

Wrestlemania Count-Up – Wrestlemania XX: The Triple Threat Match

Wrestlemania XX

Date: March 14, 2004

Location: Madison Square Garden, New York City, New York

Attendance: 20,000

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler, Tazz, Michael Cole

We're back where it all started so it can all begin again. I'm not sure what that means either but it's the tag line of the show. The main event tonight is a triple threat match because what would a WWE show be without one of those? It's HHH defending the title against Chris Benoit and Shawn Michaels, the latter of whom is here for absolutely no reason whatsoever. The other big match is Eddie Guerrero defending his newly won world title against Kurt Angle. There are some young guys getting their first Manai match tonight as well. Let's get to it.

The Harlem Boys Choir sings America the Beautiful.

We get a shot of Vince standing in the dark before going into a video on the last twenty years of Wrestlemania which is a pretty cool sight. This transitions into a very serious video about everyone talking about how huge this match is for them. We hear that it all begins again tonight, transitioning to a shot of Vince's newborn granddaughter. Cool idea.

US Title: John Cena vs. Big Show

Cena is challenging here and this is the culmination of a feud that lasted a few months. Show held the title for five months and defended it like three times. Cena does a rap before the match and is just INSANELY over. In New York. My how times have changed. Cena says Show can't see him so Big shoves him into the corner. Show throws him to the floor but Cena guillotines him as they come back in. A cross body (why would you try that on Big Show?) is countered into a slam for two and the match

slows down a lot.

The fans cheer for Cena as Show chops him in the corner. Cena comes back with some right hands but Show clotheslines him down with ease. Show stands on the bottom rope to crush it into Cena's throat before a vertical suplex gets two. The champion stands on Cena's back for good measure and drops a leg for two. Show tries a powerslam but gets caught in a sleeper, but the powers of fat break it up pretty easily.

There's the cobra clutch by the champion for good measure but the fans applaud Cena to freedom. The hold goes right back on though and Cena is in more trouble. John slugs his way out again and gets a boot up to stop a charging Big Show. The FU hits but Show is out just a second after the two count. Since that didn't work, Cena wraps a chain around his hand but when the referee takes them away, Cena gets brass knuckles to stun Big Show before a second FU gives him his first of many titles.

Rating: C. Slow match but this was a good choice for an opener. The fans were WAY into Cena as he was rapidly becoming the hottest thing in the company (until the rise of Batista of course). The FU was a great visual to open things up as fans are always going to react to freakish displays of strength like that. Good opener here and the fans are hotter than they already were, which is the right idea.

Coach is in the back talking to various people before going in to see Eric Bischoff. Eric sends him to find Undertaker.

Evolution (minus HHH of course) talks about taking out Mick Foley tonight and we get a clip of Orton kicking Foley down a flight of stairs 10 months ago to start the feud. They just happen to be in front of the same stairs, which is a great touch. Instead of having them show us the stairs in a photo, it adds atmosphere which is missing in most promos today. We see Foley walking away from Orton over the months and Evolution destroying Foley over the same months. Tonight it's Rock teaming with Foley against Evolution in a handicap match which should be AWESOME. Really good package here on the match too.

Raw Tag Titles: La Resistance vs. Dudley Boyz vs. Garrison Cade/Mark Jindrak vs. Booker T/Rob Van Dam

Booker and RVD are defending and this is one fall to a finish. Booker has an AWFUL remix of his song here so hopefully they drop the belts so we don't have to hear it again. Van Dam and Dupree get us going with Rob monkey flipping him down. Booker comes in with a side kick for two and a hip toss for an interfering Conway. Rene is knocked into the Dudley corner for a tag off to Bubba with the Dudley getting two off a neckbreaker. Booker comes back with a side kick but D-Von tags himself in before the cover. RVD jumps in with a kick to the face of D-Von but there was no tag so it's Jindrak vs. Booker instead.

Cade and Jindrak take over on Booker in the corner but Rene steals a tag to take over. This match needs to end already. We're four minutes in and I'm already bored. Conway hooks a bow and arrow hold which goes on WAY longer than needed. Booker fights out with a spinebuster for no cover but it's not hot tag to RVD. Everything breaks down but D-Von breaks up the Five Star. It's Booker vs. D-Von but Cade breaks up 3D. The scissors kick and Five Star are enough to pin Conway and retain the titles.

Rating: D. Sacre bleu what a waste of my time. No one card about this match because the tag division was so dead at this point that almost every team was just thrown together. Since this is Wrestlemania though, there's ANOTHER four way tag match later tonight. Nothing to see here and the match sucked on all levels. Let's get on to ANYTHING else.

Coach is in the back again and hears noises coming from a closet. He opens the door to find a disheveled Gene Okerlund and Bobby Heenan with an unbuttoned shirt. Coach thinks there's something going on between the two of them but Heenan says there was a poker game going on. Moolah and Mae Young come out of the same closet and drag the guys back in. Heenan screams for help and Coach shakes his head. When I said ANYTHING else, I didn't mean THAT.

We recap Christian vs. Jericho which is a pretty awesome story. Month ago Christian and Jericho made a bet for \$1 Canadian that Jericho could sleep with Trish before Christian could sleep with Lita. Jericho wound up falling for Trish but she found out about the bet. He's spent months begging for her forgiveness but Christian got tired of hearing Jericho whining like this.

Trish agreed to just be friends but Christian started hitting on her. Bischoff made Christian vs. Trish with Christian agreeing to lay down for her. Christian decided to show some tough love by putting her in the Walls of Jericho, setting up Christian vs. Jericho tonight with Jericho fighting for the honor of his love. This is one of my favorite feuds.

Christian vs. Chris Jericho

They lock up to start with Jericho getting very aggressive and taking Christian down by the hair. A belly to back suplex gets two for Jericho and he backdrops Christian over the top and out to the floor. Chris hits a big spring plancha but can't hook the Walls back inside. Christian sends Jericho over the top and out to the floor in a big crash. Back in and Christian chokes away before slapping his own chest a bit. A knee to Jericho's ribs gets two and it's off to a neck crank.

Christian pulls some of Jericho's hair out for good measure before covering. Off to a chinlock with a knee in Chris' back but it's quickly broken up into another failed Walls attempt. A forearm puts Christian down and there's a running crotch attack to Christian in 619 position. The running enziguri gets two for Jericho before they trade rollups for two each. A northern lights suplex gets two for Chris but the bulldog sets up the Lionsault which hits knees.

Jericho charges into an elbow into the corner and gets taken down by a reverse tornado DDT for two. The reverse DDT into a backbreaker puts Jericho down again but Christian goes up and gets crotched. He blocks a superplex though and hits a top rope cross body, only for Jericho to roll through for two. This is solid stuff so far. Christian kicks Jericho in his injured knee and puts on the old school Texas Cloverleaf. In an impressive counter, Jericho gets underneath Christian and rolls through into the Walls but AGAIN Christian makes the ropes.

Jericho takes it to the floor and puts on the Walls out there before having to break the count. Back in and a butterfly superplex gets a VERY close two on Christian as Trish comes bouncing down the aisle. An inverted DDT puts Chris down for two and Christian spots Trish. He drags her into the ring but Jericho makes the save. Not being able to see

though, Trish blasts Jericho in the face, allowing Christian to hook a quick rollup for the pin.

Rating: B. As I said I'm a bit fan of this match and the angle that went along with it. This was Christian's best singles match to date and he looked perfectly capable of hanging with a more talented guy like Jericho. Trish of course would play a much bigger role just after the match, so let's get to the interesting part.

Post match Trish apologizes to Jericho before slapping him, turning into EVIL Trish. Christian lays out Jericho and leaves with the girl. Evil Trish was SMOKING hot and we would get to see a lot more of her as this feud continued for months.

Mick Foley talks about the emotion of being back in New York but Rock interrupts him. He says that FINALLY they're back here and Mick Foley is home. Rock hijacks the camera and finds Rosey and Hurricane eating hamburgers and Jimmy Snuka and Don Muraco just hanging out. Rock sends the cameraman into the arena to get a shot of the people but has him come back because it's Rock N Sock's night.

Evolution vs. The Rock/Mick Foley

It's Flair/Orton/Batista here and Orton is Intercontinental Champion. The brawl is on to start with Rock fighting the young guys and Flair getting punched by Foley. Evolution is knocked out to the floor until we start with Rock vs. Flair. Rock immediately elbows him down and does the Flair strut to send Naitch to the floor. A backdrop puts Flair down and they fight to the floor, only to have Ric get caught in another backdrop. Foley drops an elbow off the apron and Evolution is in trouble to start.

Foley wants to come in to face Orton but Randy immediately bails to the floor to great heat. We finally get inside for the fight that people want to see as Foley pounds away and puts Orton in the Tree of Woe. Off to Rock who punches Orton in the "stomach" before clotheslining him down for no cover. Ric gets clipped in the back of the head by Flair which draws him into the corner, sending the fight to the floor. Batista drops Rock face first onto the barricade to take over.

Back in and Batista pounds on Rock, dropping him down with an elbow for two. Flair comes in again to chop at Rock before going up with even Lawler making fun of Flair for it never working. Big Dave comes in again to pound on Rock but the Brahma Bull gets over to the corner to bring in Foley. Mick pounds away on Batista and punches him down in the corner, only to be taken down by Batista's big running clothesline. Foley goes after Orton on the floor but Flair jumps him to stop the comeback.

As is his custom, Flair is sent knees first into the steps, causing some cringing pain. Back in and Orton drops knees on Foley's head before it's back to Flair for a hard chop. That's all for Ric right now and it's back to Orton for a reverse chinlock. Batista takes Orton's place and pounds away with rights and lefts, only to be caught in a quick Mandible Claw. Batista escapes but gets caught in a swinging neckbreaker. That's STILL not enough for the hot tag to Rock though, and the crowd continues to want it more and more. A quick right hand to Flair is enough for the tag to Rock though, and the reaction isn't all that great.

Rock cleans house with everything he can but walks into a spinebuster by Batista. Instead of a cover though, we get the People's Elbow from Naitch, complete with strut! The elbow doesn't have a chance to be launched though as Rock nips up and pounds away on Flair with right hands. The spinebuster sets up the real Elbow with Rock strutting for two. Another tag brings in Orton who walks right into a Rock Bottom for two. The big clothesline puts Rock down and there's the Batista Bomb for good measure.

That gets two for Randy but Rock drops him again, allowing for the tag to Foley and there's the pop we were waiting for. Evolution is knocked down and there's the double arm DDT to Orton. Mr. Socko returns but Orton SNAPS off an RKO for the pin out of nowhere. The look of shock on Orton's face and Foley getting up and three and a half and looking around as if to say "what happened" are great touches.

Rating: B. Very solid match here with all five guys feeling it at Wrestlemania. The ending is perfect and makes Orton look all the better as he got the fall on a fresh Foley with the RKO out of nowhere. This led to a great match at Backlash which cemented Orton as a player. This was

also Rock's last match for seven and a half years. Great match though and well worth checking out for a lesson in how to give a perfect rub.

Foley gets a standing ovation and Rock is just kind of there. Again, they don't steal the spotlight, making it clear that Evolution is the important group here. Very well done.

We get some clips from the Hall of Fame induction ceremony last night which is the first class inducted in eight years. Heenan wishing Monsoon was there still makes me smile.

Here's Gene Okerlund to introduce the Hall of Fame class. The class includes Bobby Heenan (good ovation), Tito Santana (should get a bigger ovation), Big John Studd (represented by his son), Harley Race (the pop starts before Gene can even speak), Pete Rose (booed, although I've heard he was as humble as you could ask anyone to be), Don Muraco (polite applause), Greg Valentine (bigger ovation than I expected), Junkyard Dog (represented by his daughter), Billy Graham (biggest pop so far), Sgt. Slaughter (decent pop) and Jesse Ventura (solid pop). Next year's class had Hogan in it to give the thing some credibility.

Sable/Torrie Wilson vs. Miss Jackie/Stacy Keibler

This is an evening gown match and the annual Playboy promotional match. Sable and Torrie posed together and had a teased lesbian angle around this time. Sable wants to just wrestle without clothes but Jackie (Gayda, as in the attractive one) says no. Everyone else winds up in lingerie and Jackie is soon stripped too. This is exactly what you would expect: horny announcers, sexual spots, very little wrestling and very little complaining from most fans. Stacy kicks Torrie's head off for two and it's back to Jackie. We get the rolling over the referee spot and Torrie rolls up Jackie for the pin. This was what it was.

We hear from some fans who are excited to be here.

Eddie comes in to see Benoit but Benoit doesn't want to hear about how big of a night this is. Guerrero of course talks about all the pressure on Benoit but Benoit says he believes in himself and that he's never been more ready. Eddie says Benoit needs to have fire in his eyes and it

finally comes out, so Eddie is very happy.

Cruiserweight Title: Cruiserweight Open

Chavo Guerrero, Ultimo Dragon, Shannon Moore, Akio, Tajiri, Jamie Noble, Funaki, Rey Mysterio, Billy Kidman, Nunzio

This is different from what the Cruiserweight Open would wind up being when it was a free for all. This is basically a gauntlet match with everyone at ringside and two guys starting. It's elimination rules and last man standing is champion. Chavo comes in defending and gets to come in tenth for no apparent reason. We start with Moore vs. Dragon who fight over a hammerlock. Moore tries to speed things up but gets caught in a standing Sliced Bread for a fast pin. I now remember why I hate gauntlet matches.

Jamie Noble is in next and after avoiding a moonsault, he hooks a neckbreaker and a guillotine choke to put Dragon out. Funaki comes in and gets small packaged for the pin less in about three seconds. Nunzio is in and takes Noble to the mat in a hurry before being sent out to the floor. Noble hits a sweet flip dive off the top to the floor and rams Nunzio into the apron for a countout. Billy Kidman is in next but Nunzio trips him up. Noble heads to the floor as Kidman slides back inside for a Shooting Star off the top to take both guys out.

Back in and Kidman breaks up the guillotine choke and enziguris Noble down. The Shooting Star is broken up but Kidman hits a BK Bomb (D'Lo Brown's Sky High) for the elimination. Mysterio (as the Flash this year) comes in with a springboard seated senton but gets dropkicked down for two for Kidman. Billy loads up something off the top but gets caught in a sunset bomb for the pin. Mysterio vs. Tajiri now as Rey is caught in the Tarantula. Mysterio will have none of this selling stuff and there's the 619 but Tajiri kicks him down.

Akio gets on the apron but gets caught in the Green Mist, which means he's out for no apparent reason (my guess is they're out of time) so here's Chavo vs. Mysterio which is what this whole match should have been in the first place. Tajiri gets in a cheap shot on Mysterio and it's Guerrero in control early. Rey comes back with a headscissors and a

baseball slide to Chavo Senior. There's a big dive onto an old man to pop the crowd (New York is mean!) but as Mysterio comes back in with a sunset flip, Chavo Jr. drops down and has Senior's help for the pin on Mysterio to retain.

Rating: D. What am I supposed to get into off of this match? The longest fall was maybe two minutes in length and none of them were anything of note. The match should have just been Rey vs. Chavo, but because of the annoying Wrestlemania payday, we need to jam in eight other guys to ruin the match. Also this brings up the universal problem with these matches: if it's possible to get all these two minute pins, why do matches usually last five times or so as long?

We recap Brock vs. Goldberg which started at the Rumble. Goldberg wasn't impressed by Lesnar so Brock interfered in the Rumble and tossed Goldberg out. Austin left Goldberg a ticket for No Way Out where Lesnar defended the title against Eddie Guerrero. As you can guess, Goldberg cost him the title and tonight it's about revenge. Brock blamed Austin for the loss and stole his ATV which Austin got back. Austin is also guest referee tonight to keep the match from falling apart.

Brock Lesnar vs. Goldberg

The catch here is that both guys are leaving and the fans know it, so they boo them both out of the building. Goldie gets his full entrance from the back. The fans IMMEDIATELY start chanting YOU SOLD OUT at Lesnar who is going to the NFL after this match. They circle each other and Austin says get to it. Now the fans sing the GOODBYE song with the guys still making zero contact over a minute in. The fans chant for the referee as Goldberg looks at Austin. Still no contact. After nearly THREE MINUTES of circling each other they lock up.

Amusingly enough, Goldberg is said to have an advantage because he's a mixed martial arts aficionado. They lock up and shove each other away as it's almost four minutes in without even a punch being thrown. We get a second lockup with the same result. The crowd is booing loudly now. Literally five minutes in Lesnar grabs a headlock for the first actual move of the match. They trade shoulder blocks with no one going anywhere.

They collide again with both guys going down and we're somehow six minutes into this match.

Now they stare at each other as the fans are about to riot. The fans cheer for HOGAN of all people and that's FINALLY enough to get something going. Goldberg presses him over his head and drops him into a kind of spinebuster for two. The spear misses though and Goldberg hits the buckle chest first. The fans think Goldberg sucks as he is sent into the post. Back in and Brock gets two off a suplex and then hooks a modified headlock. The fans chant for Hogan again.

Back to the same headlock after a brief break before they collide again. Brock gets two as Austin is still a complete non factor. He seems to be the rodeo clown out there to keep everything from falling apart. Well, falling completely apart because we're long past falling apart. JR is polite and calls this match pedestrian. Goldberg comes back with some clotheslines and a swinging neckbreaker of all things as the Hogan chant starts again. There's the spear for two but Goldie spends too much time arguing with Austin and walks into an F5 for two. Brock tries a spear but misses, so a spear and Jackhammer can finish Brock.

Rating: E. As in embarrassing, which is what this was. Have some pride out there people. I know you're leaving and the fans don't care, but man alive have some effort out there. If I was an NFL team and Brock gave that kind of a performance I wouldn't want anything to do with him. No he doesn't want to be there but that's his job until his contract expires. This was embarrassing to watch and they deserve the booing they received. Austin added nothing here but he didn't really need to.

Post match Brock flips off Austin and gets Stunned for his efforts. Goldberg has a beer and gets Stunned for good measure.

Wrestlemania 21 is in Los Angeles.

Vince actually comes out and thanks the fans for getting us here and hopes they'll be there in the future. Cool moment there.

Smackdown Tag Titles: Too Cool vs. Basham Brothers vs. World's Greatest Tag Team vs. APA

That would be Scotty and Rikishi who are defending coming in. One fall to a finish again. Bradshaw and Shelton start things off with the Texan taking him down with a shoulder and getting two off an elbow drop. Doug Basham comes in to beat up Shelton now and it's off to Danny. Shelton tags in Haas for a slam onto Haas' knee in a cool spot. Scotty comes in to fight Charlie as this is going nowhere.

In another creative spot, Scotty skins the cat but lands in the Shelton jumps over Charlie's back to land on Scotty for two. Charlie tags off to Doug for a kick to Scotty's face. The hot tag brings in Rikishi to clean house and knocks Shelton to the floor to break up the German suplex. Charlie gets a Stinkface and Bradshaw launches Doug to the floor with a fallaway slam. There's the Clothesline to Danny but Bradshaw walks into a Samoan Drop. Rikishi sits on Danny to end it and retain.

Rating: D. Whatever man. Seriously, I wouldn't have remembered this match if you put a gun to my head, just like with the other tag title match. They're just not interesting at all and there was nothing here to remember at all. There needed to be just one set of tag belts at this point and these matches make it painfully obvious.

Rikishi and Scotty dance for old times' sake.

Edge is returning soon.

Jesse Ventura interviews Donald Trump, who is at like his fifth Wrestlemania. Ventura implies they'll run for the White House together.

Molly Holly (looking GREAT here with the shoulder length dark hair) is excited about her hair vs. title match against Victoria. This can't end well.

Women's Title: Molly Holly vs. Victoria

Victoria is defending and Molly has her hair on the line. The champion has the awesome All The Things She Said as her theme song as is looking sweet in white here. They lock up to start and Molly pounds her down before whipping Victoria into the corner. Victoria nips up off the mat and sends Molly to the floor but loses control soon thereafter. Back in

again as the match is already going slowly.

A low dropkick gets two on Victoria and it's off to a reverse cravate by Molly. A quick rollup gets two for Victoria as JR says he doesn't wear underwear. Victoria powerslams her down for two but Molly heads up a few seconds later. An attempted superplex is countered into a slow motion sunset bomb for two for Molly. A backslide out of nowhere retains the title for Victoria, meaning it's time to see a bald Holly.

Rating: D+. Not much to see here other than both girls looking incredibly cute. As is usually the case, there's no explanation given for why this match is happening, none does anyone seem interested in telling us. Molly would get a wig soon after this which admittedly was pretty amusing. Nothing to the match which didn't even last five minutes.

Molly tries to put Victoria into the barber's chair post match but can't get the clippers to work. The champion fights back and lays Molly out for the haircut.

We recap Eddie vs. Angle. Eddie, as a former drug addict, has no business being champion according to Kurt. Guerrero is also in WAY over his head because of how good Angle is. Heyman, the Smackdown GM, hates Eddie for no apparent reason on top of that.

Post video, Molly is VERY bald.

Smackdown World Title: Kurt Angle vs. Eddie Guerrero

Feeling out process to start with Eddie taking Angle to the mat in a surprising development. Angle sits out and the fans applaud what they see. Angle takes over with a headlock but Eddie reverses into one of his own. A shoulder block puts Eddie down and he isn't sure what to do from here. Now the champion grabs a headlock followed by three straight shoulders to knock Angle down. Kurt bails to the floor for a breather.

Back in and Eddie takes him down with an armdrag but Angle takes control again with a sweet amateur move into a front facelock. Eddie comes out of it with a series of armdrags into an armbars as the fans applaud again. Guerrero switches over to a keylock but Angle shoves him off and drives a

knee into the ribs to take over. Like any good ring general, he follows up on an injured body part with an abdominal stretch.

Eddie rolls out and tries Three Amigos but gets countered into a German instead. Eddie gets thrown to the apron but Angle slides through the ropes and tries the German off the apron but Guerrero escapes because it would, you know, kill him. Back inside and Eddie dropkicks Angle back to the floor as things slow down a bit. Guerrero tries to dive off the top to take Angle out but lands ribs first on the barricade. That's adding to the story they started with the ribs, making it awesome.

Back inside and a backbreaker gets two for Angle and it's off to a body vice on the champion. Eddie fights up but gets dropped ribs first on the top rope for two. Angle unleashes the suplexes again with an overhead release belly to belly for no cover. There's another one for two and it's back to the body grip. Another belly to belly gets another near fall as Angle is getting frustrated. Angle puts him on the top but gets shoved off as a result. A fast Frog Splash attempt misses though and Eddie's ribs are in big trouble.

Angle punches Eddie to send Cole into a frenzy because Michael Cole is an authority on ethics all of a sudden. Eddie gets up and says HIT ME AGAIN so Angle does just that. Guerrero grabs a fast suplex for two but Angle escapes a second before rolling the Germans. Eddie counters the second one into a rollup for two but Angle takes Eddie's head off with a clothesline to stop him again.

The champion escapes the Angle Slam with an armdrag and starts doing his Latino dance. He STILL can't hit the Three Amigos though as Angle counters into the ankle lock. Eddie kicks him away and dropkicks Kurt down before heading up. Angle pops up again and runs the ropes for the belly to belly, putting both guys down again. Kurt takes the straps down and puts on the ankle lock but Eddie rolls out into a cradle for two.

Another German suplex puts Guerrero down again but the champion counters the Angle Slam into a DDT. Now the Frog Splash hits for a VERY close two. When I watched this the first time I thought that was it. Eddie isn't sure what to do and gets caught in the ankle lock as a result. He almost

taps but manages to swing Angle out to the floor. Eddie unlaces his boot with Kurt down on the floor to relieve some pressure. Guerrero crawls away as Kurt gets back in and lets him pick the ankle. Eddie kicks Angle away, losing his boot in the process. Angle is confused and Eddie smothered him to retain in a brilliant move.

Rating: A. Great match here with the psychology flowing freely. Eddie was BRILLIANT out there as he had finally took it away from the wrestling game and got Angle out of his comfort zone. The dueling rolling suplexes were a great touch too as neither guy could hit them but it was a battle to try. Great match and well worth checking out.

We recap Kane vs. Undertaker. Other than their huge history dating back over six years, Kane had helped literally bury Undertaker at Survivor Series in a buried alive match. At Wrestlemania, the gong went off to scare Undertaker and he's back tonight as the Dead Man for the first time in four and a half years.

Kane vs. Undertaker

The visual on Kane's entrance is really cool as the set is designed to look like New York City and it has fire all over it as Kane comes out. Sweet. The lights go out and we get Paul Bear's Ooooooooooooooooooooooh YEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEES. Since this is Wrestlemania, we get druids, smoke, and torches. Now we get thunder and lightning and a gong, which gives us the Undertaker. He has shorter hair now which would be his look for the next eight years or so. The entrance, as always, is excellent.

Kane shouts that Undertaker isn't real and reaches out to touch him, earning the right hands from Undertaker. Undertaker calls for the chokeslam but Kane runs out to the floor. Taker is fine with that and the brawl heads to the floor with the Dead Man in full control. There's the apron legdrop and we head back inside for a running clothesline in the corner. All Undertaker so far as JR actually tries to push this as a brand vs. brand match. Taker loads up the Last Ride but gets backdropped into the ropes in an awkward looking spot.

Kane chokes away on the mat and talks trash about telling Undertaker to not come back. Undertaker comes back with rights and lefts, only to walk

into the side slam. The top rope clothesline crushes Undertaker for a close two. Kane misses a charge in the corner and there's a big boot to put Kane down. Taker follows it up with a legdrop (BROTHER) and Old School for good measure. Scratch that actually as Kane catches him by the throat and hits the chokeslam. Kane laughs maniacally but Taker sits up to a BIG ovation. The Taker chokeslam and tombstone make Taker I believe 12-0.

Rating: D+. Yeah the match sucked but this was all about the moment and making it clear that Undertaker was back. That worked like a charm here and the match worked quite well for what it was supposed to be. This would of course lead to Paul Bearer being locked in a tomb made of concrete. You don't see the connection?

We recap the main event. HHH is world champion because he's HHH, Benoit won the Rumble and switched brands, and Shawn is here because he's a whiny little man that can't accept that he didn't win at the Rumble. Therefore he superkicked Benoit and signed Benoit's contract, which apparently you can just do and have it be legally binding. The solution was to make a triple threat match because that's what WWE does.

Raw World Title: HHH vs. Shawn Michaels vs. Chris Benoit

HHH (and his big white boots) bail to the floor as the other two chop it out. They head to the mat with Benoit bridging up into a backslide attempt but Shawn blocks. The Crossface doesn't work but Benoit gets two off a northern lights suplex. The Game comes back in to take over and he slugs both guys down. Shawn is thrown over the top rope for some skinning of the cat but comes back in to pound away at the champion in the corner.

The high knee takes Shawn down for two and a less high knee puts Benoit on the floor. Benoit has his back rammed into the barricade but Shawn baseball slides both of them onto the concrete. That is followed up by a big moonsault to the floor to take out all three guys and wow the crowd a bit. Shawn and HHH go back inside but Benoit has to come in with a clothesline to break up a Pedigree. Shawn goes shoulder first into the post at the hands of the Canadian but HHH ties Benoit up in the Tree of Woe.

Michaels whips HHH into Benoit and rolls up the champion for two before nipping up, only to be clotheslined out to the floor by Benoit. Chris rolls some Germans on the champion but Shawn comes back to break up the Swan Dive. HHH DDTs Shawn down and superplexes Benoit for a pair of two's. Benoit gets a weak Crossface on HHH but Michaels makes the save. Now Shawn tries to roll Germans on Benoit but you can't do that to a Canadian (without being Kurt Angle of course), and Benoit reverses into Germans of his own on Shawn.

The Swan Dive hits Shawn for two as HHH makes another save. HHH low bridges Benoit to the floor and it's time for DX to fight again. Shawn drops the top rope elbow on HHH and there's Sweet Chin Music for good measure but it only gets two. Benoit makes the save and it's time to chop a Canadian. Michaels has to fight off the Sharpshooter but can't avoid a catapult into the post. There's the Crossface on Shawn but HHH grabs Shawn's hand to prevent tapping. That catapult into the post busted Shawn open too.

Out to the floor they go with HHH whipping Benoit into the steps to put him down. HHH loads up the announce table but Benoit fights him onto said table. Benoit fights out of a Pedigree attempt but here's Shawn on the table as well. A double suplex/slam sends Benoit flying through a table and it's down to one on one for all intents and purposes. HHH pounds away on Shawn in the corner but gets backdropped out to the floor, taking out the referee in the process. Shawn sends him into the post to bust the champion open too.

Back in and HHH hits a Pedigree out of nowhere but he's too exhausted to cover. Eventually he does but Benoit pops in to break it up at the last second. Shawn falls out to the floor as Benoit chops the champion. The Pedigree is countered into the Sharpshooter but Shawn comes back in with Sweet Chin Music to break it up, but only for two. Michaels tunes up the band again but misses the superkick and gets backdropped to the floor. Benoit hooks the Crossface on HHH and holds onto it even as Benoit rolls into the middle of the ring until HHH taps out, giving Benoit the world title.

Rating: A+. I can't stand triple threat matches but this is a

masterpiece. They were so crisp with everything and while Shawn didn't need to be there at all, it was still an excellent match. Benoit winning was the absolutely right decision (and would have been the year before as well) but it was the feel good moment they needed.

Eddie comes out to celebrate with his friend as confetti falls to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. This show really does hold up quite well. It's not a masterpiece or anything but the two world title matches are must see. Unfortunately that's about all that's must see as this over four hour long show (yes, OVER FOUR HOURS) is in need of some trimming (the tag titles would be a great place to start) but it's still a solid show. The ending scene is hard to watch as the two crumbled under the pressure and ultimately would be gone less than four years later. Still though, the first moment was excellent.

Ratings Comparison

John Cena vs. Big Show

Original: C-

Redo: C

Booker T/Rob Van Dam vs. Garrison Cade/Mark Jindrak vs. Dudley Boys vs. La Resistance

Original: D

Redo: D

Christian vs. Chris Jericho

Original: B

Redo: B

Evolution vs. The Rock/Mick Foley

Original: A

Redo: B

Torrie Wilson/Sable vs. Stacy Keibler/Miss Jackie

Original: F

Redo: N/A

Cruiserweight Open

Original: D+

Redo: D

Goldberg vs. Brock Lesnar

Original: F

Redo: E

Too Cool vs. World's Greatest Tag Team vs. Basham Brothers vs. APA

Original: D

Redo: D

Victoria vs. Molly Holly

Original: D+

Redo: D+

Eddie Guerrero vs. Kurt Angle

Original: A

Redo: A

Undertaker vs. Kane

Original: D

Redo: D+

Chris Benoit vs. HHH vs. Shawn Michaels

Original: A+

Redo: A+

Overall Rating

Original: B

Redo: B

That's as close to identical as you're going to get.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/03/27/history-of-wrestlemania-with-kb-wrestlemania-20-where-it-all-begins-again-with-two-dead-guys/>

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And check out my Amazon author page with wrestling books for under \$4 at: