

Wrestlemania Count-Up – Wrestlemania XXVIII: This Show Got Me Excited All Over Again

Wrestlemania XXVIII

Date: April 1, 2012

Location: Sun Life Stadium, Miami, Florida

Attendance: 78,363

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

We wrap things up with this and a main event which no one ever thought we would see: John Cena vs. The Rock. This is one of if not the only match ever that I had to see. I didn't know if it would be good or bad, but I needed to see it. The match was announced the night after the last Wrestlemania and was literally built for a year. On the undercard we have Punk vs. Jericho for the world title, Sheamus vs. Bryan for the other title and HHH vs. Undertaker inside the Cell. When that is a DISTANT second match, you know you've got something huge. Let's get to it.

Lillian Garcia sings America the Beautiful.

The opening video is about how Cena and Rock's lives have both built up to this moment and how this match is Once In A Lifetime. Oh and HHH vs. Undertaker is happening too.

Smackdown World Title: Sheamus vs. Daniel Bryan

Sheamus won the Rumble to earn this show. We're pre-beard for Bryan here which is weird to see anymore. The bell rings, Bryan kisses his girlfriend AJ, turns around into a Brogue Kick and we have a new champion in 18 seconds. That number would haunt Bryan for at least six months.

Team Johnny is fired up for the twelve man tag for later tonight. Miz brags about being in the main event last year but it's Otunga who gets

them to be quiet for a pep talk from Johnny Ace.

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Kane vs. Randy Orton

Kane had recently put the mask back on again and went after Orton to prove that he's still evil because last summer he lost a street fight to Orton and then shook his hand. Why is it Orton who gets these months and years long backstories? The opener didn't quite have its intended effect as the fans are chanting for Daniel Bryan. Kane takes over to start but the chokeslam is broken up by kicks to the ribs. Orton gets him down and stomps away but Kane reverses the Elevated DDT (called a bulldog by Cole) and takes over with a big boot.

Kane's low dropkick gets a near fall and it's off to a chinlock. Back up and they slug it out with Randy taking over. Kane will have none of that though and clotheslines Randy down for two. The side slam gets two more and it's back to the chinlock. A swinging neckbreaker out of nowhere puts Kane down but the monster hits a vertical suplex for another two count. Off to chinlock #3 as the match slows down again.

Orton backflips out of another side slam and his backbreaker puts Kane down for a bit. There's the powerslam and Orton is getting fired up. Kane goes shoulder first into the post and now the Elevated DDT hits (again called a bulldog by Cole). The RK0 is countered into a big boot for two more for Kane but the top rope clothesline is blocked by a dropkick. Orton loads up the Punt but walks into a chokeslam for a close two. Another RK0 is countered and Kane goes to the middle rope. Orton tries a superplex but Kane shrugs him off and hits a middle rope chokeslam for the upset win.

Rating: B-. I had always wanted to see these two have a match and I was pleased when I finally saw it. Kane can have a good match on a big stage when he needs to and that's what he did here. Orton is bulletproof so it's not like losing here means anything of note. This was a nice surprise and a good match with a big ending.

Santino is with Mick Foley in a sailor hat and a guy from the fishing

show Deadliest Catch. They're eating crabs and Foley makes bad pirate jokes. Socko and Cobra make appearances, as does Ron Simmons and I think you can get the joke from here.

Some National Guard people are here.

Intercontinental Title: Cody Rhodes vs. Big Show

Cody is defending and the idea here is that Big Show has never had a good Wrestlemania moment. You know, because winning a meaningless midcard title in 2012 is more important than main eventing the show in possibly the biggest and best year the company has ever had. During the entrance we get some "highlights" from Show's career. Naturally the pin in the 8 man tag last year is never mentioned at all.

Cody runs to the floor to start but Show easily throws him back into the ring. There's a beal across the ring and a hard chop in the corner, followed by a Stink Face for good measure. Cody comes back with some dropkicks to the knee and pounds away as much as he can. Rhodes pounds on Show's back a bit and is LAUNCHED off on the kickout. The champion works on the knee a bit with a standing leg lock and a DDT to take it down. After some stomps to Show's head, he shoves Cody away with ease but gets caught by the Disaster Kick. A second is countered with a spear though and the WMD makes Show the champion.

Rating: D+. What were you expecting here? At the end of the day, Cody has nothing that was going to keep Show down and with all the building up of the match about Show's past embarrassments, there was only one way this could end. That and it's only about five minutes so it didn't have enough time to suck or anything. Not great but it was exactly what it was expect to be.

Video on what it means to be a Diva.

We recap the Divas tag. Kelly Kelly had been a guest on Extra with Maria Menunos when Eve and Beth came in and claimed they should be the guests. A tag match was made.

Eve Torres/Beth Phoenix vs. Maria Menunos/Kelly Kelly

Beth has....wings on her head? Kelly and the freshly heel Eve start things off with Kelly doing her screaming hurricanrana to take over. A handspring elbow hits Eve's knee in the corner but Kelly breaks up a moonsault and knocks Eve into the Tree of Woe. Off to Maria for a double Stink Face, resulting in the famous stain on the back of Maria's tights from Eve's makeup.

Since Maria isn't a wrestler, the beatdown on her begins quickly with Eve wrapping her up in a body vice. Off to Beth (in gold tonight) for a side bearhug as the match slows WAY down. Back to Eve for some quick double teaming but she takes too long with the shaky moonsault. It's back to Kelly as things break down a bit. A top rope seated senton gets two on Beth and the Glam Slam is countered into a bulldog. Back to Maria who goes....up. After getting pulled down, Kelly breaks up a gorilla press and a rollup is enough for Maria to pin Beth.

Rating: D+. Four good looking women in tight outfits and one of them anchors a national television show. Do you really need a further explanation as to why this happened? The interesting note: of these four, Maria is the only one involved with Wrestlemania 29 and that's as a Hall of Fame inductor.

Shawn Michaels, the guest referee inside the Cell, says either the Undertaker or HHH are done tonight.

New attendance record. As always.

Jim Ross comes out to do commentary for the Cell match.

HHH vs. Undertaker

This is inside Hell in a Cell with Shawn Michaels as guest referee. Undertaker basically became Batman in his cave and wanted a rematch to prove he could beat HHH. As in like he already did. This is also billed as End of an Era, but what era that was never actually became clear. The announcement of the Cell was perfect as HHH said he wanted one more thing, which was presumed to be Streak vs. career. It's a good lesson in letting the feud set the stipulations, not the calendar. Undertaker debuts his new mohawk here to a gasp from the crowd. The Cell is lowered

to Memory Remains by Metallica.

Taker pounds away into the corner to start with "carcinogenic" right hands according to JR. HHH pounds away as well but gets thrown out to the floor soon thereafter. HHH is sent into the Cell a few times and a backdrop puts him down on the floor again. Taker sends him into the steel over and over as it's one sided so far. Now it's the steps instead of the Cell with Taker in full control. Back in and a facebuster is no sold and down goes HHH again.

Old School connects and we head back outside again. Shawn isn't a factor yet. The steps go upside HHH's head and set up the apron legdrop. Back in and HHH hits a DDT, which somehow makes us completely even. The steps are in the ring now so HHH slams Taker's head into them a few times. A Pedigree onto the steps is blocked with a backdrop but HHH comes back with a spinebuster onto the steps, only to get caught in the Hell's Gate. In an impressive power display, HHH lifts Taker up into a powerbomb to break the hold and get two as well.

HHH throws in a pair of chairs and cracks one of them over Taker's back. Taker is whipped into the steps in the corner before they're sent to the outside. JR says there are no laws in the Cell. Other than you win by pin or submission and all that. HHH goes off with the chair, DESTROYING Undertaker Austin/Rock style. Shawn takes the chair away and tells HHH to cover Undertaker because he's not going to quit. Trips takes the chair back and shoves Shawn down before pounding on Taker even more. He tells Shawn to end it before he does.

Taker says do not stop it as he's getting back up. He turns around though and is hit in the ribs and back by the chair but it only gets two. HHH is starting to get frustrated so he hits Taker in the back with another chair and it's time for more pathos with Taker saying don't stop it. Cue the sledgehammer for a shot to the head for ANOTHER two. HHH (who is cut over the eye) has no idea what to do now.

The Game pulls up the hammer to slam it down onto Taker's head but Shawn pulls it away to prevent the murder. Shawn is ready to stop it as Taker can barely move. Michaels raises his hand but Taker pulls him into the

Hell's Gate to stop him. Trips breaks it up with a hammer shot but Taker comes back with a low blow and Hell's Gate on HHH. There's no referee though and Taker lets it go from exhaustion with his opponent out cold.

Another referee comes in as Taker hits a last effort chokeslam for two. Taker chokeslams the referee (I believe that's the same referee he beat up in 2001 against HHH as well) but walks into the superkick into the Pedigree....FOR TWO! I lost my mind watching that live because I really thought it was over. Now HHH shoves Shawn to the floor and Taker sits up to scare the life out of HHH. Taker erupts on HHH with a big boot and running clothesline, setting up snake eyes and another boot.

The Tombstone connects but HHH is up at two. Shawn has no idea what to do as both guys are slowly getting up. They slug it out from their knees before getting to their feet for more HARD punches. Another Tombstone is countered into the Pedigree for a VERY close two. HHH goes for the hammer but Taker steps on it to stop him. A HARD chair shot to the back puts HHH down and another one keeps him down.

Some more chair shots get two on HHH so Shawn screams at them to end this. HHH tries a hammer shot to the face but Taker easily blocks it. They stare each other down and HHH gives Taker a crotch chop. Trips walks out of the corner into a hammer shot to the head. HHH tries to climb up Taker's body but the strap comes down, the throat is slit, and the Tombstone makes it 20-0.

Rating: A+. This is another reason why I'm not so wild on last year's match: they're capable of SO much better and this is proof. This match told a great story with both guys destroying each other with Shawn being stuck in the middle and trying to figure out what to do in each situation. It's a great match, it's a great fight, and it's pure emotion the entire time. Great stuff here, and most importantly of all: there were moments where I thought it was over. I never bought that as a possibility last year.

After a few moments on the mat, Taker sits up but falls right back down. He pulls himself up on Shawn and they embrace. HHH is still out cold. Shawn and Taker lift him up and carry him out of the ring. They embrace

on the stage in one of the most iconic images you'll ever see. You don't often get to use that word, but it's true in this case.

Send Slim Jims to soldiers! I love charity stuff, but it's a big shift after what we just sat through.

We get clips of the Hall of Fame stuff from last night.

Here's the live presentation of the 2012 class: Mil Mascaras, Yokozuna (represented by his kids), Ron Simmons, the Horsemen (including Flair, which set off a lawsuit since he was still under contract to TNA), Mike Tyson and Edge (who gets theme music but has short hair which is such an odd look for him). This was the breather that the fans needed.

Heath Slater tries to get a spot in Flo-Rida's performance but gets turned and then shoved down. Hawkins and Reks laugh at Slater.

Team Johnny vs. Team Teddy

Johnny: Miz, Mark Henry, Drew McIntyre, Jack Swagger, Dolph Ziggler, David Otunga

Teddy: Kofi Kingston, Great Khali, R-Truth, Zack Ryder (with Eve), Booker T, Santino Marella

Each team has a Bella as a fan, the match is for total control of both brands, and Johnny is in a white suit. Oh and Vickie is with Johnny and Horny is with Teddy as the flag bearers. Otunga and Santino are team captains, because Miz and Booker aren't good enough. Kofi and Dolph start things off for their usual solid sequence. Truth comes in for a double hiptoss and a dancing legdrop.

McIntyre comes in to pound on Truth but it's quickly off to Khali to change momentum. It should also be mentioned that they're in red and blue t-shirts with the GM's on the front. Off to Booker to chop away on Drew and a superkick puts him down. Booker goes after the rest of Team Johnny but the numbers catch up with him, allowing Swagger to take over. Jack gets to beat on Kofi for a bit and it's off to Henry. Mark pounds him down in the corner as the match slows way down.

Off to Miz with some knees to the chest and a boot to the face for two. We hit the chinlock for a bit but Booker comes back with a suplex for no cover. Ziggler comes in to break up the tag and drop some elbows for two. Everything starts breaking down as Henry hits the Slam on Booker but Khali chops him down. I can't keep track of everything going on but Henry catches a diving Horny in mid-air.

The girls get in a brawl and there's the hot tag to Santino to pound on Miz. The Cobra connects and Cole panics until Ziggler makes the save. Another hot tag brings in Ryder for the Rough Ryder for Dolph and a beatdown on everyone else. He loads up the Broski Boot but Eve gets in the ring as well. The referee tries to get her out and the distraction lets Miz hit the Skull Crushing Finale on Ryder for the pin, making Ace GM of both shows.

Rating: D+. As is the usual case with stuff like this, there was way too much going on to keep track of anything. There were something like 18 people involved in this whole thing and the ending was about Eve and her heel turn more than anything else. Ace would be GM for about four months or so while boring us to death against Cena. Not much to see here though due to the amount of people in the match.

Post match, Eve finally turns on Ryder for good, confirming him as the biggest loser in the WWE. Wasn't Eve already a heel in the Divas tag? Why is this supposed to be shocking?

Alex Rodriguez and Torrie Wilson are here.

We get a video on the media blitz and activities for Wrestlemania week.

To celebrate winning, Laurinitis changes the Raw World Title match rules so that if Punk gets disqualified, Jericho wins the title.

Raw World Title: Chris Jericho vs. CM Punk

This is over who is the best in the world and Jericho claims that Punk is really an alcoholic and his family has a bunch of substance abuse issues. The buildup for this really was good stuff, even though this is nowhere near the main event. Punk takes it to the mat to start and fires off some

kicks to the chest. He does the same with knees in the corner but stops when the referee gets to four. Jericho slaps him in the face and takes the beating like a man to try to get the DQ again.

Another few slaps have Punk in a frenzy but he holds off to avoid the DQ. A slam puts Jericho down but he rolls away before the Macho Elbow can be launched. Instead CM dives to the floor to take out Jericho, followed by a wicked smile. Jericho asks how Punk's sister and father are but Punk doesn't swing the chair he grabs. Punk charges into a pair of boots to the face and the challenger takes over.

They head to the apron and Punk tries a GTS, only to be clotheslined back into the ring. Jericho hooks a kind of Jackhammer to the floor for two back inside. We hit the chinlock but Punk fights up with a slap. Jericho comes right back with a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker for two and kicks the injured back again. Some hard kicks to the torso keep Punk in trouble but he fires off some strikes of his own. The champion goes up but is pulled back down to land hard on his back.

Punk escapes a bow and arrow hold and sidesteps a charge to send Jericho crotch first into the corner. A spinning neckbreaker gets two on Chris and there's the running knee in the corner. Jericho counters the bulldog but has to stop the Lionsault to avoid knees. That counter is countered into a Walls attempt but Punk shakes him off for two. The Macho Elbow hits knees and Jericho hits the Codebreaker but it sends Punk out to the floor. Back in and Punk grabs a GTS out of nowhere for two.

Punk fires off the kicks and gets two off a quick powerslam. They trade German suplex grips but Punk gets dropped on the top rope to give Jericho control. The Lionsault gets two and Chris goes up, only to be chopped a lot to slow him down. The champion loads up a hurricanrana but gets countered into the Walls in one of Jericho's classic counters. Punk finally makes the ropes and sends Jericho to the floor to set up the suicide dive.

Jericho staggers to his feet and Punk hits the running knee, crushing Jericho's head against the post. They head back in and somehow Jericho grabs the Codebreaker out of nowhere for two. Back up and Jericho pounds

away on Punk in the corner, only to go up again and get kicked down. The GTS is countered into the Liontamer (the kneeling version of the Walls) in the middle of the ring but shifts it to the regular Walls.

Jericho has to pull him away from the ropes and Punk escapes into dueling small packages. CM rolls through again into the Anaconda Vice but Jericho knees Punk in the back of the head to escape. The Walls don't work again and Punk hooks another Vice, this time tucking his head in to avoid the knees. Jericho is trapped and finally gives up.

Rating: A. Great match here with both guys destroying each other and countering everything both guys had. I love the ending with Punk getting smarter as he kept going in a good display of psychology. Thankfully the DQ bit didn't go anywhere which makes it pretty stupid. Excellent match here though which would have been a great main event for any other show of the year.

Wrestlemania 29 is coming to New Jersey, but we'll bill it as New York because it sounds better.

Here's Brodus, who had recently debuted as the Funkasaurus. He tells everyone to get their phone, because they're gonna call their mamas. Brodus calls his own and apparently she's here tonight.....WITH THE BRIDGE CLUB! Cue a troop of old women for a BIG dance party.

Video on G.I. Joe 2 which was just released like two weeks ago. As in nearly a year after this show.

And now, it is time.

We recap Rock vs. Cena which is at least a year in the making. Something like seven years ago Cena insulted Rock in an interview, so when Rock came back to be guest host last year, he insulted Cena in his return promo. The night after Wrestlemania, Cena had challenged Rock to a one on one match at THIS Wrestlemania. This led to a year of build (minus six months for Rock to make a movie of course) which got me to the point where I HAD to see this match. I didn't know if it was going to be great, if it was going to suck, or somewhere in between, but I needed to see it. That's never happened to me as a fan before.

Diddy comes out to bring out MGK (a rapper) to perform some song called Invincible. He does this stupid monologue about how Cena is a huge underdog in this, despite Cena being active having more experience overall than Rock. Cena is booed out of the building but gives something to an old lady who apparently is related to some Hall of Famer. We should be ready for Rock's entrance, but first we need Flo-Rida to perform two songs. I remember SCREAMING to get to it at this point. Oh and Flo has a bunch of dancers with him, presumably the same girls who were in the Bridge Club ten minutes ago.

John Cena vs. The Rock

Rock's ovation is thunderous. There's really no other way to put it as it's very clear who the fans are for here. During the big match intros, Cena is booed even further out of the stadium. They stare each other down and FINALLY the bell rings. Cena shoves him away to start and the dueling chants begin. They lock up again and this time Cena goes flying. Rock grabs a headlock before they fight over arm control.

A few armdrags put Cena down and a cradle gets a quick two for Cena. Cena has to make sure it wasn't three as he looks a bit shaken. Back up and John leapfrogs over Rock before taking him down with a headlock takeover. They get up again and Rock tries a quick Sharpshooter but Cena bails to the floor. Rock decks him as he gets back in but Cena charges at him in the corner with a hard shoulder to the ribs. Cena gets a quick one count off a clothesline before putting on a bearhug on the mat.

Back up and Rock punches away but gets low bridged out to the floor. Cena drops him ribs first onto the barricade and announce table before going to the ring for a seat. When Rock won't quit Cena throws him back inside and gets a two count. We're definitely in another gear now. Off to a bearhug on Rock's bad ribs but he won't quit. Rock finally comes back with right hands to escape and a DDT for two.

Rock wins a quick slugout and hits the spinebuster but Cena picks the leg to break up the Elbow. Cena comes back with his finishing sequence but the AA is escaped. A double clothesline puts both guys down as they take a breather. After a few moments on the mat they slug it out with Cena

punching Rock down to his knees. Rock fires off more punches and does You Can't See Me before trying the spit punch, only to get caught in the AA for a close two.

Cena goes to pick Rock up but takes the Rock Bottom for two for the Brahma Bull. Rock stomps away in the corner but walks into a side slam for two. John goes up top for a very delayed top rope Fameasser for another near fall. Rock comes back with a spinebuster into the Sharpshooter but he doesn't have it on well. Cena crawls to the rope so Rock lets go and pounds away. Back to the Sharpshooter (why don't more people do that? Even if Cena won't quit you can still do more damage) but Cena makes the rope immediately again. Gee maybe if he had pulled Cena from the rope it would have been harder to escape.

Rock fires off some elbows to the chest and sends Cena into the steps for good measure. Back inside and Cena tries a sunset flip of all things but immediately shifts into the STF in the middle of the ring. Cena drags him back to the middle of the ring and Rock is starting to fade. We get an old school arm check and Rock holds it up on the third drop. I love stuff like that. Rock makes it to the ropes and as they get back up, Cena walks into a Samoan drop to put both guys down.

Another slugout goes to Rock and the spinebuster sets up the Elbow.....for TWO. The place is losing their minds on these kickouts and can you blame them a bit? Both guys are spent here but Cena hits a catapult into the corner for two. With nothing left to try, Cena loads up the middle rope AA but Rock shoves him off and tries a top rope cross body but Cena rolls through into the BIG AA for an even closer two. Cena begs the referee to call it three. That gets him nowhere so Cena loads up a People's Elbow. As he hits the second rope, Rock nips up and hits the Rock Bottom for the shocking pin.

Rating: A+. What else do you want from this? This is one of those matches which could have gone either way as they beat the tar out of each other. They had the big fight atmosphere down to perfection here and while the ending is still questionable (yet not completely wrong), it's exactly what you want a Wrestlemania main event to be. This somehow surpassed the hype and was excellent in every sense of the word.

Cena sits on the ramp, stunned.

Rock poses to end the show.

Overall Rating: A. This is one of the best shows of all time, bar none. The two big matches delivered far better than you could have hoped for, the Raw title match was great, nothing sucked, there are multiple Wrestlemania Moments on here, and the crowd was white hot all night. This is easily in the highest levels of Wrestlemanias ever and it's every bit as good as it was when I watched it live. Great stuff and absolutely worth checking out.

Ratings Comparison

Daniel Bryan vs. Sheamus

Original:

Redo: N/A

Kane vs. Randy Orton

Original: B-

Redo: B-

Cody Rhodes vs. Big Show

Original: D+

Redo: D+

Kelly Kelly/Maria Menunos vs. Beth Phoenix/Eve Torres

Original: C+

Redo: D+

HHH vs. Undertaker

Original: A+

Redo: A+

Team Johnny vs. Team Teddy

Original: C

Redo: D+

Chris Jericho vs. CM Punk

Original: A

Redo: A

The Rock vs. John Cena

Original: B+

Redo: A+

Overall Rating

Original: A+

Redo: A

I shortchanged that main event terribly. It's a masterpiece.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2012/04/01/wrestlemania-xxviii-one-of-the-best-shows-of-all-time/>

Well that's that I guess. As is the case with every PPV series, some are great, some suck, a lot are in the middle. This series however is different. It's THE show and THE series which is bigger than anything else in the world of professional wrestling. Wrestlemania has been around 29 years now and with the latest edition only a day away as of right now, it's still going strong.

Around 2001, Wrestlemania became a spectacle in addition to an event as they started going to major stadiums and drawing 70,000+ people to every show. That's remarkable and the fact that the crowds keep growing is a great sign. I love wrestling and I love Wrestlemania, so watching these

shows has been a treat.

I'll be back on July 24 with the Summerslam Redos, so I hope to not see you then. Why would I want to see you? I want you at your computers reading the reviews. Go read more of them now. Or my books. Yeah preferably the books.

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