

Wrestlemania Count-Up – Wrestlemania XXIX (2015): The Punk Match Is Overrated



IMG Credit: WWE

Wrestlemania XXIX

Date: April 7, 2013

Location: MetLife Stadium, East Rutherford, New Jersey

Attendance: 80,676

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, John Bradshaw Layfield

With those matches out of the way, the only name left is the Undertaker, who will be facing CM Punk in a match that might have been better had it been for the title. This time it's personal though, as Paul Bearer had recently passed away, leaving Punk to mock his memory and steal the urn one last time. Let's get to it.

Pre-Show: Intercontinental Title: Wade Barrett vs. The Miz

Barrett is defending and Miz is now a good guy who uses the Figure Four. Miz gets sent to the apron to start but slides in for a sunset flip for two. A hard kick to the ribs drops Miz but he's still able to get his boot up to stop Wade's running boot. The Reality Check (backbreaker/neckbreaker combo) gets two on the champ, followed by Winds of Change (spinning Boss Man Slam) from Barrett for the same. Barrett's Bull Hammer (hard elbow to the head) is countered with the Figure Four, sending Wade into the ropes. Not that it matters as Miz sweeps the leg and puts the hold on again for the tap out and the title at 4:05.

Rating: D+. Really quick and nothing match here to fire the crowd up before the real show comes on. Barrett and Miz were both in tailspins at this point and the title was in an even worse place with meaningless title changes like this one. To give you an idea of what this meant,

Barrett would get the title back the next night on Raw.

The opening video is narrated by New Jersey Governor Chris Christie, who talks about the devastation of Hurricane Sandy, which leveled huge portions of New Jersey. In the face of all that adversity though, New Jersey stood tall and is still alive today. Everywhere from New York to New Jersey, the people are unbreakable and unstoppable.

The New Jersey National Guard waves American flags.

We get the standard awesome Wrestlemania opening video, again focusing on the Wrestlemania Moment. The Streak actually gets the primary focus here with the other two main events going after. A great line here: "The storied past is only rivaled by the promise of a glorious future."

We're back in the company's home area, hence the theme song called Coming Home.

The set is one of their most detailed ever with the Brooklyn Bridge and Empire State Building over the entrance and the Statue of Liberty over the canopy above the ring.

Sheamus/Randy Orton/Big Show vs. Shield

Shield (Dean Ambrose/Roman Reigns/Seth Rollins. I'll spare you a description of each.) comes through the crowd as is their custom. Show hasn't been considered the most trustworthy partner so the question is whether or not the team will implode. Sheamus and Reigns get things going with Roman taking over in the corner and stopping a charge with an elbow.

It's off to Orton to slam Rollins' head into the mat and then stomp on his face. Some right hands in the corner and a slingshot suplex get two on Rollins and it's back to Sheamus. Notice the lack of tagging in Big Show. Ambrose comes in and gets powered down by Sheamus as well, only to have Show tag himself in for a series of rapid fire (well as rapid fire as Show can reach) chops in the corner.

Shield starts going with what brought them to the dance with the fast tags, setting up the top rope knee to Show's head for two. Dean has lost his shirt as he comes in to stomp Show down, followed by some knees to

the head to give Rollins two. Reigns puts on a chinlock (he's the only member of the team who could make that work) until Show easily throws him down and makes the tag off to Sheamus.

That means Rollins loses his shirt as well for the ten forearms to the chest. Not to be outdone, Ambrose replaces Sheamus and takes a string of forearms of his own. Reigns breaks up the top rope battering ram though as Orton and Show have been taken down off camera. Orton gets triple teamed and it's a triple stomp on Sheamus back inside.

Show comes back in with a spear to break up the TripleBomb. Sheamus crawls over to tag Show but Orton tags himself in instead to clean house, including catching a springboarding Rollins in the RK0. Reigns comes in with a spear for the pin at 10:34 with Big Show just watching the pin go down.

Rating: C+. Nice opener here as Shield looked good and are clearly the future. Show turning on his partners doesn't do anything for me as it happens at least twice a year. Orton and Sheamus were great choices to put in on the team as they can take a loss with no damage and are just good enough that you could see them pulling it off. Shield would have far better matches but that wasn't the point here.

Post match Show knocks his partners out.

Music video on Rock vs. Cena. Haven't we already paid for the match at this point? We really don't need to have it hyped again. The theme here is Rock's legacy vs. Cena's redemption.

Ryback vs. Mark Henry

Ryback has been in a free fall since losing his undefeated streak and needs a win to get his momentum back. Henry hasn't meant much in awhile but is still strong enough to be a threat to anyone. They slug it out to start with Henry as the strong crowd favorite despite being the heel. New York fans are smart you see. Henry runs him over and grabs a powerslam for one.

A "Sexual Chocolate" chant begins and Henry clotheslines him out to the

floor before bringing Ryback inside again for some shots to the back. The bearhug doesn't last long as Henry throws him outside again, only to put the bearhug on again. Just in case Ryback didn't learn his lesson the first time. Ryback makes his quick comeback with the Meathook clothesline but Henry grabs the rope to break up the Shellshock. The weight makes Ryback collapse and Henry falls on him for the pin at 8:03.

Rating: D. What the heck was that? They've set Ryback up as needing a win and they have him lose here? The only answer would be a losing streak to set up a heel turn, because WWE thinks the best way to get someone over as a heel is to have them lose all their matches first. Really weird decision here but WWE had a lot of those.

Post match Ryback hits the Shell Shock. Henry would lose a World Title shot the next night and Ryback would indeed turn heel, leading a series of pay per view title shots. Why they didn't have Ryback win here, then have Henry answer an open challenge for the title the next night and then let Ryback have his title series as the bigger threat. Instead they did everything backwards because they do a lot of stupid things.

The announcers play with their new toys with JBL making sure to beat up Rey Mysterio.

The WWE is partnering with the Special Olympics.

Some Special Olympians are here with Stephanie McMahon and Chris Christie.

Tag Team Titles: HELL NO vs. Dolph Ziggler/Big E. Langston

HELL NO (Daniel Bryan/Kane) is defending. Langston is Ziggler's new bodyguard and an awesome powerhouse. The bell rings and Ziggler kisses AJ (Now with him. As Lawler put it, AJ has been on more manhunts than the FBI.) and walks into a kick to the head from Bryan for two in a nice callback. Ziggler bails to the floor and eats a suicide dive followed by the YES kicks. That's finally enough to send Ziggler over for the tag and Bryan does the same for the power vs. power match.

Langston throws Kane into the corner and powers out of a chokeslam before

running Kane over ala Vader. It's off to Zigler who misses a splash in the corner and overshoots the Fameasser. Everything breaks down as Langston breaks up a cover, leaving Zigler to hit the Zig Zag on Kane for two. AJ throws in the Money in the Bank briefcase, only to have Dolph walk into a chokeslam. Bryan adds the top rope headbutt to retain the titles at 6:17.

Rating: C-. Just a step above a Raw match here which is becoming a problem on this show. Things picked up a lot near the end but what are you going to get out of a six minute match? Bryan and Kane were becoming something special and Zigler would win the World Heavyweight Championship the next night.

WWE works with Make-A-Wish.

Fandango vs. Chris Jericho

Fandango is a dancer (formerly known as Johnny Curtis) making his in ring debut here. It had been teased a few times before but he had declined due to someone pronouncing his name wrong (seriously). Jericho was chosen because he kept messing the name up ("Fan-Danny Devito? Fan-B-I-N-G-O-and Bingo was his name-o!"). Fandango comes out with a bunch of dancers before going to ringside with his main dance partner.

Jericho takes him down to start and pounds away with a very early Codebreaker putting Fandango outside for a big dive. Fandango is staggered but finally comes back with an enziguri to take over. JBL is really not pleased with Fandango posing so much because JBL is far too uncultured to understand the power of dance. A chinlock just seems to re-energize Jericho as he comes back with an enziguri of his own, only to be sent into the post.

Now we get Fandango's real control as he drops his top rope legdrop for two. Yeah they really just had his finisher get two in his debut. Does that mean it's still his finisher? Jericho breaks up a second legdrop attempt but the Walls are countered into a small package for the pin at 9:18.

Rating: C. That's one of the biggest upsets in Wrestlemania history and

it really shouldn't be that big of a surprise given that Jericho was only around to put people over at this point. The extra time helped a bit but everyone knew that a dancing gimmick was only going to go so far, though it did lead to the INSANE rise of Fandangoing (a dance done to the tune of Fandango's music) that was the hottest thing in the company for about a week, starting the next night.

Clip of the pre-show match.

Another Rock vs. Cena video with fans quoting Rock's catchphrases. This is the kind of stuff that really needed to be cut for the sake of more match time.

Here's a montage of Wrestlemania moments set to music from the Rocky movies, leading to P. Diddy coming out for the musical medley. At least it's shorter than Kid Rock.

We recap Alberto Del Rio vs. Jack Swagger. Del Rio has turned face and won the World Heavyweight Title back in January. Swagger then adopted a new gimmick as the disciple of Zeb Colter (formerly known as Uncle Zebekiah about eighteen years ago), a man who accused every non-white person of sneaking across the border and being here illegally. The match is a huge culture clash with Swagger wanting to win the title and get rid of Del Rio while Del Rio is standing up for what he believes America is all about. Swagger won the Elimination Chamber to earn this shot.

World Heavyweight Title: Jack Swagger vs. Alberto Del Rio

Swagger is challenging and doesn't even get an entrance. Did I mention that he had been arrested for DUI and marijuana possession about six weeks before this match? Before the match, Colter rips on New York for being a bunch of people who can't speak English. Swagger recently broke Ricardo Rodriguez's ankle but Ricardo limps out here. I had hoped they would get Ricardo deported and then have him make his big return here instead but it's not that big of a deal.

Swagger bails to the floor to start so Alberto drops him with two boots through the ropes. Back in and a Colter distraction lets Swagger run him over and put on a very quickly broken chinlock. A Vader bomb gets a close

two on the champ and Jack drives in some weak shoulders to the ribs. Alberto fires off some clotheslines and even stomps on Colter's hand, only to have Swagger slam him down to break up the armbreaker attempt.

Swagger finally gets to the point by taking out the leg to set up the Patriot (ankle) Lock. Del Rio easily kicks him away and pounds in forearms to the back, followed by a Backstabber for two. Neither guy can get their submission so Jack settles for a layout powerbomb for two more.

The Patriot Lock goes on but Del Rio takes him down and counters into the armbreaker, only to have Swagger kick the arms away and grab the ankle again. Del Rio gets to the ropes and comes back with the corner enziguri (thankfully limping into it) but has to save Ricardo from Colter. Swagger gets in a few cheap shots but Del Rio grabs the armbreaker back inside for the tap out at 10:30.

Rating: B-. Again the time hurt this but the submission trading with all the counters was really fun stuff. They would have an I Quit match the next month which sounds good on paper, until you realize that Del Rio just beat him by submission here. Del Rio was a good face but for some reason they turned him right back in June. On the other hand, Swagger was dead in the water the second he got arrested which made the match more academic. There were rumors that he was going to win until the arrest, which really does show how much one mistake can screw you up.

WWE supports the National Guard, in case you haven't been told how awesome the company is in the last half hour.

We recap CM Punk vs. Undertaker, which is mostly about the urn and Paul Bearer's legacy. Undertaker had been paying tribute to him but Punk interrupted to say that Bearer was lucky enough to not see Undertaker lose his Wrestlemania perfection. Punk spent weeks disrespecting Bearer's memory with manager Paul Heyman even dressing up like Bearer as a distraction so Punk could beat Undertaker down. Undertaker swore that even if the Streak ended, Punk wouldn't live to tell about it.

CM Punk vs. Undertaker

Living Colour plays Punk to the ring and Heyman still has the urn. No

druids this year but the stage is so close to the fans that you can see hands reaching through the shadows and smoke to try and touch Undertaker. Punk spends the entrance tossing the urn in the air like a ball. Undertaker stalks him into the corner and gets slapped in the face as Punk is trying to win any way he can, including by DQ.

The chokeslam is broken up by a kick to the head so Undertaker takes him to the floor and throws Punk over the timekeeper's barricade. It's time to load up the announcers' table but Undertaker throws him back inside. Old School is broken up as well and Punk actually does his own Old School for a new idea.

Punk starts working on the arm to set up for the Anaconda Vice before throwing him outside for a top rope ax handle. Back in and we hit the chinlock as Heyman talks trash from the floor. Punk makes the eternal mistake of trying the same move twice and crotches himself going for Old School. Heyman breaks up the Taker Dive and Punk gets two off a springboard clothesline.

The Macho Elbow gets the same and Heyman holds up the urn. A quick chokeslam gets two for Undertaker but the big boot is blocked by a leg lariat. They head outside with Punk escaping a Last Ride and kicking Undertaker onto the table. The Macho Elbow doesn't break the table which had to feel horrible on Punk's hip and knee. Undertaker beats the count at nine and a half and Punk is shocked. He's shocked enough that Undertaker grabs Hell's Gate, only to have Punk roll over into the Anaconda Vice.

In the spot of the match, Undertaker does the situp and stares into Punk's eyes as the hold is still on. Punk's confidence is shattered as he looks completely terrified with his best move getting him nowhere. A chokeslam is countered into a bad GTS but Undertaker shrugs it off (to be fair it really didn't connect) and grabs a Tombstone for two on a hot near fall. They slug it out and there goes the referee.

Punk tries his running knee in the corner but gets countered into the Last Ride. Before he's dropped, Heyman throws in the urn for a shot to the head and a very close two (done much better with HHH and the

sledgehammer at Wrestlemania XVII). The GTS is countered into the Tombstone which is countered into the GTS which is countered into the Tombstone to make it 21-0 at 22:08.

Rating: B+. I liked this better on a second viewing as when I watched live, I never bought the Streak as being in jeopardy. They tried to make the Vice a big deal but at the end of the day, Undertaker does not tap out. Period. Why should I buy this particular submission as having a chance? The urn to the head was a good near fall though and had me closer to thinking it was over than anything in the HHH match two years earlier. Very good match but it never hit the level of the HHH and Shawn editions. Undertaker poses a lot and retrieves the urn one more time.

Ad for the new Mick Foley DVD.

Here's a video on Cena wanting his redemption tonight after losing a year ago. This makes over ten minutes spent on these things.

Sports commentator Michelle Beadle is here.

We recap HHH vs. Lesnar II. They fought at Summerslam 2012 with Lesnar making HHH tap out. HHH teased retiring as a result (again taking the focus off Lesnar as the last shot of the show was HHH standing in the ring alone) and after no one bought it, Lesnar attacked Vince and Shawn to set up the rematch here. To make it even more intense, it's no holds barred with HHH's career on the line. (which was announced with the same intensity as last year's Cell match). Just in case you had any doubt that HHH was winning here you see.

At the end of the day though, everyone knew this was all about HHH getting his redemption over Lesnar because Lesnar is the latest monster trying to stop HHH's precious legacy, even though Lesnar is anything but just another monster. Unfortunately that's how Lesnar was billed and it made this feud even less interesting. The first match was fine, but this was the least interesting rematch in a long time.

HHH vs. Brock Lesnar

Shawn and Heyman are here as seconds and remember it's no holds barred.

HHH sends him to the floor to start and whips Brock hard into the barricade. You know, the same Brock who destroyed Cena when they fought about a year ago? Well HHH is beating him up a minute into the match. The fans are silent but it's in awe of the awesomeness I'm sure.

HHH knocks a chair out of Lesnar's hands but Heyman is smart enough to grab the chair before HHH can get it. A whip into the steps has no effect on Brock as he belly to bellys HHH on the floor (now that's more like it). HHH gets suplexed through the announcers' table and Brock is in Beast Mode. Brock throws him onto the pieces of the table and a single glare at Shawn sends him SPRINTING away. Yeah because a Hall of Famer and one of the best ever just isn't good enough to stand up to Brock the way HHH did.

Back in and a series of suplexes gets a series of two counts. Brock goes after Shawn on the floor but the distraction lets HHH get in a clothesline to put Lesnar in the timekeeper's area. That goes nowhere though as Brock Germans him again and elbows Shawn in the face. You don't mess with HHH's life partner though and he plants Brock with a spinebuster. The Pedigree is countered into an F5 but Shawn comes in for a superkick, only to take the F5 instead.

HHH grabs a quick Pedigree for two but the sledgehammer shot is countered with an F5 for another two. They go outside again with HHH going into the steps, which are then sent inside for more fun. Brock hits him with the steps for two and tells HHH to retire, igniting HHH's comeback. Cole: "A little flame in the game!" The Kimura (Brock's arm lock) has HHH in trouble but he breaks it up as the fans want to see a broken arm.

Brock gets it on for the fourth time in a row with his legs wrapped around HHH's waist, only to get powered into a spinebuster for the break. HHH is MANLY you see. A low blow keeps Brock down and HHH wraps his arm around the post. He crushes Brock's arm with a chair for good measure and there's a Kimura from HHH. So he's a submission guy too. Heyman tries to come in for the save but Shawn superkicks him down. See, Heyman isn't some big monster that would scare Shawn.

Thankfully Brock doesn't tap as he lifts HHH up and slams him onto the

steps. HHH grabs the hold again so Brock counters it the same way. It worked so well that they do it AGAIN, but since HHH is so smart he counters into a DDT onto the steps. The sledgehammer to the head and a Pedigree onto the steps ends Brock at 23:58.

Rating: B-. This was HHH's big thank you for putting Lesnar over last year, because a win over HHH means SO much at this point. Let's recap: HHH is able to beat Brock in a slugout, knows how to do UFC submissions, isn't a coward like Shawn (that Hall of Fame World Champion), can survive suplexes and F5's and isn't hurt by things like Kimuras.

HHH looked like a god here and it was so ridiculous for a long majority of the match. The fans' silence was so telling as they just did not want to see HHH get his big moment, no matter how much HHH demanded that he get it. Oh and they had ANOTHER match the next month too, stretching their feud to a year. At least HHH was nice enough to put Lesnar over there, because he couldn't do it here at the show people remember most.

Hall of Fame video, with a STACKED lineup.

Here's the Class of 2013: Mick Foley, Booker T. (probably the lowest level wrestler in the class), Trish Stratus, Bob Backlund, Donald Trump (booed here but he's been at five Wrestlemanias now) and the headliner: Bruno Sammartino (so long overdue it's unreal). If there's ever been a better class, I've yet to see it.

Wrestlemania XXX is in New Orleans.

The new attendance record is announced.

No recap of the main event but I think you get the idea by now.

WWE World Title: John Cena vs. The Rock

Rock is defending. Cena is booed out of the building even worse than he was last year, which I didn't think was possible. After the big match intros, Cena runs him over with a shoulder to start. Rock nails one of his own and it's a standoff. They circle each other for a bit as the fans are restless, leaving Cole to explain Rock's history.

Rock takes over with some right hands and a kick to the face but Cena grabs a belly to belly. A chinlock keeps the match slow until Rock reverses into a sleeper. Cena counters with another suplex and stomps down as JBL actually says Rock and Cena compete in movies. A release fisherman's suplex gets two on the champ and good grief do something interesting already.

Rock comes back with right hands before ducking a shoulder. The STF is broken up but now some weak shoulders have Rock in trouble. Well they're certainly doing something now. A much better Sharpshooter has Cena in trouble but he rolls away and hits the ProtoBomb. The Shuffle misses so Cena settles for the STF, only to have Rock reverse into a rollup for two.

Cena catapults him into the corner and now the Shuffle connects. The AA is broken up and Rock plants him with the spinebuster, only to have the People's Elbow countered into another STF. Rock rolls onto his side and separates Cena's hands for the break in a good power display. Back up and a Rock Bottom out of nowhere gets two. There's an AA for two with almost no one buying the near fall.

Rock avoids the top rope Fameasser and scores with the spinebuster into the Elbow for two more. Just like last year, Rock goes up for a cross body but gets caught in the AA, only to slip out and hit the Rock Bottom. Instead of covering though he tries the Shuffle, allowing Cena to hit another AA for two. Cena wins a slugout and Rock Bottoms Rock (BIG reaction for that) but the kickout stuns him all over again.

Just like last year (again), Cena tries the Elbow but is ready for Rock, only to take too much time setting up the AA and getting countered into the Rock Bottom for two. They counter each others' finishers about five times in a row (with little energy on any of them) until Rock plants him with a DDT. Another Rock Bottom is countered into another AA to give Cena the title back at 24:00.

Rating: B-. While it's still entertaining, there was almost no emotion in this. It felt like both guys were just going through the motions to get to the obvious ending and that's not good. As we've seen over the years,

there are ways to have an entertaining match with an obvious ending but that's not what happened here. Instead this was a bunch of finishing moves over and over after about ten minutes of nothing to start. It's still a good enough match, but they really needed more intensity here. At least look like you're giving it everything you have even if you really aren't.

One last thing of note: at some point, Rock ripped his abdominal muscle and suffered a hernia. Reports vary about when it happened (ranging from in the opening to the first AA to the final AA) but it's a major reason why Rock hasn't had a match since. This is WAY too dangerous for him to be doing when he's needed on movie sets and it will probably keep him out of the ring for good, save for maybe one more farewell match.

They shake hands post match and say something to each other than the cameras can't pick up. Cena leaves Rock in the ring to pose until Rock comes up to the stage to raise Cena's hand and end the show.

Overall Rating: C. In a word, this show was just there. There's good stuff on it but nothing feels like it matters. Instead we have a bunch of good to decent matches with the crowd (and remember a good chunk of it is a New York crowd) not caring. The last two matches are especially bad about this as they were rematches that people didn't want to see. The HHH vs. Lesnar rematch was even worse about this as there was no need to have a rematch other than to make HHH look good. Rock vs. Cena wasn't as bad about that but it also wasn't as entertaining of a match.

Undertaker vs. Punk is definitely the best match of the show due to the good story behind it and the execution helps even more. I still didn't believe that Punk was a real threat to the streak but that doesn't mean it wasn't entertaining. Punk got in a lot more offense than I was expecting and had some near falls to make it good. There was no way Undertaker was going out in his tribute to Bearer though.

The rest of the card is where the show falls apart. There's some watchable stuff but so much of it feels like it belongs on Raw. None of the first five matches break eleven minutes and I really didn't have much interest in seeing Chris Jericho lose to a newcomer, even if it was one

of the biggest upsets ever. The first half of this show had the problem of not feeling like a Wrestlemania, which is one of the worst things that can happen. The second half is a huge improvement, but nowhere near enough to make this required viewing.

Ratings Comparison

The Miz vs. Wade Barrett

Original: D+

2014 Redo: C

2015 Redo: D+

Shield vs. Randy Orton/Sheamus/Big Show

Original: B-

2014 Redo: C+

2015 Redo: C+

Ryback vs. Mark Henry

Original: D

2014 Redo: D

2015 Redo: D

Dolph Ziggler/Big E. Langston vs. HELL NO

Original: C

2014 Redo: D+

2015 Redo: C-

Fandango vs. Chris Jericho

Original: D

2014 Redo: C

2015 Redo: C

Jack Swagger vs. Alberto Del Rio

Original: C+

2014 Redo: C+

2015 Redo: B-

Undertaker vs. CM Punk

Original: B

2014 Redo: B

2015 Redo: B+

HHH vs. Brock Lesnar

Original: B+

2014 Redo: B

2015 Redo: B-

John Cena vs. The Rock

Original: C+

2014 Redo: B-

2015 Redo: B-

Overall Rating

Original: B-

2014 Redo: B

2015 Redo: C

There's good stuff in there but it's swimming with an anchor.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2013/04/07/wrestlemania-xxix-and-so-it-ends/>

And the 2014 Redo:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2014/04/05/wrestlemania-count-up-wrestlemania-xxix-redo-twice-in-a-lifetime/>

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