

# Wrestlemania Count-Up – Wrestlemania XXX (Original): I'll Always Have New Orleans



IMG Credit: WWE

## Wrestlemania XXX

Date: April 6, 2014

Location: Mercedes-Benz Super Dome, New Orleans, Louisiana

Attendance: 75,167

Commentators: John Bradshaw Layfield, Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

It's finally here. After months of waiting, we've finally arrived at the biggest night of the year. This is Wrestlemania, where everything changes as the WWE year comes to a close. All the major stories come to a head tonight, as we have Daniel Bryan facing HHH for a spot in the WWE Title match, Undertaker putting his Streak on the line against Brock Lesnar, and John Cena fighting the disturbing Bray Wyatt in a battle over Cena's legacy. To say I'm excited is a huge understatement. Let's get to it.

As you may have heard, I was in the Super Dome for the show so this is my second viewing in about twelve hours. I'm still kind of on a cloud after last night so this is going to be pretty biased. I'm much more coherent now than I was beforehand though. If you're wondering, my seat was in the first set of raised seats, opposite the cameras, in front of where the stage turned into a ramp.

## Pre-Show: Tag Team Titles: Usos vs. Real Americans vs. Los Matadores vs. Ryback/Curtis Axel

The Usos are defending but the crowd was behind the Real Americans. People HATED Los Matadores and the kids weren't only kind of cheering for Torito. The interesting thing is you can see the Usos standing on stage during the previous team's entrance. Axel vs. Jey gets things going as a LOUD WE THE PEOPLE chant fills the arena. They trade chops to start and the Real Americans want no part of a tag.

Curtis comes back with a running dropkick but it's quickly off to Ryback vs. Jey. The big guy hammers away but Diego tags Ryback to come in. JBL calls this a stupid point because it's not a one fall match. This brings up an interesting point: The fans, myself included, didn't seem to know that it was elimination. It may have been mentioned before the show (probably was), but I didn't hear it mentioned again before the match.

Anyway Cesaro tags Jey and it's Diego getting double teamed by the Americans. Swagger nails a BIG clothesline for two but Diego comes back with a springboard headbutt, only to miss a Lionsault. Everyone not named Axel or a Matadore is sent to the floor, setting up a nice double dive from the masked guys that the cameras almost miss. Torito tries to go up as well but gets caught by Curtis. Axel throws him down and goes up top, but Los Matadores make the save.

Torito slips jumping to the top but gets up well enough to drive Axel and Los Matadores onto the floor in a big pile. Back in and Diego goes up top but Jack runs the ropes to superplex him into the Patriot Lock for the submission at 5:40. The fans thought we had new champions due to the lack of an explanation, but the confusion didn't last long.

A quick Patriot Lock to Jey doesn't work as well and it's quickly off to Ryback for a delayed suplex and two on Jey. A middle rope splash from Ryback and a middle rope elbow drop from Axel combine for two and we hit the chinlock from Ryback. Off to a front facelock for a few moments until Jey whips Ryback away. The big guy misses a hard charge into the post though and the hot tag brings in Jimmy.

The Samoan drop sets up the running Umaga attack but Swagger catches

Jimmy in a powerslam for two. Jimmy blocks the Vader Bomb with two feet to the face but Ryback plants both guys with spinebusters. There's the Meat Hook to Jack but Cesaro breaks up the Shell shock. That's fine with Ryback as he slams Cesaro off the top, only to get thrown into the air for Swiss Death, setting up the Neutralizer for the elimination at 11:44.

We're doing to the Usos vs. the Real Americans and the fans are mostly for the challengers. It's a brawl to start and the Usos quickly send them to the floor, setting up the double dive to knock all four guys down. Back in and Cesaro nails a backbreaker on Jey for a close two but the Neutralizer is countered into a jackknife cover. Cesaro counters that into a Swing attempt but Jimmy makes the save. That earns him an uppercut of his own but Jimmy goes up top for a Whisper in the Wind to drop both Americans for two.

Jack counters the Umaga attack into the Patriot Lock but Cesaro can't intercept Jey who makes the save. Swiss Death drops Jey but Jimmy puts Cesaro down with a Samoan drop. Everything breaks down and Colter begs Cesaro to get back up. A double tag brings in Cesaro to face Jimmy. That's fine with the champions as a double superkick sets up the double Superfly Splash on Cesaro for the pin at 16:13.

**Rating:** B. Really fun stuff here but man this would have been better with the Rhodes Brothers instead of the Matadores. Still though, the fans were WAY into Cesaro and the Usos got a very solid reaction as well. This is how you do an opening match to fire up the crowd and the big dives did exactly what they were supposed to do.

Post match Swagger yells at Cesaro while Colter tries to pull him back. Jack puts Cesaro in the Patriot Lock but Colter breaks it up. He orders them to hug but Cesaro Swings Swagger and leaves by himself. I bolted for the concession stand as soon as the bell rang so I could only hear this part.

The opening video for the PPV has a jazz/Mardi Gras theme. It shows a band playing on the street and talking about a good time starting when you lose track of time. "And man oh man have we lost track of time." There's a parade with shots of Wrestlemanias past put in as well. One

really cool shot shows Shawn ziplining down what I think is Bourbon Street. If nothing else we see the Bellas doing their dance which is never a bad thing.

The wide shots of the Super Dome look amazing.

Here's Hulk Hogan to open the show to a BIG ovation. There's something right about having him at this show. He hits the catchphrase to start and the fans go nuts, only to turn on him seconds later when Hogan calls this building the Silver Dome. Hogan talks about his history at Wrestlemania and calls it the Silver Dome again. Hulk finally realizes what he said and corrects himself to some nice applause. The fans are clearly in a good mood tonight.

Hogan says there will be Wrestlemania moments tonight and you never know....CUE GLASS SHATTER! The place absolutely came unglued when we heard that as people were expecting Austin much later in the show. JBL wants to see Hogan take the Stunner. Austin gets right in Hogan's face but stops to ask the crowd if they're ready for Wrestlemania before saying it's great to be back at the Silver Dome to a laugh.

Steve says he usually beats up whoever he's in the ring with and the fans seem to like the idea of him doing it to Hogan. They were sitting next to each other at the Hall of Fame last night and Austin has seen everything Hogan has done at Wrestlemania I. WHAT? Wrestlemania II? WHAT? On through Wrestlemania X (which Hogan wasn't at). WHAT? Austin: "You get the picture." Austin says he respects everything Hogan has done but says tonight is about the current group of wrestlers to show everything they've got for these fans.

Stone Cold does his catchphrase...and here's the Rock. He immediately hugs both guys and the crowd is just stunned at what they're seeing in the ring. Rock says it's a Wrestlemania moment when all five of your senses are on fire. He can see the people in front of him, he can hear the crowd cheering, you can feel it, taste it, and you certainly can smell it. Rock does the FINALLY bit for New Orleans, Wrestlemania and the SUPER Dome, drawing a smile from Hulk and a SUPER DOME chant from the crowd.

Rock says he doesn't see two of the biggest stars of all time across the

ring. Instead he sees his friend Steve Austin and his childhood hero Hulk Hogan, meaning he sees the two biggest names in the history of the WWE. He's fought both of them at Wrestlemania and they've both impacted his career.

They've had a huge impact on everyone's career in the back too, because without Hulk Hogan telling the people to say their prayers and take their vitamins, no one is fighting for Hustle Loyalty and Respect. Tonight someone is going to rise against the Authority (pause for a YES chant which Rock seems to like a lot) and that doesn't happen if a bald headed SOB didn't beat up his boss.

Rock says a lot of people have birthdays nine months after Wrestlemania because they watched him electrify the world and had to make some Rock Babies. We get a little rhyming from Rock, saying the three of them could beat up everyone in Wrestlemania history. They all hit their catchphrases one more time (Hogan makes sure to say SUPER Dome) and beers are consumed. All three get their music played as they leave too. Do I need to explain why this was absolutely incredible? I said out loud that I could go home now and be a very happy man.

Oh yeah we have matches too.

We get an awesome video on the WWE career of Daniel Bryan, starting from NXT and going into his rocket push over the last year set to Monster by Imagine Dragons. We even get some clips from his indy days to really show how big a deal this is. It transitions into a video on HHH vs. Bryan and how this is all about the Authority not thinking Bryan is a main event player but Bryan and the people saying he's good enough to beat anyone.

Stephanie is in the ring with half of a business suit and some barely there leather shorts. She still has some nice legs. Stephanie introduces HHH, who has what was described as a Game of Thrones entrance (never seen the show so that may be way off) with three women in masks (Charlotte, Sasha Banks and Alexis Bliss from NXT) standing around his throne. HHH is wearing a big red robe, golden spiked shoulder pads and a gold mask complete with chain mail around his head. This worked really well and didn't look stupid like the Conan one a few years back.

## HHH vs. Daniel Bryan

The winner goes into the triple threat later tonight. Cole says this should be a mismatch, even though Bryan is a Triple Crown winner and a three time World Champion. The YES chant was awesome in person and the place went absolutely nuts when Bryan's music hit. Oddly enough he wasn't announced at all and just came to the ring with his music. No Big Match Intros either. Bryan's left shoulder is taped up after the attack a few weeks ago on Raw.

They stare each other down for a good while to start as a bunch of fans have YES written on pieces of paper. HHH offers a handshake and is quickly kicked down for two. Daniel fires off more kicks in the corner but HHH bails to the floor to avoid a big kick. Back in and HHH goes for the bad arm like a smart wrestler would but Bryan takes him down with a headlock takeover. A hard shoulder block drops Daniel but it's right back to the headlock.

HHH drives shoulders in the corner but Daniel comes back with his kicks, only to have HHH take him down by the leg in a nice counter. Bryan gets away before HHH can wrap the arm around the post and hits a running tornado DDT off the apron. The running knee off the apron puts both guys down as Stephanie is freaking out. Back in and Bryan goes up but gets crotched. Stephanie: "B+ AT BEST!"

A big right hand knocks Bryan out to the floor and it's table time. Bryan fights out of a Pedigree attempt through the table but gets his arm slammed into the table. Stephanie: "YES! YES! YES!" Bryan is back in the ring at seven and HHH drives knees into the shoulder. We hit the armbar for a bit but Bryan is able to backdrop HHH to the floor. HHH is able to get up and block the FLYING GOAT with a big right hand, which looked like a sledgehammer shot on the big screen.

HHH gets him back to the apron and drops him arm first onto the apron. Stephanie is still yelling at Bryan as she's just perfect in this role. Back in and we go old school with a crossface chickenwing on the bad arm. HHH shifts into a regular Crossface and the fans aren't sure what to think of it. Daniel makes the rope and they slug it out until Bryan drops

him with a running forearm. Bryan loads up the moonsault but HHH wisely stops and tries a German, only to be reversed into three straight German suplexes for three straight near falls.

The Game counters another into a chickenwing attempt but HHH reverses into a tiger suplex of all things, putting Bryan down on his shoulder again. HHH's superplex attempt is countered into a sunset bomb but Bryan can't cover. The running dropkick in the corner has HHH in trouble but he comes out of the corner with a wicked clothesline. Stephanie: "YES! WOO!"

The Pedigree is countered into a rollup for two and a big kick to the head drops HHH again. Bryan loads up the flying headbutt, only to dive head first into a knee. Back to the Crossface and HHH rolls Bryan away from the ropes ala Benoit in 2004. Daniel is able to counter into the YES Lock out of nowhere but HHH gets a rope. HHH rolls outside and it's the FLYING GOAT to send him into the barricade.

Bryan hits it again before firing off the YES Kicks to the chest. Back in and there's the missile dropkick into the nipup followed by more YES Kicks. JBL: "Something isn't right about this!" The big kick to the head gets two as the fans think this is awesome. Daniel loads up the running knee but is caught in a spinebuster. The Pedigree gets two and Stephanie is shocked.

A small package gets two on HHH so he hammers away in the corner with some heavy right hands. Another Pedigree is countered with a backdrop for two but HHH holds on to the grip. Bryan won't get up though so HHH drives knees into the shoulder. HHH still can't hit the Pedigree so Bryan kicks him in the face. With both guys spent, Daniel backflips out of a suplex and nails the running knee dead on to send himself to the main event at 25:58.

**Rating:** A. Oh yeah this was awesome. They played the underdog card perfectly and the fans ate it up with a spoon. I'm surprised they went with the clean pin instead of the fourway but that's the better move at the end of the day. It's definitive and clean with Bryan beating HHH in a fair match despite being injured coming in. Outstanding opener, even if most people knew Bryan was going to the title match anyway.

Post match Stephanie slaps Bryan until HHH gets back up and lays him out. HHH crushes the shoulder against the post with a chair again to leave Bryan's future in doubt.

Mountain Dew commercial.

### New Age Outlaws/Kane vs. Shield

Since we're over an hour into the show and have had one match, Shield FLIES down to the ring after cutting off the Outlaws' entrance, wearing white half masks for some reason. This is the result of Shield protecting Jerry Lawler from Kane when the Big Bald accused Lawler of causing the Occupy Raw movement. Kane starts with Ambrose and hammers away before dropping him with a clothesline. Off to Reigns (now in a singlet top instead of the full back) for some running clotheslines and a crotch chop of all things.

The floor to apron boot lays out both Outlaws and there's a Superman Punch to Road Dogg (BIG reaction to that). Kane blocks another Punch but Rollins comes in to dive on Kane. Ambrose takes down Road Dogg and there's the Superman Punch to Billy. The Shield has Gunn surrounded so he bails, allowing Ambrose and Rollins to hit stereo suicide dives on the Outlaws. There's a spear to Kane and a double one to drop Gunn and Dogg. A DOUBLE TRIPLE BOMB is enough to end the Outlaws at 2:55. Total and complete squash which makes me feel FAR better about this match than I thought going in.

Jim Duggan and Sgt. Slaughter are in the back playing with the Slam City figures, complete with DANNY DAVIS giving Duggan a fast count pin. Ricky Steamboat wants next but a guy in a suit takes the toys away because someone has bought them. This brings up the required Ted DiBiase cameo to say even in Slam City, everybody has a price. The only possibly payoff is Ron Simmons for the catchphrase and that's exactly what we get.

### Andre the Giant Memorial Battle Royal

Sheamus, Big Show, Alberto Del Rio, Big E, Brad Maddox, Brodus Clay, Cody Rhodes, Damien Sandow, Darren Young, David Otunga, Dolph Ziggler, Fandango, Drew McIntyre, Goldust, The Great



Khali, Heath Slater, Jinder Mahal, Justin Gabriel, Kofi Kingston, Mark Henry, The Miz, Rey Mysterio, R-Truth, Santino Marella, Sin Cara, Titus O'Neil, Tyson Kidd, Xavier Woods, Yoshi Tatsu, Zack Ryder.

Only Sheamus and Big Show get entrances. I'll give WWE credit: I didn't notice the guys getting into the ring at all as I was distracted by the legends segment. Well done. The problem though is no one knew who all was in the match. Yoshi Tatsu is quickly dumped before Kofi and Cody are both sent over but hang on to stay in. Brad Maddox is tossed and Khali chops Brodus to the floor. 3MB combines to dump Khali though as the ring is slowly clearing out a bit.

The Band gets rid of Ryder and Darren Young as well and you can actually see some of the mat. Henry has had enough of 3MB though and tosses all three, only to be eliminated by Big Show. Show gets rid of Titus (DO THE DOG BARK!) and it's Cobra time from Santino. Miz blocks the dreaded sock for a bit but is knocked out a few seconds later. He beat Cena at Wrestlemania three years ago and now he's jobbing to a sock. Sandow is gone as we're almost half done. Big E. tosses Justin Gabriel.

Otunga is actually in the match long enough to be eliminated until we get a big upset with Fandango eliminating Big E. with ease. We get some Fandangoing but Sheamus grabs him for TWENTY SEVEN FOREARMS TO THE CHEST. I shout because WHY DIDN'T HE GO TO THIRTY? He casually shoves Fandango to the floor and the fans love it. Big Show throws out Truth and dances a bit before staring down at Rey. JBL: "EAT HIM BIG SHOW!"

Kidd goes up and is kicked out by Del Rio as Sheamus hammers on Big Show. Del Rio kicks Goldust to the floor as well and complete the Rhodes double by shoving Cody off the top. We're down to Mysterio, Del Rio, Ziggler, Sheamus, Big Show, Cesaro and Kingston. Rey hits a 619 on Del Rio but Cesaro counters one into Swiss Death for the elimination. Kofi is LAUNCHED

over the top onto the steps but his feet stay on the steps so he can get back in. Kofi gets to clean house with kicks all around, including one to knock Big Show down.

Cesaro Swings Kingston for a LONG time but walks into a chokeslam. There's a Brogue Kick to Big Show and another one to Kofi for an elimination. Ziggler hits his running DDT on Sheamus but gets superkicked out by Del Rio. We're down to Sheamus, Big Show, Del Rio and Cesaro.

Alberto puts Sheamus in the cross armbreaker (why?) but Sheamus lifts him up. He takes Del Rio to the ropes but they both fall out to leave us with Cesaro vs. Big Show. A series of clotheslines can't drop Big Show so Cesaro goes up top, only to be chopped out of the air. Cesaro slips off Big Show's shoulders, EASILY picks him up and throws Big Show out to win at 13:44.

**Rating:** C+. Pretty standard battle royal until the end where they did something that Wrestlemania can be used for: pushing a new guy. This is Cesaro's big moment and a probable face turn for him. There's nothing that can beat pure strength like that and visuals like Big Show being lifted up are always going to work.

Big Show shakes Cesaro's hand and walks out in peace. Five referees have to get the trophy into the ring but Cesaro picks it up on his own to make things even better.

We recap Cena vs. Bray Wyatt. The idea is Cena has worked hard and lived off of hustle, loyalty and respect to build his career but Bray just wants to destroy the heroes. Bray started talking about Cena's legacy because one day his career is going to end and then what becomes of him since he's built his life around the WWE.

### John Cena vs. Bray Wyatt

Bray is played to the ring in an awesome visual, complete with

barrels fire, what appears to be a voodoo woman dancing with swords and I believe an altar. No special entrance for Cena this year but he gets more booing than cheers. The cheers are there though. Bray bounces on the middle rope to start before kneeling in front of Cena and begging John to be a monster and hit him. FINISH ME JOHN! Cena says get up and fight before taking Bray down with a headlock. Bray headbutts Cena several times to take over while shouting a lot.

An elbow drop gets two and he asks the fans if this is their hero. Cena comes back with a HARD clothesline before looking furious in the corner. He hammers away on Bray but Wyatt laughs and invites Cena to do more. John drives in more right hands, drawing Harper and Rowan to the apron. Wyatt keeps laughing (very 1998 Raven) and Cena isn't sure what to do. He chokes away which is exactly what Bray wants as Cena is unleashing the monster inside. A big boot drops Bray but Cena is angry at himself for losing control.

Bray lifts Cena up for a suplex but slams him down instead in a cool visual. John comes back with a dropkick but gets caught in a sleeper. It shifts into a chinlock but Cena counters with the ProtoBomb. He loads up the Shuffle but Bray bridges up into the spider stance. Fans: "THAT WAS CREEPY!" Bray runs him over and conducts the crowd as the arm swaying begins. Cena comes back with a tornado DDT but the Fameasser is countered into a wicked powerbomb for a very close two.

Cena comes back again and hits the Shuffle but Bray counters the AA into a spinning gutbuster for two. Bray takes him to the apron for a DDT and another near fall as the fans start singing He's Got The Whole World In His Hands. Now THAT is a creepy moment. John is able to fight out of a superplex and loads up the Fameasser, only to dive onto the Family instead. Bray is right back on him though and sends Cena hard into the steps. Wyatt says he's figured it out but gets knocked down by a hard shot.

Now we get to the interesting part as Cena picks up the steps but can't bring himself to embrace the hate. Back in and the hard cross body gets two for Bray and it's time for more singing. He misses a backplash though and Cena nails the AA for two. This kicking out of finishers thing is really getting old. Rowan tries to interfere, allowing Harper to superkick Cena down. Now the backplash gets two and Bray is getting frustrated.

He sends Cena outside so John spears Luke through the barricade for some revenge. That's what Bray wanted though so he throws Cena back inside and bends over backwards in the corner. Sister Abigail is countered into the STF but Bray makes the ropes. Back up and a quick Sister Abigail is good for two. Wyatt is smiling again and heads outside to load up the announce table.

Then he goes over to get a chair (giving us a visual of Harper still out cold two and a half minutes after he was laid out) but slides it to Cena instead. Bray gets on his knees and tells Cena to hit him. This is the big moment as John heavily thinks about it but is able to control himself and knock Rowan off the apron with the chair instead. Sister Abigail is countered into an AA for the pin out of nowhere at 22:28.

**Rating:** B. The match was the usual big match style here with both guys hitting all their big stuff. However the important part here was the psychological war instead of the physical aspect. I'm REALLY not sure on Cena winning, but the story is clearly going to continue in some gimmick matches. That's where Cena can be pushed even further and go too far with the violence ala Magnum vs. Tully where Magnum went nuts and then realized what he did.

The match worked well enough but the ending leaves a lot of questions to be answered. The biggest of all though is what happens to Wyatt. Hopefully the magic isn't gone after the loss but we'll find that out very soon. He'll be way over in

his home state and the gimmick is cool enough to keep him over for years.

Cena celebrates with fans and his dad post match.

Hall of Fame time. Lita got a great reaction while rocking a long silver dress. Bearer probably got the best reaction of everyone, until Ultimate Warrior came out after everyone else. The cameramen were pulling back like he was going to sprint to the ring but it didn't happen.

Daniel Bryan is examined in the back. They've been sticking with the stuff in the ring tonight and I kind of like that.

We recap Lesnar vs. Undertaker. The video talks about the Streak going on for over twenty years with the question being can any man beat the Streak. It cuts to Heyman saying the answer is no, but a Beast could do it. The line of "Eat, Sleep, Conquer, Repeat. Eat, Sleep, Conquer, Repeat. Eat, Sleep, Conquer the Streak" was great stuff.

### Undertaker vs. Brock Lesnar

The entrance is very cool this year with 21 caskets with a name and Wrestlemania printed on each one. Punk's casket is of course not show but they're all lit on fire in a great shot. Undertaker hammers away to start but walks into a belly to belly. A clothesline puts Undertaker on the floor but he just stares up at Lesnar. Some heavy knees into the ribs have Undertaker in trouble again but he snaps Brock's neck over the top rope.

Lesnar's arm is bent around the top rope and they fight on the floor for a few moments. Back inside and Old School is countered but Brock misses a charge into the post. The legdrop across the apron has Lesnar in trouble but they head outside again with Brock ramming him into the post. Undertaker is taken down with a spinebuster and it's back inside for some hard choking.

Brock stomps away in the corner and goes after the leg to take away the vertical base. Undertaker gets to the floor and limps a lot but Brock kicks the bad leg out again. A not very hard whip sends Undertaker into the barricade and they head back inside for more knees to the chest. The sweat is dripping off Brock's nose in a disturbing image. Brock tees off on him with rights and lefts but Undertaker comes back with the running DDT to put both guys down.

Some running clotheslines in the corner stagger Brock and it's Snake Eyes into the big boot and a legdrop for two (Brother). A chokeslam gets two more but Taker walks into an F5 for the same. Hell's Gate is slapped on out of nowhere but Brock powers him up (barely) and drops him all of two feet onto the mat. They do the same sequence again and this time the drop is better but you can see Brock isn't going full force here.

There's the Kimura from Lesnar but Undertaker reverses into one of his own. Brock is taken to the mat but gets into the ropes for the break. Both guys are getting tired out there. Taker loads up Old School but is barely able to stand. He almost falls into an F5 for a very close two and follows up with some VERY light German suplexes.

Brock hammers away in the corner (again why?) and gets caught in a powerbomb. Yes a powerbomb as he wasn't lifted at all. The Tombstone is good for two, which isn't shocking as you could see Undertaker's feet in the space between Brock's head and the mat. Undertaker sits up but Brock counters a tombstone into an F5 to end the Streak and shock the world.

Before we get to the rating, I have to talk about the crowd a little bit. As you might have noticed, I can talk a good deal when I need to. For one of the only times in my life, I couldn't move and couldn't say a word. I've heard stories of the crowd in MSG going silent when Sammartino lost the WWF Title to Koloff and that's what I think happened here. This isn't something that just happens. This is the end of an era

and something no one has ever seen before.

A graphic that said 21-1 appeared on screen and the fans were literally SCREAMING for Hogan to come out and do something to save the Streak. People actually ran out of the building crying because they didn't want to believe what they had just seen. This is a wrestling changing moment and we'll never, ever, see anything like it again.

**Rating:** C+. And that's being generous. This is being written about 15 hours after Wrestlemania ended and this has gotten about 80% of the comments. Since the match ended, word has come out that Undertaker wanted to end the Streak because he couldn't perform at this level anymore. If that's true, and based on this match, I can certainly see why, then I respect him greatly for it. It's clear that Undertaker is having a lot of trouble moving around anymore as age and his career are catching up with him.

If you watch the match carefully and with the emotion taken out of it, it's very clear that Undertaker just can't do it anymore. The Last Ride had literally no elevation, the German suplexes were Undertaker being laid down on his back and the Tombstone was just sad. If the Streak had kept going, it would have become an embarrassment for Undertaker as the matches would have gotten worse and worse.

Undertaker is 49 years old and really hasn't been an active wrestler in years. Father Time catches up with everyone and it caught up to Undertaker. Points to him though for ending it while he could still have a passable match like this one. At the end of the day, the Streak had to end sometime and I'm glad he got to pick when it did.

Finally, there comes a point where the Streak is pushed beyond the point of being realistic. I'm supposed to believe that a man pushing 50 is able to come out of a glorified retirement and beat BROCK LESNAR in a one on one fight? People, myself

included, said it was ridiculous that HHH beat Brock at Wrestlemania. Would it really have been that much more ridiculous for Undertaker to do it? I don't really think so. Brock may have not been the best option, but it's certainly not insane.

Now on to more aftermath. Undertaker was hospitalized after the match with a severe concussion and neck injury. If he was banged up that badly in the early part of the match, you have to excuse some of the sluggishness a bit. It's not a great match, but the reaction at the end more than makes up for it. Brock winning may not be the best option, but I offer the following question: who else was there for this spot? Reigns simply isn't ready, Cena vs. Undertaker needed a bigger build, Sting would be an even bigger waste and just wasn't going to happen. Who else is there?

That being said, the Streak is one of those things that is never going to be topped. Ever. Period. It went on for TWENTY THREE YEARS. Hulk Hogan was still WWF Champion around that time and I was five years old. Let that sink in for a minute and realize how big a deal that was. A lot of fans don't remember a time before the Streak began and it's produced some of the best matches in Wrestlemania history. Undertaker has won three World Titles at Wrestlemania and pinned all four members of Evolution. That's a fine career and he did it one year at a time.

Most of the people he beat are in the Hall of Fame and most of the rest of them will probably be in one day (the majority of them are locks and would Sid/Boss Man/Bundy really surprise you?). The match with Shawn is as good as you're ever going to find and Batista and Orton were made at those shows.

It took on a life of its own and was basically a co-main event at every Wrestlemania for the last six years or so. The Streak was going to end someday and it's good that it happened under Undertaker's terms instead of when age forced it to happen



against his wishes. That's your big Wrestlemania moment and I'll never forget it.

Undertaker gets the hero's sendoff as the fans chant THANK YOU TAKER.

Wrestlemania XXXI is in Silicon Valley, California. During this announcement, the Divas filled the ring for the next match.

#### Divas Title: Vickie Guerrero Invitational

Aksana, Alicia Fox, AJ Lee, Naomi, Brie Bella, Cameron, Emma, Eva Marie, Layla, Natalya, Nikki Bella, Rosa Mendes, Summer Rae, Tamina Snuka.

So AJ is defending and is facing the entire division, as in thirteen other girls. Good reaction for the champion but this is the death spot to end all death spots. Vickie is at ringside holding the title. AJ and Tamina are thrown into the middle of the ring and beaten on for a solid three seconds before it breaks down. Everyone is in the ring at the same time mind you. The fans want refunds and chant for Undertaker.

There's nothing to call here other than the girls look good in their outfits and Rosa looks bizarre with short bleach blonde hair. Natalya tries a triple Sharpshooter on Cameron, Rosa and someone else but Eva makes the save. A quadruple suplex gets four near falls before Cameron hits a running Codebreaker on the champion. Cameron's top has been ripped apart and she keeps having to cover up.

The Emma Sandwich crushes Summer and it's time for the Parade of Finishers/moves that are allegedly finishers because most of these girls don't ever win anything. Eva, in a swimsuit, shoves Tamina down but runs away from her. Everyone but the Bellas are knocked to the floor and the twins hit some nice suicide dives to take them out. Now it's time for the Bellas to fight but Alicia and Nattie come back in to break it up. Tamina nails Natalya with a Samoan drop but Naomi breaks up the Splash. Natalya slams Aksana off the top for two and AJ puts Naomi in the Black Widow for the submission to retain at 6:43.

**Rating:** D+. There were fourteen girls in there at once and one fall to a finish. What in the world were you expecting here? Also they knew there

was no way anyone was going to care and they didn't really try to fight it. Those dives by the Bellas were nice though. Odds are this sets up Paige debuting though as there's literally no one left for AJ to beat. Or Kharma comes back.

We go to the back to see Gene Okerlund with Hogan. Hulk talks about how awesome this is but stops because Roddy Piper and Paul Orndorff show up. Piper begrudgingly admits that Hogan is doing a good job as Orndorff says he's heard about losing the main event of the first Wrestlemania for thirty years. Piper wants to fight but Mr. T. comes up to even the odds. Pat Patterson, in a referee shirt for a perfect moment, says it's been thirty years so let it go. Hogan agrees and everyone shakes hands. Piper sound like he's giving birth before shaking T's hand is great.

Bruno Sammartino, Harley Race, Dusty Rhodes and Bret Hart (loudest pop by far) are here.

#### WWE World Heavyweight Championship: Randy Orton vs. Batista vs. Daniel Bryan

Rev Theory plays the champion Orton to the ring. The song goes on too long though as they play the full thing. Batista is LOUDLY booed whereas Bryan gets the hero pop, even though he can only YES with one arm. An interesting note: Cole hypes up Extreme Rules as a "WWE Special" rather than a pay per view, which is a good way to advertise it on the Network. Any time you can get the word "pay" out of something it sounds more enticing. After the Big Match Intros we're ready to go.

Batista runs Orton over to start but can't hit the Bomb on Bryan. Orton and Bryan are both thrown outside with Bryan being sent into the barricade arm first. Batista loads up a powerbomb onto the steps but Orton counters into a backdrop to get a breather. Bryan starts to get up but Orton drops him back first onto the barricade to stop him again. It's Dave vs. Randy in the ring again with Randy hitting the circle stomp followed by the knee drop for two.

Daniel comes back in with a double missile dropkick but Batista slams both guys down for two each. Bryan is able to send Batista into the buckle and hits a string of running dropkicks in the corner to both guys.

A top rope hurricanrana takes the champion down again but Batista suplexes Daniel over the top and out to the floor. Now Batista goes up top but Orton pulls him down with a superplex. Bryan is back in again and nails the swan dive to set up the YES Lock, but HHH and Stephanie come in from the crowd to pull out the referee.

Batista hits the spinebuster as Scott Armstrong comes in to be referee. Cole calls him crooked, but wasn't he crooked before in Bryan's favor? So the story is HHH had Armstrong do a fast count on Bryan at Night of Champions so the pin wouldn't count? Was that ever established on WWE TV? Anyway he counts two after a Batista Bomb to Bryan and Batista charges into the post. Bryan kicks Armstrong in the head and nails the FLYING GOAT to take out the Authority and Armstrong.

HHH is livid and pulls out the sledgehammer but Bryan steals it and lays out the Game. The original referee counts two as Bryan rolls up Batista but Orton is back in for the save. Bryan's arm is exposed as the opponents start double teaming. HHH and Stephanie are helped out (cue Goodbye Song) as Orton bounces the steps off Bryan's head. Batista and Randy pick up Bryan and load up the announce table. The fans chant for CM Punk out of desperation (this happened throughout the night but never became a big thing).

In the spot of the night, Batista lifts up Bryan for a Batista Bomb and Orton hits the RK0 (neckbreaker but whatever) to lay Bryan out cold. The scary part though was Orton who landed square on a monitor. I was genuinely scared he wasn't going to get up at all. A stretcher is brought out for Bryan as Lawler asks a very good question: why is Batista not throwing someone in the ring and trying to pin them? That's a problem in wrestling today. So many people just stop using logic because it's not the planned finish. As soon as Orton could indicate that he was ok, Batista should have tried to pin him.

Instead he just whips Orton into the barricade about five times in a row to lose what they had of the crowd. Orton comes back with the Elevated DDT onto the floor but Bryan is off the stretcher and literally crawling back to the ring. An RK0 is countered into a YES Lock but Batista makes the save.

The spear misses Orton and sends Bryan to the floor, setting up an RKO on Batista for a VERY close two. Orton loads up the Punt but Bryan takes his head off with the knee. Batista steals the cover for two and nails the Batista Bomb on Orton, but Bryan takes him down with the running knee, setting up the YES Lock on Batista for the submission and the title to blow the roof off the place at 23:01.

**Rating:** A-. It's long and there are some parts that dragged but this was all about making the impossible happen and they nailed that to perfection. Everything else is a bonus and they actually had me thinking Orton would retain with that RKO. It was all about Daniel Bryan though and that's exactly what it needed to be. Excellent match and it gave us the moment we were looking for.

A HUGE celebration follows with fireworks, confetti (I snagged a piece for a souvenir) and Bryan's sister and niece coming in to celebrate with him. The celebration went on for awhile after the show went off the air with nothing you wouldn't expect.

**Overall Rating:** A+. Let's see. We had two of the most historic moments of all time plus Daniel Bryan getting to the title match and winning the title in two great matches. On top of that Shield looked awesome, the battle royal gave us a new star, Cena vs. Bray was good enough and the Divas could have been FAR worse.

This show was all about the emotion as we went from joy to shock to more joy in the span of less than four hours. That's very impressive when there was no terrible match (I can't bring myself to call a match with fourteen good looking women in revealing outfits to be a bad thing) and the good stuff was really good. I can't put it above Wrestlemania 17 as there's nothing here that tops Austin vs. Rock, let alone TLC 2, but this was a very special show and the best Wrestlemania in at least ten years. Excellent show and one I'll watch many times over the years.

## Results

Daniel Bryan b. HHH – Running knee

Shield b. Kane/New Age Outlaws – Triple Bomb to Road Dogg

Cesaro won the Andre the Giant Memorial Battle Royal last eliminating Big Show

John Cena b. Bray Wyatt – Attitude Adjustment

Brock Lesnar b. Undertaker – F5

AJ Lee b. Aksana, Alicia Fox, Brie Bella, Cameron, Naomi, Emma, Eva Marie, Layla, Natalya, Nikki Bella, Rosa Mendes, Summer Rae and Tamina Snuka – Black Widow to Naomi

Daniel Bryan b. Batista and Randy Orton – YES Lock to Batista

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