

Wrestlemania Count-Up – Wrestlemania XX (2015 Redo): They Were This Close



IMG Credit: WWE

Wrestlemania XX

Date: March 14, 2004

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

Attendance: 18,500

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

There really was no other option for the location of the twentieth Wrestlemania. Even though it's a much smaller venues than the stadiums they had been running, there's something about this place that makes the show feel special. It's the world's most famous arena in the company's old hometown. You just don't get any better than that. Let's get to it.

The Harlem Boys Choir sings America the Beautiful.

Vince McMahon walks into a dark room and a voiceover takes us into a history of Wrestlemania. I know Vince gets some flack and a lot of it is deserved, but there is no one else who should have opened this show. Again, this year's video treats the show like the most important event of the year and so far ahead of anything else in wrestling. The tagline is "Where it all begins again" and the camera goes back to Vince, who is

standing next to Shane and holding his first grandchild. That's a very cool idea and brought a smile to my face.

The entrance is on the left of the ring but there's a video screen opposite the hard camera showing the current match. There did need to be something there, for old times' sake if nothing else.

US Title: John Cena vs. Big Show

And so it begins. Cena is challenging here and is still the rapper, meaning he's one of the most popular acts on the roster. He calls Show a monkey and thinks his match is against a float in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade. The fans are more than willing to chant Big Show sucks. It's so strange to see Cena this popular in New York. To show you how worthless the title was to Big Show, he won the belt on October 19, 2003. This is his third televised title defense.

Cena sticks and moves to start but Show throws him to the floor with ease. Still mostly uneducated, Cena tries to come back in with a high cross body and gets powerslammed to teach him a lesson. Cole describes a headbutt from Show as being hit in the head with a typewriter. Are there a lot of reports of being hit in the head with typewriters and comparisons to headbutts from large wrestlers?

Show superkicks him down and easily breaks up a sleeper attempt. Off to a cobra clutch from the champ but Cena powers up and hits a quick FU (later known as the Attitude Adjustment) for two. Cena is STUNNED so he grabs his chain for a right hand to the head. It's just a ruse though as the referee stops him, allowing Cena to grab his brass knuckles to knock Show silly and hit another FU for the pin and the title at 9:17.

Rating: C-. The crowd reactions help this one a lot but they're more interesting due to how loathed Cena would be in the coming years. Cena's power wasn't on full display here though the FU's looked good. This was a return to form for the opening match as the fans were dying to see Cena get pushed and loved to see him take the title from Show who was wasting the title for months.

Coach is talking to various people on his way to Raw General Manager Eric

Bischoff's dressing room. Bischoff gives Coach the job of finding Undertaker, who is a Smackdown guy. Undertaker hadn't been seen in months after Kane buried him alive, but the rumor is that he's coming back as the Dead Man for the first time since 1999.

Evolution (Randy Orton, Ric Flair and Batista. Leader HHH is busy tonight.) talks about how it all begins again here. Orton can't wait to break Mick Foley again. This is the part of a ten month feud where Foley was scared of losing his legacy at the hands of the legend killer Orton. He walked away multiple times but returned at the Royal Rumble to attack Orton.

The rest of Evolution beat the tar out of Foley in February and it was clear he needed help. With no one else to turn to, Foley made a call to Hollywood and the Rock came running (literally) to help his old buddy. Orton says it's his time now and he'll kill some legends tonight. Randy looked like a pure star here and instantly had that IT factor that you can't teach. I completely see the potential they saw here and it's hard to argue against charisma like that.

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

Van Dam and Booker are defending and this is one fall to a finish. Unfortunately the champions have a combined version of their theme music and it really, really doesn't work. La Resistance (Rob Conway and Rene Dupree) are evil Frenchman (well Rene is while Conway is a sympathizer) and Cade/Jindrak are your run of the mill young muscular heels. Dupree and Van Dam get things going with the champ throwing the villain around. Rene gets catapulted into a kick from Booker and Conway's save attempt goes bad. It's off to Bubba as the fans already want tables.

Bubba tries a little Flip Flop and Fly but gets kick in the face for his troubles. Van Dam adds one to D-Von and we settle down to Jindrak beating on Booker. Dupree tags himself in and La Resistance takes over with stomps and a bow and arrow from Conway. After far too long in the hold, Booker gets up and grabs a spinebuster, allowing the tag to Van Dam. House is quickly cleaned as everything breaks down. Cade breaks up 3D on

Booker but Booker nails the scissors kick on Conway, followed by the Five Star to retain at 7:57.

Rating: D. This was a good example of everything that was wrong with the division at this point. You could have cut out at least one of these teams to make the match a lot more entertaining as well as coherent. Did anyone really want to see Jindrak and Cade in here? Jindrak was amazingly athletic but I didn't need to see him in a title match at Wrestlemania.

Coach is going to find Undertaker and hears strange noises and banging coming from a closet. He opens the door and finds....Bobby Heenan and Gene Okerlund trying to get their clothes back on. Heenan: "No it's not what you think!" They were playing poker you see. The door opens again and Fabulous Moolah and Mae Young drag the guys back in. Coach walks away in a daze. JR: "Oh lord."

We recap Christian vs. Chris Jericho. This was an awesome story as the two were tag partners who made a bet over who could "nail" Lita or Trish respectfully for \$1 Canadian. Lita dropped out of the story pretty quickly but Jericho started to actually fall for Trish. She started to have feelings for Jericho too but Christian hated the fact that she was breaking up the team. Christian beat her up in an intergender match to teach Jericho (a full on good guy by now) a lesson. This started a feud between the two and the big showdown is at Wrestlemania.

Christian vs. Chris Jericho

The aggressive Jericho controls to start and backdrops Christian from the apron out to the floor in a unique spot. A springboard plancha puts Christian down but he comes right back with something like a belly to back suplex to send Chris out to the floor in a huge crash. A chinlock keeps Jericho down for a bit before they ram heads to keep him down even longer.

Jericho keeps calling him a CLB (creepy little bastard) to get on Christian's nerves, followed by an enziguri for two. A pinfall reversal sequence goes how most pinfall reversal sequences go before Christian hits a reverse tornado DDT for two of his own. Christian heads up top and breaks up Chris' superplex attempt by just throwing him face first onto

the mat. Jericho might have tweaked his knee so Christian gets smart by putting on a Texas Cloverleaf. I could go for someone using that as a finisher or even a big time hold.

Jericho counters into the Walls though and holds on even as Christian crawls through the ropes to the floor. This brings Trish out to ringside as Christian plants Jericho with a DDT. Trish gets up on the apron so Christian drags her in. Jericho goes over to check on her and gets elbowed in the face by mistake, knocking Jericho into a rollup for the pin at 14:56.

Rating: B-. Fun match here but this was much more about the story than the action. This story worked really well all around and everyone comes out of it looking better, mainly because they took their time and let the story build instead of wedging it into a month and then doing one match followed by a gimmick rematch. It makes for a better story and the whole thing works.

Post match Jericho goes after Christian again but Trish holds him back, only to slap him into the Unprettier. Trish and Christian leave together and kiss on the stage. This gives us evil Trish which, in a word, worked.

Mick Foley says this is the biggest night in the history of wrestling in Madison Square Garden so yes he is overcome. Rock comes in to say let the emotion go because FINALLY the Rock has come back to New York City. After telling Lillian Garcia that the people's package buffet is closed, Rock hijacks a cameraman to see Hurricane and Rosey (the Superhero In Training), Jimmy Snuka and Don Muraco and of course the people themselves as the camera goes into the arena for a second. It's time to electrify.

Evolution vs. The Rock/Mick Foley

Orton/Flair/Batista here. This is Rock's first match in a nearly a year and Foley's first match since Wrestlemania XVI. Orton is Intercontinental Champion. Rock and Foley clear out all three and it's Flair vs. Rock to start. The fans aren't sure who to cheer for here as Flair is a heel but this is New York. They go for Rock to start as he takes over early with right hands and backdrops both in and out of the ring.

Foley dives off the apron with the elbow drop and you can tell this is going to be a hot one. Orton gets the tag so Foley comes in, sending Randy bailing to the outside. Why you would go outside against the hardcore legend isn't clear and Foley takes over as you would expect. Mick ties him in the Tree of Woe and hands it off to Rock for what looked like a low blow. Batista low bridges Rock to the floor and drops him on the barricade to give Evolution their first advantage.

Now Flair's chops have an effect and the strut is loudly cheered. Rock clotheslines Ric down though and is booed for the fourth straight year at Wrestlemania. Batista takes a clothesline as well and it's back to Mick for the knee lift. Foley pounds away in the corner but Batista hits his big clothesline (a secondary finisher a few months earlier) to knock Foley outside again.

We get Mick's double knees to the steps bump and now Orton is willing to come in. After a few cheap shots from Randy it's back to Batista who has to be saved from the Mandible Claw. Flair again and the fans welcome him back with open arms. Ric takes a forearm to the head though and the tag brings in Rock to face Orton. Rock tries to fight three on one but walks into a spinebuster from Batista.

It's back to Flair...who loads up the People's Elbow, complete with strut of course. It takes too long though and Rock nips up. Right hands and a spinebuster set up the original People's Elbow, again complete with strut. The Rock Bottom plants Orton but Flair pulls Rock to the floor. A Batista Bomb gives Randy two and the hot tag brings in Foley to clean house. It's Socko time but Orton grabs a quick RKO out of nowhere for the pin at 17:09. Foley is shocked at the fall, which puts Orton over even more.

Rating: B. This was great fun with Rock and Flair being the hams that only they can be. They knew they were in the big arena for the smart fans and they played right to them. The real star here though was Foley, who made Orton look like a star here, just as he was supposed to do. They would do that again the next month at Backlash in their big showdown where Foley put Orton over and made him look like a star. Orton would be World Champion in August and these two matches played a big role in

getting him there.

Video on the Hall of Fame ceremony, which made its return after an eight year absence. The line of the night came from Bobby Heenan. After thanking everyone: "One thing is missing. I wish Monsoon was here." That gets me every time.

The Class of 2004 is brought out for the audience and each gets an introduction: Bobby Heenan (playing to the crowd the entire way through), Tito Santana, Big John Studd (represented by his son), Harley Race (the fans start cheering before Gene can start talking), Pete Rose (celebrity induction and said to be incredibly humble and thankful for the honor), Don Muraco, Greg Valentine (much bigger reaction than I was expecting), Junkyard Dog (represented by his daughter), Billy Graham (loudest ovation of the group in a bit of a surprise), Sgt. Slaughter (USA chant) and Jesse Ventura.

Sable/Torrie Wilson vs. Miss Jackie/Stacy Keibler

This is a Playboy evening gown match which means you have to strip your opponents to win. Sable and Wilson had done a Playboy pictorial together but Jackie (Jackie Gayda from Tough Enough, not Jacqueline) and Stacy thought they should have been featured instead. Sable wants to just have the match without the gowns but Jackie won't follow suit, only to be stripped by her opponents.

Jackie and Sable start and it's quickly off to Torrie for a high cross body. Stacy comes in for a pinfall reversal sequence to show off the camera shots. We get the trademark rolling over the referee spot as Cole and Tazz are (rightfully) treating this as a huge joke. Torrie rolls Jackie up for the pin at 2:41.

Clips of fans coming from around the world to see Wrestlemania.

Eddie tells Benoit that he's proud of him no matter what. Benoit needs the fire in his eyes though and Eddie finally gets it out of him, drawing a big smile.

Cruiserweight Title: Cruiserweight Open

This is a gauntlet match with Chavo Guerrero (with his father Chavo Sr.) defending and going in last at #10. Shannon Moore and Ultimo Dragon (a Japanese legend who trips twice during his entrance) start things off fast with some near falls until Shannon scores with a belly to back suplex. Dragon avoids a corkscrew moonsault press and grabs the Asai DDT (kind of a standing sliced bread #2) for the pin at 1:17.

Jamie Noble (a country redneck) is in at #3 and blasts Dragon from behind, only to take some rapid fire kicks to the chest. Noble comes right back with a guillotine choke for a submission at 2:15. Funaki comes in at #4 with a high cross body but Noble rolls through into a pin at 2:23. Nunzio (a stereotypical Italian) is in at #5 and lasts a bit better as the fans want their pizza. A quick rollup gets two on Noble and Nunzio gets the same off a middle rope dropkick.

Jamie sends him outside and hits a big flip dive from the top for a countout at 4:15. Billy Kidman (a talented guy without much of a gimmick) is in at #6 but Nunzio is still at ringside and pulls Noble to the floor. That's fine with Kidman who hits a top rope shooting star (barely rotating enough and nearly breaking his neck) to take everyone down. Back in and Noble's guillotine doesn't work very well so Kidman goes up top and BK Bombs (sitout spinebuster) Noble for the pin at 6:06.

Rey Mysterio (dressed as the Flash this year) is in at #7 and dropkicks Kidman to the floor, only to come back in with a Sky High for two. Kidman takes him up top but gets caught in a sunset bomb for the pin at 7:26. Tajiri (a Japanese wrestler with some of the hardest kicks you'll ever see) is in at #8 and quickly takes the 619.

The West Coast Pop is blocked though and Tajiri sprays the Asian mist, only to hit his partner Akio by mistake. Rey rolls Tajiri up for the pin at 8:36. Akio can't go because of the mist so Chavo is in for the final match against Mysterio. A springboard hurricanrana takes Chavo down and Rey takes out Chavo Sr. for good measure. Back in and Chavo counters a sunset flip and gets the pin with help from his dad at 10:26.

Rating: D. I can't stand matches like this one as they completely stretch the suspension of disbelief. Most regular matches take at least a few

minutes but we just had eight falls and only one of them came close to two minutes. If I'm a casual fan, the only thing I know about any of these people is that Chavo cheats to retain his title. This went by way too fast and really should have just been Chavo vs. Mysterio.

We recap Goldberg vs. Brock Lesnar in an interpromotional match. Goldberg and Lesnar had words at the 2004 Royal Rumble and Brock attacked Goldberg in the Rumble itself, leading to his elimination. Steve Austin then gave Goldberg a ticket to Lesnar's title defense against Eddie at No Way Out 2004, where Goldberg of course cost him the title. Lesnar stole Austin's ATV and Austin beat him up on Smackdown to get it back.

This set up a showdown here with Austin as guest referee to try to hold things together. The problem is word leaked that both guys were leaving as soon as Wrestlemania was over and the fans all knew about it. This could go bad in a hurry, especially in the smarkiest of all smark strongholds.

Goldberg vs. Brock Lesnar

Austin is guest referee. The YOU SOLD OUT chants begin and there's no contact in the first thirty seconds. Austin tells them to go but they stare at each other for the first minute. The fans sing the Goodbye Song and Goldberg swears at Lesnar a lot. Nothing in the first ninety seconds. Make that two minutes. The fans chant for Austin as he stares at Goldberg.

They FINALLY lock up at 2:46 as JR brags about Goldberg being a mixed martial arts aficionado. The lockup lasts about forty five seconds and then they stare at each other even more. We're four minute into this now and the only contact has been that lockup. Another lockup goes twenty eight seconds before they break. The fans are loudly and rightfully booing now. At the five minute mark, Lesnar grabs a headlock. They trade shoulders and stare each other down again.

Another big shoulder apiece puts both guys down as we hit six minutes. Brock gets in the first strike with a kick to the ribs at just under seven minutes. A gorilla press into a spinebuster drops Lesnar but Goldberg misses a spear in the corner. The fans are all over Goldberg now

as Brock hits two straight suplexes.

Off to a side choke from Brock to eat up time before they have the nerve to do a double clothesline. Goldberg comes back with more clotheslines and a neckbreaker, followed by a spear for two. Austin and Goldberg argue a bit and Brock grabs an F5 for two. Back up and Goldberg hits a big spear but is booed out of the building. The Jackhammer ends Lesnar at 13:48.

Rating: F. As much of an embarrassment as this was, it took some guts to go out there in MSG and do this on the biggest show of the year. I don't want to imagine how bad this would have been had Austin, who was innocent in this whole mess, not been there to keep it as coherent as he did. This was barely a match but it was certainly something interesting to see, as unfair as it was to the fans.

Lesnar throws up two middle fingers (which he later said were to Vince and not the fans) and gets Stunned. Austin throws Goldberg a beer, then throws him two more after he drops the first one. Goldberg is booed out of the building and takes a Stunner, followed by Austin consuming a lot of beer.

Wrestlemania XXI is in Los Angeles.

Fireworks go off from the roof of Madison Square Garden.

Vince McMahon comes out to thank the fans for making Wrestlemania what it is on behalf of everyone who has ever performed for him and his entire family. Nothing else said here but this was a very nice moment.

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

One fall to a finish. Too Cool (Scotty and Rikishi) are defending. The World's Greatest Tag Team was known as Team Angle. The Bashams (Doug and Danny) are two guys who looked a lot alike and were some of the biggest stars in Ohio Valley Wrestling history (then developmental), yet for some reason they only had a forgettable tag run before they were out of the company.

Bradshaw and Benjamin start things off with Bradshaw shoving him around, only to have Danny Basham come in for an atomic drop. Haas and Benjamin take over on Danny but he sneaks away to make the tag to Scotty. That means it's time for some dancing until Haas hangs Scotty over the top rope so Shelton can dive onto Scotty's back.

Charlie slaps on a bearhug before it's off to the Bashams for a double suplex into a double nipup. Scotty flips out of a suplex and dives into the corner for the hot tag to Rikishi, who has gone from a comedy goof to someone treated as a moderate legend for reasons I don't quite understand. Everything breaks down and Bradshaw charges into a Samoan drop. Rikishi sits on Danny's chest to retain at 6:05.

Rating: D. This was the same as the Raw Tag Team Title match earlier and that's not a good thing. After the previous few matches, this really wasn't a good choice to go with here and feels like they're just dragging the show on even longer. The match isn't terrible or anything but again it shows how weak the tag divisions (yes both of them) are at this point. Merging them together would have been a great idea but we were years away from that.

The champs dance a bit.

Edge is returning from his neck surgery soon.

Here's Jesse Ventura to do an interview because this show hasn't drawn out long enough. His interviewee tonight: Donald Trump. Donald talks about how awesome Vince is and pledges his financial support to Jesse if he gets back into politics. That would be a very, very different interview if it happened today. Another waste of a few minutes to drag this show out even longer.

Molly Holly is ready for her title shot.

JR and Lawler talk about tomorrow's Raw a bit.

Women's Title: Molly Holly vs. Victoria

Victoria is defending and this is title vs. hair. Feeling out process to start with Molly taking over in the corner, only to be sent out to the

floor. Back in and a quick basement dropkick gets two on the champ and we hit a neck crank. A powerslam gets two for Victoria but Lawler keeps trying to talk about the evening gown match. Molly mostly powerbombs Victoria out of the corner for two but a quick backslide retains the title at 4:56.

Rating: C-. This needed more time as they were flying through the match because they only had five minutes instead of a realistic length. If only there was some other stuff they could have cut out from the show that meant absolutely nothing and just ate up parts of the show. These two were both very talented women and they could have a good match if they were given the chance.

Victoria chases Molly up the ramp and ties her into the barber's chair for the head shaving. Allegedly that was the only way Molly could get on the show and she couldn't sign up fast enough.

We recap Angle vs. Guerrero. Eddie won the title about a month ago but Angle attacked him soon after. Angle didn't think Eddie was a good enough role model for the WWE due to his past drug issues. Eventually Eddie agreed to face Smackdown General Manager Paul Heyman with his hands cuffed behind his back. Naturally this brought out Angle for a beating to really light a fire under Eddie, setting up this match.

After the long video, Molly is still being shaved and is completely bald. The fans are impressed.

Smackdown World Title: Eddie Guerrero vs. Kurt Angle

Eddie is defending of course and rides out in a low rider truck. They hit the mat to start with Eddie hanging with Angle at first until Kurt grabs a headlock. A top wristlock goes well for Angle and he shoulders Eddie down for good measure. Back up and Eddie nails a hard shoulder of his own but is still feeling the effects of the arm work.

Angle easily regains control on the mat with some movement so fast that Tazz can't even call before Angle is off to the next position. A front facelock keeps Eddie down but he reverses a suplex into an armbar of his own. That's not cool with Angle so he gets up and grabs an abdominal

stretch but the champ is right back with the Three Amigos but Angle counters into the Rolling Germans.

Eddie gets to the apron though and has to hang on tight so Kurt can't German him out onto the floor. Instead the champ knocks Kurt to the floor but misses a top rope dive, landing ribs fist against the barricade. Kurt is smart enough to stay on the ribs as he drops them across the top rope, followed by the belly to bellies. Off to a smart bearhug but Eddie pokes him in the neck (that's a new one) for the break.

Eddie goes up top so Kurt tries to run the buckles, only to get shoved back down. The frog splash misses though and Eddie is in trouble again. Cole is AGHAST that Kurt is throwing punches to a staggered Eddie. Guerrero tells him to bring it on so Kurt tries to roll the Germans, only to get caught in a rollup for two. A dropkick looks to set up the frog splash but Kurt is like "boy you're getting superplexed" and the corner run works this time around.

The ankle lock is reversed and the Angle Slam is countered into a DDT. Eddie finally hits the frog splash but it's only good for two. There's the ankle lock again but Eddie rolls him out to the floor. With Kurt down, Eddie unlaces his boot. Angle looks up from the floor and you can see Eddie panic. The ankle lock goes on again and the boot comes off. Angle has to figure out what just happened and then charges right into a small package (with Guerrero's feet in the ropes because he has to cheat) to retain Eddie's title at 21:04.

Rating: A. Outstanding match here with a very creative ending. These are two guys who need almost no instruction as they're both so good that they can do whatever you ask of them and never expect anything less than greatness. The ending makes perfect sense too as Angle is all about polish and playing by the rules but Eddie changed how they were playing out there and caught Angle off his guard. Smart stuff, as Angle controlled when it was fair so Eddie cheated to retain, yet was somehow praised for it. Funny how that works sometimes.

Angle is FURIOUS.

We recap Kane vs. Undertaker. Kane hated Undertaker for abandoning the

dark side and becoming the biker so Kane helped Vince bury Undertaker alive at Survivor Series 2003. This brought back the Undertaker Kane wanted, but this Undertaker wanted revenge for being buried alive. People tend to do that at times.

Kane vs. Undertaker

Kane has a cool entrance where the set, which looks like the New York skyline, starts to burn as well. This is of course trumped by the return of Paul Bearer and the torch bearing druids. Undertaker debuts his singlet top look here which he would use for the rest of his career. His hair is still above his shoulders though so it's a work in progress. Kane insists that Undertaker isn't real and looks like he's about to cry. He reaches out to see if he can touch Undertaker and gets punched in the jaw for it.

The threat of a chokeslam sends Kane out to the floor and Undertaker whips him into the apron. The apron legdrop keeps Kane in trouble but he counters the Last Ride with a backdrop. Unfortunately he doesn't quite have his placement right and Undertaker has to put his hands out to keep himself from slamming face first into the ropes.

The top rope clothesline connects but Undertaker grabs him by the throat. Kane escapes but misses a charge in the corner to set up Old School. It still doesn't work at Wrestlemania though and Kane catches him by the throat for the chokeslam, causing him to celebrate early. Undertaker sits up and the fans know what's coming. Kane tries a kick to the face and Undertaker gives him a look that makes Kane want to cry again. The jumping clothesline, a chokeslam where Undertaker loses the grip and the Tombstone make Undertaker 12-0 at 6:56.

Rating: D+. What did you think was going to happen here? This was a long way of saying the old Undertaker is back and that was best for everyone as the biker was long past it's shelf life. It would take a LONG time to figure out how to use Undertaker again and it would be a rough year, but once they figured out the formula, Undertaker was gold all over again.

Side note: so was that stuff with Bischoff sending Coach to find Undertaker just to set up the Heenan/Okerlund bit? Sounds like a bit of

overkill.

Backlash ad.

We recap the main event. HHH and Shawn Michaels had continued their never ending feud at the Royal Rumble where they tied in a last man standing match. Shawn said he needed one more shot and wanted it at Wrestlemania. That's not how it works though because Chris Benoit had won the Royal Rumble and jumped to Raw for the title shot. Shawn didn't accept this and superkicked Benoit before signing the contract himself (because that's how contracts work). Austin, the co-boss of Raw at the time, make it a triple threat. There was really no reason for Shawn to be in this match and it really should have been one on one.

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

HHH is defending and has big white boots for some reason this year. We get an old school weapons check and the fans are entirely behind Benoit. Benoit and Shawn fight over who gets to beat up HHH until Benoit tries a Crossface. HHH takes a breather on the floor until both guys are down for a bit and now it's time to go after the challengers.

Shawn skins the cat and goes back to hammering on HHH. The high knee gets two for the champ but he has to knock Benoit back to the floor. Shawn baseball slides Benoit into HHH and takes them both down again with a moonsault press. All three get back in and Benoit has to break up a Pedigree to Shawn. Michaels is sent shoulder first into the post but the champ ties Benoit in the Tree of Woe and whips Shawn hard into him. It's already time for the forearm and nipup but Benoit is ready for him and sends Shawn out to the floor.

The champ gets rolled with some Germans but Shawn crotches Benoit on top. Sweet Chin Music misses the champ and Shawn gets caught in a DDT. That earns HHH a Crossface until Shawn makes the save. Shawn actually tries a German on Benoit and the fans ROAR when Benoit reverses into a trio of them. The Swan Dive gets two on Shawn and all three are down. Benoit is knocked to the floor so we can get the Shawn vs. HHH quota out of the way. Sweet Chin Music is good for two with Benoit making a last second save.

All three head outside and you can hear the impending sounds of tables cracking. It's back inside first though and Benoit is catapulted into the post to bust him open. The Crossface goes on again but HHH grabs the hand to stop the tap. They go outside again with Benoit's shoulder meeting the steps and now it's announcers' table time. A double suplex puts Benoit through the table and Shawn's blood is all over his chest.

So it's HHH vs. Shawn again, which JR calls ten years in the making, even if HHH hasn't worked here for nine years yet. JR is screaming for an EMT for Benoit as a cameraman gets taken out. HHH is whipped into the steps and the fans pick Shawn of their remaining options. The champion is busted too but a quick Pedigree puts both guys down. Somehow Benoit saves Shawn again before Michaels falls to the floor.

Benoit puts HHH in a Sharpshooter and pulls him back to the middle of the ring until Shawn superkicks Benoit down. JR's voice is going quickly as all three are down again. Benoit dumps Shawn to the floor and counters the Pedigree into the Crossface. HHH is almost out but he kicks backwards, only to have Benoit hold on and crank back on it right in the middle of the ring for the submission and the title at 24:07.

Rating: A+. Do you really have to ask here? This is the best triple threat match of all time with all three guys doing exactly what they needed to do as well as they could do it. It was really hard to believe that Benoit wasn't going to win in the end but they came as close as they could have to make me think it might not happen. Outstanding match here and exactly how Benoit should have been put over on the grandest stage of them all in the main event of Wrestlemania. It doesn't get bigger than that, period.

Benoit celebrates and here's longtime friend Eddie Guerrero comes out to hug him as confetti falls to end the show.

The Vince dark room video and part of his speech take us to the highlight package.

Overall Rating: A-. Oh they were close with this one but there's about an hour long stretch in the middle that goes from worthless to trying to cram too much in there to....whatever Goldberg vs. Lesnar was to another

lame Tag Team Title match and it really drags down what could have been one of the best of all time. I mean, did we need both Tag Team Title matches and the lingerie stuff? The appeal is obvious but this show needed a few more edits to get it down from FOUR AND A HALF HOURS.

Now that being said, you're not going to find a better one two combination than Angle vs. Guerrero and the triple threat for a very long time and that's more than enough to carry the show. Couple those matches with some other REALLY fun stuff like the Christian vs. Jericho match and a fun outing from Cena plus the great handicap match and you have a great show. If this was about forty five minutes shorter, it could be up there with XVII and XIX as one of the best ever. Unfortunately there's too much clogging it up and that brings the show far lower than it should be. Watch it with a remote to fast forward and you'll have a blast.

Ratings Comparison

John Cena vs. Big Show

Original: C-

2013 Redo: C

2015 Redo: C-

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

Original: D

2013 Redo: D

2015 Redo: D

Christian vs. Chris Jericho

Original: B

2013 Redo: B

2015 Redo: B-

Evolution vs. The Rock/Mick Foley

Original: A

2013 Redo: B

2015 Redo: B

Torrie Wilson/Sable vs. Stacy Keibler/Miss Jackie

Original: F

2013 Redo: N/A

2015 Redo: N/A

Cruiserweight Open

Original: D+

2013 Redo: D

2015 Redo: D

Goldberg vs. Brock Lesnar

Original: F

2013 Redo: E

2015 Redo: F

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

Original: D

2013 Redo: D

2015 Redo: D

Victoria vs. Molly Holly

Original: D+

2013 Redo: D+

2015 Redo: C-

Eddie Guerrero vs. Kurt Angle

Original: A

2013 Redo: A

2015 Redo: A

Undertaker vs. Kane

Original: D

2013 Redo: D+

2015 Redo: D+

Chris Benoit vs. HHH vs. Shawn Michaels

Original: A+

2013 Redo: A+

2015 Redo: A+

Overall Rating

Original: B

2013 Redo: B

2015 Redo: A-

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/>

And the 2013 Redo:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2013/03/29/wrestlemania-count-up-wrestlemania-xx-nearly-a-masterpiece/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the paperback edition of the WWE Grab Bag (also available as an e-book) from Amazon. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2018/03/23/new-paperback-kbs-grab-bag/>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>