

Wrestlemania Count-Up – #15: Russo. It's All Russo.

Wrestlemania 15

Date: March 28, 1999

Location: First Union Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Attendance: 20,276

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

America the Beautiful: Boyz 2 Men

This show is dripping with Russo here although his time was ending rapidly with he and Ferrara being gone in less than 7 months. All along, this was the main event we knew was coming one day and it was finally here: Stone Cold Steve Austin vs. The Rock for the WWF World Heavyweight Championship in the main event of Wrestlemania. Seriously, how awesome does that sound? While that match really was great, the rest of the card more or less sucks. Russo's stuff was controversial, but at the same time it made little sense and made for some bad matches. This show may have been ok at the time, but the age hasn't been kind to it. Let's get to it.

Boyz 2 Men sing America the Beautiful and do a great job at it. To begin with, we get an amazing voice over from Freddie Blassie. Go find this and appreciate it. His voice is just perfect for something like this. He talks about how these moments are what define our lives and are so rare. I love these packages as they make you feel like this is the biggest night of your life. As Blassie says, "Welcome to Wrestlemania, the Showcase of the Immortals."

After that, we get the writing of Vince Russo shoved down our throats.

Hardcore Title: Billy Gunn vs. Hardcore Holly vs. Al Snow

See, this right here is what makes no sense. Billy had been going after the IC title for months. Ok, that's all well and good. His partner the Road Dogg had been going after the Hardcore title for months. Again, that's fine with me. So what would be the logical move? Clearly, to have Road Dogg win the IC title and Billy win the Hardcore title! That's the problem I have with Russo: he makes swerves for the sake of making

swerves. There was no logic or reasoning at all to do this. Billy wasn't a hardcore wrestler but his partner was. Why not put three hardcore wrestlers into a hardcore match for the hardcore title? Doesn't that make sense on paper at least? Not in Russo's mind apparently.

Gunn is over here and has the title. Billy tries to talk and Snow jumps him like a good man would. Holly in black tights and black boots is a weird look for some reason. Snow takes over and kicks both guys a lot. Al sends Hardcore into the Spanish Announce Table. Billy tries to jump in but Snow/Holly are like boy please and throw him into the steps so they can keep fighting.

We talk about the Big Show Paul Wight for a bit. Snow busts out a hockey stick and hammers away on both guys so we get a Let's Go Flyers chant. There's a broom as this is sloppy even by Hardcore Title match standards. Snow goes ninja on us after breaking the broom handle. This has more or less been Snow vs. Holly with Gunn not leaving them alone.

Gunn tries to get in there again and Snow beats the heck out of him for it. Chair time and it's all the real hardcore guys here. The champion finally does something but then gets drilled in the face by Head to take him down. Snow brings in a table and of course goes through it himself at the hands of Billy. Fameasser onto the chair to Snow but Holly drills Gunn with the chair to get the pin and the title.

Rating: D+. The booking made no sense at all. Why have Gunn in there? Seriously, he hasn't ever done anything hardcore in his life except hardcore drugs. This led to Holly and Snow's wars over the title in the upcoming months before the 24/7 rule came into play. Nothing worth watching that wasn't done 100x better later on. Not terrible though, although an odd choice for an opener.

We recap the battle royal on Heat where the final two people

got a tag title match. Yes this is how weak the tag division was. See how glad they were to see the Dudleys in about 8 months? Was there a reason why Owen Hart/Jeff Jarrett were tag champions? What did they have in common other than a bad haircut?

Tag Titles: Owen Hart/Jeff Jarrett vs. D'lo Brown/Test

D'lo has Ivory, the forgotten diva, with him for this. At the time Test is the hired gun of the Corporation. Debra comes to the ring in a jacket and bikini. Never once have I thought she was attractive. The name puppies doesn't exist yet but Lawler is looking for it. How in the world did Test get such a huge push later in the year?

Test and Brown start arguing before the champions get to the ring. Test and Jarrett to start but then it's off to Brown. Off to Test vs. Owen now and a diving powerbomb gets no cover. Pumphandle is blocked and there's an enziguri. Sharpshooter is broken up as the crowd is dead. Debra interferes and the champions take over for a bit.

D'lo fights them off and gets two on Jarrett. Everything breaks down and Debra tries to seduce Brown. Ivory vs. Debra on the floor as Teri comes out. Owen gets a top rope kick to Brown and Jarrett gets a rollup for the pin. Thank goodness this is over quickly.

Rating: F+. This was a waste of time and not even fun to watch. Not off to a good start here at all. This was less than 5 minutes long. Seriously, was the tag division this pathetic? There were actual tag teams in the battle royal and this is the best we could get? Obviously Test and Brown never teamed again. Stupid all around.

The team known as PMS is out there arguing with Test. Yep it went nowhere. Test and Brown fight for no apparent reason.

And now we have one of the worst ideas in the history of the

wrestling business: a Brawl for All match. Let me break this down for you. Brawl for All was more or less UFC meeting wrestling meeting boxing. It was three rounds per fight, a legit fight, and you could use takedowns or punches. Let me reemphasize something: this was legit. That was the biggest problem. Bart Gunn of all people won the tournament.

Who in the world was Bart Gunn you rookies ask? That is the problem. No one knew who he was and he did nothing after this. The idea was to let a guy named Dr. Death Steve Williams win this and get a huge push. The problem was, Bart Gunn had an insane left hook and he knocked Williams out cold. So of course, since he's the toughest fighter in the company, WWF thought it was a good idea to have him fight a real boxer. Enter Butterbean, a 400lb fighter that hardly ever lost. This was also a legit fight.

Bart Gunn vs. Butterbean

We get a bad promo from Gunn who proves why he should never get a mic. We have guest judges for this. There's a no name boxing champion that serves as referee. The guests judges are: Kevin Rooney, who is Mike Tyson's trainer, Chuck Wepner, who was the inspiration for Rocky and wrestled Andre the Giant, and Gorilla Monsoon who really looks bad here as he would be dead within a few months. Nice ovation for him though.

This is an assault. It lasts about forty seconds and Butterbean shows why he's a professional fighter. Two big right hands and Bart is out cold. Did WWF really expect something else to happen? We get a ton of replays to desperately fill in the time that didn't use.

Rating: F. This did nothing but show that real sports like boxing have tougher guys in it. Total waste of time that did nothing at all. Get it through your head wrestling people: WRESTLING AND UFC DO NOT MIX!

For some reason, the San Diego Chicken runs out. Why? I don't

know. We're in Philadelphia, not San Diego. The boxing referee knocks him out cold with an uppercut that would have hit the costume and not the person but he goes down anyway of course. You have to love wrestling.

Show and Mankind had a fight earlier today.

Foley says that he's done everything asked of him and yet he's still got another match tonight with a big challenge. He doesn't mind.

Big Show vs. Mankind

The winner here is the guest referee for the main event. Ok, now the story on this one is complicated. This was in the middle of the huge conspiracy angle between Austin and McMahon. A year ago, Steve Austin won the WWF Title from Shawn Michaels. The next night on Raw, Austin stunned Vince, saying he wouldn't do things Vince's way.

This set off a two year plus feud between the two with Vince becoming desperate to get the title off of Austin. Vince threw opponent after opponent at him but Austin fought them all off. Over the summer, Taker and Kane started having weird interactions that led people to believe that they were working together to help Vince. While both denied it, they were seen together or with other members of the Corporation, which was Vince's team.

Eventually, Austin beat them both but was finally put into a "triple threat" match with them in which both pinned him at the same time. This eventually resulted in Austin being fired but holding McMahon at gunpoint the next night. That led to the Deadly Game Tournament at Survivor Series which ended with Rock joining McMahon and becoming the Corporate Champion.

McMahon went on to win the 1999 Royal Rumble to keep Austin out of Wrestlemania. McMahon said he forfeited his spot, which was awarded to Austin. Austin had to defend his shot against Vince in a cage match at an In Your House in a cage match,

where Big Show debuted and cost Vince the match by mistake.

This whole time though, Mankind had tried to get on McMahon's good side but Vince kept taking advantage of him. Mankind wanted to be involved in the main event at Mania but Vince kept throwing him into unwinnable matches that he continued to win. Finally Vince said he could be part of the match, playing the role of guest referee if he beat an opponent at Wrestlemania.

Oh hey there's a match here. Mankind has a referee shirt on and fires away to start. And there's a boot to take care of that offensive streak. They hit the floor and Foley can't get a double arm DDT out there. All Show here for the most part as he hits a Russian Leg Sweep to put Foley down again. Mankind manages to fight back and sends Show over the ropes.

There's Socko but Show fights him off. Ok no he doesn't as the hold is on again. Dang it make up your mind! We're at the third Claw in like a minute. For some reason Mankind gets behind Show as the fans chant Foley. Show is able to get up and drop backwards onto Foley to break the hold in a nice counter. The replay shows how awesome that really was.

We head to the floor with Show in total control. There's a chair shot to the back of Mankind and that's ok apparently. Two chairs and the two guys go back in there. Foley is holding his ribs here due to reasons of extreme pain. Show sets up both chairs and chokeslams Foley through them, as in I don't think they hit his back at all. Foley is the referee for the main event.

Rating: C-. Considering who you have out there, this is a pretty decent match. I've never liked the ending though, but that comes into play later on in the show. Good effort helps this match a lot. That bump from Foley where Show fell on him was absolutely great. This was designed to get us to the end of the show and I think it worked ok.

Post match Vince comes out and isn't happy. For some reason he's on a mic and we can hear him perfectly fine. Show gets all ticked off at him and picks him up for a chokeslam but sits him down. Vince, ever the genius, keeps mouthing off to him and slaps him. Show knocks his block off and turns face. This would result in the formation of the Union and Vince still being a face for a total of a month before Vince was revealed as the Higher Power in an incredible moment.

Mankind is taken out on a stretcher and likely won't be able to referee tonight.

In the back, Patterson and Brisco try to get Vince back together, making him feel better by saying Mankind is in no condition to referee. Apparently he wants Show arrested.

Intercontinental Title: Road Dogg vs. Goldust vs. Ken Shamrock vs. Val Venis

Again, what in the heck is this? What logic does this have to it? These four actually had something close to a story if you can believe that. Road Dogg does his pre match thing that is so over it's scary. Why is it scary? He calls himself the IC Champion of the world and gets a pop.

Oh yes the story. Ok so Shamrock and Venis, the former champion, were feuding for the title but the fans weren't getting into it. What's the solution? Add in Billy Gunn. Alright I guess that works. Three way feuds are hard to pull off but they can work. So what's the end result of this? Give the title to Road Dogg of course. Why do that? I don't know, they just did it. So ok, we have Billy Gunn leaving the feud to go for the hardcore title as we discussed earlier, leaving us with Shamrock vs. Venis vs. Road Dogg. Alright I guess that can work.

BUT WAIT!!!

Enter Ken Shamrock's so hot it's mind blowing sister Ryan (yes

Ryan.) She sides with Goldust of all people after making a "special" movie with Val Venis, so Shamrock has a problem with them too. Goldust wants the IC Title, so we've got a fourway feud where the champion is holding onto the title for his tag partner as two of the guys feud over a sister who is hot but has a man's name but made a movie with the former champion.

So did you get all that? Actually, when you look at Ryan up close, she's not as hot as I remember. Her eyes are just absolutely creepy looking. If you avoid those, amazing though. This has elimination rules of course, as one fall simply wouldn't be enough, but only two in the ring at once with the others having to be tagged in. You know, when Road Dogg was being normal and didn't have Billy around, he wasn't bad at all.

Ryan comes out with Goldust and the Blue Meanie because it would tick off Ken the most. The line that Road Dogg is the only one that doesn't have history with Ryan is funny. Shamrock sends Road Dogg into the corner as they're the official starters here. Why would you want to come in if it's last man standing? Lawler talking about the steamy night in which Pat Patterson won the IC Title in Rio is great.

Val stomps away at Ken as it's Val vs. Goldust at the moment. Curtain Call is countered and a spinebuster from Val gets two on Goldust. Val reverses a middle rope suplex into a bulldog for two. Fisherman's Suplex gets two as well. They collide in the corner and Val does Sting's fall into the crotch spot. Shamrock gets a DDT on Goldust and Road Dogg puts Val down so they're both down.

Goldust gets the cover for a very long two. Off to Roadie vs. Val now and Road Dogg chops away which gets WOO every time. The dancing punch puts down Val. Make that it puts down everyone. Shaking kneedrop to Shamrock but Val suplexes Roadie for two. Lot of kickouts in there. Pumphandle puts down Val and Ken grabs the ankle lock on Val who makes the rope. This

would be a lot more interesting if this was one fall.

Ken is sent to the floor and Ryan yells at him. Val hits a baseball slide into the back of Ken and now they fight up the aisle. Yep it's a double countout for those two. Down to Goldust vs. Road Dogg now. That's rather cheap and we needed to do one fall as you can tell. Shamrock hits a belly to belly on both guys and we're at another count. Ryan trips Goldust, turning on him for zero reason at all and Roadie gets a rollup to end it.

Rating: D. Storylines aside, the wrestling here wasn't bad. It wasn't great, but it wasn't bad. However, the booking was just mind numbingly stupid. What was the reasoning behind Dogg and Goldust for the title? Simply put: there isn't any. Road Dogg absolutely steals the show here, and that can't be a good sign. I have no idea how the title fell this far this fast but it's amazing to think that it did. Jericho, Benoit and Angle were coming though.

Show is arrested in the back and cracks jokes of course.

Time to recap HHH vs. Kane. Ok, yet again, we have a complicated backstory. Chyna was part of DX which had HHH as the leader in the role of the incredibly popular midcarder that was just waiting for his chance to break through to the main event, kind of like Jeff Hardy a year and a half ago. Kane was part of the Corporation but was over, and Chyna betrayed DX to join the Corporation.

Kane and HHH had a match on Raw where Chyna held HHH for a fireball from Kane. HHH ducks and Chyna's eye is damaged, causing Kane to pick her up and carry her to the back, drawing cheers to the heel carrying the still popular heel. 2 weeks after that, HHH dressed up as Goldust and launched a flamethrower at Kane, burning him again. That brings us here. This is at the point where Kane is starting to seem human, but still is partially a total monster. Apparently he has a crush

on Chyna though.

HHH vs. Kane

Pre match the San Diego Chicken runs back out and is unmasked as Pete Rose. Yep it's another tombstone for him. What a great tradition that is. HHH's music hits but he sneaks through the crowd and hits Kane low to start us off. He still throws the swinging uppercuts which were always a little weird. HHH should go back to the long tights. They suit him better to me.

Kane charges but HHH backdrops him to the floor. HHH sends him into the steps as HHH is showing a lot of uncharacteristic power. The leaping knee keeps Kane outside the ring and we're back on the floor again. We finally get back in the ring and then Kane throws the future Game right back to the floor. He grabs a chokeslam but drops HHH balls first onto the railing.

The Mean Street Posse is at ringside as HHH's back is rammed into the post multiple times. Leg drop gets two for Kane. HHH gets a boot up in the corner but now we're going back to the floor one more time. Kane DIVES over the top to crush HHH. Nice one too. Back in and Kane can't hit the top rope clothesline. HHH hammers away and a facecrusher has Kane in some trouble. A jumping knee to the head does put him down.

And here's Chyna as we get to the point of this match. Remember she turned on HHH to join the Corporation and in theory Kane. Pedigree is countered and both guys are down. Chyna slides the steps into the ring but HHH kicks them into Kane's face. Drop toehold puts Kane into them as the referee is like screw it.

Out to the floor again and another Pedigree is countered. Back in the ring and Kane hits the chokeslam but Chyna has a chair. She wants to get the big shot in on HHH and of course she turns on Kane, hitting him with the chair for the DQ. HHH pops him with the chair to save her so we get the big emotional reuniting after the two weeks apart.

Rating: D+. WAY too much brawling on the floor and the ending was stupid given what was coming in about 20 minutes. This was basically HHH trying to hit the Pedigree for 10 minutes and then the Chyna stuff. These two would get a bit better over the next year but still this was pretty weak.

As you can guess, Vince declares himself the referee for that night.

Women's Title: Sable vs. Tori

Now this isn't Torrie Wilson, but Tori, a woman that did almost nothing at all in her whole career yet never got fired. Sable is in the middle of her heel run here that absolutely couldn't have been much worse. Basically she thinks she's the hottest thing ever and is better than everyone else. Oh and she's in Playboy. Tori had just gotten done with the same angle that Mickie and Trish had a few years back with Tori being the psycho stalker. Let's make this quick please? Tori's outfit is um, different.

Tori is in some freaky looking full body suit and this is her debut. Oh dear. Sable dances a lot while Tori can't get in the ring. She gets in and then is tossed around a bit. It's clear that neither have a clue what they're doing. Sable tries a cross body from the apron which is more like a knee to the face. There's no point in me telling you what's going on for the most part as a lot of it is so bad you can't tell what they're even trying to do.

They try, and that's the most important word here, a bridge into a backslide and I'm counting three different botches in it. As in they botch, fix it, then botch again. Three different botches. That's bad. Like, very bad. Ref is bumped. They botch the Sable Bomb as Tori winds up sitting up. Nicole Bass runs in early so she has to hide at ringside. She comes in to save Sable and the Bomb ends it. Thank goodness.

Rating: F. This is one of the worst matches I've ever seen.

Also do we have proof that Bass was born a female?

We recap Shane winning the European Title in a total fluke. This started the Mean Street Posse I think. It really was funnier on the second look through. That sets up Pac vs. Shane in a Greenwich street fight where the Posse helped Shane win. The rematch is tonight.

DX says they're stronger than ever. X-Pac says the great line of Shane, get ready for some pain. And remember: DX is UNITED!!!

European Title: Shane McMahon vs. X-Pac

Shane won the title in a tag match on Raw a few weeks ago after X-Pac got beaten down and Shane fell on him for the pin. If DX is united, why does X-Pac get attacked by the Stooges since he's on his own coming to the ring? GREAT logic there. Test is with Shane as the backup I guess. They try to play up the culture war here which is kind of funny to put it mildly.

No contact yet as Shane runs. They head into the ring where Pac kicks Shane's head off and hammers away. Test pulls Shane out of the way of a Bronco Buster. We hit the floor again and Test grabs X-Pac and crotches him on the post. Shane gets him down and sets for the Corporate Elbow but Pac gets out of the way. Another low blow by Shane and he gets his hands on Test's belt to whip away at Pac's back.

X-Pac manages to get a backdrop to send Shane to the floor and get some relief. Pac dives down on him but the Posse grabs him to break the momentum. Great to see that UNITED DX right? The help from Shane's friends including a beatdown from Test sets up Shane on offense again.

Back in the ring with Shane getting crotched on the top rope. A superplex gets two and Test accidentally rams himself into the steps. Pac gets the belt and slaps away at Shane which for some reason drawing W00s from the crowd. There's the Bronco

Buster but Test drills Pac with the European Title to kill him dead. That gets two and the fans ROAR.

Shane sets Pac up for a Bronco Buster but X-Pac avoids it again. Test comes in and shouts OH CRAP as Pac takes him down. Back to Pac whipping the Corporation as he gets Test in position for a Bronco Buster. HHH and Chyna are here and HHH pulls Test out of the ring.

X-Factor to Shane kills him dead, but as Chyna distracts the referee, HHH turns on X-Pac and in turn joins the Corporation by hitting Pac with a Pedigree and putting Shane on top for the pin. Yes, within two weeks Chyna had turned heel to join the Corporation then 20 minutes earlier Chyna turned face again then now HHH turned heel and joined the Corporation. This was a very confusing year.

Rating: C+. Well let's see. The drama was there and considering it was Shane in there as a guy that wrestles maybe three real matches a year, this was pretty good for what it was. Not a great match or anything but the crowd was way into the kickouts and the turn at the end was shocking. It made little sense but it was in fact shocking.

HHH and Test beat down X-Pac post match. The Outlaws run out for the save but get beaten down too. It might have helped if Billy hadn't literally slid across the ring. Kane makes the final save, apparently turning face in the process. So let me see if I've got this straight. Kane and Chyna came into the show as heels and HHH as a face. At the end of the show Chyna and HHH were heels and Kane was a face. Somehow in there Chyna turned twice. This was typical for the Attitude Era. You really did need a scorecard to keep track of things around this time.

Time to recap Bossman vs. Undertaker. Some of this stuff goes past Mania but for the sake of this it's ok I think. Ok. This match and this angle right here sums up the entire Attitude

Era and Vince Russo's booking style. Here's what's going on. Taker is fed up with Vince ordering him around and says that he owns Vince's soul. He starts abducting and crucifying Shane and other Vince associates as a sacrifice to the so called Greater Power.

Eventually, he has Stephanie's (yet to debut mind you) teddy bear and lights it on fire, showing Vince that not even his home is safe. Taker's symbol is burned on Vince's lawn to show the same idea. Now a month after this at Backlash, Stephanie was kidnapped by Taker and the Ministry, being "sacrificed" that night. Taker said he would release her in exchange for ownership of the WWF.

Vince tries to go through with it but Taker instead goes to the ring for a "wedding" with Stephanie, but Austin makes the save. Later, the Corporation and the Ministry merge on the first Smackdown special. Vince forms the Union with himself, Mankind, Show, Shamrock and Test for four weeks. On the fourth Monday of their existence, Mankind went out of action with an injury and the Higher Power arrived.

He was covered in this cloak and Vince pops up on the screen, saying he wants to see this bastard's face. They pull the hood back and Vince is the Higher Power. The terrorizing of his family, the abduction of his daughter, the injuries to himself, the absolute insanity were all just to get the WWF Title off of Steve Austin and Vince was in on it the whole time. That my friends, is what defines the Attitude Era: over the top angles, betrayals left and right, and one guy being in on something all along.

Where was I? Oh yes, Hell in a Cell. Bossman was the head of security of the Corporation at the time so he was handpicked to take on Taker in this match. Think about this: these two in the Cell? Following the other PPV matches in this structure of Mankind/Taker and Taker/HBK, on a scale of 1-10 how bad is this going to be? Start counting backwards. When you get to

the end of the match, you'll be close.

Undertaker vs. Big Boss Man

The only good thing here is that Taker's music is straight up awesome. No entrance for Boss Man if that gives you an idea of how much of a chance he has here. They stare it down to start as we talk about the other great matches that Taker had in the Cell. Boss Man hammers away in the corner to start as the announcers try to tell us this is Boss Man's environment. That's just amusing.

So far it's a wrestling match in the Cell. If you're going to have a Cell match, MAKE IT VIOLENT! Boss Man gets a swinging neckbreaker inside a Hell in a Cell match. I give up. Boss Man knocks him down, Taker sits up, Boss Man knocks him down again, Boss Man says GET UP, Taker sits up. We go to the floor as this is two minutes in and I'm bored out of my mind already.

Taker beats on Boss Man on the floor but Boss Man finds some cuffs and attaches him to the Cell. With Taker stuck to the cage, Boss Man finds the nightstick so Taker tries to kick it away. Yep that doesn't work so Boss Man hits him in the head with the stick. Taker falls to the ground and it breaks the cuffs. Must not have been made in America.

Blood on Taker's head now. The referee yells at them. Uh, for what? Taker grabs Boss Man by the throat and throws him face first into the Cell. The Cell moves when Boss Man is rammed into it. Also Taker is fine after being hit in the head by a freaking nightstick. Taker finds a chair under the ring while Paul Bearer talks trash. Big chair shot as somehow we're over halfway done with this.

Taker is back in the ring now while the fans are chanting something. Some idiot fan decides he just HAS to stand up and look at the camera so that everyone sees him and not the match. Nice guy isn't he? Boss Man is bleeding now too. Back

in the ring now and Taker hits a flying clothesline for two.

Taker sets for Old School but Boss Man kicks the ropes to crotch Taker. Cole: "Boss Man kicked the rope and Undertaker felt it." You can't buy insight like that people! They slug it out and we go WAY wide for some reason. As in you can see either end of the arena and the Cell is in the middle. Random but whatever.

Boss Man puts Taker down with a headbutt but Taker almost gets a Tombstone. That's blocked but the second attempt at it isn't. Boss Man is of course dead and we have a Cell match that lasted less than ten minutes in total. Why in the world did this happen again? Oh yeah so we could do the post match thing.

Rating: H. As in holy goodness why was this a Cell match? They managed to ruin what is supposed to be the easiest match in the world. This was less than ten minutes long and totally boring. No one bought Boss Man as a legit threat here and it sucked beyond belief. Terrible match and one of the biggest WTF moments in WWF history.

Post match the Brood (Edge, Christian and Gangrel) comes down from the ceiling and breaks into the Cell with a rope and noose. Bearer raises the Cell so Boss Man is then hung from the Cell and just stays there. Great indeed.

Hey, while a man who was hung from a Cell by his neck stops struggling, let's talk about the RAGE PARTY! Yeah it's stupid.

We recap Rock vs. Austin. In short, Vince had pulled some strings to get the title off Austin and put it on his crown jewel, the Rock. Austin came second at the Rumble and then got the match after Vince forfeited his spot. This is the big blowoff and Austin is clearly getting his title back here. Oh and the beer truck happened in there too.

Jim Ross comes out to call the main event. Well this just got

a lot better. Vince comes out to be referee but what's that I hear? That would be the music of Mr. Wrestlemania himself, Commissioner Shawn Michaels. HUGE pop for Shawn and he brings a referee with him. Is this a Hardcore Title match? Shawn might be a little drunk.

Shawn of course says that only the Commissioner can appoint special referees. Why in the world is that the case? Vince can't like, override that? Also the Corporation is barred from ringside. Shawn says that if Vince tries anything, the two of them will have a fight of their own out back. I'd pay to see that. I did actually. I think it was called Wrestlemania 22.

WWF Title: Steve Austin vs. The Rock

Champion comes out first here which is always weird to see for some reason. Dang I love that belt. Austin comes out in a t-shirt which looks weird to put it mildly. Here we go immediately as Austin fires the first punch. We're on the floor almost as soon as the bell rings and there goes Austin's shirt. Back in the ring now with Rock in control.

This is No DQ by the way. I forgot to mention that earlier. We head into the crowd because this is 1999 and that's required. They get back into the ringside area so they can go right back out of the ringside area and back into the crowd. Rock chokes away with the electrical cord and we head up towards the entrance.

Austin gets a clothesline to take over as this has been a total brawl the entire time. They've been in the ring about 9 seconds out of 5 minutes of fighting. Rock backdrops Austin onto the lights and Austin's knee may be injured. Austin sends Rock into the massive logo and walk around a lot. They look at the ring but first it's a suplex in the aisle.

They're around the ring now but it's not time to go in there yet. Rock grabs some water and of course it goes into Austin's face. Austin puts Rock onto the Spanish Announce Table and

drops an elbow on it. Naturally it doesn't break. Austin's solution: drop another elbow until the thing explodes! Rock is more or less dead Austin gets some water and spits it in Rock's face. Nice touch.

HOKEY SMOKE WE'RE IN THE RING!!! And never mind as Rock rolls to the floor. Rock wraps it around the post and we're on the floor again. Rock goes into the steps again and now back into the ring. Out of absolutely nowhere Rock hits the Rock Bottom for two. That surprised me and I've seen this match multiple times. Rock hits the floor and grabs a chair.

Austin gets the chair but caves Chioda's head in with it by mistake. No referee now and Rock gets a swinging neckbreaker to put Austin down. Stunner is reversed and here comes Rock. He goes after the knee with the chair and Austin is in trouble. BIG chair shot puts Austin down for two as a second referee is here.

Rock throws on a chinlock as we finally get some help for the other referee that got his head cracked by the chair. Austin fights up and hammers away with rights but walks into a Samoan Drop for two. Rock hits the referee with a Rock Bottom. Stunner to Rock and Earl Hebner runs down for two. Get Foley out here already.

Here's Vince who wants a showdown with Austin. It's enough of a distraction for Rock to get a low blow to Austin and Vince is in the ring now. Vince pops Hebner, making a need for referee #4. Rock stomps a mudhole into Austin and here comes Mankind. BIG pop for him hitting Vince. Austin grabs a rollup for two as it's Austin, Rock and Foley in the ring.

Thesz Press by Austin and Rock is in big trouble all of a sudden. Rock fights back and there's Rock Bottom #2 and it's time for the Corporate Elbow. Austin moves and tries the Stunner but Rock counters into an attempt at another Rock Bottom. Austin fights out of it and a Stunner gives him I

think his third world title.

Rating: B+. This was supposed to be an absolute brawl and that's what it was. They would have far better matches as Rock wasn't someone that you could really buy as a world champion at this point. Well you could but he wasn't at the level of Austin. Granted no one was but you get the idea. Anyway, good match but not a classic at all.

Much beer is consumed and Vince is beaten up to send the fans home very happy.

Overall Rating: D. Oh this was bad. The main event is good and some of the other matches are ok, but for Wrestlemania this was really bad. Things would get better in two years but we had another year to get through first. This wasn't the worst show ever but at the same time it was close. Weak show but this era was never really about high quality in the ring. Until next year.

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