

Wrestlemania Count-Up – Wrestlemania XXVI: Goodbye Mr. Wrestlemania

Wrestlemania XXVI

Date: March 28, 2010

Location: University of Phoenix Stadium, Glendale, Arizona

Attendance: 72,219

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, Matt Striker

Here's a pretty different show from last year. This is a double main event with a Taker vs. Shawn II and Cena vs. Batista II, the latter one being for the Raw Title. Other than that we have Jericho vs. Edge for the Smackdown Title and...uh...wait why would you need anything more than that? It's Cena vs. Batista for the World Title at Wrestlemania. Let's get to it.

Fantasia, I believe from American Idol, sings America the Beautiful. This is one of those renditions where she basically screams the song but it's called soulful or something like that.

The opening video is about how several long careers have led here. Bret Hart is also back tonight in a match with Vince McMahon. This is one of the first times where there was a big push on the idea of making a Wrestlemania moment.

The theme song is I Made It by Kevin Rudolf. This one really grew on me over the years.

Tag Titles: ShoMiz vs. R-Truth/John Morrison

That would be Big Show and Miz as champions. If there's one thing I'm glad we've moved passed, it's portmanteau tag team names. Miz is also US Champion and the tag titles are still represented by all four belts. John and Miz start things off and there's a fast dropkick for two by Morrison. Off to Truth for a guillotine legdrop for two more.

A big left hand misses for Miz and a side kick takes him down. Off to Big Show and Truth can't do much against him, other than be caught in a fallaway slam. After Show knocks Morrison off the apron, John breaks up a Vader Bomb to put Show down. Off to Miz vs. Morrison again and a running knee takes Miz down. Starship Pain misses though and Show rams Truth into the post. John counters the Skull Crushing Finale into a rollup for two but Show makes a blind tag and knocks Morrison silly with the WMD to retain.

Rating: D+. This wasn't even three and a half minutes long so what else do you expect here? To be fair, Awesome Truth was thrown together and won the title shot in the same night so there wasn't much of a reason for these teams to be fighting. The champions would lose the title in a month while the challengers would never really do anything.

We look at WWE taking over Phoenix.

Cody Rhodes vs. Randy Orton vs. Ted DiBiase

This is the final blowoff to the never ending Legacy story, with the young pups being mentored by Orton until the crowd turned Orton face by sheer willpower. This is his chance for revenge and to bury the feud once and for all. The place goes NUTS for Orton. Oh and before I forget: the set here is AWESOME as it's set up like a big pyramid with video screens on all sides.

Orton fights them both off to start before bailing to the floor. This is a glorified handicap match in the early going. Orton gets Rhodes down on the floor and stomps away on DiBiase back inside. Cody gets back in though and the two on one beating is on, drawing really solid heat. Lawler says these stomps are like the ones Orton uses. Uh, yeah King. I can clearly see the similarities in kicking somebody.

Rhodes pounds away while Ted holds Randy back and there's a double suplex. DiBiase does Orton's pose which makes Randy punch Cody down, only to be clotheslined by Ted. Legacy goes High/Low on Orton and there's a knee drop from Cody. Cody loads up the moonsault but has to stop to break up a pin attempt by DiBiase. Ted is sent to the floor and Cody gets two off an Alabama Slam.

Legacy goes at it and brawls to the floor and Orton gets back into things. He takes both guys down with his usual finishing sequence but DiBiase breaks up the RK0 on Rhodes. Cody tries a dive but Orton sidesteps it, sending Rhodes into DiBiase. They come back in and walk into a double Elevated DDT, sending Orton into "that place." With DiBiase watching, Orton Punts Rhodes and then counters Dream Street into the RK0 for the pin on Ted.

Rating: C. The fans loved Orton but that's about all they've got here. Legacy just lost a glorified handicap match in less than ten minutes as Orton never even seemed to be in danger. This would start a MEGA push for Orton as he would become the second biggest face in the company and spend the rest of the year chasing the world title. The pop for the RK0 was really good here.

The heel Divas in the ten Diva tag later brag about how Vickie is going to win in her Wrestlemania debut. Jillian Hall, not on the team, pops in to sing. The other girls leave and here's Santino to plug Slim Jims. He bites one and Jillian turns into Mae Young. Another turns Mae into Gene Okerlund in a strapless dress. A third bite makes Okerlund into Melina. No more bites. Ok then.

Kofi Kingston vs. MVP vs. Evan Bourne vs. Jack Swagger vs. Shelton Benjamin vs. Matt Hardy vs. Dolph Ziggler vs. Drew McIntyre vs. Kane vs. Christian

Kane has a BIG black eye for reasons never explained. Remember when I said eight man matches were too busy? Well here's a TEN man version. It's a big brawl to start until MVP throws in the first ladder. Drew tries to go up but gets shoved over by Matt. MVP hits a big running boot to knock Drew to the floor. Nine people fight for two sides of a ladder to climb but Kane cleans house and sends about five guys to the floor.

Christian and Matt go up but Kofi (in the rare white trunks) makes the save. Ziggler hits a kind of Zig Zag off the ladder to Christian but Kane and MVP get back inside. Things are already really congested here. Kane is put into the corner and has a ladder rammed into his ribs. Kofi stumbles up the ladder and falls onto the steel. Shelton comes in with

Paydirt to MVP and loads up the big ladder, only to be stabbed with a ladder by Swagger. Jack winds up inside the ladder and gets speared from either side with the tops of ladders between the rungs of the big ladder by Christian and Matt.

Now the ladders Matt and Christian used are bridged across the top rope like a big cross kind of thing. Matt and Christian climb up while Bourne climbs up the side of the ladder. The ladder Matt is standing on falls out and Bourne kicks Christian down, but instead of GETTING THE CASE, Evan hits the Shooting Star on Christian. Now Matt stops Bourne but Swagger comes up and throws Matt onto the other bridged ladder, leaving everyone down.

MVP and Shelton go up but a rana by Benjamin send both guys out to the floor. Kane is the first person back inside but Ziggle makes the stop. He actually climbs over Kane but the big man shoves the ladder over to make the stop. A chokeslam onto the ladder has Dolph in trouble, much like Kane actually slamming the ladder onto Ziggle so hard he BREAKS THE LADDER. In the creative spot of the night, Kofi picks up the two broken pieces and walks on the like stilts.

McIntyre finally makes the save and brings the big ladder back inside. Hardy finally makes the save by shoving Drew off the ladder and onto the top rope for a big crotching. Matt is alone but can't quite pull the thing down. Christian and Kane join him on top and it's the big bald being shoved down. Christian hits the reverse DDT (called the Twist of Fate by that schnook Cole) and here's Swagger back inside. It's Swagger and Christian on top and a case to the head allows Swagger to (FINALLY as it takes forever) pull down the case to win.

Rating: B-. C+. WAY too many people in there which led to way too much laying around. It's not a terrible match or anything, but these are getting weaker and weaker as they keep going. Kofi's stilts spot was great but other than that there's nothing to see here. We've seen these same spots so many times now and they're getting repetitive, making them weaker every time.

We get the Hall of Fame video from last night.

Here's the live presentation to the crowd. The class this year is: Stu Hart (represented by his kids), Wendi Richter, Mad Dog Vachon, Antonio Inoki, Bob Uecker, Gorgeous George (represented by his wife) and Ted DiBiase (BIG ovation).

We recap HHH vs. Sheamus. Sheamus was the next big thing in late 2009 and won the WWE Title. HHH beat him inside the Elimination Chamber and Sheamus revealed that he had always wanted to be like HHH. This led to Sheamus attacking HHH over and over again, setting up the obvious match.

HHH vs. Sheamus

I forgot to mention this big cylinder that hangs from the middle of the roof with a mini Tron video for whomever is coming out. They shove each other into the corner until HHH slugs Sheamus down into another corner. Back up and they pound away on each other with HHH taking over with a knee drop. They head to the floor for nothing of note so it's back inside for a chop block and the Figure Four to Sheamus.

After quickly grabbing a rope, Sheamus comes back with more brawling stuff and sends HHH to the floor for a bit. The move which would become known as the Irish Curse hits and there's a second one for good measure. We get into the standard pounding down in the corner by Sheamus followed by an ax handle to the head for two. Sheamus drops some elbows and puts on a quick chinlock before a powerslam gets two.

We hit an armbar of all things on the Game which shows off how different the skin tones of these guys are. HHH comes back with a belly to back suplex to put both guys down and a DDT for the same. Back up and the high knee sets up the facebuster for two but the Pedigree is countered with a leg trip. They fight to the corner but Sheamus slips between the legs to try the High Cross, only to be countered into the Pedigree. That gets countered as well and the yet to be named Brogue Kick gets two.

Back up again and HHH hits the spinebuster for two and both guys are down again. Sheamus staggers to the apron and manages a Brogue Kick from there but can't cover. Back in and HHH grabs the Pedigree out of absolutely NOWHERE for the quick pin. That would be Sheamus' first singles loss.

Rating: C+. Not bad at all here with Sheamus looking more than good in his first Wrestlemania match. This was a good way to make the pale one look good and the win over HHH the next month at Extreme Rules would make that even better. Sheamus was definitely here to stay which would become very clear in the near future.

We recap Punk vs. Mysterio. Mysterio had cost Punk an MITB spot so Punk had set his sights on Mysterio in retaliation. Punk has been stalking Rey and his family for weeks now, leading up to Punk interrupting Rey's daughter's 9th birthday by singing Happy Birthday to her. Punk made Mysterio look like a coward because Rey didn't want to fight with his family in the ring with him. This led to the match and the stipulation that if Rey loses, he has to join the Straightedge Society.

CM Punk vs. Rey Mysterio

Punk has Serena and Luke Gallows (Doc from Aces and 8's) with him. On the way to the ring, Punk gets on the crowd for being high on drugs which makes them think Mysterio is a superhero. Punk isn't a monster but rather a savior who can lead everyone to a better place. After tonight, it will be one nation under Punk with sobriety for all. This year Mysterio is dressed like the aliens from Avatar which is rather different to put it mildly.

A Gallows distraction lets Punk take over but he gets sent face first into the middle buckl. Rey misses a charge and gets caught in the Tree of Woe for some solid stomping. A baseball slide misses Rey though and we get the Mr. Perfect sliding crotch into the post. Rey tries a rolling cradle to the floor but gets dropped face first onto the steps instead. We head back inside and it's off to a chinlock by the guy whose face you can actually see.

Rey fights up but gets sent to the apron for a seated senton. A springboard seated senton is caught into a belly to belly and another counter into a rollup gets two. Punk counters a rana by flipping Rey onto his feet and hits the high kick for two. They grab a test of strength grip and Rey climbs the ropes and moonsaults into a DDT for two in a cool spot.

The 619 is caught into a GTS attempt but Rey escapes to the apron. A kick to Punk's head looks to set up the frog splash but it only gets mat. That gets two for Punk but Rey headscissors him into 619 position. Serena makes the save but a second attempt connects and it's a springboard splash for the pin for Rey.

Rating: C. Not much to see here but it wasn't bad. These two would go on for months and the matches really did get to be solid stuff. Mysterio was always good for stuff like this and Punk as the straightedge messiah was always a cool gimmick. This really could have used another five minutes or so too.

We recap Bret vs. Vince. Do you REALLY need an explanation for this one? Bret returned back in January and Vince kicked him low. Bret wanted a fight and pretended to break his leg in order to get Vince to fight him at Wrestlemania. Vince signed, Bret took the cast off, and the match was made.

Bret Hart vs. Vince McMahon

Vince says he's bought a lot of lumberjacks: the Hart Family (including the Hart Dynasty), with the idea being that they all hate Bret just like Vince does. Also Bruce Hart, Bret's brother, is guest referee. Bret asks his family if they all agreed to this and says they must have all gotten paid up front. If there's one thing he's learned from Montreal, it's that there's nothing sweeter than a good double cross. Tonight, the Harts are united because they came to Bret and agreed to sucker Vince in.

Bret pounds away to start and stomps away in the corner before sending Vince out to the lumberjacks for a beating. Natalya hits a HARD slap (Striker: "Best of luck in your future endeavors.") and the beating is on. The Hart Dynasty hits a Hart Attack to the floor as Bret looks on approvingly. Back in and Bret goes after the leg which knocks Vince back to the floor. He finds a wrench or something from somewhere which sends the Harts away.

Back in and Bret knocks it away from McMahon before picking up the pipe. Seven shots with that look to set up the Sharpshooter but instead Bret hits him with the pipe a few more times. There's a hard kick to the balls

and a few more for good measure. Natalya: "MAKE EM BLEED!" A chair is sent in and Bret takes a seat. Vince slowly gets up so Bret hits him with the chair EIGHTEEN TIMES and it's the Sharpshooter for the submission.

Rating: A+. I said that when I first did this and I say it here. Now while I shouldn't have to explain this, I will anyway because a lot of people are slow. Am I saying it was a match on the level of say Shawn vs. Razor? Of course not. I'm saying it's the perfect match for what it was supposed to be. This was Bret DESTROYING Vince for a long time and doing it as well as he could given his condition. If you thought it was going to be anything but that and Vince tapping to the Sharpshooter, you completely missed the point of this match.

We're going to Atlanta for Wrestlemania 27. Cole says there's going to be a great guest host for it. I know he couldn't know that at the time, but man that's some AWESOME unintentional foreshadowing.

There's a new attendance record: 72,219. Wait it might not be a record. Why would this make a difference? Either way it gets a fireworks display, which doesn't look great given that it's still daylight.

We recap Edge vs. Jericho. They had been tag champions but Edge snapped an Achilles tendon and had to drop his share. Edge came back to win the Rumble and gets a title shot tonight. The idea was that Edge was obsessed with spearing Jericho which didn't really work all that well. He did it over and over again until Jericho actually hit him during the charge. Why that was so hard beforehand I'm not sure.

Smackdown World Title: Edge vs. Chris Jericho

Jericho grabs a quick headlock to take Edge down but the challenger comes back with a flying shoulder. A flapjack puts Jericho down but he bails to avoid a spear. Back in and Jericho gets in a boot to the face and a baseball slide sends Edge out to the floor. A belly to back suplex gets two in the ring for Jericho and it's off to a chinlock. Back up and Jericho misses a charge into the post and Edge is to his feet again.

Jericho drops Edge ribs first onto the top rope and we head to the floor again. Edge comes back with a clothesline off the apron and we go back

inside. Jericho crotches Edge as he goes up but Edge blocks a superplex. Back on the mat and Jericho can't get the Walls but Edge can hit a top rope cross body, only to have Jericho roll through it for two. Another Walls attempt is broken up but Jericho kicks him in the face to put Edge down again.

The Codebreaker is countered but Jericho jumps over the spear into a cradle into the Walls in the middle of the ring. Edge rolls through that and hooks a small package for two but Jericho kicks him right back down. The Lionsault misses and Edge gets two off the Edge-0-Matic. An enziguri gets two for the champion and what I think was a forearm smash to the back of Edge's head off the middle rope puts Edge down again. Jericho tries a spear of his own, only to charge into a big boot.

The real spear charges into a Codebreaker in an AWESOME counter. Since this is Wrestlemania though it only gets two so Jericho goes after the recently repaired ankle. Now the Walls are put on again but Jericho shifts it over to a half crab which is the smart move here. Edge FINALLY makes a rope and even gets a rollup for two. A Cactus Clothesline puts both guys on the floor and as they head back in we lose the referee, allowing Jericho to hit Edge in the head with the belt for two. Not that it matters as the Codebreaker retains the title a few seconds later.

Rating: B. Much like Mysterio vs. Punk, this really could have been something special with more time. Jericho winning was a big surprise here but it's one of those things that I can more than live with after this very solid match. Edge not winning was a nice thing to see as it doesn't just hand him another world title. Yeah imagine that: making people earn world titles. Swagger would cash in on Jericho on Smackdown two days later.

Post match Jericho tries to go after the ankle even more but Edge fights back and puts Jericho on the announce table. With a running start, Edge runs over two announce tables and spears Jericho off the table and through the barricade.

We look at the dark match battle royal, won by Yoshi Tatsu.

Laycool/Vickie Guerrero/Maryse/Alicia Fox vs. Beth Phoenix/Kelly

Kelly/Eve Torres/Mickie James/Gail Kim

Beth is in white here and man alive it REALLY works for her. She's also a face here which is really rare. Vickie and Gail start with Kim getting shoved backwards. Vickie poses and when she turns around, it's Beth. All the good girls take their turns on Vickie in the corner so she shouts at them. Michelle breaks up a pin by Kelly and we already begin the parade of finishers (Gail totally botches Eat Defeat), culminating with Beth ENDING Fox with the Glam Slam. Michelle saves Vickie from Beth with a big boot before putting Vickie on the top rope. The "Hog Splash" is enough to pin Kelly.

Rating: D. Laycool and Beth looked GREAT out there so it doesn't fail for them. No one else was in there long enough to make much of an impression, but again it's amazing how much better the Divas are at this point. They have personalities and actual emotions instead of just staring at cue cards and botching everything they do.

We recap Cena vs. Batista. Cena survived the Chamber and won the title, but Vince pulled a New Year's Revolution and made him immediately defend against Batista, which was payment for Big Dave helping out Vince recently. The result was a rematch for the title here at Wrestlemania. Do you need more than that?

Raw World Title: John Cena vs. Batista

This is a rematch from Summerslam 2008. Cena's big entrance this year is a full military honor guard. They lock up to start with the champion grabbing a quick headlock. John grabs one of his own and takes it down to the mat. That goes nowhere so Cena tries pounding away in the corner, only to have Batista clothesline him down. A running boot to the side of Cena's head has him in more trouble and there's a second for good measure.

The idea here is that Batista is going after Cena's neck which he broke back in 2008. Cena comes back with a suplex and the bulldog for two but the AA is countered into a fast DDT for two. Off to a rear naked choke by Batista to crank on the neck even more. John fights up and they slug it out for the boo/yay chants. A quick neckbreaker gets two for the champion

and it's off to a front facelock on Cena.

A backdrop finally puts Batista down and there are the shoulder blocks to keep him down. The ProtoBomb sets up the Shuffle but Batista pops up with his spinebuster to plant Cena. The Batista Bomb is countered into the STF though and Batista is in trouble. He finally makes the rope and comes back with a spear for two before sitting Cena on the top. In a cool spot they have a test of strength on the top with Cena slugging Batista down to the mat. Cena busts out a top rope Shuffle but Batista grabs the rope to block the AA.

There's the Batista Bomb out of nowhere but Cena is up at two. Batista loads up another but after a series of counters, Cena this a BIG release AA for two. Cena goes up top and dives right into a spinebuster which is the same move that resulted in his broken neck a year and a half ago. The Batista Bomb is countered into the STF though and after a long time, Batista taps away the title.

Rating: B+. These two know how to have the big time match. Cena winning was the right move to get his win back from a year and a half ago while also taking out Batista for what happened back in February. At the end of the day, it's John Cena vs. Batista for the WWE Title at Wrestlemania. This had to be good by definition.

We recap Shawn vs. Taker. They had their masterpiece last year and Shawn became obsessed with beating Taker because he made one mistake. Shawn wanted a rematch and after superkicking Taker and costing him the world title in the Chamber, Taker said yes. There was a condition though: it was Streak vs. Career. Shawn said if he can't win, there's no reason for him to stay in the ring. There was no way this couldn't main event the show, and with the match we just got done with, that says a lot.

Undertaker vs. Shawn Michaels

You can only win by pin or submission. They stare each other down and Shawn does the throat slit. Taker charges into some chops in the corner but Shawn is thrown into a Flair Flip in the corner, followed by snake eyes and the big boot. Old School is broken up a few times but the third try hits perfectly. The chokeslam is countered and Shawn goes after the

leg. A quick Tombstone attempt is blocked and Shawn tries for the Crossface, only to be grabbed by the throat.

Taker grabs the arm as well but has to back away from Sweet Chin Music. Now Shawn is going after the knee and Taker is in trouble. Michaels goes for some stomps in the corner but the big man gets in an uppercut to send Shawn to the floor. Taker loads up the Dive but Shawn slides back in for a chop block. They head to the floor for Undertaker to take over with the apron legdrop. It hurts his leg again though and the big man can't follow up.

Back in and Shawn takes out the leg again and there's a Figure Four. Taker sits up and has them there crazy eyes...but can't break up the hold. Scratch that as he can with pure power and Shawn lets it go. They slug it out on their feet again with Taker taking over with the strikes. Shawn comes back with the forearm and there's the nipup. Unfortunately he walks into the chokeslam for a close two. Shawn busts out an ankle lock of all things and the grapevine is added as well.

Undertaker gets on his back and punches his way out of it but Shawn sends him to the floor. There's a springboard cross body but Taker counters into a Tombstone on the floor. Shawn flailing to escape and then stopping cold was perfect. Back in and that somehow only gets two so Taker tries the Last Ride. The leg gives out again and Shawn counters into a kind of X-Factor for two. The big elbow hits knees, but that hurt Taker just as much as it hurt Shawn.

Michaels gets caught in Hell's Gate but he flips forward into a rollup for two, making Undertaker break the hold. Back up again and there's the superkick out of nowhere for two. Now Shawn tunes up the band but Taker catches it coming in and hits a full on Last Ride for two. Undertaker throws him to the floor and loads up the announce table. The Last Ride through the table is escaped and there's a superkick to put Taker on the table. Shawn busts out a moonsault but mainly hits Taker's legs. It would have looked great from a distance though.

Back in again and the superkick hits perfect but somehow only gets two. The fans are calling this awesome and I can't say I'm arguing at all.

Another superkick misses and there's a big chokeslam. Taker can't follow up though...until he plants Shawn with a Tombstone. THAT gets two and Taker is shocked. The Dead Man pulls the straps down but stops himself before doing the throat slit. Shawn pulls himself up on Taker's body and does the throat slit himself, admitting that he can't do it. Taker stares at him so Shawn slaps Taker in the face. That does it and it's a jumping Tombstone to end Shawn's career.

Rating: A+. That throat slit is as close to Shakespeare as WWE is ever going to get. Shawn going out in a masterpiece like this was as good as it was going to get and Undertaker gets to have another great match on his resume. Shawn has actually stayed retired which is the right move, because he's not going to top this with one more match. It's excellent even though it's somehow a step below last year's match.

Undertaker isn't sure what to do now as the lights go out and 18-0 flashes on screen. Shawn still hasn't moved. Taker helps Shawn up and they shake hands to a big ovation. Undertaker lets Shawn stand in the ring alone and soak up one last round of applause. Shawn slowly walks up the aisle and slaps hands. Shawn: "I'm going to drive my kids crazy in three weeks." He walks to the back to end the show.

Overall Rating: B+. This was a very solid show for the most part with an excellent main event. On top of that you only have one bad match and that had Beth looking all hot in white. Other than that you have Batista vs. Cena and a good Edge vs. Jericho match. The rest of the card isn't bad either, making this the third straight pretty solid Wrestlemania.

Ratings Comparison

Awesome Truth vs. ShoMiz

Original: D

Redo: D+

Randy Orton vs. Ted DiBiase vs. Cody Rhodes

Original: D+

Redo: C

Christian vs. Matt Hardy vs. Kane vs. Jack Swagger vs. Kofi Kingston vs. Drew McIntyre vs. Dolph Ziggler vs. Shelton Benjamin vs. MVP vs. Evan Bourne

Original: B

Redo: C+

HHH vs. Sheamus

Original: B-

Redo: C+

CM Punk vs. Rey Mysterio

Original: B-

Redo: C

Mr. McMahon vs. Bret Hart

Original: A+

Redo: A+

Edge vs. Chris Jericho

Original: A-

Redo: B

Beth Phoenix/Kevin Kelly/Mickie James/Gail Kim/Eve Torres vs. Vickie Guerrero/Alicia Fox/Laycool/Maryse

Original: F

Redo: D

John Cena vs. Batista

Original: A

Redo: B+

Undertaker vs. Shawn Michaels

Original: A+

Redo: A+

Overall Rating

Original: A

Redo: B+

Dang and I liked it even better on the first view. I might have been closer to right a few years back.

Here's the original review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/04/03/history-of-wrestlemania-with-kb-wrestlemania-26-john-cena-vs-batista-do-you-need-more/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and make sure you pick up my new book on the History of the WWE Championship from Amazon at: