “Ready, willing and Gable” catchphrase.



**Finn Balor** was with Devin and said he was proud to go into NXT’s tour of Texas as the champion. Devin revealed that Balor was in the Dusty Classic and Samoa Joe walked in as his partner. The two shook hands and said they were ready.

**Eva Marie vs. Billie Kay** – Eva Marie over in 3:49. Instead of looking lost and like she didn’t have a clue what she is doing like before, Eva was rushing through all of her spots so she didn’t forget what to do. Billie got a close near-fall and the crowd all booed when Eva kicked out. Finish saw Eva win with Sliced Bread. – She’s still no good, folks.

**Enzo Amore, Big Cass & the Hype Bros** were celebrating their big win in Brooklyn last week. They all argued about where to go and eventually left separately like a bunch of geeks.

**Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic Tournament Round 1: Jason Jordan & Chad Gable vs. Neville & Solomon Crowe.** – Jordan & Gable over in 9:35. Decent match; nothing special. Gable & Jordan schooled the faces with some grappling early and it was awesome. Neville used his speed and agility and the faces cleared the ring for commercial break time cue. Gable & Jordan tossed around Crowe and worked him over for the heat. Neville made the comeback and went for the Red Arrow on Jordan; Gable pulled Jordan out of the way so Neville took him out with a huge moonsault off the post and Crowe landed a tope on Gable. Jordan hit a huge over-head belly to belly on Crowe and the heels hit their Double team back suplex to get the win.

After the spectacle of performing in front of 13,000 people last week, we were back to reality here in the 200 seat Full Sail and the usual not bad, but not great episode of NXT TV. The next month or so will be all about the **Dusty** Classic, which I suppose is something different. Here are the rest of the brackets for the tourney:

Finn Balor & Samoa Joe vs. Lucha Dragons.

Enzo Amore & Colin Cassady vs. Angelo Dawkins & Sawyer Fulton.

Dash & Dawson vs. Tucker Knight & Elias Sampson.

Blake & Murphy vs. The Vaudevillains.

Hype Bros vs. Marcus Louis & Alexander Wolfe.

Tyler Breeze & Bull Dempsey vs. Tomasso Ciampa & Johnny Gargano.

### **RAW Ramblings – September 7<sup>th</sup> 2015.**

**Royal Farms Arena: Baltimore, MD.**

@BenCarass.

As the days get shorter and the nights draw in for the start of Autumn, everybody's favourite, the nothing-happening Holiday editions RAW make a triumphant return! At least on this Labour Day episode there were no Jack-o'-lanterns, pilgrim food fights, miracle on (insert name here) street fights or New Year's Babies in sight. Never fear though, we've got all that to come over the next 3 months or so! To be honest some of that goofy stuff would have probably livened this week's RAW up a bit because it was completely void of anything resembling entertaining, except for those three lovable scamps in the **New Day** of course.



So the main storyline of the show was **Seth Rollins** demanding his horrendously cheap looking statue back from **Sting**, who apparently just takes the thing everywhere he goes as carry-on luggage. **Rollins** did his customary 15 minute promo about how great he is in the opening segment and the fans chanted, “boring” at the World Champion; great. **Sting** appeared on the Tron with the statue and told **Rollins** to “come get it.” Also, **Sheamus** came out and threatened to cash in the

briefcase at Night of Champions; what an idiot! **Rollins** made a comment about **Sheamus** looking like Ronald McDonald and some clueless sap on Creative thought it would be a good idea for **Sheamus** to say, “Hey, don’t talk about my family like that!” – Whoever came up with that needs to be fired, immediately. **Rollins** met with **HHH & Steph** in the back and whined some more; at least this week they didn’t blatantly tell viewers that **HHH vs. Rollins** is the match they really want to see and not **Rollins/Sting**. Since **Rollins** will be defending the US & WWE titles at Night of Champions in two separate matches, **HHH** booked **Rollins** against **Ryback** and then made **Rollins & New Day vs. Cena & The Prime Time Players** in the main event. **Rollins/Ryback** went 17:45 and was the most boring **Seth Rollins** match you are ever likely to see. Finish saw **Sting** appear on the Tron again with the statue and **Rollins** was distracted, which allowed **Ryback** to win with the shellshock. The IC champion pinning the WWE & US champion, you say? They must have made a big deal out of that? – No, they just moved on and barely mentioned it again. **Sting** put one of his cheap gimmick masks on the statue and **Rollins** was outraged. Main event only went 13 minutes and was fine, but after such a dull show it was hard to get into, plus **Xavier Woods** did his best to distract everyone by providing sound effects for the action on his trombone. **Cena** ended up pinning **Kofi Kingston**; I have no idea why. **Cena** did the **PTP’s** dance then all the faces just walked out instead of closing the show to celebrate, which was weird, and **Rollins** was left sulking in the ring. **Sting** showed up again on the Tron and the camera zoomed out to reveal that **Sting** was standing in front of a garbage truck. After making some wacky Joker-**Sting** facials, **Sting** shoved the statue into the trash compactor and the cheap, hollow piece of metal was crushed very anticlimactically. – **Sting** was good, but it was strange seeing him go into goofy Joker-mode. I wish someone would have realised that in the very same arena **Sting** won his first World title when he beat **Ric Flair** at the Great American Bash 1990. Is it so hard to tell the story of the legend, **Sting**, trying to win his first WWE World championship, instead of them fighting over this stupid statue and whether **HHH** is the best ever or not?

The BEST segment on the entire show by a mile was a backstage skit involving **New Day, the Dudley Boyz** and **Edge & Christian**. **Rollins** met with **New Day** before their six-man when **Edge & Christian** showed up. **Rollins** ended up storming off, but they did bring up that stupid angle where **Rollins** threatened to murder **Edge** if **Cena** didn’t bring back the **Authority**. **Xavier** started playing his trombone and **Christian** pulled out the old kazoo for a wind instrument battle! **Christian** played “**New Day Sucks**” while **Edge** sang then **Big E** grabbed the kazoo and ate it! **The Dudleys** showed up and told **New Day** they would defend the Tag belts against the **PTPs** next week. – This was amazing.

I guess the other “big” story was The **Wyatt Family** attacking **Randy Orton** to set him up as **Roman Reigns & Dean Ambrose’s** partner at Night of Champions. First, **Reigns & Ambrose** squashed the **Ascension** in 2:50; they used the Doomsday Device. The **Wyatts** cut a brief pre-tape on the Tron afterwards and said nothing of note. Later, **Orton** was shown just shooting the breeze with **Ambrose & Reigns**, because you know **Randy Orton** is just a nice friendly chap. **Orton** beat **Sheamus** with the RKO in a match I NEVER WANT TO SEE EVER AGAIN at 15:50. Afterwards, the lights went out and the **Wyatt Family** showed up to put a beating on **Orton**. **Strowman** did his terrible Kata Gatame and that goofy slam thing to leave **Orton** lying. In a strange move, the announcers speculated that **Orton** will not want to team with **Reigns & Ambrose** to fight the **Wyatts**, because **Strowman** beat his ass so badly. – I don’t get it either.

The **Rusev/Ziggler/Hot Summer** program continued with an atrocious segment, but before we even got to that, **Michael Cole** hyped it up by calling it “Steamy and sexual” and they aired this god-awful TMZ-style tabloid video package, twice I might add, to build the “drama.” **Summer** cried for betraying **Rusev** and begged him to forgive her. **Rusev** called **Ziggler** a “skinny, hairless American.” **Ziggler** showed up and **Rusev** told him that **Lana** was not there because he broke her heart. **Ziggler** superkicked **Rusev** to end this abomination. – The fans, rightfully, chanted “Boring” during this pile of garbage.



**Crapola:** **Sasha Banks** over **Paige** with a roll-up after a distraction from **Team BAD** at 9:55. Match was solid enough, but the fans didn’t care and lame finishes like this aren’t going to help turn the Divas Revolution around. According to [www.distractionrollup.com](http://www.distractionrollup.com) this was the 16<sup>th</sup> distraction and roll-up finish on RAW in 2015. Backstage, **Renee** interviewed **Ryback**; he was worse than usual, and then **Kevin Owens** showed up. **Owens** was eating an apple and told **Ryback** not to bite off more than he can chew. You see, because **Kevin Owens** is fat. It’s been a nice run for **Owens**, but a program with **Ryback** is certain death, especially if they keep up the food-related tie-ins. Plus, if **Owens** ends up with the IC title it is all over for him. The **Dudley Boyz** squashed **Los Matadores** with the 3D in 1:35. The **Matadors** turned on **El Torito** afterwards and the **Dudleys** saved **Torito** then powerbombed **uno Matador** off the top through a table. **Cesaro & Miz** fought to a double count-out at 4:10. **Big Show** came down and chased **Miz** around the ring then KO’d **Cesaro** for good measure too. **Cesaro** put on **JBL**’s hat and gave **Miz** a running uppercut on the outside then stood on the announce table. **Michael Cole** put this over by saying: “Who says he doesn’t have any charisma?!” – Unbelievable. **Nikki Bella** and her cronies came out and hyped a “Bellabration” (UGH) for next week’s RAW when she is set to break the Divas title record, which the Bellatron was counting down. **Charlotte** & the rest of **PCB** showed up and they exchanged terrible dialogue about **Charlotte** getting her title shot next week. They ended up brawling and **Charlotte** tapped **Nikki** out with the Figure Eight.

On an interesting note, **Michael Cole** announced that next week’s show would be the “Season Premier.” I can’t imagine the start of the Fall Season will be any type of draw for people to tune in instead of watching the first week of the NFL, so why even mention it? Also, by that logic that would make this show the Season Finale! What a way to go out. Also, during **Seth Rollins**’ entrance for the main event, a fan managed to get onto the ramp and walked a couple of steps next

to **Rollins**. They quickly cut away and I'm sure the guy was dragged off and thrown out. Just imagine if this were Mid-South in 1982 and a fan tried this with **Dick Murdoch** or something, hell forget 1982. Imagine if this were **Brock Lesnar**, what kind of damage could have been done. Fine work by the WWE security team.

**WWE NXT – September 9<sup>th</sup> 2015**  
**Full Sail University: Winter Park, FL.**

@BenCarass.



Well, NXT may be a “hot” product with the hardcore fans but the content of the shows is the lowest it has been for a while. With **Charlotte, Becky & Sasha** all gone (for the most part) the next crop of women are simple nowhere near ready to fill the void created by the Divas Revolution. Plus, with **Kevin Owens** out of the picture there is one less main eventer around to carry the shows on a weekly basis. Hopefully **Sami Zayn & Hideo Itami** will be ready to go soon, because the show desperately needs them at this point.

**Carmella vs. Peyton Royce** – **Carmella** over in 5:02. **Royce** is the former **KC Cassidy** and she had a new entrance and gear but was still ultimately a geek. Match was no good and totally clunky. Crowd died during a long chinlock spot; **Carmella** finally made her comeback then inexplicably put **Royce** in a chinlock too. **Royce** made a comeback of her own which wasn't much better than **Carmella's**. Finish saw **Carmella** win with a flat-liner into a Koji-clutch, which of course she executed awkwardly.

**Finn Balor & Samoa Joe** were in the locker room. They agreed to win the tourney for **Dusty** and **Joe** handed **Balor** the NXT title.

They showed highlights of some **Dusty** Classic matches that took place at an NXT House Show. **Enzo Amore & Big Cass** beat **Sawyer Fulton & Angelo Dawkins** with their rocket launcher. Up next were clips of **Scott Dawson & Dash Wilder** advancing to the next round over **Tucker Night**

**& Elias Sampson.** Another **Nia Jax** vignette aired; she said greatness was her destiny.

**Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic Tournament Round 1: Tommaso Ciampa & Johnny Gargano vs. Bull Dempsey & Tyler Breeze.** – **Gargano & Ciampa** over in 6:30. **Gargano & Ciampa** were given entrances, although they came out to some generic crap-rock, and received a decent reaction from the hardcores. There were even “Johnny Wrestling” and “**Tommaso**” chants. Match was pretty basic. **Team Indie** worked well together and looked good; **Bull** did some comedy stuff, which took away from the match slightly. Finish saw **Bull** knock **Breeze** off the apron by mistake and **Team Indie** pinned **Dempsey** with a sunset flip/jackknife pinning combo. Afterwards, **Breeze** attacked **Bull** and left him lying with the supermodel kick. – **Gargano & Ciampa** are not under contract and are working as freelancers, but if they impress the right people I would assume they will be offered some kind of deal. Oh, and a **Breeze/Bull Dempsey** feud? No thank you.



**Lucha Dragons** cut a promo in the back about winning the **Dusty Classic**. **Sin Cara** spoke in Spanish then **Kalisto** said they wanted to honour their “good friend”, **Dusty Rhodes**. After some more Spanish from **Sin Cara**, **Kalisto** put over **Joe & Balor** then told them if they played with fire they would get burned. **Dana Brooke** was with **Devin**; she complained about **Bayley** winning the Women’s title and said she wanted to knock her off the top and take over the women’s division.

**Dana Brooke vs. Billie Kay.** – **Dana Brooke** over in 5:26. They had a, let’s do everything slowly so we don’t screw up, match. There were four geeks with signs in the crowd chanting for Dana, but everybody else was bored to tears by this plodding affair. **Dana** won with her cradle shock finish. – This was terrible. Like another girl they are inexplicably obsessed with, **Eva Marie**, **Dana Brooke** is just no good at all and working doesn’t come naturally to her at all. Don’t worry though, she’ll be given every chance to succeed whereas someone else they don’t have a thing for would have been cut a long time ago.

**Apollo Crews** was with **Devin** in the back. He said the “**Apollo Nation**” would take over **NXT**. They showed that little girl who is always in the front row, **Izzy**, getting a tour of the Full Sail studio and they hyped **Bayley’s** first appearance since winning the Women’s title next week.

**Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic Tournament Round 1: Finn Balor (NXT Champion) & Samoa Joe vs. Lucha Dragons.** – **Joe & Balor** over in 8:30. This was taped at a SmackDown taping in Providence, RI; **Tom Phillips & Jimmy Uso** were on commentary. There were “NXT” and “This is awesome” chants not even a minute into the match. It wasn’t awesome by any stretch of the imagination, but it was a decent match. **Balor** did a big tope con hilo early; **Phillips** talked about **Joe & Balor** training in the California New Japan Dojo. **Dragons** cut off **Balor** and worked him over for the heat. **Joe** ran wild and made a hell of a comeback on both **Dragons**. **Kalisto** hit Joe with a nice rana for a near-fall, but **Joe** came back and killed him with an STO. Finish saw **Joe** give **Kalisto** the muscle buster and **Balor** came off the top with the double stomp to get the pin. – Given more time, this could have been something; still, it was a solid little TV match. I expect **Joe & Balor** to go a long way in the tourney and my ideal scenario would see them lose in the final to **Chad Gable & Jason Jordan**. That would immediately launch **Gable & Jordan** to a new level and give the tag division a much needed shot of legitimacy.

It’s pretty redundant at this point to say this, since you either watch NXT or you don’t, but give this week a miss. There may be some changes coming with the NXT coverage in the next few weeks. The TV show very rarely has anything big or newsworthy happen from week-to-week, so the plan is to go forward with a monthly overview of the product which focuses on the main angles and storylines, plus the development of the talent being pushed. Since, you know, NXT is still developmental after all.

### **Mid-South Wrestling (TV #136)**

**April 15<sup>th</sup> 1982**

**Irish McNeil Boys Club: Shreveport, LA.**

*Ben Carass.*

After only a two week absence, **Jim Ross** was back on commentary with **Boyd Pierce**. **Boyd** ran down the card as usual and hyped the return of **Dick Murdoch**, plus **Ernie Ladd & The Assassin vs. The Samoans**. **Boyd** then introduced **Ross** to the viewers once again and **JR** said he had been around some great wrestling in the past, but claimed that **Grizzly Smith** had put together the, “Greatest television card ever!” **Ross** then talked about the **Andy Kaufman/Jerry Lawler** match



that took place in Memphis on April 5<sup>th</sup> 1982 and threw to a promo from **Bill Watts** about the situation. **Watts**, as you would expect, was deadly serious and went on a tirade about athletes working their way from amateur to pros and said the immortal words: “THERE IS NO MAGIC WAND TO MAKE ANYONE A STAR!” **Watts** called **Kaufman** a “clown” and an “embarrassment” who had humiliated a bunch of women, whom by the way **Watts** also buried for putting themselves in a situation which allowed them to look stupid. **Watts** then explained the angle with **Jerry Lawler** and put the **King** over as a “real tough hombre” and they showed the famous clip from the match of **Lawler** giving **Kaufman** the

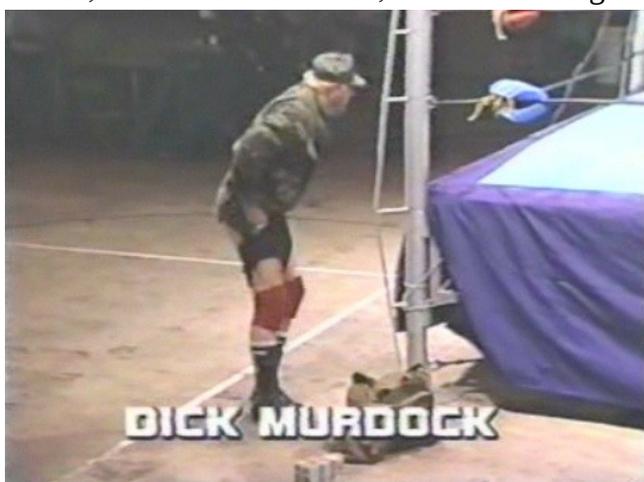
piledriver. The clip was actually from ABC News and had some reporter talking about how **Kaufman** went to the hospital and how that wasn’t “part of the show.” Back with **Watts**, who smugly proclaimed that **Kaufman** found out how “real” wrestling is and that even the great **Muhammad Ali**, in his “prime,” was “spanked” by **Gorilla Monsoon** in 1976. – **Ali** in his prime in

'76? I thought **Watts** was supposed to be a stickler for logic?! Anyway, it was cool seeing the footage from Memphis and I wonder just what people watching in Biloxi, Mississippi in 1982 made of the whole thing; after all, it's not like they were used to this sort of thing with Mid-South Wrestling. **Watts** almost became a parody of himself when putting over how this puny little comedian had no place in the ring with a big bad wrestler. It was great stuff.



**2-on-1 Handicap Match: One Man Gang w/Skandor Akbar vs. Tony Torres & Terry Gibbs.** – **Gang** over in 2:53. Typical **Gang** squash, only he killed two guys instead of one. **Gang** didn't take any bumps for the jobbers and pinned **Torres** with his big splash. – Kind of messy, but it served its purpose.

**Non-Title Match: Bob Roop (North American Heavyweight Champion) vs. Dick Murdoch.** – **Murdoch** via count-out at 2:35. This was so awesome. **Murdoch** came out in a camouflage jacket and hat, like **Killer Karl Kox**, and he had a big duffle bag which he pulled his wrestling tights out



of and put them on at ringside! **Roop** jumped **Murdoch** before the bell and got some heat. **Skandor Akbar** showed up at ringside and **Ross** reminded viewers that **Akbar & One Man Gang** helped **Roop** win the title and that **Akbar's Samoans** had injured **Murdoch**. **Roop** went for a **Vader-bomb** but **Murdoch** got his knees up and made a comeback with some 5 star punches. They ended up on the floor and **Murdoch** pulled out **Killer Karl Kox's** shovel or "trenching tool" as **Boyd Pierce** called it. **Murdoch** nailed **Akbar** with the shovel and **Akbar** sold like death; **JR** was screaming that he was "Out cold!" while **Murdoch** chased **Roop**

with the shovel. **Roop** eventually ran to the back and was counted-out. – My goodness was this great. First, a match between **Roop & Murdoch** can't not be amazing, however this turned into a big revenge angle, with **Murdoch** getting some payback on **Akbar**. It was wild, fun, chaotic and, most importantly, made sense; everything you want out of a pro wrestling angle.

**Paul Orndorff vs. Tully Blanchard.** – **Orndorff** via DQ at 4:36. Like the previous segment, this

was tremendous stuff. The work was fast and crisp; they even did an early fish-out-of-water stand-off spot. **Tully** cheated, so **Orndorff** used great old-school psychology and gave the heel a taste of his own medicine. Some fine storytelling saw **Tully** use the Figure Four, however, as you know, **Orndorff** and **Roop** came up with the counter, so **Orndorff** turned over and reversed the pressure. **Bob Roop** showed up and dropped a big knee off the top onto **Orndorff** while he was still in the Figure Four for the DQ. **Roop** put the boots to **Orndorff** and kicked him out of the ring. **Roop & Tully** stood tall and walked out together. – So great. The action, the booking, the storytelling. It’s all very simple stuff, but it all makes sense and when you are watching it, you realise where the story is going without the announcers beating you over the head.

“**Iron**” **Mike Sharpe vs. Larry Higgins**. – **Sharpe** over in 2:25. As great as the last two segments were, this was equally terrible. **Higgins** was horrendously out of shape and had his tights pulled up almost to his nipples to hide his heaving gut. Story was meant to be that **Higgins** was bigger than **Sharpe**, so **Sharpe** had to come from behind to beat this big guy, however **Higgins** was visible blown up after two minutes and he couldn’t even run the ropes anymore. It would have been hilarious if it weren’t so pathetic. **Sharpe** won with a bearhug.

Everyone was in the ring for the **Ernie Ladd & The Assassin vs. The Samoans** main event. **Assassin** stole **Reeser Bowden’s** mic and cut a promo about how he was a mercenary who worked for money. He said that **Ladd** had paid him well to come back and help him fight **Akbar’s Army**, however he received a phone call this morning from **Skandor Akbar** himself! **Assassin** explained



that **Akbar** had paid him even more money than **Ladd** and he called **Ernie** a “Big Dummy” then walked out of the ring. **Ladd** was confused and flustered, so he asked for a minute to try find another partner or he would come back and fight the **Samoans** on his own. **Boyd Pierce**, who may or may not have been drunk, was totally lost and **JR** had to explain the entire angle to him, which was hilarious. **Boyd & JR** stalled for time while **Ladd** was gone and **Ross** put the **Assassin** over as a “Bounty Hunter.” **Ladd** returned a couple of minutes later with “**Iron**” **Mike Sharpe** and a four-way brawl

broke out with the **Samoans**. The big tough faces stood tall, however the **Assassin** showed up again and he took out **Sharpe** with his “**LOADED**” MASK! Just as it appeared hopeless for **Ladd**, **Paul Orndorff** stormed the ring and he and **Ladd** cleaned house of the dirty heels. – Well, this was just great. From the **Assassin** swerve and him taking out **Sharpe**, to **Orndorff** showing up to help; THIS RULED! Again, without the announcers explaining things to the viewers like a bunch of idiots, they allowed fans to realise on their own that **Orndorff** was screwed out of the North American title by **Bob Roop & Skandor Akbar’s** “double, double cross” so him showing up to help made all the sense in the world.

After all that craziness, we had an interesting segment. At the desk, **Boyd & JR** put over “6 time” former World Heavyweight Champion, **Harley Race** and **Boyd** said we were going to see footage of **Race** in action from “Atlanta, Georgia.” What we actually got was a match between **Harley Race** and **Terry Taylor** from Florida in 1980. I don’t know if **Boyd** was confused or if they were

just trying to work the viewers, but it was obviously footage from Florida because there was a huge banner over the ring that said “CWF



Championship Wrestling '80.” Plus, it was in the Florida TV studio and **Gordon Solie** talked about **Race** being the current 4 time NWA champion. So, this match had to have taken place before September 4<sup>th</sup> 1980, when **Race** lost the NWA title for the second time to **Giant Baba** in Japan. The match was joined in progress and **Race** pretty much dominated **Taylor**; **Race** used a piledriver but **Taylor** got his foot on the rope to stop the count. **Race** finally won with a vertical “supley,” as **Gordon Solie** called it. (4:40 shown) – Like the Memphis stuff earlier, it was fun to see footage from other territories; even if it was 18

months old. I presume **Race** will be coming in for a shot or two in the next few weeks; why else would they have shown this footage otherwise?

**Jesse Barr vs. Buddy Landel.** – TV Time Limit Draw at 3:08. **Boyd & Ross** talked about the **Ladd/Assassin/Orndorff/Samoans angle**. **Akbar** showed up on commentary and said that **Dick Murdoch** would pay for laying him out with the shovel. If you're wondering if they went all WWE and had **Akbar** no-selling the shovel shot, well **Boyd Pierce** had you covered as he explained that, even though the viewers couldn't see him, **Akbar** looked groggy and was holding an ice pack to his head. Genius. The geeks in the ring did stuff until the time ran out. **Boyd & JR** hyped the “Girl wrestlers” for next week and a “big six-man”, the return of **Ted Dibiase** and the debut of **Jim Duggan** in two weeks.

Another stellar hour of pro wrestling from Mid-South this week. The three big angles were all fantastic and they all tied into each other. **Akbar** coming out during **Roop's** match and **Murdoch** getting his revenge, **Roop** attacking **Paul Orndorff** to keep their feud alive, and **Orndorff** helping **Ernie Ladd** fight off **Akbar's** goons after the **Assassin** turned heel. We also got a couple of fun little Easter eggs, with the Memphis footage of **Lawler & Kaufman** and **Harley Race** in Florida. Over the years Mid-South has gained almost mythical status among hardcore fans and tape traders/collectors as the greatest and most soundly booked wrestling television show of all-time. Well when you watch the show from week to week and see how everything develops logically like, and imagine this, A STORY, plus all the little nuances that are no longer apart of pro wrestling , it is hard not to buy into the legend of Mid-South Wrestling.

### Mid-South Wrestling (TV #137)

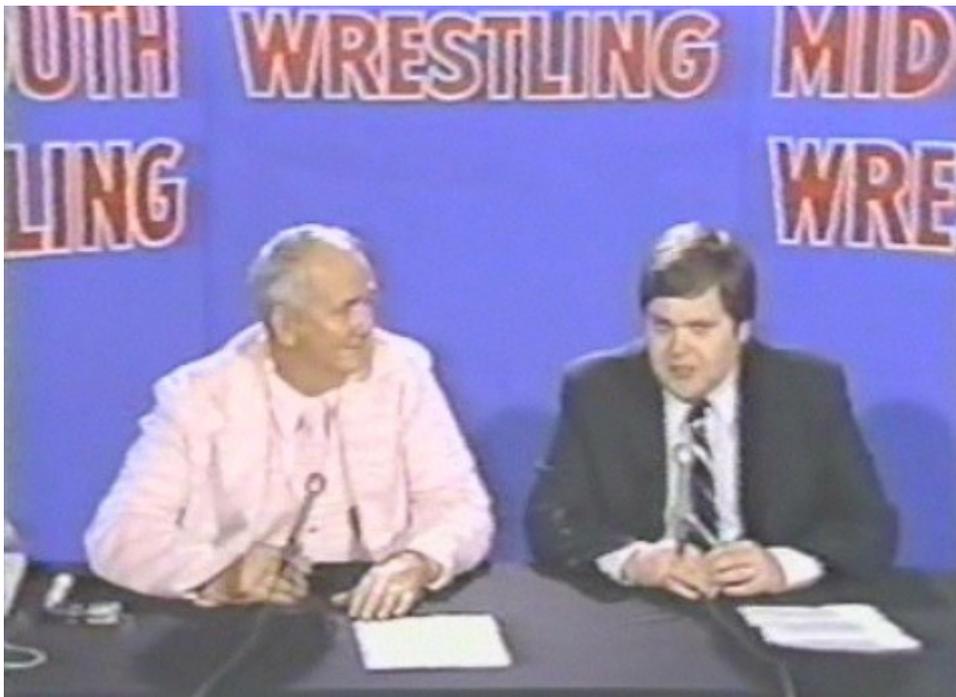
April 22<sup>nd</sup> 1982

Irish McNeil Boys Club: Shreveport, LA.

@BenCarass.

**Boyd Pierce & Jim Ross** opened the show from the announce desk and as usual **Boyd** ran down the card. **Ross** pretty much said the exact same thing as last week, putting over **Grizzly Smith** for booking a great card etc., so much so that I thought I was watching last week's episode again. Thankfully, **Boyd Pierce** was wearing his amazing pink suit which assured me I had the correct show.

**Paul Orndorff vs. Larry Higgins.** – **Orndorff** over in 2:48. You may recall last week I buried **Higgins** for being fat and atrocious, well he was much worse here and **Orndorff** knew it. Instead of selling for the bigger man and fighting from underneath, **Orndorff** just pounded on the hapless **Higgins** and gave him absolutely nothing. It was clear **Orndorff** was aware that he was working with a giant sack of manure and when **Higgins** didn't get up for the powerslam, which was the finish, **Orndorff** made him do it again and looked furious when the match was over. – **Higgins** is just the absolute worst. He's out of shape, can't move and apparently can't even remember basic spots. The only good thing about this was JR hyping a potential **Orndorff/Bob Roop** singles match.



**“Iron” Mike Sharpe vs. Ron Cheatham.** – **Sharpe** over in 3:05. **JR** tried to put **Sharpe** over as a future superstar, but the guy just oozed banality and wasn't great in the ring either. Mercifully, **Sharpe** won with a hideous dropkick, although it wasn't the worst on the show, and a bearhug.

**Wendy Richter vs. Velvet McIntyre.** – **Velvet** over in 4:07. **Resser Bowden** introduced the women by saying it was time for the “beautiful part of the event” and, to be fair, the way **Wendy Richter** looked in 1982 he wasn't lying. **Wendy** had just come in from Calgary, where she teamed with **Joyce Grable** as the **Texas Cowgirls** for a series of matches against **Velvet McIntyre & Judy Martin**. **Wendy** had her cowboy hat and boots on and looked tremendous. It was clear these gals had worked together many times, as they had their match down. They traded holds for a while then it was time for the old dog-pile roll spot that **Jack Doan** used to take in the WWF. **Wendy** got hot at the pervy ref and tossed **Velvet** around with some hair biels. **Velvet** made her comeback and won with a goofy rollup. – The match wasn't particularly good by any means, although it wasn't horrible. I still can't get over the way **Wendy** looked! If I had been 16 in 1982...

**Bob Roop (North American Heavyweight Champion) & Tully Blanchard vs. Cocoa Samoa & Buddy Landel.** – **Roop & Tully** over in 6:07. This is where the show picked up. **Cocoa** shone with a bunch of armdrags to the heels and there was an early four-way standoff. **Cocoa** hit his SPRINGBOARD sunset Flip on **Roop** but they landed too close to the rope so the referee didn't

count. **Landel** ran wild and cleaned house with a series of bodyslams. The heels finally cut **Cocoa** off with an illegal double team and worked him over for the heat. **Landel** got the hot tag, but the heels sent **Cocoa** to the floor and illegally double teamed **Landel** some more. Finish saw **Roop** pin **Buddy** with a jumping knee and a big leg drop. – Good, solid action. The heels bumped like bosses and made the faces look really good before they cheated their way to victory.

At the desk, **Boyd & JR** recapped the **Assassin** turning on **Ernie Ladd** and the following angle with **Paul Orndorff** coming out to help fight off the **Samoans**, which they then showed footage of. **JR** said that **Skandor Akbar** had paid off the **Assassin** with, “oil money.”

**The Assassin vs. Terry Gibbs.** – **Assassin** over in 4:52. This was hands down the most boring match I have seen in the five months of doing these Mid-South reviews. **Assassin (Jody Hamilton)** was completely out of shape and looked atrocious. I know the **Assassins** are one of the most legendary teams of all time, but my goodness **Hamilton** was wretched here. They worked a match



that consisted of **Assassin** sitting in a side headlock then doing a basic highspot every two minutes or so. **Boyd Pierce** assured viewers that this was the “original” **Assassin**, but the live crowd didn’t care at all and literally sat in silence. **Gibbs** landed a horrible hiptoss that **Hamilton** barely went over for then the **Assassin** threw one of the worst dropkicks I have ever seen. Finish saw the **Assassin** win with a headbutt and his mask may or may not have been loaded. – This was so mind-numbingly boring, it felt like I was watching a Crockett, Mid-Atlantic TV match from ’82.

Back with **Boyd & JR**. **Boyd** put over **Dick Murdoch** for being an ex-marine tough guy then said there was “a little ANGLE” last week between **Murdoch & Skandor Akbar**, which they then showed. **JR** looked at **Boyd** like he had three heads when he said “angle,” but since he was fairly new to the territory he just sat there and kept his mouth shut.

**Skandor Akbar’s Army: The Samoans (Mid-South Tag Team Champions) & One Man Gang vs. JYD (Louisiana Heavyweight Champion), Dick Murdoch & Mr Olympia (Mississippi Heavyweight Champion).** – TV Time Limit Draw/No Contest due to Craziess at 2:00. Usually

the “main event” on Mid-South goes on during the middle of the show, so I knew something was up when this big match was put on last with only a few minutes of air time left. **JYD** sent **Gang** over the top early with some wacky punches then it broke down big time with everybody brawling all over the place. **Murdoch** got **Killer Karl Kox’s** shovel out of his duffle bag and nailed both **Samoans**, who bumped like crazy. The heels fled and the faces stood tall to close the show. – I think they were trying to have the time limit run out just as **Murdoch** used the shovel, so there would be no need to call for a DQ, however their timing was slightly off and the bell didn’t ring until long after the heels had run away. Still, this was all kinds of wild and it was a great way to go off the air.

Compared to the last couple of weeks, this show was pretty weak. **Orndorff** tried his best with a great big lump and **Mike Sharpe** attempted to send everyone to sleep, which the **Assassin** successfully managed to achieve with his unbelievably boring match. The **Roop/Tully** tag match was good and seeing **Cocoa** do his springboard in 1982 never gets old. As mentioned, the main event was fun while it lasted and going off the air amidst all the craziness was a nice hook for next week. However, for me, the story of the show was **Wendy Richter** and I recommend finding this episode if you are a fan of Dallas Cowgirls, which I am!

### Next Week's Issue

In next week's issue we hope to not only cover WWE's Night of Champions, but also the upcoming Wrestling Observer Hall of Fame balloting, NXT, and Mid-South!

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