



## **Cubed Circle Newsletter Issue 208 – PRIDE, Everyone, PRIDE**

In this week's edition of the newsletter we (Ben Carass) take a look at all of the happenings in the world of wrestling for this week, including Del Rio's jump back to the WWE, Hell in a Cell with double juice in the main event, one of the better RAWs of the year, the return of PRIDE and which female wrestling star will be involved, Mid-South from 1982, and more!

– Ryan Clingman, Cubed Circle Newsletter Editor

### **The Pro-Wres Digest for October 25<sup>th</sup> – October 31<sup>st</sup> 2015.**

*Ben Carass.*

Alberto Rodriguez (El Patron/Del Rio) returned to the WWE on 26/10 at the Hell in a Cell PPV as John Cena's mystery opponent in the US title open challenge and won the title clean from Cena in just over 7 minutes. Rodriguez left WWE in 2013 after an incident in catering when a foolish employee made a racist joke about him clearing up the dirty dishes and Alberto slapped the taste out of the guy's mouth. Since then, Alberto had been working for AAA in Mexico pretty much full-time, however he also made appearances for ROH and Lucha Underground on their TV shows. He was one of the bigger stars Lucha Underground had but as we reported a couple of weeks ago Alberto believed he wasn't being used the way he would have liked and there was also a dispute over his pay. El Patron had been featured as one of the main eventers in AAA and won the Mega Heavyweight title from Texano Jr back in December 2014; a title he still currently holds. AAA has had a tough year with the death of Perro Aguayo Jr, Myzteziz jumping ship back to CMLL, the disastrous TripleMania PPV, and now their champion resigned without dropping the title. Alberto did have the courtesy to inform AAA he would be appearing on the Hell in a Cell show in the form of a phone call a couple of hours before the show went live. Konnan was backstage at RAW in San Diego on Monday, maybe to iron out the details of Alberto going back to Mexico to drop the title. It is hard to believe that Vince McMahon would allow one of his top stars and now US champion to appear on another company's show and lose. El Patron was advertised on several AAA shows in November: 2/11, 7/11, 15/11, 20/11, 21/11 & 22/11, however he will not be able to make any of those dates due to RAW and SmackDown commitments, plus the European tour which runs from 4/11-14/11, and Survivor Series is on 22/11. According to Dave Meltzer in the Observer, the deal with WWE was put together five weeks ago in mid-September, so why AAA didn't take the title off him before he debuted is anybody's guess. AAA will be lucky if Del Rio shows up at all to drop the title; they may just have to vacate the thing, which would not look good for the company at all.

Brock Lesnar and the Undertaker pretty much went into business for themselves during their main event match at the WWE Hell in a Cell PPV on 26/10. Both men gigged and were bleeding all over the place; the word backstage was that Vince McMahon was freaking out and Kevin Dunn wanted

all the replays to be shown in black and white. Vince was yelling at the referee and doctor through their earpieces and the match was halted a couple of times while the poor doctor tried to patch up Lesnar and Taker. Finally, Lesnar threw the doctor down and that was the last we saw of the doc; can you blame him? The last time an unauthorised blade job occurred, in a Batista/Chris Jericho match, both men, and the referee, were fined \$100,000 for the incident and were chewed out in Vince's office. Apparently Vince didn't say a word to Lesnar or Taker, so it looks like both men have escaped any punishment for now at least. Lesnar needed nine staples to close the gash on his head afterwards and neither he nor Undertaker appeared on RAW as they both flew home after the PPV.

Global Force Wrestling crowed a bunch of champions on their latest set of television tapings despite still not yet having a TV deal. Get a load of these names; it's a veritable murderer's row I tell ya. PJ Black won the NEX\*GEN title, which is basically the equivalent of the X-Division title, in a four-way over Virgil Flynn, Jigsaw & TJ Perkins. Christina Von Eerie beat Amber Gallow's for the Women's title. The Bollywood Boyz downed Reno Scum for the Tag belts. Nick Aldis (f.k.a: Magnus) downed Bobby Roode to become the GFW Global champion. What a gaggle of geeks that is.



With John Cena out until December at the latest, Randy Orton side-lined with another shoulder injury and off the European tour, plus Brock Lesnar being off until mid-December, WWE had no choice but to elevate Roman Reigns into the #1 babyface spot on RAW this week. Despite missing Cena, Orton, Lesnar & Undertaker, WWE put on one of the best episodes of RAW of the entire year and featured a one night tournament to crown a #1 contender, which ended up being Roman Reigns. Who would have thought that a wrestling-heavy TV show with a purpose and men fighting for something important would turn out to be so good? Reigns received one of the best receptions from the San Diego crowd since he became a singles guy and WWE for once did a great job of booking him like a strong, top star, however they didn't really have another option. I doubt WWE will be able to keep the quality of RAW the same as it was on Monday going forward, nor do I expect Reigns to get the kind of reaction he got in San Diego to carry over to the east coast crowds, but that is the challenge facing WWE at the minute. If Reigns doesn't beat Seth Rollins for the WWE title at

Survivor Series then that would be yet another failure for a man who has already failed multiple times in big matches this year and nothing cuts the legs out from a hot babyface faster than losing one too many times. WWE could have Dean Ambrose turn on Reigns and screw him out of the title and go a different direction with that, which seems the most likely at this moment, or they could have Reigns beat Rollins clean and hold the title until WrestleMania where he would face the winner of the Royal Rumble, Brock Lesnar. Putting on one of the best TV shows of the year didn't help the ratings too much though, as the show did a 2.45 with 3.34 million viewers. The only positive is that the third hour didn't fall off a cliff like usual and they kept a steady number throughout hours two and three. First hour did 3.64 million viewers while hours two and three did 3.21.

On Wednesday, Ring of Honor announced that the Young Bucks have signed an "exclusive" deal with the company. Despite using the word "exclusive", the Bucks will still be able to do all their New Japan dates and the Bucks revealed on Twitter that they will still be allowed to work for PWG as well. Basically, the deal rules out any chance of the Bucks going to NXT, which has been talked about ever since Matt & Nick decided to not sign with WWE last year, and also kills any speculation of the Bucks signing with Lucha Underground. The Young Bucks were notorious for working any and all independent shows in North America and pretty much had steady work all year round. With the ROH deal they are no longer permitted to work anywhere in North America besides PWG, although they get to keep their t-shirt business alive, which almost certainly would have been squashed if they signed with WWE.

With Nobuyuki Sakakibara attempting to resurrect Pride FC in the form of the Rizin Fighting Federation, the freak show fights are already starting to be rumoured for their big New Year's Eve shows. There is still no opponent announced for Fedor on 31/12 and Kazushi Sakuraba will be fighting Shinya Aoki on 29/12. Aoki, at 5'11 and 155lbs, will also be fighting two days later on the 31/12 show against Montanha Silva who is 6'10 and 315lbs. This is just insane. If Fedor and Sakuraba fighting in 2015 wasn't enough of a sideshow, the latest circus act to be added to the carnival, according to Ariel Helwani of mmafighting.com, is inhuman mutant freak and multiple time BJJ world champion, Gabi Garcia. What has this got to do with pro wrestling you might be asking yourself, well in true Pride fashion, Garcia's opponent is rumoured to be Lei'D Tapa of TNA & Global Force "fame." Tapa, the daughter of the Barbarian has apparently been training at the ATT gym in Coconut Creek, FL and could potentially make her MMA debut against Garcia on either the 29/12 or the 31/12 shows at Saitama Super Arena. Garcia would also be making her MMA debut, however it would hardly be a fair fight as Garcia is clearly out of Tapa's league when it comes to shoot grappling and submissions. If the fight actually takes place, my guess is that it goes about 20 seconds and ends with Garcia taking Tapa down and tapping her with any one of a hundred submissions. Antonio Inoki will also be running his annual IGF Inoki Bom-Ba-Ye New Year's Eve show at Sumo Hall so there will be a head-to-head battle of the freak-show promotions on December 31<sup>st</sup>. I dread to think what Inoki will book to go against the Rizin show.

Perhaps even more frightening than the potential Garcia/Tapa fight is the news that Bellator have signed Kurt Angle to some sort of contract. Don't panic though, as a press release sent out on Wednesday makes it clear that Angle will not be fighting and will be making an appearance at the Fan Fest prior to Bellator 145 next week. The release states, "Bellator officials announced today that TNA superstar, former WWE superstar and Olympic Gold Medalist Kurt Angle will join the epic line up, which is already packed with star power the likes of Kimbo Slice, Liam McGeary, Royce Gracie, Ken Shamrock and Tito Ortiz." Before the announcement, both Angle and Ken Shamrock were teasing on Twitter that they both had big announcements when it came to Bellator 145, which naturally led to ludicrous speculation of the two fighting each other at some point in the

future. Angle, 46, has flirted with the idea of doing MMA since he left WWE in 2006 but thankfully he has never gone through with the idea. Even if Angle did want to fight, there is no way he would pass any legitimate athletic commissions tests, so unless Bellator run a show in Japan I think it is safe to assume that Angle will not be stepping into the cage anytime soon.

In typical head in the sand fashion, WWE finance executive George Barrios claimed during Vince McMahon's quality conference call that they are not too concerned about the ratings decline and that the product is in fact not utterly atrocious. Barrios noted that "the content is great and fans are enjoying it" – (HA!) and even though they are aware of ratings being down, their approach is to look at all related metrics, such as social media engagement, YouTube views, and Network subs. Internally, TV ratings are lumped together with the other metrics to evaluate the audience's total engagement. The Network subscriber number went up to 1,233,000 paid subs; last quarter the number was 1,156,100.

Rusev reportedly suffered an injury during the Main Event TV taping in Phoenix, AZ on 27/10. PWInsider reported that the belief is that Rusev suffered a torn bicep although WWE have yet to confirm anything as of press time.

AJ Styles was at the ROH TV tapings last weekend but didn't wrestle due to a sciatic nerve problems with his back. Styles is scheduled to work New Japan's Power Struggle on 7/11 and is currently resting his back before heading over to Japan.

Tetsuya Naito made an unadvertised appearance on CMLL's Arena Mexico show on 23/10. Naito helped his Los Ingobernables buddies, Rush, La Sombra & La Mascara beat Volador Jr, Valiente & Atlantis when he gave Volador a low blow and Sombra pinned him.

Similarly, at the CMLL show at Arena Mexico on 28/10, newly crowned Formula 1 world champion, Lewis Hamilton, got involved in a match between Mistico and Mephisto. Hamilton did a few spots for the cameras and even took down Mistico with a crossbody. The story was all over the UK press on Thursday, even getting major play on TV/radio and on all the big news sites.

Brock Lesnar's next WWE date is 19/12 for a big house show at the Forum in Los Angeles, CA. John Cena is also advertised for the show, which means Cena will be returning early from his sabbatical as he was originally advertised back on 26/12 at Madison Square Garden. TLC is in Boston, MA on 13/12, so it is not beyond the realm of possibility that WWE brings Cena back even earlier to work that show in what is basically his hometown.

On a sad note, Doris Adkisson, the matriarch of the Von Erich family, passed away on 24/10, at the age of 82 after a long battle with emphysema.

William Regal underwent a second operation on his neck on Wednesday after the results of CT scan. In a WWE.com interview, Regal said he was lucky to have discovered further damage to his neck because he had felt better than he had in years and was considering getting back in the ring with the guys training at the Performance Centre. F4Wonline reported that unlike Regal's fusion surgery last year, which was on the front part of his neck, Dr Joseph Maroon performed the procedure on four different vertebrae, C-3, C-4, C-5 and C-6, to clean out calcium deposits. Regal noted that he would be healed in time for the NXT tour of the UK in December.

Biff Busick, Rich Swann and Bandido Jr were officially announced as part of the newest class of recruits at the WWE Performance Centre on WWE.com this week. I would expect Busick to make

it on to NXT TV before Swann & Bandido due to him being much bigger and a better all-rounder of the three.

The Jerry Lawler/Terry Funk match in Jackson, TN on 24/10 ended in a DQ win for Lawler in about 10 minutes when Funk attacked referee, Jerry Calhoun. After the match, Lawler threw a FIREBALL(!) at Funk, which hit Funk right in the face and no-doubt caused some superficial burns to the crazy 71 year-old. Footage of the fire throwing spot is easy to find online and it is certainly a hell of a sight to see. The match was reportedly not pretty, as you would expect, however the live crowd of about 1,000-1,500 ate up the action. They used a bunch of weapons including soda cans and broomsticks; Funk giggged when Lawler hit him with a soda can because he is Terry Funk. It should be noted that after Funk took the fireball, he started selling his eye.



### **WWE Hell in a Cell – October 25<sup>th</sup> 2015**

**Staples Centre: Los Angeles, CA.**

*Ben Carass.*

WWE couldn't have picked a better time to have a good show. It's no secret that the product has been mind-numbingly horrendous for some time; most weeks RAW is torturous to sit through and SmackDown has basically become Superstars with a couple of main eventers thrown in. Even though the TV building towards Hell in a Cell was like watching paint dry, the show itself was a lot of fun. The main event was a hell of a spectacle, mostly because **Brock Lesnar & the Undertaker** went into business for themselves in order to have the match they wanted, company policy be damned. There was double juice – **Brock** giggged about three minutes in after taking the ring post and **Taker** soon followed, they teased doing chair shots to the head although none actually landed, and **Brock** ended up shoot throwing down the poor doctor, who along with the referee were getting screamed at through their earpieces by a seething **Vince McMahon**. They even tried to break the ring by exposing the boards under the canvas and even though it didn't work, the visual still added a lot to the match. Blood is a divisive subject in 2015, and I may be a complete dinosaur, however I firmly believe that if the correct precautions are taken there will always be a time and place for a little colour in professional wrestling. There is simply an extra dimension that the blade can bring to a match and seeing two bloodied men trying to destroy each other evokes a primal reaction that

would be impossible to achieve otherwise. I'm not saying regular juice should be brought back and used as a crutch, like when **HHH** would bleed to get his main events over, but you're kidding yourself if you believe a well-timed gig has no place in a main event blood-feud; it's called that for a reason. **Brock** won the match after a revenge low-blow and an F5 on the exposed boards. Afterwards, **Undertaker** milked a standing ovation from the crowd and the **Wyatt Family** showed up to put a four on one beating on **Taker**. Nobody came out to help and the show ended with the "sick hairy bastards" (as **JBL** called them) carrying **Taker** out on their shoulders. WWE are promoting Survivor Series as the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the **Undertaker**, so clearly we are getting some kind of **Team Taker vs. Team Wyatt** on that show. I don't know what has gotten into **Taker**, but he has worked more shows this year, including house shows in Mexico, than at least since his World title run on SmackDown in 2008.



There was some more big news on the show, as current AAA Mega Heavyweight Champion, "**El Patron**" **Alberto Del Rio**, returned to the company to defeated **John Cena** for the US championship. Obviously this means **Del Rio's** AAA and Lucha Underground deals are out of the window, but the status of the AAA title is currently unknown. "**El Patron**" is still currently advertised for some AAA shows, but I would be surprised if WWE allow him to fulfil his remaining dates after already appearing on their TV. Maybe they can work out some kind of deal for **Alberto** to drop the title on a house show or something, because we know how WWE gets about its talent appearing on other company's TV.

Let's not kid ourselves; on paper, this was a one match show. Still, the undercard matches delivered and there wasn't anything bad on the show. **Roman Reigns & Bray Wyatt** had a total smoke and mirrors Cell match, but both men worked very hard and the fans actually cared about the match, which is a miracle considering the dire booking leading up to it. **Nikki Bella & Charlotte** had a good, solid women's match; nothing on the level of NXT Takeover, but it was one of the best women's matches the WWE have had on PPV in a long time. **Seth Rollins** even managed to drag a passible match out of **Kane**. So all-in-all, Hell in a Cell over exceeded in terms of entertainment and good wrestling, plus it had a main event which will probably be remembered as an all-time great Cell match.

Pre-Show was the standard seizure inducing blather from the panel of geeks. **Cesaro, Neville & Dolph Ziggler** beat **Sheamus, King Barrett & Rusev** in 11:30. Match was your basic pre-show deal for the most part then **Cesaro** ran wild off the hot tag and it became awesome. How **Vince** still cannot see the potential in this guy is one of the most infuriating things in terms of missed opportunities in a long time. **Cesaro** went nuts, nailing all the heels with uppercuts then swung **Barrett** around 15 or so times; the fans were into everything he did so much which makes it all the more depressing that **Cesaro** will be back to being just another geek on RAW. **Neville** pinned **Barrett** with the Red Arrow for the finish. Good stuff. (\*\* ¼ ) Only other thing of note was **Kevin Owens** cutting a promo in front of the Magic Johnson statue outside the arena.



**US Championship Open Challenge: John Cena (C) vs. Alberto Del Rio w/Zeb Colter.** – **Del Rio** became the new champ at 7:45. **Zeb** came out on a motorised scooter since he has still not fully recovered from his surgery. Everyone was expecting **Jack Swagger**, so when he introduced **Del Rio** the place went crazy. Match wasn't much at all: They wrestled for a while, didn't bother with any near-falls, **Del Rio** escaped the AA and won with his short superkick out of nowhere. It was unclear whether **Del Rio** was a heel or babyface, however the alignment with **Zeb** certainly suggests heel. They are out of their minds if they think putting **Del Rio** with the old white racist will make him that huge Latino star they have been trying to create for years. Although if you remember how they treated **Del Rio** the last time he was a face, I suppose WWE are not above doing something stupid like that again. (\*\* ¾)

**Hell in a Cell: Roman Reigns vs. Bray Wyatt.** – **Reigns** over in 22:05. Total smoke and mirrors match as noted, but both guys put in a hell of a shift and had one of the better singles matches of their respective careers. Story was basically built around three big table spots: **Wyatt** gave **Reigns** a Uranage off the apron through a table to start the heat. **Reigns** powerbombed **Wyatt** through a table then made his comeback and the big spot towards the finish was **Reigns** spearing **Wyatt** off the apron through a table on the floor. **Wyatt** hit Sister Abigail for a near-fall then stuck a couple of kendo sticks into the turnbuckles and tried to impale **Reigns** on them. **Reigns** countered, nailed **Wyatt** with one of the canes and won with a spear. (\*\* ¾)

**Tag Team Championship: New Day (Big E & Kofi) (C) vs. The Dudley Boyz.** – **New Day**

retained in 8:25. **Xavier Woods** was not on the show because he was busy getting married. Pretty much a RAW match and the fans didn't really care about the **Dudleys**, who botched a double team move to an horrendous degree early on. **D-Von** sold for the heat, **Bubba** made the comeback. Finish saw **Big E** hit **Bubba** with **Xavier's** trombone and **Kofi** pinned him with Trouble in Paradise. I guess they have given up on the **Dudleys**, so I'm at least grateful that they put the champions over in somewhat of a strong manner. (\*\*)



**WWE Divas Championship: Charlotte (C) vs. Nikki Bella.** – **Charlotte** retained at 10:40. This turned into a good match, but the fans didn't care at the start and chanted, "We want **Sasha.**" **Charlotte's** nose got busted up early on. **Nikki** worked over the back, which later came into play when **Charlotte** was unable to apply the Figure Eight due to the damage done. **Nikki** tried a German Superplex, but **Charlotte** flipped out and escaped; it looked kind of scary, as **Charlotte** didn't exactly land smoothly. **Nikki** hit an Alabama Slam into the apron but **Charlotte** came back to win with the Figure Eight. **Paige & Becky Lynch** showed up to celebrate with **Charlotte** to keep this horrible **PCB** story going. (\*\*\*)

**Dean Ambrose & Roman Reigns** were in the locker room; thankfully, **Reigns** was selling the Cell match. They bantered about going out later; **Ambrose** congratulated **Reigns** on putting the feud with **Wyatt** to bed and they both agreed that they knew what was next, which they said would be revealed on RAW.

**WWE World Heavyweight Championship: Seth Rollins (C) vs. DEMONKANE.** – **Rollins** retained at 14:40. **Rollins** worked his ass off to have a good match with **DEMONKANE**, however one of the genius agents decided it would be a good idea for **DEMONKANE** to play babyface in peril for five minutes: it was completely stupid. Finally, **Rollins** starting bumping around for **DEMONKANE** and took a chokeslam which unbelievably some people bought as the finish. **DEMONKANE** went to put **Rollins** through the announce table but **Rollins** countered and powerbomed **DEMONKANE** onto the side of the Spanish table, which didn't break and looked terrible. It looked like the ref threw up the dreaded "X" and the doctor checked on **DEMONKANE** for a while. Finish saw **Rollins** hit two springboard knees, two **Alberto** short superkicks, a beautiful

frog-splash and the pedigree to put **Corporate Kane** out of a job. (\*\*\*)

**IC Championship: Kevin Owens (C) vs. Ryback.** – Owens retained at 5:40. Complete nothing match. The positive is that Owens won clean with the pop-up powerbomb and looked really strong; when was the last time you could say that about the Intercontinental champion? (\*\*)



**Hell in a Cell: Undertaker vs. Brock Lesnar w/Paul Heyman.** – Lesnar over in 18:08. Incredible match. Brock gassed when Taker posted him 3 minutes in and was a total mess. The doctors came in to wipe the blood away and the fans booed like crazy. Lesnar took his glove off, presumably because it still has his blade in it, and pounded on Taker. Taker juiced while he was on the floor; both men were caught on camera getting colour, so presumably there are going to be some \$100,000 fines dished out here. Brock threw a couple of chair shots that came close to Taker's head, but they never actually made contact; the tease of a head-shot was more than enough to ramp up the drama. Taker kicked out of an F5 at 10:05 then hooked the Gogoplata at 13:15, which Lesnar fought his way out of with some BRUTAL ground-and-pound shots. Brock tried to nail Taker with the stairs, but Taker kicked them back into Lesnar's face, which busted him up even more and gave him a nasty swelling over his eye. The doctor came back in and Lesnar threw him to the ground because he is a great man. Vince & Kevin Dunn were going crazy in the back. Lesnar ripped up the canvas to expose the boards, but Taker gave him a nasty chokeslam on to them at 15:20; they failed in breaking the ring, but the spot was still crazy. Taker hit a very safe Tombstone onto the boards for a wonderful near-fall. Finish was tremendous and played off Undi giving Lesnar all those nut shots, as Taker did his throat slashing gesture and Brock gave him a low-blow then landed an F5 onto part of the exposed boards to get the pin. You just don't see matches like this anymore. Afterwards, the Wyatt Family ruined everything by attacking Taker to set up the Survivor Series tag match. The angle was fine, but it killed the crowd and in typical WWE fashion nobody came out to help the babyface from being killed by a bunch of heels. (\*\*\*\* ½)

**RAW Ramblings – October 26<sup>th</sup> 2015.**  
**Valley View Casino Events Centre: San Diego, CA.**  
*Ben Carass.*

I wonder if **Vince McMahon** just woke up on Monday morning, after a really fun PPV the night before, and said to himself, “Alright **Vinnie**, we’re going to put on a great wrestling television show tonight, DAMMIT!” Because I seriously cannot remember a better episode of RAW since they moved to the three hour format in 2013. There were barely any long boring promos and, for the most part, the stupidity was kept to a minimum. Of course, there is always going to be some nonsense when the show is three hours long, but for the most part RAW was an excellent show this week.



The story of the show was a one night tournament to crown a new number one contender for the WWE title. **HHH & Steph** opened the show and brought out **Seth Rollins**, who gloated about being the greatest ever. **Roman Reigns** showed up and told **Rollins** he was coming for the WWE championship. **HHH & Steph** also set up four qualifying matches, with the winner advancing to a fatal four way in the main event of the show to see who would face **Rollins**. Of course, **Roman Reigns** won the entire thing, and for once he received an almost unanimously positive reaction. **Reigns** beat **Kofi Kingston** in the first qualifier at 12:45; it was a solid, entertaining match that was stage one of operation “Rehab **Roman**.” The second qualifier was **Cesaro vs. Kevin Owens** and it was all kinds of fun; **Owens** went over with the Pop-up Powerbomb in 10:20. **Alberto Del Rio vs. Neville** was our third qualifying match and just like the previous two, it was a blast. **Del Rio** was with **Zeb Colter** again and they are doing a goofy “MexAmerica” gimmick. Basically, **Zeb & Del Rio** have “created” their own nation and at the moment are subtle heels, however **Alberto** was over like a huge face in San Diego. **Del Rio** won with a tree-of-woe double stomp in 12:05. Final qualifier was **Big E vs. Dolph Ziggler**; **Tyler Breeze & Summer Rae** came out to sit in a VIP area next to the announcer’s table, but they didn’t really do anything expect look pretty. Match was probably the weakest of the qualifying round, but the fans got into it at the end and **Ziggler** won with the Zig-Zag in 13:55. Main event was **Reigns vs. Owens vs. Del Rio vs. Ziggler** and it was awesome. They did all kinds of moves and highspots; there was an amazing faceoff between **Reigns & Owens** which led to the finish; **Owens** went for the Powerbomb but **Reigns** countered with a

Superman punch in mid-air and pinned **Owens** with a spear at 15:02. – I wouldn't have pinned the IC champion, but that's just me and the announcers could have at least pointed out that nobody other than **John Cena** had ever pinned **Owens** on the main roster. After the match, **Reigns & Rollins** had an intense stare-down, which the crowd went crazy for. It was hard to believe the reaction **Reigns** was getting; ever since the Rumble he has been booed heavily by the hardcore fans, but for whatever reason he was beloved here and they actually booked him like a guy who is going to be the next champion for once instead of losing all the time. Maybe once fans figure out that he is once again on the fast track to the title they will turn on him again, but for one night at least, **Vince McMahon** got exactly what he wanted.

There wasn't much else on the show of note at all. **Bray Wyatt** cut his usual rambling promo on the **Undertaker** then **Kane** came out to avenge his brother being kidnapped by the **Wyatts**, which there was no real follow up on. **Kane** ended up being beaten down by all four **Wyatt** members and he was carried out of the arena on their shoulders like **Taker** was at Hell in a Cell. It was a decent angle to build to **Team Taker vs. Team Wyatt** at Survivor Series.



The only non-tournament matches were both unremarkable six-man tags. **Team Bella** downed **Team PCB** when **Nikki** pinned **Becky Lynch** with the Rack Attack at 5:25. If **Charlotte & Becky** didn't look stupid enough for teaming with **Paige**, who has already turned on them twice, **Paige** beat both of them up afterwards and the crowd cheered her for kicking the dumb babyfaces' asses. **Rusev, Sheamus & King Barrett** (aka, The Lads!) beat **Ryback & The Dudley Boyz** in 6:10 when **Barrett** rolled up **Bubba** after a distraction. With all the jobs the **Dudleys** are doing lately perhaps a heel turn is on the cards, however I suppose they could just be being used to get the younger guys over, which is perfectly fine. We also got a goofy WWE 2K16 plug: Early in the show, **Miz** was playing the game in the back while a bunch of faceless geeks cheered him on. **Miz** decided to play as **Stone Cold Steve Austin**. About two hours later they cut back to **Miz**, still playing the same game – he must really suck or was just button mashing for two hours. Anyway, he finally won his game with a “Stunner!” then did some of **Austin's** catchphrases to the delight of the geeks watching. **Steve Austin** appeared and helped with the release of the game. I presume they filmed this last week; if not, then they need their heads examining if this is all they could come up with for **Austin** to do. Oh, in case you were wondering nobody cared about **Randy Orton** being kidnapped in Mexico by the **Wyatts** and it was never mentioned once.

While the creative was not particularly strong, the **Team PCB** stuff was typically wretched and having no explanation about what the **Wyatts** did with the Undertaker didn't make a lick of sense, the wrestling on this show made up for the few instances of the usual WWE idiocy. The **Del Rio/Zeb** stuff is mind-bendingly goofy and it is clear that they haven't got clue one about how to book a Latino star. Still, the one –night tourney was really fun and the main event was excellent, but perhaps more importantly they actually made **Roman Reigns** look like a superstar. Time will tell if they can keep up his momentum; personally, I don't think they have it in them not to screw up again, but we'll see.



### Mid-South Wrestling (TV #143)

June 3<sup>rd</sup> 1982

Irish McNeil Boys Club: Shreveport, LA.

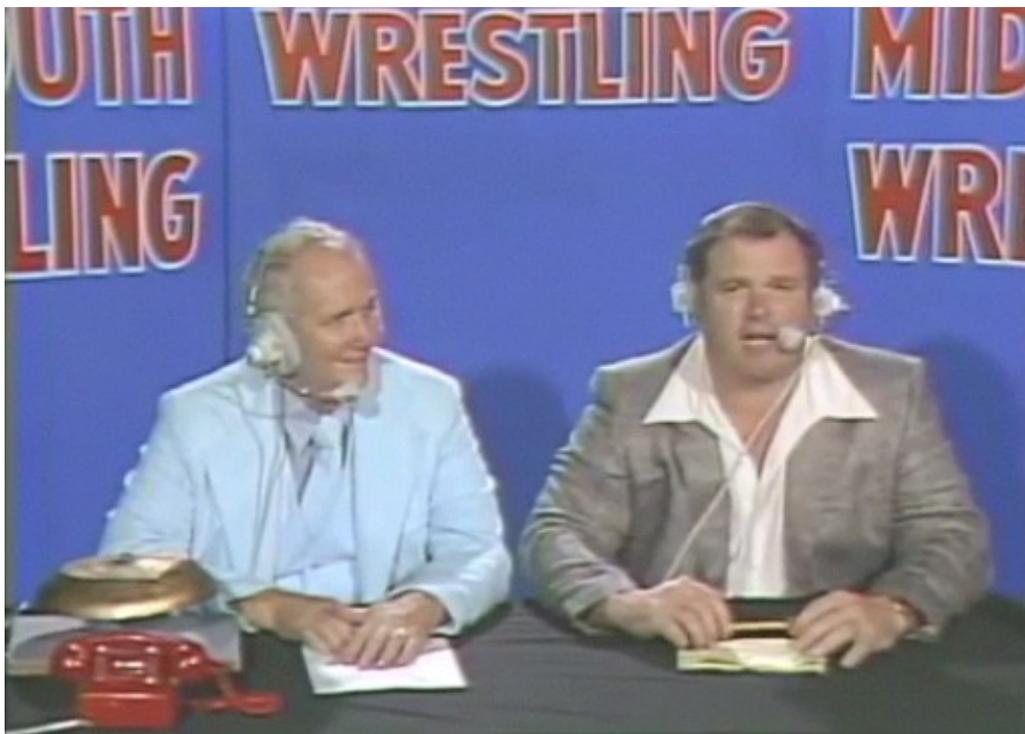
*Ben Carass.*

**Boyd Pierce**, in his snappy teal three piece suit, and **Bill Watts**, in his dowdy leisure suit opened the show. **Watts** put over **Paul Ellering** for helping the kids get in shape over the past few weeks and he threw to our latest segment involving **Precious Paul** and some children. This was the lamest of the lot, as five minutes of air-time was dedicated to **Ellering** pulling apart those plastic beer rings that hold your six pack together. The gimmick was that every time you fold the rings they become harder to rip apart; I cannot confirm this as I have always been more concerned with drinking the beer. **Ellering** ripped 18 rings then tore a license plate in half. – This. SUCKED.

Back with **Boyd & Watts** at the desk and **Watts** talked about **Dick Murdoch** going on a tour of Japan. **Murdoch** was going over to be a part of New Japan's Summer Fight Series where he teamed with **Andre the Giant**, **El Canek**, **Greg Valentine & The Grappler** during his two month tour. However, listening to **Watts**, you would think **Murdoch** was headed out to fight a bunch of pinko commies, as **Watts** claimed **Murdoch** was taking his Marine Corps gear just in case any "trouble" broke out while he was over there and he had to enlist at the nearest US military base. – Amazing!

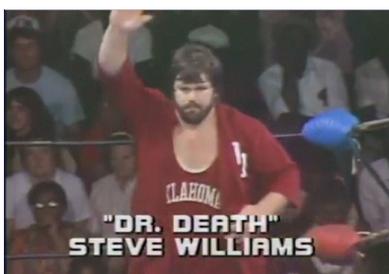
**Dick Murdoch vs. The Turk.** – **Murdoch** over in 2:58. **Dickie** was selling his throat after the big

hanging angle last week. **Turk** threw some chops to the throat and worked over **Murdoch** briefly, however **Murdoch** came back with the brainbuster to get the win. – Match was dull, but at least **Murdoch** was selling what happened to him last week. These days guys don't even sell if something happened to them on the same show.



**Ted Dibiase vs. Randy Base.** – **Dibiase** over in 2:28. **Dibiase** completely outclassed **Base** and won with his powerslam. There was virtually no playing to the crowd from **Dibiase** as he ruthlessly dispatched of the tomato can in the ring with him. Yet more subtle hints of a change coming for **Dibiase**.

**“Dr. Death” Steve Williams vs. Billy Starr.** – **Doc** over in 3:43. According to **Watts** this was only **Doc’s** second ever match and as noted last week I can neither confirm nor deny this due to the sparseness of the house show results from this time. **Doc**, again, looked super green and stumbled around while he figured out what he was supposed to do. His selling wasn't great either, but thankfully that was kept to a minimum. **Watts** noted that he had taught **Doc** the Oklahoma Stampede and given **Williams** his old wrestling boots, which he was in fact wearing. **Doc** won a bad match with the Stampede.



**Boyd & Watts** threw to **“Hangman” Harris** hanging **Dick Murdoch** last week and they put **Harris** over as a dangerous man.

**“Hangman” Harris vs. Mike Hudspeth.** – **Harris** over in 3:09. **Harris** got the better of an ugly forearm brawl early and beat up the jobber, **Hudspeth**. There were exactly zero moves performed before the finish, which saw **Harris** neck **Hudspeth** on the top rope then get the win with his wacky Hangman submission hold.

**North American Heavyweight Championship: Bob Roop (C) vs. JYD (Louisiana & Mid-South Tag Champion).** – JYD over via DQ at 2:53. **Roop** played cowardly heel early and they got over JYD's strength with a bunch of power spots. **Roop** necked JYD on the top rope for the heat spot and landed a nice neckbreaker. JYD fired up and made his comeback and hit his Big Thump finish. **One Man Gang** ran out and attacked JYD for the DQ. **Gang** tried to post JYD's leg but **Ernie Ladd** showed up and nailed **Gang** with a chair. **Roop** gave JYD his Shoulder Breaker and went up top to deliver a big Bombs Away knee, however **Ted Dibiase** stormed the ring and threw his body on top of JYD to take the big knee drop from Roop! JYD made a comeback on **Roop** then **the Assassin & the Grappler** appeared and pulled **Roop** to safety. – Match wasn't much but the angle was fantastic and made complete sense. **Ladd** still wants revenge on **One Man Gang** for breaking his leg and **Dibiase**, while in the midst of a turn, still hates **Bob Roop** for stealing the title from him that he sacrificed himself so JYD could kick his ass. Also, **Roop** beat **Dibiase** for the North American title after **Gang** had posted **Dibiase's** leg, so that was a nice little call-back too.



**The Grappler & The Assassin vs. Cocoa Samoa & Jesse Barr.** – **Grappler & Assassin** over in 4:09. The prelim babyfaces shone early and actually got quite a lot of offense in. **Grappler** cut off **Barr** with a backbreaker and the heels worked him over for the heat. **Watts** said that **Big John Studd & the Super Destroyer** from Georgia had issued a challenge for the Mid-South Tag titles and said that **Grappler & Assassin** wanted the belts too. I think the idea was just to make it seem like the Tag titles were a big deal by claiming outsiders wanted a shot at them. **Cocoa** ran wild off the hot tag and went for a Monkey Flip on the **Grappler**; **Assassin** nailed **Cocoa** with a headbutt from the apron and **Grappler** got the win with his running **Fujiwara** armbar. – Very solid match and the team of **Assassin & Grappler** are awesome. I'm a sucker for old-school masked wrestlers and these two were great. **Denton** did most of the work since **Hamilton** was pretty old, but they were still a fantastic mean-guy team.

**“Iron” Mike Sharpe vs. Jim Starr.** – TV Time Limit Draw at 4:20. This was hideously boring. **Watts** got so bored he started putting over the company who re-sprayed his private jet! **Boyd Pierce** hyped **Ernie Ladd vs. One Man Gang** for next week. **Sharpe** looked like a total loser who couldn't beat a nobody before the time ran out. You can really see that **Watts** had given up on

**Sharpe** at this point.

Another fine week of Mid-South TV. The big angle during the **Roop/JYD** title match was great and set up **Ladd vs. Gang** next week, plus it kept the **Dibiase/Roop** feud on the boil, which will come to a head in a few weeks with one of the most memorable angles in Mid-South history. None of the matches were anything special, although **Grappler & Assassin** were a lot of fun, but still the booking of the main angles and feuds was near perfect as always.

### Next Week's Issue

In next week's issue we return with coverage of the continuation of the build to Reigns/Rollins, Mid-South, the news, Del Rio updates, PRIDE, and much more!



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