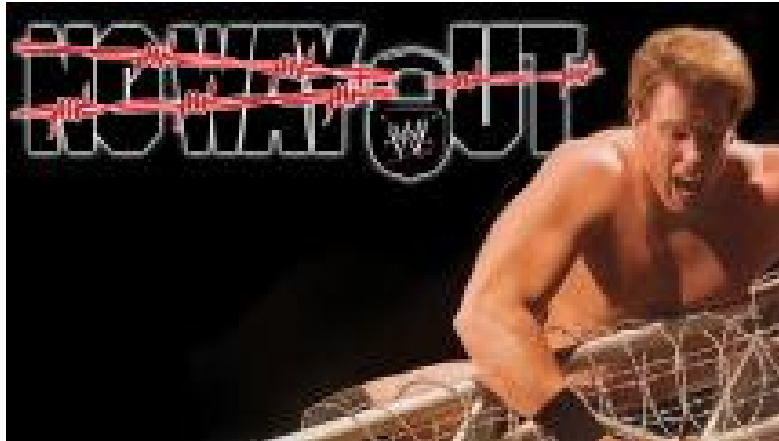


No Way Out 2005 (2019 Redo): Some Good Wrestlers In Search Of A Better Show



IMG Credit: WWE

No Way Out 2005

Date: February 20, 2005

Location: Mellon Arena, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Attendance: 9,500

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

This is a different kind of show as there is little doubt about where things are going for Wrestlemania but they're trying to keep up the pretense of some surprises that could still come. That includes a barbed wire steel cage match with JBL defending the World Title against Big Show and a #1 contenders match between John Cena and Kurt Angle. Let's get to it.

The opening video talks about the barbed wire cage, which is now as demonic as the Cell. They really need to find a better steel structure manufacturer.

The announcers talk about how Batista is going to be here tonight and could get involved in the main event. As usual, cages mean nothing around here.

Tag Team Titles: Eddie Guerrero/Rey Mysterio vs. Basham Brothers

The Bashams are defending and Eddie joined Rey as a replacement partner for the injured Rob Van Dam. Eddie and Danny start things off with Danny being very proud to have SOD (for Secretary of Defense) on his tights. A takedown brings Danny down and it's time to crank on the leg a little bit. Rey comes in to work on the arm but gets driven into the corner for the tag off to Doug.

That doesn't last long either as it's right back to Eddie to knock Doug outside. Danny comes back in for a crossarm choke as the fans are right behind Eddie, to the surprise of almost no one. Doug pulls Eddie away from the tag and drops some elbows, followed by a powerslam for one as Rey makes a very fast save. A missed elbow allows the tag off to Rey though and a DDT gets two on Doug.

The referee goes to yell at Eddie though and the Bashams make the switch so Rey can get in trouble for a bit. A full nelson into a waistlock keeps Mysterio down and Eddie comes in for a failed save attempt. That just means more choking on Mysterio as the heat segment goes on. Rey finally gets in some elbows and a top rope moonsault press gets two. That's still not enough to for a tag though and it's Danny grabbing a chinlock.

Eddie can't reach for the tag so he goes over to the other corner and unties the tag rope so he can tie it to his own for more length. You can't say he's conventional. A reverse powerbomb/faceplant combination gets two on Rey with Eddie coming in for a fast save. Mysterio finally realizes that he's Rey Mysterio and rolls between both Bashams for the hot tag off to Eddie. The springboard armdrag/headscissors combination gets two on Doug but the champs are right back with a double spinebuster for two of their own.

Eddie gets frustrated and grabs a title but Rey won't let him go where. Instead Eddie goes back in but has to roll through the frog splash attempt. Doug thinks Eddie crashed though as Eddie lays down, allowing Eddie to get two off a small package. A title gets tossed in to distract the referee so Rey throws Eddie the other belt for a shot to Danny. The 619 takes out Doug and Eddie gets the pin and the titles.

Rating: C+. I liked the match well enough, though it could have gone a few minutes shorter. It says a lot to see the Bashams go from jokes to perfectly competent champions with a simple gimmick. You don't always have to have some over the top gimmick to make things work and the Bashams having their greatest success as generic heavies is all the proof you need. It's a good choice for an opener, though with a six match card, there is only so much they could pick from.

Theodore Long is getting things ready for Batista when Carlito comes in, flanked by the wife of a member of the Board of Directors. She is enjoying the show and wants to see Batista get signed to Smackdown. It's almost time for the next match so she goes back to her seat, leaving Carlito to say that it seems if Long doesn't sign Batista, he's out of a job.

Here are Dawn Marie and Torrie Wilson to judge the first round of the Rookie Diva Of The Year contest. Joy Giovanni, Rochelle Lowen, Lauren Jones and Michelle McCool all come out in evening gowns, Torrie thinks they're all hot, and we're done.

Heidenreich vs. Booker T.

This was thrown together on Smackdown. Before the match, Heidenreich reads a poem about how he's not crazy because he has good inside. Booker takes him into the corner to start but a few right hands gets Heidenreich out of trouble. An elbow to the face sends Booker outside as it's almost all punching and shots to the face so far. Back in and Booker drops him with a superkick for two but Heidenreich hits a hard clothesline.

A keylock doesn't get Heidenreich very far so he kicks Booker in the face for two more and grabs the hold again. Booker fights up again and drops Heidenreich to a shot to the face so the comeback can start. There's the Spinarooni but the Book End is broken up. A missed charge sends Heidenreich to the floor, where he comes up with a chair shot for the DQ.

Rating: D. So they had a lame TV level match and then do that ending? After setting the match up three days ago? I know the show isn't the most important in the world but you really can't have Booker win off a rollup here? Is anyone wanting this feud to continue? Or for Heidenreich to

continue for that matter? Bad match, but what's worse is that it seems to be continuing.

Post match Heidenreich throws him back in for a cover because he's not all there.

John Cena congratulates Eddie and Rey on their win but they tell him to go win as well. Eddie wants to talk to Cena on his own and gives him a pep talk for the biggest match of his career. Kurt Angle is a special talent though and has promised to hurt Cena. Eddie believes in Cena though and knows he'll win. It's a nice speech, though you can tell they're trying to drag this out as long as they can.

Cruiserweight Title: Spike Dudley vs. Funaki vs. Akio vs. Paul London vs. Chavo Guerrero vs. Shannon Moore

Funaki is defending in what is billed as an elimination match but is really a gauntlet match. Funaki and London start things off and everyone else is standing on the corners for a change of pace. London hits a shoulder but Funaki sweeps the leg for two before realizing that he can't tag anyone standing at the corner like they would when you could tag someone. Some stomping delays London's charge into the corner so Funaki can get out of the way and roll London up for two.

Spike gets in a cheap shot from the apron though and London pins Funaki. It's Spike in third but Funaki superkicks him behind the referee's back so London can get another pin. Moore is in fourth and rolls London up for some early (Is it still early after two eliminations?) near falls. A Whisper in the Wind misses though and London drops the 450 for another elimination.

Akio is in fifth as they're flying through this as is the case in most gauntlets. A choke over the ropes gives Akio two and we hit the chinlock. Cole: "Looks like Akio could be trying to choke out Paul London here." That's the kind of analysis you can only get around here. Akio switches over to a Kimura before taking London to the top, where a super swinging neckbreaker brings him right back down. The referee starts the ten count and Akio doesn't make it up for an elimination. When is the last time you saw that one happen? I mean for me it was about four seconds but it might

be longer for you.

Chavo goes for some covers on London and gets annoyed that he can kick out after the full seven minute beating. London manages a dragon suplex for two and tries a rollup, only to have Chavo reverse into one of his own. Throw in a grab of the rope and Chavo gets the title back.

Rating: D. I never like gauntlet matches like this one as the falls go so fast and it's really hard to get your head around the eliminations. If someone can pin one of their opponents in a minute and a half, why do regular matches take so long? It's not a good way to run a match and they would have been better off having everyone in there going nuts until someone stole a quick pin. Funaki dropping the title is fine as it's not like he was anything important as champion.

We look back at Batista destroying JBL's limo on Smackdown and then saving Big Show from a Cabinet beatdown.

We run down the rules of the barbed wire cage match.

Wrestlemania Recall: the Gimmick Battle Royal.

After that awesome moment, it's time for the second round of the Divas competition, meaning everyone has to be introduced again. This time, it's a talent competition because of course it is. Joy goes first and since her talent is massage, she asks Torrie to lay down for a rub. Naturally this includes taking off her top and leaning over in a rather short skirt as the massage lasts all of four seconds. Dawn says she can give a better rub than that. Torrie: "And if you don't believe that, just ask of they guys in the back."

Rochelle, who is very perky, tells awful jokes so Dawn takes the mic away from her. Lauren dances, meaning more clothes come off. Dawn tells her not to quit her day job because she would starve as a stripper. Michelle goes last and slams Dawn. Much like before, this was quite the waste of time.

JBL shouts about how violent the main event is going to be but he's going to retain the title and move on to Wrestlemania. His body is temporary

but the title is forever. He is the wrestling god.

Luther Reigns vs. Undertaker

Mark Jindrak is here with Reigns, who is NOT scared of Undertaker. Actually never mind as Jindrak is ejected before the match. Undertaker may have a concussion after being hit with a camera on Thursday so Reigns starts with left hands. That just earns him a pull on the arm and Old School into the Downward Spiral for two. Undertaker stops to glare at the referee so Reigns can take the turnbuckle pad off.

Reigns clotheslines him down with another shot to the head, only to get whipped into the exposed buckle (the classic wrestling irony). The apron legdrop keeps Reigns in trouble and he even begs off a bit, which is rare for him. Back in and the referee distraction lets Reigns get in the low blow so he can send Undertaker head first into the exposed buckle. A suplex gives Reigns two as the fans aren't quite buying Reigns' offense. Reigns grabs a half crab but stands on Undertaker's head.

In a move that just looks bad, Reigns stands up while holding the leg like he's about to turn over for a half crab for some near falls. He's not even cranking on the leg. Dude at least do something. Undertaker is somehow able to get up from that, tells Reigns to spear him, and then gets taken down by a bad looking spear. Reigns' swinging neckbreaker is broken up and Undertaker hits a running clothesline in the corner. Snake Eyes doesn't work for some reason and Undertaker kicks him in the chest for two.

The chokeslam looks to set up the Tombstone but Reigns slips out and hits a reverse DDT (which Cole and Tazz call a swinging neckbreaker several times each). The swinging neckbreaker (for real this time) is broken up and Undertaker grabs a DDT. That's enough for the Tombstone to finally finish Reigns.

Rating: D-. This was messy, dull, boring, and never in doubt once. Reigns is not working in any way other than standing there and looking intimidating so they keep going with him in this role. Having a muscular lackey is fine but it doesn't work when he has to wrestle at some point. Undertaker really needs a new opponent because beating up Angle's goons

isn't working.

Batista still hasn't arrived.

And now the final Diva round, with Torrie hosting the final round alone. Everyone gets an entrance again (including measurements on a graphic of course). This is the swimsuit round so they all disrobe, the crowd approves and we have to wait on the winner. Joy wins the crowd vote for now. Amazingly enough, Joy wins by a huge margin after being the only contestant pushed on television for months. Another waste of time but with such a small card, it was the best they could do since adding another match or two would have been insanity.

We recap the #1 contenders tournament by looking at each match. The final for the Wrestlemania title shot is tonight.

#1 Contenders Tournament Finals: Kurt Angle vs. John Cena

Non-title and Angle is the hometown boy but Cena gets a bigger pop. A headlock takeover puts Cena down to start and a belly to belly lets Angle grab an arm trap choke. The fans think Angle sucks because he can't get respect in his home town. Back up and Cena gets his own headlock but Angle takes him down in a hurry and slaps on a front facelock.

They fight outside and Cena tackles him over the announcers' table, which Cole calls a drive by assault. Given that Cena dove onto Angle and landed on him, I don't think Cole knows what a drive by, where you DRIVE BY AND NOT INTO someone, means. Angle bails from an FU attempt and it's time to chill on the floor. Back in and Angle hits a release German suplex into the corner to rock Cena for the first time. A suplex gives Angle a pair of ones and a backbreaker gets two.

The bodyscissors goes on as Angle stays on the ribs. Angle adds a chinlock but that's just feeding a comeback, meaning Cena fires up and elbows his way to freedom. You don't do that to Angle though and it's time to roll some German suplexes. Now it's a chinlock with a knee in the back to punish Cena for that comeback. Cena doesn't learn so he fights up again and hits a flying shoulder for the double knockdown. The hard clothesline starts the next comeback so Angle rakes the eyes like a

veteran.

Cena on the other hand plants him with a spinebuster like a power guy in need of a hope spot. The ProtoBomb gives Cena two but the broken FU is countered into a belly to belly. Angle's victory roll into the ankle lock has Cena screaming until he rolls through to send Angle outside. As Angle comes back in, Cena scores with a top rope Fameasser for two and the kickout has Cena surprised. The FU gives Cena a delayed two but he doesn't realize it at first, allowing Angle to get back up as Cena celebrates. Angle goes right after the knee with some cannonballs and wraps around the post.

There's the Angle Slam but Angle goes for the ankle lock instead of a cover. As tends to be the case in Angle matches, a grab of the rope doesn't count and Angle puts on the grapevine. The second rope grab counts but Angle puts it on again. This time Cena crawls up the rope and the ref gets bumped as he pulls Angle forward. Angle is frustrated enough to go grab the chain but Cena breaks it up and hits the FU for the pin to go to Wrestlemania.

Rating: B. They had me worried about a Shawn Michaels run in at the end (the fans were cheering for it) because Cena needed to win this one on his own. He has all the momentum in the world but in this case he needed to win the big match to really validate himself. There is nothing holding him back now and pinning Angle is going to take him a long way as far as making him look legitimate.

Angle is ticked about the loss.

Batista is still not here over two hours into the show.

The cage is lowered.

We recap JBL vs. Big Show. They were both part of a triple threat match at the Royal Rumble but JBL pinned Angle to retain. Therefore, he gets to face Show in a barbed wire cage match so no one can interfere. Batista is hanging over the whole thing too, as he thinks JBL tried to run him over on Raw, sending Batista here to deal with him. There is still a chance that Batista will sign with Smackdown to face JBL at Wrestlemania. Right.

Smackdown World Title: Big Show vs. John Bradshaw Layfield

JBL is defending, there is barbed wire around the top of the ring, and you win by pinfall, submission or escape, though the door will not be an option. Show punches him in the head to start but JBL blocks some rams into the cage. You don't do that to Show, who hits him in the back a few times, only to have JBL get smart by going after the leg. JBL goes for a climb and quickly realizes that he's not going anywhere, allowing JBL to pull him back down. A suplex puts JBL down and the slow pace continues.

JBL manages to get up and send him into the cage for the first time for the first busting open. Since JBL still can't climb out, he comes back down and chokes away with a tag rope. Show doesn't seem to mind and comes back with a powerbomb to plant JBL. The champ is busted as well so Show sends him into the cage as the fans are just silent for this. JBL gets catapulted (monkey flipped according to Cole) into the cage as the Cabinet comes out for an attempted save.

Long comes out and says not so fast, making me wonder what the point of the barbed wire is if Long is watching the whole time. Orlando Jordan manages to slip JBL some bolt cutters though and a shot to the head drops Show. The Clothesline From JBL gets two so he tries again, only to charge into a chokeslam for two more. A low blow cuts Show down and JBL goes up but Show's save makes him drop the cutters.

They're both on top and that means a super chokeslam to send JBL through the ring. Show slowly climbs down and goes for the door, instead of PINNING THE GUY WHO WENT THROUGH A RING. Instead, he breaks the chain off the door and walks out....but JBL is on the floor because he crawled through the hole in the ring to retain. The camera didn't show inside the hole after Show got back down on the mat so it was a surprise, but the crowd was already deflated enough when that was announced.

Rating: D. What a perfect way to end such a terrible show. This was horrible with both guys looking bad and the admittedly creative ending being yet another way to let Bradshaw keep the title against all odds. It goes with the whole problem of the last month and a half: we know where the title reign is ending but it takes a lot of trickery to get us

all the way to Wrestlemania. Boring match for the most part too, which made things even worse.

Post match the cage is raised up and Show beats on JBL. The Cabinet runs in for the save but Batista, in his gear, makes the real save. Cena comes out to beat up JBL and gives him a spinebuster off the tech area through part of the set. Batista and Cena are both coming for the title to end the show.

Overall Rating: F+. Angle vs. Cena is quite good but it's just not enough to save this wretched show. The problem here is the same thing that I've mentioned multiple times: nothing on here, aside from Cena vs. Angle, feels like it's going to matter in a few weeks. Wrestlemania is all but destined to be Cena vs. JBL and Batista vs. HHH, making most of this feel like a waste of time. Throw in the Divas and the post main event segment only being able to drag this show to 2:35 and you can see a lot of the problems.

The other major issue here is how weak the rest of the roster really is. I kept thinking about how annoying it was to have the Divas out there three times instead of a match, but what else could they have put out there? Van Dam is hurt and I don't think I could take another Kenzo Suzuki or Rene Dupree match. The roster is just so depleted at the moment and a name or two desperately need to come over from Raw to breathe some life into this place. After this terrible show, that can't come soon enough. Awful pay per view.

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