

Bragging Rights 2009: Even Attempted Murderers Need Rest Periods

It was mentioned that this wasn't up so here's a bit of a bonus.

Bragging Rights 2009

Date: October 25, 2009

Location: Mellon Arena, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Attendance: 13,562

Commentators: Todd Grisham, Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

This is back in the days of Raw vs. Smackdown meaning something but in this case there are two major matches. In addition to the Raw vs. Smackdown match, we also have John Cena vs. Randy Orton in an Iron Man match because all the other pay per view matches those two have had haven't been enough. The card really is built around those two matches and I'm not sure what else there is to mention. Undertaker is also defending his Smackdown World Title in a four way match, which means eighteen people are involved in two matches. That might explain the hour long Iron Man match. Let's get to it.

The opening video focuses on the seven on seven brand supremacy match with Orton and Cena not even being mentioned. The rest of the show is really just filler around those two and that might be better all things considered. You would think the title match would warrant a mention though.

There are three Raw vs. Smackdown matches tonight and the winner gets a trophy. Yeah the whole Team Raw vs. Team Smackdown match that the show is built around is only a third of the formula.

We recap Miz (US Champion, Smackdown) vs. John Morrison (Intercontinental Champion, Raw). This is basically a showdown that would have happened anyway as they used to be a big tag team and now they've split with an

argument over who was the Shawn and who was the Marty. In other words it's catchphrase vs. skill though Morrison was considered a much stronger prospect around this time.

Miz vs. John Morrison

Non-title. The ropes are half blue and half red for a cool visual. Morrison takes him to the mat to start and Miz bails to the ropes like a good heel should. Miz is driven into the corner but heads outside for an early breather. Back in and Miz gets caught in a flapjack, followed by Morrison's standing shooting star for two. The Moonlight Drive is broken up so Morrison settles for a hard clothesline to the floor, only to have Morrison get thrown out as well for a much nastier crash.

Miz cranks on both arms for a bit before putting on a quickly broken chinlock. A slugout goes to Morrison (of course) and a leg lariat gets two. The Flying Chuck (springboard kick to the face) gets the same and now the fans are getting into these near falls. Miz bails to the floor and takes a corkscrew dive but he breaks up Starship Pain (split legged corkscrew moonsault) and pins Morrison at 10:54.

Rating: C+. The match was fine but that ending was really quite lame. The crash and burn for Morrison was fine but Miz couldn't throw in a Skull Crushing Finale? After a strong build up to this, you would kind of expect more than just what we were given here. If nothing else though, I was really glad to see Miz win here as he's worked hard after being considered a nothing guy while Morrison was rolling on charisma for a long time.

We look back at Smackdown with Team Smackdown beating defeated by another group of five, meaning the winners took their places. Both lineups had Chris Jericho and Kane as co-captains but the original lineup of:

Dolph Ziggler, Eric Escobar, Drew McIntyre and Cryme Tyme

Has been replaced by:

R-Truth, Matt Hardy, Finlay and the Hart Dynasty

It should be noted that the match match where the new team won didn't

have Shad Gaspard, who was out sick. It's also not a good sign that they switched a team out with just two days before the pay per view.

Cody Rhodes, part of Team Raw tonight, is bragging about how awesome his show is when R-Truth comes in. Rhodes berates him so Truth says the only reasons Cody is here are Dusty Rhodes and Randy Orton. Big Show comes in to say Raw (his team) will win.

Michelle McCool/Natalya/Beth Phoenix vs. Melina/Kelly Kelly/Gail Kim

Smackdown vs. Raw. Natalya is part of the Hart Family and Kelly Kelly is a model who eventually became a pretty good worker. Michelle (who has gotten a very nice haircut since we last saw her) and Melina are the respective brand's women's champions. Beth and Gail get things going with Phoenix quickly dominating. It's off to Natalya who is quickly rolled up for two.

Natalya misses a charge in the corner so Gail can sit on the back of her head and bring in Kelly. A screaming headscissors drops Natalya but she drops Kelly across the top rope for two. Kelly gets caught in the wrong corner and it's off to Michelle for some bad looking knee drops. Beth won't let Kelly get over for the tag and Michelle comes back in for some knees to the face. A jawbreaker finally lets Kelly tag Melina in and house is cleaned. Beth stops her with a slingshot suplex and everything breaks down. Everyone else goes outside and it's the Glam Slam (double chickenwing faceplant) to put Melina away at 6:54.

Rating: C-. This was fine but there was absolutely no doubt who was going to win here thanks to the best of three format. It really is amazing to see how strong the division was around this time before it collapsed with the rise of the Bellas and everyone else leaving around the same time. The match wasn't bad but just filler and a way to get the women on the show.

HHH gives Team Raw a pep talk but brings up all the stuff they've made fun of Mark Henry for over the years. Jack Swagger isn't worried about the match and Shawn threatens to replace him with the first person he sees. Hornswoggle comes in and Shawn quickly changes his mind. The team eventually rallies around DX.

We recap the Smackdown World Title match with Undertaker defending against CM Punk (getting another rematch), Batista and Rey Mysterio (friends who are getting shots because they're former champions).

Smackdown World Title: Undertaker vs. Rey Mysterio vs. CM Punk vs. Batista

Punk runs around to start and causes Undertaker to blast Batista with a clothesline. The champ sends Punk to the floor so Mysterio can dive off the apron to take him down, leaving us with a Batista vs. Undertaker showdown. Old School keeps Batista in trouble but Punk saves Mysterio from the same fate. A superplex drops Undertaker and Rey springboards in with a splash for two as Punk makes a save.

Batista comes back in to go after Punk but eats a big boot from Undertaker. Rey's springboard is countered into a Last Ride, only to have Batista spear Undertaker down for the save. Rey scores with a 619 to send Undertaker into the spinebuster but Punk makes the save again. Hell's Gate has Batista in trouble but...yeah you know who breaks it up. That just earns Punk a Last Ride for two and there's a chokeslam to Batista for two.

Punk is tossed outside so the big guys can go at it even more with Batista hitting a quick Batista Bomb for two as Mysterio makes a save of his own. That's not cool with Rey's friend Batista and they get in an argument, allowing Undertaker to chokeslam Batista for two more. A double clothesline drops both of them so Punk can cover both of them for two. Batista gets back up and tosses Rey again, only to walk into the Tombstone to retain Undertaker's title at 9:58.

Rating: B+. They were smart to keep this one a bit shorter as it allowed the match to be this energetic throughout. This wouldn't have been as good with the laying around and it allowed Punk to keep running in and out and Undertaker and Batista to do all the big power stuff. Strong stuff here and a good bonus, though it's not going to mean anything in the long run.

Post match, Josh Matthews goes inside to talk to Rey and Batista. Rey says it was a good try but Batista asks the fans if they were close.

Batista thinks he was close but he was tired of only coming this close and of his best friend stabbing him in the back. Batista: "I'm not playing. I'm gonna rip your head off." And he comes pretty close with a big clothesline as Smackdown has a new monster heel. Rey is thrown hard into the barricade and kicked in the head before Batista slowly walks away.

This was an EXCELLENT turn as Batista had a good reason to go after Mysterio but it still looks like a big guy treating a smaller one like a loser for his own failures. In other words, Batista looks like a jerk who is abusing his power and the fans will want to see Mysterio try and get some revenge, even if that's not likely. Really good stuff here and something I'd love to see happen more often. Not necessarily this specific thing but something character based and logical.

The fans are split on who wins here.

Team Raw vs. Team Smackdown

Raw – Shawn Michaels, HHH, Cody Rhodes, Big Show, Kane, Kofi Kingston, Jack Swagger

Smackdown – Chris Jericho, Kane, Matt Hardy, Finlay, R-Truth, Hart Dynasty

One fall to a finish here. The Hart Dynasty are Tyson Kidd (speed) and David Hart-Smith (power). Cody and Truth get things going and everyone is wrestling in a red or blue shirt. Well save for DX because they're special. Rhodes spins around and grabs a leg but Big Show tags himself in.

Truth isn't crazy (yet) so he brings in Kane for the giant showdown. Show quickly puts Kane down and drops a leg before bringing in Swagger for some shots to the back. It's already off to Hardy to clothesline Swagger as the announcers push the idea that the wrestlers all really want to be the best. Normally that means with titles but let's just go with bragging rights instead. They head outside to start the big showdown as Swagger loses his shirt. But how will I know which side he's on?

Hardy is dragged into the corner for some arm cranks from Henry. A big elbow misses but Mark easily throws Matt into the corner, meaning it's time for Shawn to come in. You can hear the fans get fired up now because it's starting to get serious. Shawn may be great but he allows the tag off to Finlay for some heavy shots of his own. Sweet Chin Music makes up for it but a blind tag brings in Hart-Smith who helps hit a quick springboard Hart Attack for two on Michaels, meaning it's time for some selling.

Jericho slaps on the chinlock ("ASK HIM! ASK HIM!") before bringing in Kane for one of his own. David makes it three chinlocks in a row but Tyson's springboard elbow misses and the hot tag brings in HHH. A series of spinebusters have Smackdown in tatters but Kane stops HHH with a chokeslam. HHH puts Jericho down though and it's off to Kofi as everything speeds way up.

Trouble in Paradise gets two on Chris as everything breaks down into the parade of secondary finishers. Cole: "VINTAGE BRAGGING RIGHTS!" It's been on the air for less than an hour and a half and there's a vintage era? Anyway Big Show turns on his partners (because he's Big Show) and chokeslams Kofi to give Jericho the pin at 15:40.

Rating: B. You can only get so far on a made up rivalry with fourteen people having to cram in all their stuff in the span of less than sixteen minutes. It certainly wasn't bad though and both teams were more than fine, albeit a bit stretched as a lot of the guys didn't quite fit the level as people like DX, Jericho and Kane. Big Show screwing over his team wasn't the most interesting thing in the world either as he does it so often but at least it makes it clear that Raw was better until Smackdown got some help. You know, in case anyone thought otherwise.

We recap Cena vs. Orton in yet another match as this rivalry cannot die. Orton attacked Cena's dad to make it even more personal and if Orton wins, Cena is off Raw. Yeah just keep pretending it's not obvious now. This is billed as the final showdown, which WWE is usually pretty good about holding up. In this case though, I give it two months at most.

Kofi and Cody argue over why Raw lost and get in a fight over it with

Kofi being left laying.

Raw World Title: John Cena vs. Randy Orton

Orton is defending, anything goes, falls count anywhere Iron Man rules, meaning the most falls in sixty minutes wins. The introduction makes sure to point out that there will be a thirty second rest period between falls, which will come into play later. They start slow (makes sense) with Orton getting caught in a headlock, only to send Cena hard into the corner. The champ slowly stomps away but Cena grabs the STF for the immediate tap out at 3:56 (all times listed will be total and the thirty second rest periods count towards the time limit) as Orton wants to get out of the hold to avoid damage.

1-0 Cena

Orton is right back up with a powerslam for two as we're five minutes in. The very slow pace continues as we hit the chinlock on Cena. Back up and Cena initiates his finishing sequence but takes too long loading up the Five Knuckle Shuffle, allowing Orton to pop up and hit an RKO to tie things up at 9:00.

1-1

With ten minutes left, Orton knocks Cena off the apron and into the barricade. Now it's time for the anything goes aspect to take effect as Orton hits Cena in the head with a monitor for two on the floor. Back in and Orton calmly hits him in the head with a microphone for another near fall. Things slow down though as the referee has to check a cut on Cena's head and the clock is actually stopped.

Cena will have none of that and charges at Orton with right hands in the corner. They go outside again with Cena going into the steps to slow him right back down. Cena is sent into the barricade as we hit fifteen minutes in. You don't keep Cena down with just a few shots like that though and it's already time for the FU, only to have Orton catch him with an RKO to counter. That means a double pin (with Orton having to adjust his arms to get the spot right) at 16:46 to keep us tied up.

2-2

The medical staff uses the break to fix the cut in a smart use of time. Orton goes shoulder first into the post to give Cena a breather. That breather doesn't last long though as he puts Orton on the top rope for a super AA to give him the lead back at 19:23. You would think that would be a bigger spot for later in the match.

3-2 Cena

During the break, here's Legacy to beat Orton down to give Orton an easy pin to tie it up at 20:46.

3-3

Kofi runs in to chase them off, which makes sense given the segment with Rhodes earlier. Nicely done WWE. Orton and Cena are left alone and a double clothesline lets them burn off some more time. Cena takes him down by the legs and it's time to go outside again. Cena takes him up the aisle until Orton sends him into the barricade for two. They head over to the tech area and Orton sends him into the board to set off some pyro. That gives Orton an idea and this can't end well. Randy sends him through a piece of the lighting grid for a fall at 25:20.

4-3 Orton

With Cena down, Orton goes over and starts playing with the pyro board. Like a real villain, Orton throws Cena onto the stage AND TRIES TO BLOW HIM UP WITH FIREWORKS. It doesn't actually work but that's quite the heel move. You know, attempted murder and all that. They go back to the ring because there's less violence to be found there. The champ sends him into the steps and we hit halftime.

Orton throws the steps at his head for two before cracking him over the back with a chair for two. We're firmly into the "there's no reason to believe he can kick out of these things" territory. Back in and Cena grabs a small package to tie it up at 32:40. Orton beats the heck out of Cena during the break but the referee makes sure to enforce the thirty second break. TO THE ATTEMPTED MURDERER!

4-4

Cena is basically done though and Orton makes it even worse with the elevated DDT off the apron for a fall at 35:04.

5-4 Orton

Randy is smart enough to immediately go for the cover but Cena kicks out despite likely needing to be in a hospital. The beating continues back inside with Orton hammering him in the chest for two. Orton wastes a few minutes walking around (smart) and hitting Cena every now and then, which makes sense as we have twenty minutes left and they're probably running out of big spots.

Cena, with the blood flowing again, gets in a right hand to send Orton up the ramp. The chase goes nowhere so Orton pounds away back inside. The threat of an AA sends Orton running into the crowd with Cena slowly giving chase (well he walks briskly at least) as the clock keeps ticking. Cena finally catches him and hits the champ with a trashcan. See, at least Cena keeps the violence on a lower level.

The beating knocks Orton back towards the ring as we have fifteen minutes to go. Cena gets a few near falls at ringside before sending him through the barricade. The steps go into Orton's head and we have ten minutes left. Those steps are sat next to the table and an AA through the table ties it up again at 51:46.

5-5

Cena covers again after the rest period ends but only gets two. It's time for another table in the ring but Orton avoids the top rope legdrop to drive Cena through instead. Five minutes to go now and both guys are down again. They slug it out with four minutes left as they're clearly spent. The slugging continues with neither guy getting an advantage as we have three minutes left. Of course Cena's cardio is fine as he starts the shoulders but takes the referee out by mistake.

There's an RKO but there's no referee. Another one comes in and count two with two minutes left, earning himself a beating from the champ. The Punt

misses with a minute left and Cena grabs the STF with fifty five seconds to go. Orton hangs on as long as he can but as you might expect, he taps out with three seconds left to give Cena the title back at 60:00 with a final score of 6-5.

Rating: B. It's entertaining for the most part but you could really see them running out of things to do after awhile. Having Cena win at the very end keeps both of them looking equal, which is fine, but doesn't quite make Cena look like the big winner of the feud. There was no real reason for this to be an Iron Man match but at least there was one memorable spot with the pyro.

The biggest problem here is still the burnout between these two. The fans had seen them time after time and there's almost no reason to get interested in seeing them fight one more time, especially for an hour. They're firmly at the point where people don't want to see them wrestle no matter what happens and that's never a good thing. Oh and as for the "final" meeting: they fought again before Christmas.

A long recap for a long match wraps us up.

Overall Rating: B. Not a bad show for the most part but you could cut out the first two Raw vs. Smackdown matches and no one would notice. That being said, I kind of like the idea of shortening the series to just three matches instead of doing seven or nine matches to accomplish the same goal. It would have been nice to have some other stuff going on besides the two main events and the fourway helped a good bit but the show still felt like it was all about those two matches and nothing else. At least the wrestling was strong though and that's more important than so many other things.

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