



**Cubed Circle Newsletter 203 – Observer Hall of Fame Discussion, Pro-Wres Digest, CMLL Anniversary Show, ROH All Star Extravaganza & More!**

We have a colossal issue for you this week, not only covering all of the major news stories of the week in the The Pro-Wres Digest with Ben Carass, but also more on the Observer Hall of Fame, Ring of Honor's All Star Extravaganza, CMLL's Anniversary show, RAW, Night of Champions, and Mid-South from 1982! There is something for everyone this week, without a doubt.

– Ryan Clingman, *Cubed Circle Newsletter Editor*

**The Pro-Wres Digest for September 19<sup>th</sup> – September 26<sup>th</sup> 2015**

*Ben Carass.*

A shocking story broke on Sunday concerning the brother of Kurt Angle, David. The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette website reported that David Angle is being charged with the homicide of his wife, Donna Angle. Police were called on a domestic disturbance report and when they arrived at the scene they found Mrs Angle unresponsive. She was later pronounced dead at the local hospital. Kurt Angle Tweeted on Tuesday about the situation and asked people to respect his family's privacy while they mourn their loss.

I'm sure everyone is well aware that Sting was advertised for RAW a couple of hours before the show started and he never appeared on the show because he was at home recovering from his neck injury. On Monday Sting's agent, Steve Martinez, made a statement, the gist of which was that doctors will continue to evaluate him and the "greatest damage" Sting sustained was "before the match was over." Martinez put Sting over for being a dedicated professional and continuing the match. On Wednesday, WWE.com ran an exclusive interview with Sting and he revealed that the injury was a result of taking two turnbuckle spots. It is unclear if he was referring to the two buckle bombs specifically, however the second buckle bomb was certainly the incident that caused the most damage. "Both times into the turnbuckle [...] The second time, I went up into the air and back toward the turnbuckle like that, I thought, "Well, that's not going to happen again," and it did. The second time was worse." Sting also noted that it was his own fault and said that Seth Rollins stuck his head in the ambulance for 15 minutes while he apologized and spoke about how much it meant to work with Sting. The concerning part of the interview is that Sting mentioned the doctors diagnosed him with cervical spinal stenosis, the condition that forced guys like Edge and Steve Austin to retire. Sting also said he wasn't sure if it would be his last match and we'd have to wait and see what happens next. Another interesting note was that he called Seth Rollins, "the best I've ever worked with."

ROH is expanding into some more domestic TV markets. The company announced on Monday that ROH TV would be starting soon on WNCN in Philadelphia, WMYD in Detroit and WMCN in Charlotte. Additionally, they have worked out a six month TV deal to air in France on L'Equipe 21.

If like myself you are sick to the back teeth of three hours of Monday Night RAW and a completely useless TNA iMPACT show, which may not even be on the air much longer, then the best news of the year broke on Monday evening when Lucha Underground Executive Producer, Eric Van Wagenen, announced on his Twitter that the series will definitely return for a second season! Hollywood news site, Deadline.com, ran a story on the show being renewed and according to them: "The series will go back into production in the Boyle Heights neighborhood of Los Angeles in the fourth quarter of 2015 for premiere on El Rey Network in early 2016." The article doesn't really give any more information, however there is an interesting note towards the end which claims, "[t]he series will be distributed internationally by United Artists Media Group." Presumably this is in reference to Televisa in Mexico and it would be a huge step forward if Lucha Underground can work something out with the huge media conglomerate. More news will certainly emerge in the coming weeks, but for now the important thing is that they apparently have the funds needed to start production on Season Two and the TV tapings will begin sometime before the end of the year. It will be interesting to see if everyone from the first season will be brought back and what changes are made to the show. At the end of season one Dario Cueto flat out said "We need to find a new temple," so maybe they'll be shooting in a new location in Boyle Heights or perhaps they will just give the old temple a makeover. Rey Mysterio should also be making his debut for the company, as one of the final shots of the last episode of season one was the Lucha Underground billboard with Mysterio's question mark spray painted over it.



In more sad news, 31 year-old British wrestler, Kris Travis, announced on his Twitter on Monday that he is retiring from the business. Travis went through a battle with stomach cancer last year and had to pull out of TNA's British Bootcamp show because of his diagnosis. Despite beating the disease after having surgery to remove part of his stomach and going through chemotherapy, Travis was hospitalised with severe stomach cramps last week and had to miss some dates he was booked for. Travis received an outpouring of support, not just from his peers on the UK scene, but from

guys and girls he had worked with all over the world, when he tweeted: "I'm going to put this out there right now...I won't ever be wrestling ever again. Gutted yes. But I have to accept this. Lots of love. X". Late last year an indiegogo was set up by Preston City Wrestling promoter, Steven Fludder, to help Travis with the cost of therapy and the goal of £5,000 was reached in just two months, which should give you an idea of how popular Travis is to his peers and fans. We wish him the best of luck and hope he lives a happy and healthy life outside of wrestling.

On a similarly depressing note, Akira Hokuto, one of the greatest female wrestlers of all-time, revealed on Wednesday that she is battling breast cancer. Hokuto, 48, announced she would be having surgery on her right breast on Thursday the 24<sup>th</sup>, which thankfully was successful, and production of her TV show "Hokuto Family" would be delayed. Hokuto, along with her husband, Kensuke Sasaki, are the only married couple to be voted into the Wrestling Observer Hall of Fame and they are also a big celebrity couple in Japan. Best of luck to Hokuto on a speedy recovery.

In yet more miserable news, long time Jersey All Pro promoter, "Fat" Frank Iadevaia passed away in his sleep on Wednesday night. He ran JAPW from 1997 until today and gave exposure to guys like Low-Ki, Jay Lethal and Homicide before there was ever a Ring of Honor. Guys like Chris Hero, Jay Lethal and Gabe Sapolsky Tweeted their condolences and memories of Iadevaia, who was only 43 years old.

Gabe Sapolsky announced on his Twitter on Tuesday that former UFC fighter, Matt Riddle, would be making his debut for the Evolve the weekend of the 17/18<sup>th</sup> of October in New York. Riddle, 29, has been training at the Monster Factory in New Jersey since October 2014 and has only had a few matches on essentially training camp shows at the gym against fellow trainees. Dave Meltzer noted in this week's Observer that people have speculated that Evolve using Riddle is confirmation of a deal between WWE and Evolve. According to Meltzer, WWE were interested in Riddle, who reportedly blew everybody away during the cardio drills at his WWE try-out, and "Riddle being in Evolve was a suggestion by WWE to Evolve, but not an official directive." It should be made clear that there is "no deal in place right now" between WWE and Evolve, however this is certainly another tentative step towards some kind of working relationship between the two companies.

The card for the October 3<sup>rd</sup> WWE Network special from Madison Square Garden has been released. Obviously Brock Lesnar vs. Big Show is the big selling point, but other matches include: Seth Rollins vs. John Cena in a Cage match, New Day vs. The Dudley Boyz for the Tag Team titles, Kevin Owens vs. Chris Jericho for the IC title, Rusev vs. Ziggler and, unfortunately, Sheamus vs. Randy Orton. I can see the MSG crowd turning on that last match with a vengeance.

Just like the changing of the seasons and the turning back of the clocks, Vince McMahon has had his usual Fall/Football season freak-out due to the RAW ratings slipping to the lowest levels since 1997. In addition to changing the WrestleMania main event and having Lesnar/Undertaker take place at Hell in a Cell on October 25<sup>th</sup>, WWE have lined-up a loaded go-home show for the October 19<sup>th</sup> RAW from Dallas, TX, the home city of WrestleMania 32. Shawn Michaels, Steve Austin, Ric Flair, Brock Lesnar and the Undertaker are all scheduled to appear and you would think that being in Dallas we will get some sort of idea or tease of a new direction for WrestleMania.

Steve Austin lashed out on Twitter at the rumour being perpetuated by cut-and-paste sites that he would be facing Brock Lesnar at WrestleMania 32. "You can take my name off the rumour mill as a Brock Lesnar opponent at WrestleMania 32. Bullsh\*t reporting." How anyone could possibly believe that a man who has not wrestled in over 11 years, with a neck that is one bad bump away from paralysis, or even worse, would ever have a match with Brock Lesnar is laughable. Just like

the Sting/Undertaker match that is seemingly never going to happen, speculation about Austin returning for one last match at WrestleMania comes up every year, and every year it doesn't happen it gets more and more unlikely that it ever will.

Stop the presses, Tammy Sytch was arrested again on Wednesday. She missed her court hearing on September 3<sup>rd</sup> for her previous arrest on May 30<sup>th</sup> for driving with a suspended licence. Sytch is being held in Carbon County Correctional Facility in Nesquehoning, PA and was scheduled to appear before a judge on Friday. We have no word at press time what the situation is, but it wouldn't be beyond the realm of reason that she ends up being held in custody until her trial in December.

Revolution Pro Wrestling and New Japan Pro Wrestling will be joining forces again and running two big shows next weekend in the UK. "Uprising" will take place on October 2<sup>nd</sup> at York Hall in the Bethnal Green area of East London and "War of the Worlds" is the following night in Reading at the Rivermead Leisure Complex. Providing that I get on the correct trains and underground tubes, I shall be attending both shows so we'll likely have another road report in the coming weeks.

Card for Uprising, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, York Hall, Bethnal Green: \* Undisputed British Heavyweight Championship: AJ Styles (c) vs. 'The Villain' Marty Scurll vs. Will Ospreay. \* NJPW Tag Team Challenge Match: Kazuchika Okada & Gedo vs. Hiroshi Tanahashi & Jushin Thunder Liger. \* International Challenge Match: Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Big Damo.\* No Disqualification Grudge Match: Jimmy Havoc vs. Josh Bodom.\* Best of Super Junior Finals Rematch: Kyle O'Reilly vs. Kushida.\* Mark Haskins vs. Tatsuya Naito.\* ACH was announced to face Kris Travis, but after Travis announced his retirement this week it is unclear who will be taking his place.

Card for War of the Worlds, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, Rivermead Leisure Complex, Reading: \* AJ Styles vs. Jushin 'Thunder' Liger. \* Kazuchika Okada vs. Will Ospreay. \*Marty Scurll vs. Shinsuke Nakamura. \* Big Damo vs. Hiroshi Tanahashi. \* Tetsuya Naito vs. Kushida vs. Kris Travis (again, there may be a replacement for Travis.) Plus: The Bullet Club: Karl Anderson & Doc Gallows.

Sadly, the NOAH 9/18 show from Osaka has not surfaced yet, so we are unable to bring you coverage of the show this week. The results of the top three matches are as follows. Daisuke Harada beat Taichi for the GHC Jr title, The Killer Elite Squad retained the GHC Tag title over War Machine, and Minoru Suzuki successfully defended the GHC Heavyweight title over Takeshi Sugiura. NOAH vice president, Naomichi Marufuji, made a statement following Suzuki's win over Sugiura and said that if he, or anyone else, is unable to defeat Suzuki for the GHC title by the end of the year then he would be prepared to disband NOAH completely. Suzuki replied in a press conference that NOAH should just fold now and that the upcoming Global League should be renamed the, "Minoru Suzuki League."

Asuka, aka, KANA, made her WWE debut on NXT this week. They did a similar deal to Hideo Itami and Finn Balor, in that her indie name appeared on the screen and then changed to her new WWE alias. Asuka played happy, smiling babyface and said she was happy to be in NXT and wanted to become the women's champion. Dana Brooke & Emma came out and played mean girls and told Asuka to leave. Asuka did indeed leave, however when she got to the top of the ramp she turned around and gave the two heels a look that said, "I am going to kill you, slowly." It was a decent segment. The only other thing of note on the show is that Eva Marie & Carmella had one of the worst matches of the entire year.

## **Wrestling Observer Hall of Fame 2015 Discussion Part II: Modern Bias**

*Ryan Clingman*

A recent discussion on the Pro-Wrestling Only message board raised several interesting issues regarding the Wrestling Observer Hall of Fame. One of the biggest points raised, one worthy of debate, and that has been discussed in different forms for quite some time, is that of modern bias amongst certain balloters. This is the question of whether modern performers, particularly in the Modern North America and Japanese categories, are judged with less rigour and more concessions than their historical counterparts.

This is a relevant discussion to have, and has been raging mostly in the form of age-limit debate in recent years. There is, at the very least, a significant minority of voters and observers of Hall of Fame discussion that believe that the minimum age limit should be raised from its current limit of 35 years, or 15 years in the business, to 40 years or 20 years in the business – some believe it should be higher. This would, of course result in a greater degree of historical perspective on the careers of most modern performers. However, emphasis is placed on the idea of performers being evaluated in the context of their era, by people who followed their careers in full, and in real time where possible, which would make the raising of the age limit improbable.



A larger concern, should perhaps be the standards to which modern performers are held. This, at very glance, would seem an easy enough task, however, when considering current business models, and changes that have taken place within the last fifteen years, defining a draw in 2015, or even 2010, can be a very difficult task. For one, there is, for all intents and purposes in the United States, a single major promotion, where the value of the brand far out-weighs that of any individual performer or group of performers. What is more, is that in the years to come concrete metrics will become ever more scarce with the loss of quarter hours and pay-per-view numbers becoming all but a thing of the past, at least for the WWE.

It can then be suggested that either only stars of the calibre of John Cena, seemingly once in a generation type stars, will be inducted, or none will. CM Punk, for example, as far as drawing goes, is by no means a Hall of Fame candidate in the eyes of most, it would seem. However, as a creative figure in the industry, a performer, and influence he may have a strong case, particularly in future years, when his influence on the WWE and their roster will become more (or less) apparent.

On the other hand, a performer like Randy Orton, held in incredibly high regard by those who have worked with him, as well as with former wrestlers to some extent, bolsters little chance for

induction, even if he was the star second from the top for the majority of the last seven or so years. This isn't necessarily an argument for Orton, and in actual fact something far from it, as I wouldn't give Orton the most cursory of thoughts as a candidate at this time. Nevertheless, there should be more open discussion dedicated to deciding to what standards modern performers should be judged, even if a consensus will be hard to come by.

A related topic that was also addressed in said thread, was that on leniency towards the likes of Saito and Funaki in the Hall of Fame, and whilst there may be room to argue that those two did not deserve induction, I have no qualms with their status, especially, in the case of Funaki, given the duality between MMA and pro-wrestling in Japan. But, there are inductees such as Ultimo Dragon, whose inclusion is a little more debatable, although he did have undeniable influence, especially when considering the formation of Toryumon, and the birth of Dragon Gate that followed. Of course, Ultimo's inclusion sets a large precedent for Cima's induction too. At the same time, I don't see Shinsuke Nakamura, at least at this time, as a worthy inductee, which is a shame considering the likelihood of his induction.



This isn't to say that Nakamura hasn't had a great career, because he has, and his reinvention in the 2010s should be at least mentioned in any argument for his induction. Still, whilst showcasing an 13 year career, he was only really Hall of Fame worthy for a third of them. He has been a consistently great worker over the past few years, and on his best days perhaps one of the best in the world. However, whilst consistently great, there have been others in the company, particularly fellow candidate Minoru Suzuki who saw a far more complex career in many respects. Nakamura is a candidate that I would have liked to have seen assessed for the first time at the age of forty, as the status of his legacy will have taken a much clearer form several years down the line than it has now. And this can be seen as one of the major benefits of a 40 year-old age limit, as many performers are still peaking at the age of 35, and some even have their largest career hot-streaks and failures, years later.

Another likely first ballot Hall of Famer is Daniel Bryan in the Modern US/Canada category, a man who will be on my ballot, perhaps a hypocritical move, although one that I have justified internally. Firstly, there are several performers in the Hall of Fame such as Shawn Michaels and Kurt Angle, who were both inducted primarily on work, one perhaps prematurely so (although I have very much

enjoyed Angle as a worker over the years), both of whom were inferior workers to Danielson/Bryan in my eyes. Of course, in 2015 issuing criticism to the work of Shawn Michaels isn't commonplace, but I do believe his body of work to have been somewhat overplayed over the years. He was an outstanding worker, but certainly not one of the greatest of all time. Bryan, on the other hand, depending on the day, may very well fit into that category, producing a vast and diverse catalogue of matches throughout his career. At the same time, he acted as an example of just how far an indie performer, who the company wasn't particularly high on, could go when possessing as much talent as he did.

The drawing argument for Bryan is an interesting one, as he wasn't a major draw for the WWE, nor was he given the chance to be. However, he drew far above his push, and was the ace of Ring of Honor. But, how much weight should being the ace of a mid-2000s indie really carry? Not a lot it would seem, at least at face value, but emerging from that mid-2000s ROH company were perhaps future central components of the main stream scene, Zayn, Owens, Cesaro, and Rollins, with perhaps more to come in future years. We don't have ROH DVD sales figures like we had buy-rates for the same time period, nor do we have concrete merchandise numbers, and so putting concrete numbers to Bryan's ROH is difficult, although I would wager that shows featuring Danielson drew more than ones that didn't, although this is simply a hunch.

A candidate I have gone back and forth on for quite some time on is Volk Han, who was, at very best the largest draw for a medium sized mid-to-late 1990s Japanese promotion, and for the majority of his career the top gaijin in the promotion, but a distant overall second to company founder and ace Akira Maeda. Volk Han, however, was maybe the best hyper-realistic shoot style wrestler in the history of the business, and this is of course from his very first match onward. By this fact he should be inducted, as Kurt Angle acts as a precedent for someone who was an outstanding rookie, and was inducted off of that and work rate alone. But, I do think that voters at the time of Angle's induction expected him to reach the status of an all-time great in the business, something that he didn't end up attaining. Volk Han doesn't have that prospect, as beyond being retired, he was the greatest rookie and best ever in a style that is largely dead, which may hurt his case in the eyes of many voters. However, with the likes of Benoit, Michaels, and Angle as inductees, I feel compelled to vote for him, with perhaps the only detraction being his astonishingly small match catalogue of under 50 matches.

Unfortunately, I haven't seen quite enough of Volk Han's most famous opponent, Kiyoshi Tamura, to justify a much needed vote to keep him on the ballot. Although, I hope to conduct some research in the following year, as he may have been close to Volk Han's level in the style whilst still performing in a more traditional environment outside of RINGS for many years. As long as he breaks the threshold percentage of 10, Tamura will remain on the ballot, unlike Volk Han, who requires 50 percent for continued inclusion.

I believe this will be our penultimate week of pre-ballot submission discussion, and as such my current preliminary ballot is as follows.

### **Modern US/Canada:**

Daniel Bryan  
Ivan Koloff

## Japan:

Mike & Ben Sharpe  
Volk Han

### CMLL 82 Anniversary Show – September 18<sup>th</sup> 2015

**Arena Mexico, Mexico City: Mexico.**

*Ben Carass.*

Personally, I thought CMLL's 82<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary was the best show on one of the biggest weekends of the year. During the undercard it didn't necessarily have the "big event" feel like Wrestle Kingdom or WrestleMania, however as the show went on you did get the feeling that you were watching something important. The arena was apparently not completely sold-out, however it looked packed and came across great on TV. They broke out the dancing girls, a common staple of big lucha libre shows, but other than that there wasn't really too much in terms of production to get excited about. If there was ever a one match show, since **L.A Park & Dr Wanger Jr's** latest spat with the company put the brakes on their scheduled match, this was it.

The main event saw 52 year-old, **Atlantis**, defeat and unmask 25 year-old, **La Sombra** in an excellent match, two falls to one. **Atlantis** won the first fall via DQ when **Rush** interfered, **Sombra** took the second fall with a rolling deadlift powerbomb, and **Atlantis** used the Atlantida to get the submission in the third fall. As noted, the match was great as it basically consisted of **Sombra** beating the hell out of **Atlantis** forever and the old-time legend making a triumphant comeback to successfully defend his mask for the umpteenth time. **Sombra** was the star of the match, however **Atlantis** was also very good for his age and held up his end of the deal also. There was super heat for the match and when **Atlantis** won the place lost their minds. The post-match unmasking was an emotional deal, with **La Sombra's** mother shown crying in the crowd then his father and brothers got in the ring and they were crying too. **Sombra** cut a babyface promo and put over **Atlantis**; **Rush** gave him a hug before he unmasked and **Sombra's** dad was the one to unmask his son. It didn't have the same emotion as the **Ultimo Guerrero** unmasking last year, but hey what do you expect with only a month of build? The decision to have **Atlantis** win may seem like a stupid idea, considering **Sombra** is CMLL's top star in waiting and without the mask he looks like just another guy, but what else do they have other than **Atlantis** defending his mask every year to try and sell out Arena Mexico? Don't get me wrong, I thought the right thing to do for long term business was to put **Sombra** over, however CMLL makes a lot of money on the increased ticket prices for their big Anniversary shows and without **Atlantis**, they probably feared their business would drop off quickly. I'm interested to see if **Sombra** shows up on the 2016 Fantasicamania shows in New Japan with his mask and do an unmasking for the Japanese fans like **Volador Jr & Ultimo Guerrero** before him. Speaking of **Volador Jr**, they set him up for a big hair vs. hair program with **Rush**, who has never lost his hair, and I assume **Rush** will come out on top and be built as the next guy to go after **Atlantis'** mask next year. Intentional or not, CMLL have created themselves a situation similar to the **Undertaker's** WrestleMania Streak, in that their most popular legend is defending something the fans don't really want to see being taken away and each year it will become more difficult to find an opponent to promote as a legitimate threat. Unlike the Streak however, CMLL are pretty much relying on **Atlantis** defending his mask every year to do big business on their major show of the year. WrestleMania will continue to do well with or without the **Undertaker**, however what happens when **Atlantis** cannot physically go anymore and all the young guys who are potential stars, like **Sombra & Rush**, have already failed to beat him on the biggest stage?

There's not much point in me going through a play-by-play of all the matches, because its lucha and that would be ridiculous, plus none of the undercard matches were that great anyway.

Opener saw **Disturbio, Puma & Virus** beat **Esfinge, Fuego & Panther**. Rudos won when their captain pinned tecnico captain, **Fuego**, in the third fall. It was a solid way to start the show. Next was **Guerrero Maya Jr, Maximo & Stuka Jr** over **Dragon Rojo Jr, Polvora & Rey Escorpion**. If there was ever any doubt that titles don't mean anything in Mexico, World Heavyweight Champion, **Maximo**, was in the second match here. **Stuka Jr** did his awesome backwards dive off the post. **Polvora** used a dominator off the top to pin **Maya** in the first fall. **Maximo** downed **Escorpion** with a kiss into a cradle in the second fall and **Escorpion** came back to pin **Maximo** with a package piledriver to get the win for the rudos and presumably to set him up for a title match. Third match saw **Dark Angel**, in her farewell performance in CMLL before she heads to the WWE Performance Centre to help train the likes of **Dana Brooke**, beat **Princesa Sugehit** with the La Reineria submission. Match was solid enough, but it went way too long and the people weren't really into it that much. **Dark Angel** did a promo afterwards about her time in Mexico and thanked **Paco Alonso**. Third from the top was **Dragon Lee, Mistico & Valiente** over **Felino, Mr Niebla & Negro Casas**. This was probably the second best match on the show, with a ton of dives and moves. Crowd hated **Mistico** and loved **Niebla & Negro**. Technico captain, **Mistico** submitted rudo captain, **Niebla** with La Mistica in the third fall. For the record, **Negro Casas**, at 54, is still freaking awesome! Semi-Final saw **Shocker, Ultimo Guerrero & Volador Jr** over **Marco Corleone, Thunder & Rush** via DQ when **Rush** shoved down referee **Tirantes** during the third fall. Match was kind of sloppy in places, but the fans were into **Guerrero, Volador** and they hated **Rush**. Afterwards, **Volador**, who with his long hair looked like two-time Olympic gold medallist, American Snowboarder, Shaun White, challenged **Rush** to a hair vs. hair match which **Rush** will assuredly win.

### **ROH All Star Extravaganza VII – September 18<sup>th</sup> 2015**

**Texas Shrine Auditorium: San Antonio, TX.**

*Ben Carass.*

You are always guaranteed good wrestling with Ring of Honor and All Star Extravaganza VII was no different, however certain questionable booking decisions and a crowd that wasn't afraid to sit on their hands took away from the overall presentation of the show. I know ROH is a TV wrestling company now and as such they have to build their product in a way that makes people want to tune into the show and buy the PPVs/VODs, but they don't have to fall into the same clichéd tropes that every other major wrestling television show have resorted to over the years, with over-booked finishes and nonsensical swerves.

**ROH World TV Championship: Jay Lethal w/Truth Martini (C) vs. Bobby Fish.** – **Lethal** retained in 14:10. Solid opener. **Fish** went after the leg early; **Lethal** hit the **Lethal Injection** but **Fish** rolled outside. **Lethal** got the heat and hit two of his triple tope dives but **Fish** cut him off on the third and got a near-fall with a nice moonsault. **Lethal** hit the **Randy Savage** elbow drop and went for another **Lethal Injection**, however **Fish** caught him in the **Fish Hook**. **Lethal** rolled through the submission into a pinning combination and held **Fish's** tights to get the win. (\*\*\*)

**Silas Young vs. Dalton Castle w/The Boys: If Silas wins he gets the Boys. If Dalton wins Silas must become one of the Boys.** – **Silas** got the win, and the **Boys**, at 12:25. I know I'm not the only one who was looking forward to this match as much as anything else on the show. This is a perfect

under-card program and the characters are a perfect fit for each other. The match itself wasn't anything special and these two have had better encounters in the past, but it was all about the finish and which direction they went with the storyline. Finish saw **Silas** take off his knee brace to use as a weapon; one of the **Boys** grabbed it which distracted the referee and **Silas** landed a low-blow then hit his TKO for the pin. – It was the right finish for the feud to continue and they can build towards **Dalton** getting his revenge and presumably the **Boys** back. There is such a huge potential for great vignettes with **Silas & the Boys** on TV, let's hope **Delirious** comes through and we get at least one on every TV show. (\*\* ¼)

**The Briscoes vs. The All Night Express (Kenny King & Rhett Titus).** – ANX over in 8:30. Indeed, the **Briscoes** mystery opponents turned out to be **ANX**. Although, beforehand, **Romantic Touch** came out and was quickly killed by the **Briscoes** then **ANX** made their "triumphant" return; to be fair they actually got a decent reaction and the fans were very forgiving of **Kenny King**, who bailed for TNA while **ANX** were still the ROH Tag champs about in 2012. I have no idea who was under the **Romantic Touch** hood, by the way. **The Decade** were on commentary and they buried **ANX** for leaving, as per their gimmick. Match was average and the crowd soon got over the return of **ANX**. Finish saw **ANX** pin **Mark** with a double team powerbomb/springboard blockbuster. Post-match, **Adam Paige** gave **Jay** a low-blow and put the boots to him, so **ANX** came back to help and run **Paige** off. – **ANX** pretty much had to go over in their return, however the crowd weren't really expecting it so the finish was fairly flat. I'm not particularly enthralled by the **Jay Briscoe/Adam Paige** program either. (\*\*)

**No DQ: Moose w/Stokely Hathaway vs. Cedric Alexander w/Veda Scott.** – **Moose** over in 13:05. Total smoke and mirrors match, with tables ladders and, yes, chairs. **Moose** did a big dive after he **Okada**-dropkicked **Cedric** off the turnbuckle. The managers got involved and **Cedric** tossed **Stokely** into the barricade and **Veda** kicked him in the face with her cowboy boot. **Cedric** landed a Van Terminator for a near-fall. Finish was convoluted, but played into the storyline: **Veda** handed **Cedric** a wrench that he has used on **Moose** three times to get victories; **Stokely** got in the ring and went after the wrench so **Veda** jumped on his back. **Cedric** ended up smashing **Veda** with a running dropkick that was meant for **Stokely** and **Hathaway** drilled him with the wrench then **Moose** speared **Cedric** through a table in the corner for the win. – You would think breaking **Moose's** undefeated streak would have been a big step forward for **Cedric**, and even with **Veda Scott**, he is still just a guy. (\*\*\*)

**ACH vs. Matt Sydal: Match #3 in Best of Five Series.** – **ACH** over in 16:28. One of my major pet-peeves about ROH is that they shoot angles and advance storylines on what are essentially house shows and expect viewers to keep up. There has barely been any mention of this Best of Five Series on TV, however we are supposed to care about this because **Sydal & ACH** have gone 1-1 on shows that nobody but the hardest of the hardcore ROH fans have seen. I suppose there is a plus side, in that it gives fans an incentive to actually go to house shows and to purchase the VODs, but it is certainly infuriating if you follow the TV every week and there are these angles and storylines you have no idea about. Story of this series is that **Sydal** is a much better wrestler than **ACH**, who is trying to prove he can hang with the "veteran." **Sydal** dominated the previous two matches and **ACH** barely squeaked out a victory in their last encounter. This match was a similar deal, as they ditched all their usual high flying and tried some technical grappling with a lot of holds. **Sydal** worked over **ACH's** leg, and in his hometown, the fans didn't really care about **ACH** that much. Finish saw **ACH** deliver a brainbuster and the 450 to go 2-1 in the series. (\*\* ¾)

**ROH Tag Team Championship: The Addiction (C) vs. The Young Bucks vs. The Kingdom w/Maria.** – **Kingdom** became the new champs at 13:50. As you would expect, a fun match with a

bunch of MOVEZ and a million superkicks, although why on earth this only went 13:50, while **ACH & Sydal** went 16:28 is unfathomable. The finish took away from the great action however, as after a huge parade of moves, **Maria** got on the apron and was punched right in the face by **Daniels**. A guy in a **KRD** mask hit the ring and superkicked **Kaz** then laid out **Daniels** with **Chris Sabin's** Cradle Shock. **Bucks** hit the Meltzer Driver but **Taven** made a blind tag and rolled up **Matt Jackson** to steal the win. – You know, in certain universes like PWG or Lucha Underground, man-on-woman violence, in the context of a professional wrestling match, is somewhat expectable. Sure you have to suspend your disbelief even more than usual, but as long as they work smart then it is possible to do the man-on-woman thing right. Punching a woman, especially a 115lbs **Maria**, square on the jaw should not be part of the script, unless you are doing an injury angle or if it is the culmination of months of build, like **Jerry Lawler** nailing **Rick Rude's** valet, **Angel** in Memphis. **Maria** needs to be chewed out for the disgraceful and frankly unacceptable way she sold this punch to the face; my girlfriend Bev even suggested that someone needed to punch her for real so she can learn how to sell properly. I wouldn't go that far, but my goodness her selling was atrocious. The **KRD** angle has been a complete afterthought since it was revealed to be the **Addiction & Sabin**; hell, they barely even mention it on TV anymore. I know **Sabin** is injured, but surely they could still treat the **KRD** story, which they built up for months, as a big deal. (\*\*\*) ¾ )

**#1 Contender for the ROH World Title: AJ Styles vs. Adam Cole vs. Roderick Strong vs. Michael Elgin.** – **AJ Styles** over in 14:30. Again, the fact that **Sydal/ACH** went longer than this is absurd. This was tornado rules so there was a lot going on, but they did rotate two guys on the floor and two guys in the ring for a while. **Elgin** did his power spots and gave **Strong & Cole** the double fall-away slam/Samoan drop combo; sadly, the crowd weren't really into **Big Mike** all that much. There was a nice four-way exchange which culminated in **Strong** hitting **Elgin** with a gutbuster, sick-kicked **Styles** then hit **Cole** with the Lumbar-check. **Styles & Cole** faced off for the finish: **Styles** landed the Pele and took out **Strong** with a lariat. **Styles** hit **Cole** with Bloody Sunday and followed up with the Styles Clash to get the pin. – Now that **AJ** is no longer the IWGP Champion, and I don't see him beating **Okada** at King of Pro Wrestling, maybe **ROH** will be able to utilise him in more of a main event role. I'm not sure whether they will put the title on him, since his priority is still going to be **New Japan**, but at least they can build their PPVs around him more than they have in the past. (\*\*\*) ½ )

**ROH World Championship: Jay Lethal w/Truth Martini (C) vs. Kyle O'Reilly.** – **Lethal** retained in 14:01. Match was solid, however these two didn't have their best outing and in front of a flat crowd it didn't really feel like a big time main event. Plus, the finish was an over-booked cluster. **O'Reilly** went for his submissions early. **Lethal** landed his tope and got the heat; he went for the **Lethal Injection** but **O'Reilly** reversed into an armbar. **Lethal** tried to use the tights like he did against **Fish**, but **O'Reilly** kicked out. **O'Reilly** delivered the **Nigel** lariat, as the man himself called the action at the desk, and did the **Danielson** kick your f'n head in spot; they teased doing a ref stoppage but **Truth** interfered. **Nigel** ordered **Todd Sinclair** to allow the match to continue and carted out **Truth** in a wacky police hold. The finish degenerated into a bunch of run-ins and swerves that was the culmination of weeks of TV angles. **Bobby Fish** ran out to stop **Lethal** from using the title as a weapon; **Donovan Dijak** showed up and he nailed **Fish** with the belt. **Adam Cole** was out next and he sent **Dijack** packing then set **Lethal** up to deliver the old **Future Shock** tag team finish. Instead, **Cole** turned on his buddy and superkicked **O'Reilly** then **Lethal** hit the **Lethal Injection** to end it. – Finish was terribly over-booked and, I suppose we have to give them time to explain on TV, but the **Cole** swerve made little sense on face value. The whole reason why **Cole & the Kingdom** were having issues was because **Cole** kept losing matches and he was fed up with the heel tactics. So he came out to help his old **Future Shock** teammate, which ultimately ended in them losing a Tag Team title shot. Okay, so **Cole** was fed up of losing, lost some more, lost

on this show and decided he was better off with the **Kingdom**? Either that or the **Kingdom** was just swerving everyone the entire time, which would be **Russo**-levels of suck. (\*\*\*) ½)

## WWE Night of Champions – September 20<sup>th</sup> 2015

Toyota Centre: Houston, TX.

*Ben Carass.*

Night of Champions was a weird show; none of the matches were necessarily bad, however nothing really stood out as memorable apart from a 56 year old **Sting** working his ass off and seemingly nearly killing himself in the ring. The ringside doctor had to stop the match for a couple of minutes while he checked over **Sting**, who collapsed during a spot with **Seth Rollins**. It worked out OK and they allowed **Sting** to go right to the finish, but it was a concerning scene for a few moments. The big news coming out of the show is that **KANE** will be challenging **Rollins** next for the title, as he made his triumphant return after the main event and laid out **Rollins**. What a feud this is going to be! The most significant thing that happened on the entire show was during a video package hyping Brock Lesnar's "Go to Hell" tour (what a great name by the way; they should really fork out the money to use "Go to Hell" by Megadeth for this.) They announced **Brock** as a guest on **Steve Austin's** podcast and that he would face **Big Show** at the MSG live special on October 3rd. Then, with zero fanfare or even a cursory big angle on RAW, they announced **Lesnar vs. Undertaker** at Hell in a Cell, inside the cage. So it looks like that frees both guys up for WrestleMania, which will no doubt put the usual **Sting vs. Taker** speculation into overdrive. But after what happened to **Sting** during the **Rollins** match, the idea of **Sting & Taker** working together seems like a really bad idea. Also, expect a bunch of goofballs to start salivating over a **Steve Austin/Brock Lesnar** Texas Death Match which will never happen in a million years.

The pre-show panel of geeks were outside the building like they do at Full Sail for the NXT specials. It was the usual hour of video packages, inane banter and interviews. The only thing of note was that **Sheamus** revealed in an interview that he learned **Seth Rollins** would be defending his titles back to back and he teased a MITB cash-in. **Stardust & The Ascension** beat **Neville & The Lucha Dragons** in a nothing 10 minute match. **Stardust** pinned **Neville** with his finish. **WWE IC Championship: Ryback (C) vs. Kevin Owens**. – **Owens** became the new champ at 9:33. **Owens** worked hard to get a passible match out of **Ryback** and he succeeded in doing so. **Ryback** press-slammed **Owens** over the top early; **Owens** cut him off by ramming his arm into the post then worked it over for the heat. **Ryback** made his comeback and went for the Shellshock but **Owens** escaped, raked his eyes and rolled him up to get the pin. – **Owens** tried his best here and **Ryback** did an admirable job of selling the arm, so it turned out much better than expected. The finish was the right move, as **Owens** needed a "big" win after becoming just another mid-carder, however now he has the jobber title and will assuredly be buried like every other IC champion of the last 5 years. (\*\*¾)

**Dolph Ziggler vs. Rusev w/Summer Rae**. – **Ziggler** over in 13:45. Like their SummerSlam match, this was somewhat disappointing. **Ziggler** had Lana's face airbrushed on his crotch like **Rick Rude**, only **Rude** was a heel when he used to do it. They had a basic, heel beatdown, babyface comeback sort of affair. Finish saw Summer get on the apron and the ref threw her out. Summer took off her heels and tried to throw one at the ref, but he ducked and the shoe hit **Rusev**, which allowed **Ziggler** to hit the Zig-zag for the pin. For some reason, **JBL** felt the need to make a **Shamrock/Kimbo** reference during this. Post-match, a furious **Rusev** walked out on **Summer** than **Ziggler** kissed her on the hand like a sleaze-ball, so this feud must continue! – They can't really be dragging this program out for 4 months until Lana is ready to comeback. The best thing for all concerned is for **Ziggler** to steal Summer from **Rusev** and have **Rusev** go away for a while then

build towards a **Macho Man/Elizabeth** reunion between **Rusev** and **Lana** at WrestleMania. Of course, they won't do that though, because they actually think this soap opera garbage draws ratings, which as we have seen over the last few months is not the case at all. (\*\* ¼ )

**WWE Tag Team Championship: New Day (Kofi & Big E) w/Xavier Woods (C) vs. The Dudley Boyz.** – **Dudleys** over via DQ at 9:58. **New Day** did their usual amazingly goofy promo beforehand and talked about celebrities endorsing their “Save the Tables” campaign, one of whom was Barack Obama and, as you would expect, Obama was the biggest heel of the night in Texas. **Xavier** had his hair done up like Rufio and once again was the star of the match with his trombone skills. Match was kind of rough: **Bubba** gave **Big E** a scary superplex and barely got him over then **Big E** did his splash on the apron and landed right on poor **Bubba's** face. **Bubba** sold for the heat and **Devon** made the comeback; they hit the 3D on **Kofi**, but **Xavier Woods** ran in for the DQ. The post-match was pretty good, as **New Day** tried to put the **Dudleys** through a table because they are lying heels! **Dudleys** turned it around and gave **Xavier** the 3D through the table. – Finish was lame, but I guess they are going to do a tables match at Hell in a Cell so, in theory, **New Day** can beat the **Dudleys** without pinning them, because lord knows we can't have young guys beating established legends. (\*\*)

**WWE Divas Championship: Nikki Bella (C) w/ Team Bella vs. Charlotte w/Team PCB.** – **Charlotte** became the new champ at 12:50. Match was kind of one dimensional, in that **Nikki** worked over **Charlotte's** leg forever, however at least **Charlotte** did a good job of selling it throughout. **Nikki** used the **Bret Hart** Figure-Four around the post at 8:30. **Charlotte** didn't really make much of a comeback, as **Nikki** dove off the middle rope and got speared in mid-air then **Charlotte** used the Figure-Eight to get the tap. **Ric Flair** showed up and they had the usual blubbering **Flairs** scene. We got a backstage shot of **PCB** celebrating with **Flair** and he promised to take them out and get them all hammered. – I guess they wanted to make **Nikki** look strong, because she took 95% of the match. This wasn't on the level of an NXT women's Takeover match, but it was a solid effort from both ladies. (\*\* ¾)



**Roman Reigns, Dean Ambrose & Chris Jericho vs. The Wyatt Family.** – Wyatts over in 13:08. So before **Jericho** was revealed as the surprise partner, some lunatic fan, dressed in **Shield** attire, jumped in the ring and stood next to **Ambrose & Reigns** like he was in fact their partner. He was eventually carted off by security, but that is the fourth incident of moronic fans trying to get at former **Shield** members. These **Shield/Wyatt** reunion tag matches have been good for the most part, however they are lacking the heat and intensity of the originals. Having said that, this was the best match on the show up to this point. They built to **Jericho** running wild off the hot tag and, in typical WWE six-man fashion, there was a fun parade of moves. Finish saw **Reigns** setting up for the spear on **Strowman**, however **Jericho** tagged in and went for the Lionsault. **Strowman** countered and hit his big sit-out slam thing then choked-out **Jericho** with his head & arm. Afterwards, **Jericho** bumped into **Ambrose** as he walked out on his teammates, presumably as a tease for a **Jericho/Ambrose** program at some point in the future. – This was good use of **Jericho**. Sure they didn't advertise him and maybe they could have used him to pop a rating on RAW, but it's football season so it probably wouldn't have made too much difference anyway. **Strowman** was protected, but the little he did do looked fine and he was put over big by choking out Jericho. Looks like **Reigns** and **Ambrose** will have to find another partner for Hell in a Cell, which is in LA at the Staples Centre so let the speculation of the **Rock** coming in begin! (\*\*\*) ¼)



**US Championship: Seth Rollins (C) vs. John Cena.** – **Cena** regained the title at 15:45. Even though **Sting** was the stand-out performer of the night, this was the best match on the show. Still, it wasn't at the same level as their SummerSlam match. It was the usual **John Cena** hit a bunch of moves and near-falls match, although **Rollins** didn't kick out of an AA, so there's that at least. **Cena** did the code red at 7:18 and didn't nearly die this time. **Rollins** missed his 6 star frogsplash and **Cena** hit a tornado DDT for a near-fall at 10:52. **Rollins** did a rolling superplex into a Falcon Arrow for another near-fall. **Rollins** escaped the STF at 13:35 and hit the Buckle Bomb. **Cena** kicked out and hit the first AA of the match and got the clean pin. Afterwards, **Rollins** tried to bail with the World title but **Cena** gave him an AA on the floor and tossed him back in the ring. – See what happens when you prostitute you finish and have guys kick out of it three times in one match? Nobody buys it as a finish anymore! Both men worked hard as usual and at least we can have the US Open Challenge back to make RAW more interesting. (\*\*\*) ¾)

**WWE Championship: Seth Rollins (C) vs. Sting.** – **Rollins** retained at 15:05. Match was full of late 90's main event tropes, but they all worked and made the match much better than it had any right to be. **Sting** looked in the best shape he has been in since maybe 2001 and, at 56, he took some ridiculous bumps; he even worked just in his singlet, without his t-shirt. **Sting** worked over the beaten down **Rollins** and they went to ringside for some brawling about a minute in. They ended up on the announcer table at 6:05 and **Rollins** shoved **Sting** off through the Spanish table; the table broke fairly smoothly, however **Sting** hit the back of his head on a TV monitor. **Rollins** got the heat and got a near-fall with the Buckle Bomb at 10:00. **Sting** comeback and did a cross body off the top to the floor and somehow **Rollins** managed to catch him perfectly. Crowd chanted “Holy Sh\*t”. **Sting** hit a couple of Stinger splashes then **Rollins** came back with a hard buckle bomb. They tried to go to the next spot but **Sting** collapsed in a heap, which at first I thought was a spot, but it turned



out that **Sting** was really hurt. The doctor came in and checked over **Sting** for a couple of minutes while **Rollins** stalled by making heel gestures to the crowd. It was clear this wasn't an angle due to the fact that they cut away from **Sting** almost immediately and focused on **Rollins** until it was clear **Sting** wasn't going to die. They allowed the match to continue and they went right to the finish. **Sting** countered the Pedigree and got **Rollins** in the Scorpion; **Rollins** rolled through and held the ropes to get the pin. Post-match was lame and set up an unbelievably weak semi-main event for Hell in a Cell. First, **Sheamus** ran down and hit **Rollins** with a Brogue-kick and teased cashing in the briefcase. **Kane** returned with his mask and body suit and chokeslammed **Rollins**. **Sheamus** told him to do it again but instead **Kane** chokeslammed him and finish **Rollins** off with a tombstone. – I'm sure we'll get an update on **Sting** sooner or later, but right now the word is that he suffered “some sort of neck injury”, according to Dave Meltzer. You've got to hand it to the guy, he worked like a crazy man to put on a good match and of course **Rollins** more than played his part in carrying **Sting** throughout. I can't believe the big fall program is **Rollins vs. Kane**, but I suppose it is better to get it out of the way during football season. I just hope it is a one-and-done deal. (\*\*\*) ½)

## RAW Ramblings – September 21<sup>st</sup> 2015.

Laredo Energy Centre: Laredo, TX.

*Ben Carass.*

At around 6pm EST, a mere two hours before RAW went on the air, WWE announced on their website that **Sting** would appear on RAW and make a “big announcement” in the opening segment. Well, **Sting** didn’t appear on the show at all because he was at home. It was reported earlier in the day in the Daily Update at F4Wonline and by PWInsider that **Sting** was scheduled for the show but he had flown home due to the neck injury he suffered at Night of Champions. So it appears like once again the clowns in charge of WWE.com and the social media department were completely out of the loop which made the entire company look like blithering idiots. The RAW show itself was actually a refreshing change, as there was not a boring 20 minute promo in sight, however you better be ready for that to change when the ratings come in and they script 10 Authority segments for next week.



The main storyline of the show was that **Kane** now has split personality disorder; that’s right, they are doing the **Joseph Park/Abyss** deal to make **Kane** a babyface for his title match with **Seth Rollins**. Although, at the end of the show **Kane** (sort of) revealed that he knew exactly what he was doing. I wouldn’t be surprised however, if they keep up this gimmick for a while; I mean, what else can they do with the **Kane** character at this point? We first saw **Kane**, dressed as **Corporate Kane**, in a backstage skit with Rollins, who asked him what the hell was going on. **Corporate Kane** acted all happy to be back and played dumb about attacking **Rollins** last night and he booked **Rollins** in a rematch with **John Cena** for the US title because he wanted to make a good impression on his first night back as Director of Operations. **HHH & Steph** showed up late to the building for their own show, because even they don’t care anymore. **Rollins** cried to them and Mommy & Daddy went to talk to the big bully for little baby **Seth**. **HHH & Steph** were too smart to be fooled by **Kane’s** story; **Steph** told **Rollins** that **Kane** had “got everything out of his system” last night and **HHH** yelled at **Rollins** to stop being a wuss and go wrestle **Cena**. Main event saw **Cena** pin **Rollins** with the AA in 15:45; match was good. Afterwards, **Corporate Kane** appeared on the Tron and told

**Rollins** there were guys he couldn't even imagine in his worst nightmares waiting to take the World title for him. **Kane's** pyro went off in the arena and the **Demon Kane** ripped through the ring canvas and pulled **Rollins** down into the hole in the campiest manner possible. **Kane's** ring post pyro went off and smoke bellowed out of the hole that **Rollins** was sucked into. – That's your World title program: split personality disorder and hocus pocus magic! As noted before, it doesn't really matter what they do since they have **Lesnar/Taker** in the main event of Hell in a Cell, but still, this was totally lame.



They actually did something right with Divas Revolution this week, however whether it will make a difference at this stage is yet to be seen. **Ric Flair** came out and was **Ric Flair** for a while then he introduced **Charlotte** for her title celebration. **Charlotte** came out with **Paige & Becky Lynch** and cut a promo about how much it meant for her to be the Divas champion. Out of nowhere, **Paige** got on the mic and went absolutely crazy; they were going for a female version of the “Pipe Bomb” and, while it didn't reach the same level of awesome as **CM Punk's** worked shoot promo, **Paige** played her part well and insulted just about every Divas on the roster. **Paige** called **Charlotte** a “placeholder” and told **Becky** she would never become Divas champ. She insinuated that the **Bellas** only have their spots because of who they are dating/married to then took shots at **Team BAD** and **Natalya** for good measure. Finally, **Paige** told **Charlotte** she wouldn't be where she was if it wasn't for her old man and **Becky** had to restrain **Charlotte**, who was ready to murder **Paige** for that comment. **Paige** gave a “Woooo” and dropped the mic and walked out. **The Bellas** showed up to kill everything good about the segment and **Charlotte** ended up submitting **Brie** with the Figure Eight in a dull 9:20 match. Later, **Natalya** returned in a backstage segment and told **Paige** she was unprofessional. **Nattie** then had a match with **Naomi**, which she of course lost in 3:45. – The whole thing with **Paige** was great, however the WWE showed exactly why they are incapable of making this Divas Revolution work because they followed up this great angle with two boring matches that nobody cared about and they total buried one of the women who you can actually trust to go in there and have long matches that don't suck, **Natalya**.

The opening segment, for the first time in what felt like a lifetime, didn't involve a monotonous 20 minute **Seth Rollins/the Authority** promo. Instead, the **Wyatt Family** came out and **Bray's** ramblings were cut short by **Roman Reigns** interrupting. **Reigns** challenged **Wyatt** to go one-on-one but it ended up with **Reigns** taking a beating from all the guys. **Dean Ambrose** stormed the ring to help his “best buddy” but the faces were still outnumbered , so **Randy Orton** ran down to join

the brawl. **Reigns** gave **Strowman** the Superman punch which knocked him to the floor and the faces stood tall, presumably to set up a six-man at Hell in a Cell.

**Other Stuff:** **Neville & The Lucha Dragons** beat **Stardust & The Ascension** in the first instance of 50/50 booking of the night. **Ryback** beat **Bo Dallas** in 3:35; match sucked, but **Kevin Owens** was on commentary, so at least there was that. **Sheamus** squashed **Mark Henry** in 2:35. **Rusev & New Day** beat **The Dudley Boyz & Dolph Ziggler** in 14:15; match was a decent six-man affair. **Xavier Woods** was once again the star of the show as he made **Summer** join in with his trombone playing. Also, before the match **Xavier** had a piece of broken table in an evidence bag and said the doctors had to remove it from his “buttocks.” **Rusev** pinned **Ziggler** with a superkick, because 50/50. **Big Show** beat **Cesaro** in 6:20 then cut a promo about how he beat **Brock Lesnar** at the 2002 Survivor Series and said he would do the same at MSG on October 3<sup>rd</sup>. I guess we’re supposed to forget all the times **Lesnar** has beaten **Show**.

### Mid-South Wrestling (TV #139)

May 6th 1982

Irish McNeil Boys Club: Shreveport, LA.

@BenCarass.



Super babyface and all around good guy, Ted Dibiase, was our guest colour commentator this week and he joined Boyd Pierce at the desk to open the show. Boyd welcomed Dibiase back to Mid-South after his injury at the hands of Bob Roop’s evil scheme with Skandor Akbar and congratulated him on beating Roop last week in a non-title match. Dibiase explained that his knee had fully healed and his victory over Roop last week proved as much. They showed the angle from last week with Dick Murdoch fighting off Akbar & Hacksaw Duggan with his entrenching shovel then Boyd explained that all the babyfaces Akbar’s Army had injured, Ernie Ladd, Dick Murdoch, Dibiase, were all coming back and wanted revenge!

Dick Murdoch vs. Larry Higgins. – Murdoch over in 2:27. Higgins just gets worse every week; the guy is seriously one of the worst performers I have ever seen. Murdoch clearly knew Higgins couldn't do anything, because he just grabbed a bunch of holds and didn't make the useless klutz do any spots. Finish saw Murdoch give Higgins, who, and I promise this is no exaggeration, hit the ropes worse than Eva Marie, the worst backdrop all-time, all my life, and pinned him with an elbow drop. – How Watts kept allowing this clown Higginson his TV show is absolutely unbelievable. Maybe he worked cheap, but, even so, whatever Watts was paying him was way too much.

Non-Title Match: Bob Roop (North American Heavyweight Champion) vs. Buddy Landel. – Roop over in 4:53. Dibiase talked about wanting revenge on Roop for the “double, double cross” which resulted in Teddy losing the title. Landel hung with Roop throughout the early exchanges; this angered the grizzly veteran, so Roop raked the eyes and beat up Landel for the heat with the usual heel tactics. Roop yelled at Dibiase while he had Landel in an armbar. Landel countered a bodyslam into a sunset flip for a near-fall then made a short comeback. Landel went for an O'Connor roll but Roop ducked and Landel necked himself on the top rope. Roop followed up with a big jumping Harley Race knee for the finish. – Decent match, but compared to the opener it was like Funk/Brisco. Dibiase was good on commentary and put over his feud with Roop like it was actually important, unlike in 2015 when guest commentators say a bunch of meaningless garbage and/or are made to look like geeks by the real announcers.



Non-Title Match: Mr Olympia (Mississippi Heavyweight Champion) vs. Kelly Wayne. – Olympia over in 2:58. This was a beautiful, 5 star squash match. Wayne was a great old-school heel, complaining about phantom hair-pulls and cowering from the fiery babyface. Wayne faked a clean break in the corner, but nailed Olympiawith an elbow. This angered Olympia, who fired up big time and landed a couple of punches, hit a big backdrop then slapped on a sleeper to get the win. – Dibiase did a great job at explaining that Wayne made Olympiamad and paid the price for doing so. Stuff like this needs to make a comeback; it's so simple and it gets babyfaces over as tough guys you don't want to get on the wrong side of.

Ernie Ladd & “Iron” Mike Sharpe vs. One Man Gang & The Assassin w/Skandor Akbar. – Gang & Assassin via DQ at 5:13. The action in the match was hideous, however the angle for the finish was tremendous. To be fair, the storyline didn’t call for a pretty match full of holds and counters, and all four men brawled accordingly. Ladd pretty much no-sold all the heels’ offence, which didn’t do much good for the monster, One Man Gang. The heels eventually isolated Sharpe and worked him over with constant double-teaming; remember this is the undefeated giant monster & the most dangerous masked wrestler in history, not just two geeks brought in from Memphis. Dibiase gradually got more and more upset at the beating Sharpe was taking and told Boyd Pierce he couldn’t stand what was going on. Finally, Dibiase yelled, “I’M NOT GONNA STAND IT!” and he hit the ring to come to Sharpe’s aid. The fans went insane when Teddy ran in and Ladd came back from the dead to help send the heels packing with his fellow babyfaces. Referee, Jack Howe, came over to the announce desk and told Boyd that the heel had won via DQ due to Dibiase’ outside interference.

After the break, Bob Roop had replaced Ted Dibiase on commentary and he said he was going to call Mid-South Sports President, Charlie Lay, and suggest that Dibiase be fined at least \$5,000 for his reprehensible actions. Roop told Boyd Pierce that he could be his witness and wanted him to corroborate his story. Boyd got hot and said, “I’m not gonna corroborate you anything!” – Amazing. You can’t script this stuff!



Louisiana Heavyweight Championship: JYD (C) vs. Bob Sweetan. – JYD retained in 4:36. Typical JYD match against an opponent nobody could have possibly believed had a chance of winning. Sweetan bumped for a couple of power spots then cut JYD off for a little heat. JYD made a comeback and the referee took a ridiculous bump after getting knocked over. Sweetan went to land an illegal move off the top, but JYD caught him and gave him the Thump to get the win.

Ron Cheatham vs. Rick Ferrara. – Ferrara over in 3:12. What a battle of geeks this was. If Mid-

South would have had a D show equivalent like Velocity then this match would have been the main event. Roop totally buried Cheatham and accused him of “not having a game plan” then pointed out that he delivered a suplex that, “didn’t look like it did much damage.” Ferrara sold forever, but nobody cared about these enhancement guys, and he caught Cheatham with an inside cradle to end it. Boyd Pierce asked Roop to leave so he could go find Ted Dibiase in the locker room and ask him about what happened. Roop once again ranted about Dibiase receiving a fine as they went to break.

After the commercials, Dibiase was back, looking all sullen. He explained that he couldn’t just sit by while Akbar’s goons injured somebody else and said he would take his fine, “like a man.” Dibiase said he wouldn’t apologise however, because from now on he would not allow Akbar’s Army to get away with anything and he would go on the offensive in order to take the fight to Akbar’s crew.

Jim Duggan & The Grappler vs. Cocoa Samoa & Jesse Barr. – TV Time Limit Draw at 2:52. Cocoa got a few shine spots in but it quickly broke down and all four men ended up brawling until the time limit expired.



Geez, was there ever some terrible wrestling on this show: Larry Higgins is the absolute drizzling, Ladd & Sharpe vs. Gang & Assassin was wretched, JYD was JYD and we got an epic battle of the jobbers. There was still some good stuff though, although most of it was part of the Roop/Dibiase storyline. The show was pretty much all about these two men and their issue. The run-in from Dibiase was great and Bob Roop continues to be one of the best performers on the show; his match with Landel was the best on the show by a mile and his heel work on the mic, taunting Dibiase was tremendous.

## **Bits & Pieces**

Ryan's Night of Champions Match Ratings:

Seth Rollins vs. Sting: \*\*\* ¼

Seth Rollins vs. John Cena: \*\*\* ½

Misc. Ratings

Daisuke Sekimoto vs. Yuji Okabayashi 2015/07/20: \*\*\* ½



*Have a good week everyone! All hail Hokuto!*

## **Next Week's Issue**

In next week's issue we return with our final piece of Observer HOF coverage before the submission deadline, all the news from the week, RAW, New Beginning, Hell in the Cell build, and much more!

## **Contact**

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