

No Way Out 2000: A Forgotten Main Event On A Forgotten Classic

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Date: February 27, 2000

Location: Hartford Civic Center, Hartford, Connecticut

Attendance: 12,551

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

This is more or less about one thing: Hell in a Cell. If Cactus Jack loses, he retires. Other than that there isn't a lot to talk about. Oh actually there is. At the Rumble, Big Show had been thrown out but claimed that Rock was out first. Tonight there's a match where the winner goes to Mania. The Radicals are here now also so we have a fully fleshed out roster for this era. This is a direct request from X and others so let's get to it.

The opening video is all about Foley vs. HHH as Foley's dream is to go to Mania. This was a very emotional time actually as honestly no one was sure what was going to happen since more or less no one believed they would retire Foley without letting him main event Mania. On the other hand though, there was little belief they would do a title change. Also there was no way of knowing what the main event at Mania would be. This was a very interesting time indeed.

Intercontinental Title: Kurt Angle vs. Chris Jericho

Angle is European Champion here but it's not on the line. Jericho is IC Champion and has Chyna with him. She has that giant phallic gun with her. I wonder if she was trying to say that yes, I am indeed a man with that. Jericho gets a GREAT pop. Please Vince, give us a Jericho title run with him as a face.

Angle is apparently an idiot, an ignoramus, and an imbecile. Jericho has an I of his own: the Intercontinental Title. That's simple but the delivery is what makes it. Naturally this starts off fast paced as the Attitude Era was still around for the most part. Meaning of course, we go to the floor.

These two plus Benoit always had mad chemistry together and it was clear they were the future. Well kind of I guess. Jericho was. Benoit...maybe. Angle is hard to place in a pantheon of greatness. Crowd starts an ANGLE SUCKS chant. That's ahead of its time as Edge hasn't started the more famous chants yet.

I know I haven't given much commentary here, but dude, it's Angle vs. Jericho. Do I need to tell you that this match is awesome? Jericho hits that spinning heel kick that he does quite well at. In a lucky botch, Jericho messes up the follow through on the forearm but he landed on Angle so it looked intentional.

As Ventura said, sometimes it's better to be lucky than good. They go into some swank submission vs. pinfall stuff and it's sweet stuff. Angle gets the Slam out of nowhere when it was A, still a legit finisher (ankle lock was still about 5 months away) and B, MUCH faster and harder, gets two. We get a Liontamer which shifts into the Walls. Angle goes to get a belt and swings at Chyna. She gets rammed into the steps.

I'm no doctor but it seems to be a bad case of dramatic convenience. My diagnosis would be a short apology to Jericho. Possible side effects include a brief bit of jobbing. Take a Lionsault and call me in the morning. Back in the ring, Angle gets the belt up to block the Lionsault for the pin and the title to make him the 2nd Eurocontinental Champion. Another referee comes down to do nothing of note.

Rating: B+. This is another pairing that gets a higher than normal starting grade. Just based on who they are, they get an

automatic B. This was a very nice opener as you have two guys that you know can go and it worked out fine. Again though like I've said before, it's Angle vs. Jericho. Did you expect anything worse than a good match?

The Dudleys say there will be another title change tonight. This was when the Dudleys were still insanely awesome.

Tag Titles: Dudley Boys vs. New Age Outlaws

So the Outlaws are more or less the biggest team ever at this point and this is just another title defense against the Dudleys who took the company by storm. Think Sheamus vs. Cena from TLC. Lawler randomly barking at Road Dogg is rather funny for some reason. After the normal intros we start with a big brawl of course.

The crowd is pretty hot but you can tell they're saving themselves for the main event. Billy beat Bubba on Thursday and put him through a table. Road Dogg does his dancing punch and Bubba does what someone with intelligence would do (the irony of that stuns me) and DUCKS.

We get a What's Up but it's not named yet. This match is very short, as in like 5 minutes long. The Dudleys dominate for the most part until the required big brawl at the end. On the floor, Bubba blasts Gunn in the arm with a pipe. That legitimately injured him, putting him out of action for about 8 months.

When he got back Road Dogg was with K-Kwik (R-Truth) and Gunn got a singles push. Therefore unless there was some random reunion, this is the last New Age Outlaws match. Bubba realizes something is wrong and runs into the ring for 3D and the tag titles. This was a legit shock as more or less NO ONE thought the Dudleys had a chance.

Rating: D+. Way too short to be much of anything which I'm pretty sure was because of the injury. That happens so you do

what you have to do. This would set up the triple ladder match at Mania and the first TLC match at Summerslam as wrestling started the HOLY CRAP period of gimmick matches. Yes I know ECW did them first but theirs were far sloppier and became clichéd. Ok to revise it so I don't get yelled at: the holy crap period started in the mainstream. There.

Apparently Billy was hurt coming in and got hurt worse during the match. Got it.

We get a short package on Mark Henry vs. Viscera. Oh dang it they're fighting over Mae being pregnant and Viscera hurting her. For those of you that don't know about this angle, consider yourselves VERY lucky. If you ever hear a joke about a hand, this is what we're talking about. We'll leave it at that.

Mark Henry vs. Viscera

Be quick I beg of you. They flat out say this isn't going to be a pretty match with JR mentioning the star system. They destroy the steps with Henry taking a beating. Yeah I don't care either. We get references to babies and I change the subject immediately. Basically Henry is getting destroyed. And here's Mae Young for the save. After she gets shoved down, Henry hits a shoulder block which Viscera gets up from first, and a slam, yes a slam I say, gets the pin. What were they freaking thinking here?????

Rating: F-. Oh do I really need to explain this?

Jericho says he's mad at Angle, not Chyna. Dang I want to see that sweet triple threat from Mania now.

Gunn's shoulder is still hurt.

Hardy Boys vs. Edge/Christian

Again, do I need to tell you that this is going to be good? Terri bought the APA to protect her from the Dudleys earlier.

I guess the tag team she has already, the Hardys, aren't good enough? Both teams are faces here. I love Edge and Christian's music. Edge jumps Jeff to start.

At least you can tell the Hardys apart now as they're wearing different colors shirts. Has anyone ever adjusted their set before? Is there a need to tell fans not to do that? The shirts go off and the fans cheer. They need Lita badly, they really do. She'll hook up with them in about 3 months.

The Hardys are seeming a bit heelish here but they're wildly popular so there we are. These four were in an 8 man tag on Smackdown which apparently makes them familiar with each other. Yeah that's stupid. In a nice spot, Christian does a drop toe hold on Edge into Matt's groin.

Lawler asks where Edge was aiming. JR: THE GROIN! It's funnier than it sounds. Edge gets a nice piledriver on Jeff but it's not Memphis so it just gets two. It's a more solid match than I'm making it out to be. It's nothing great but all four guys are hustling and it's coming off good. You have to remember this is a fresh match at this point so it's far more interesting.

It's so weird to think that Edge and Hardy would be having world title matches in like 9 years. We get the double tag to Christian and Matt Hardy as this match is getting some solid time. In a slick spot, Edge is on Matt's shoulders with Christian behind them. Jeff jumps over Edge as he hooks a victory roll and lands on Christian in a cross body for a double cover. SWEET. Poetry in Motion is countered into a spear. This is awesome stuff.

Terri turns on Jeff and shoves him off the top rope for no apparent reason. She slaps Matt and the move that will become known as the Unprettier gets the pin. It's weird seeing all these moves with no names. Apparently Terri wants to join Edge and Christian. They leave her. That made them number one

contenders I guess. Yeah the APA did absolutely nothing here. Matt goes after Terri and NOW the APA do something.

Rating: B+. Just like the opener, this was solid stuff. This was over fifteen minutes of awesome though so I was very happy. Solid stuff all around with four guys that were taking the tag division to new levels that hadn't been seen in about 15 years. Great match.

Edge and Christian show some signs of issues but they're happy they're going to Mania for the title shot.

Show is will Lillian. She BARELY comes up to his chest. He says he should be going to Mania and we see Rock's feet hitting first again. That's really impressive when you think about it.

Big Bossman vs. Tazz

Yeah remember when Bossman was fighting for the world title two months ago? Neither do I. Bossman and Albert jumped him on Heat for no apparent reason. Taz is still over at this point and was supposed to get Benoit's push but Hardcore Holly screwed up a spot at Mania and put Taz on the shelf. They start in the aisle of course. Taz hooks an armbar on the floor. He's a submission master at this point also.

MAYBE a minute in Taz gets the Tazmission and Bossman is more or less done so Albert makes the save. A nightstick attack follows. Was there a point anywhere near this? Tazz keeps fighting back. If you want to make him look tough, have Tazz destroy both guys in a minute or so. Seriously, I have NO CLUE what the point of this was. Boss Man breaks the nightstick over Tazz's head. This went nowhere that I remember. Tazz gets up AGAIN as this isn't making him look awesome or anything. It's freaking stupid at this point.

Rating: W. For WTF was that???

Angle is in the cheap seats celebrating with a bullhorn.

We recap Kane vs. X-Pac because the massacre at Armageddon wasn't enough to blow off the feud I guess. This was one of the feuds that made X-Pac so hated. It just kept going on this theory that Pac could fight a monster. I mean this angle went on for about 6 months.

For those that haven't read my Armageddon review, Kane DESTROYED Pac in a cage match. If that had ended the feud, it would have been ok. They kept it going though with Tori, Kane's girlfriend, left him for X-Pac. It's a great example of an angle that went on too long. Oh and Paul Bearer is back.

Kane vs. X-Pac

It's No Holds Barred. We get a clip of Kane being hit with a flamethrower. You know Kane, maybe when you see a guy that hates you holding A BIG METAL GUN, you shouldn't stand in front of him. Kane is in the reversed color outfit here, making him look awesome again. Yes I'm a big Kane mark so there you go.

They fight up by the entrance where there's a random metal garbage can. Does anyone actually have those? We have big green plastic ones. It's a total brawl so far which at least makes sense with the stipulation. We get Bearer vs. Tori. Ok then. Pac is wrestling in a t-shirt which is gone by the time that line is typed.

Bronco Buster hits. I hate that move. That'll end that. X Factor barely keeps Kane down. That could have something to do with the fact that it ABSOLUTELY SUCKS. Top rope clothesline looks awesome. Chokeslam hits and you can feel Tori coming. Yep there it is. She gets a tombstone and Kane picks up the stairs for no adequately explored reason. They're kicked into his face for the pin. The blowoff for this was of all things Rikishi and Kane vs. Pac and Road Dogg. Yeah it was an odd pick, but so was all of Mania 2000.

Rating: C+. Not bad for a brawl, but still there was no point to this after Armageddon. I mean Kane beating up Pac is always fun, but the angle just makes limited sense to me. Bearer was worthless here so at least some things never change. It's not bad, but at the same time you scratch your head over it.

The Radicalz are ready for their PPV debut. Eddie is hurt here after shattering his arm in his WWF debut. They all say something. This is rather worthless.

Too Cool/Rikishi vs. Radicalz

It's Benoit, Saturn and Malenko in case you weren't around at this point. Rikishi hadn't quite gotten to his mega push yet but it was coming. It sucked beyond belief, but it was coming. Guerrero has a lead pipe for no apparent reason and gets beaten up before the match starts. Saturn and Grandmaster start us off. Why do I get the idea that these three guys are just not good enough to be in there with Benoit and Malenko?

Rikishi has a bad leg here so the Radicalz show intelligence by GOING AFTER IT. Seriously, why do wrestlers have such issues with figuring that out? There's a nice dichotomy here with three well schooled and master technicians vs. three more or less comedy characters that are ok in the ring. That's rather interesting when you think of it.

Rikishi is rather over if nothing else. That Rikishi Driver of his is just awesome. It looks freaking devastating if nothing else. It connects on Saturn and we get the Worm. We hit the messy stage which was destined to happen here so there we are. Saturn takes ANOTHER finisher, this time the guillotine leg drop from Grandmaster. Benoit hits the headbutt for the save and everyone goes to the floor. The Driver hits on Malenko and the visual of him just stopping is great. A Banzai Drop ends it. Naturally we dance for a bit.

Rating: B-. This match worked for one reason: Too Cool and Rikishi just wrestled for the most part. It wasn't about

comedy or a stupid gimmick or anything like that. It was a six man tag match and it came off pretty well. At the end of the day, good old fashioned wrestling is going to work better than anything else. This match right here is pretty much proof of that. It's not great, but given who was on the face side, this was great.

Angle is STILL celebrating. The early months of his career were just freaking epic.

We recap Rock vs. Big Show which is very simple: Rock was out at the Rumble but got the win anyway. The match is for the title shot. Simple yet effective, and brilliantly done.

Big Show vs. The Rock

This is around the time when Show was still pretty good. If you've never seen it, go check out his 95/96 stuff. He's a totally different guy than he is now and the difference is staggering. Rock gets a great pop as the super-push continues. Here's something you likely wouldn't guess: Show is just three months older than Rock. I NEVER would have guessed that.

Show has been around forever but he's only 37. That's hard to believe. He debuted when he was 23. That's amazing. He really was a big deal when he jumped I guess as while he was a former WCW Champion, his reigns never were very big deals.

Granted they weren't in WWF either. We're on the floor now which is fine for a match this big. Show gets a press slam and drops Rock on the railing. That would HURT. After standard stuff between these two, another referee comes down, followed by Shane. Rock Bottom hits but Shane knocks Rock out with the chair, turning heel and siding with Show. That's enough for the pin and the Mania title shot. That kind of happened, but not quite as you likely know.

Rating: B-. Not bad but really more advancing a story than about the match. Rock was about as hot as anyone on the planet

at this point though so this was just continuing that hot streak as it wasn't bad at all. Show winning was a real surprise though so I have to give them credit for that one.

We recap HHH vs. Cactus. You know the story, but more or less they're feuding and it's Title vs. Career. HHH said Foley could have any match he wanted, but if Foley lost he was done. When Foley said Hell in a Cell, the arena lit up. After the street fight classic they had, everyone knew this was going to be epic.

Angle, singing We Are the Champions, is thrown into a car trunk by Jericho and Chyna. That's just awesome. The song not the beating.

WWF Title: Cactus Jack vs. HHH

In case you're a freaking idiot, remember that this is Hell in a Cell. Seriously, why does Fink have to announce that? Here's a hint: BIG FREAKING CAGE! The cage coming down over them is just epic. Oh there's a subplot here: Cactus swore he would jump off the top of the cage but the Cell is HEAVILY locked. Here we go. Jack starts off in control here and hits a running jumping forearm. Yeah I was shocked too.

It should be noted that the crowd is kind of into this but not really at all. In his book, Foley mentions this and thought it was a sign that no one cared about him possibly being gone forever. Foley's shirt is really torn already. On the floor, HHH gets the steps ready for the running step spot. However, he doesn't hit it. HE FREAKING THROWS THEM AT FOLEY! That was just AWESOME looking.

The fans think Stephanie is a sl**, but still are relatively quiet. Chair time. In a funny moment, HHH takes a shot to the balls with a chair and Lawler says STEPHANIE! Double Arm DDT on a chair for a long two and...NO REACTION. Spinebuster on the chair and HHH gets two.

Foley said he was panicking here as he thought they were just failing in the eyes of the fans. They're not dead silent but one of Jack's finishers on a chair got a whimper. On the floor Foley gets a nice slingshot to send HHH into the cage. And now it's Foley cranking it up. It's been a very back and forth match and HHH is busted.

Foley does the chair dive off the middle rope to the floor and the fans are waking up. Seriously we're about ten minutes in and they're just NOW waking up. Foley picks up the steps and throws them at HHH (nice bit of continuity there) and HHH ducks (nice psychology there). He misses though and it hits the cage, breaking it. The roof is officially blown off. In his book, Foley said it hit him all at once: the fans were smart.

They knew the match wasn't ending in the cage. They knew Foley and HHH were going to fight all over ringside including likely going to the top of the Cell. That makes a ton of sense. If you know the match isn't going to end in the ring, why really care that much? In short, they didn't. They were just waiting for Foley to find a way out of the cage and he just did.

We hit the floor and Cactus hits a piledriver on the table. A huge Foley chant starts up and Cactus starts climbing with HHH still on the table. Fans are WAY into it now. Stephanie makes the save just before Foley finds the 2x4 in barbed wire. Oh yes. A quick shot to the head and Foley is dominating. And HHH is climbing the cage out of fear of Foley. The crowd is losing it. Oh and the 2x4 is up there too.

Foley has his hands on top but HHH slams Foley's head into the 2x4, and we get AIR FOLEY as he falls through the, say it with me, SPANISH ANNOUNCE TABLE! He gets up before HHH can get down the cage. HHH is STUNNED. Foley tries to throw a chair up top but he can't get it up. That's an odd segment but for some reason it's interesting. He gets to the top but walks into a barbed wire shot. Everyone is just waiting for the big spot

here. Everything up there is terrifying as you never know what's going to happen.

The corner of the cage breaks and HHH nearly falls through. We get a suplex on the top of the cage. Foley gets the 2x4 again, and in the words of Bubba Dudley from Rise and Fall of ECW, "Why don't we just light it on fire?" The fans have NO idea what to think of this but they love it. He lays it on the Cell and gives a sign for a piledriver. It's reversed and Foley goes through the Cell and THROUGH THE RING.

Remember, that's from a good 12-15 feet up. HHH gets down and CACTUS GETS UP. HHH loses his mind over that and beats him down again. Pedigree hits and that's finally it. DANG . Back in the day, especially after Show won, there was NO predicting who would win this. Epic match. Foley gets the big sendoff, and while he would get a reward of being in the main event of Mania, not even he knew that at the time. If I remember right he found out a week before the PPV, so it was a legit shock.

Rating: A+. It never ceases to amaze me how they find new ways to use the Cell. First it was Taker stalking Shawn, then it was a total eruption, and now a hybrid where Foley is this unstoppable monster in there with HHH afraid to fight but it's a massacre anyway. Either way, this was a great match with Foley going out in a classic, jobbing like he did better than anyone else. Excellent match with a great ending and some GREAT spots. The pops were off the charts and the whole thing is just great.

Overall Rating: A. I was about to push the - key but I couldn't do it. This is a VERY good show all around. There are some bad spots like the Taz beating and the battle of the fat boys but they're a combined 8 minutes max so how much can I complain? Some very good matches, but this is one of those shows where you get more than the matches add up to.

There's a feeling here that it's hard to describe, but you'll

know it if you see the show. Of the matches with meaning, there aren't any bad ones. Easily worth seeing and a very good show that I enjoyed a lot.

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