

Wrestlemania Count-Up – Wrestlemania XVII (2013 Redo): It's A Bigger Gimmick Than You

Wrestlemania XVII

Date: April 1, 2001

Location: Astrodome, Houston, Texas

Attendance: 67,925

Commentators: Jim Ross, Paul Heyman

After putting up with last year's mess, this is my reward. Many people including myself consider this to be the greatest wrestling show of all time and I can't say I argue that point whatsoever. It's a four hour spectacular headlined by the main event to end all main events for this era: Austin vs. Rock II for the world title. Other matches on the card include HHH vs. Undertaker for the first time along with TLC II, Angle vs. Benoit and Vince vs. Shane to FINALLY end their drama. I'm getting antsy now so let's get to it.

The opening video is a history of Wrestlemania along with shots of people around the world watching it. This includes a couple watching it in the back of a car. What kind of a portable TV can get a PPV feed? Anyway this is an awesome video that makes Wrestlemania seem like a worldwide event that everyone can get into. That's an awesome idea and the video makes it work.

Intercontinental Title: Chris Jericho vs. William Regal

Jericho is defending and this is a result of him not liking Commissioner Regal's regime. Basically he thinks Regal is boring and therefore relieved himself in Regal's teapot. Regal responded by having the RTC and the Dudleys beat up Jericho on various nights. Jericho came back by dressing up by Doink for no apparent reason and putting Regal in the Walls of Jericho.

Regal pounds away to start but Jericho forearms him out to the floor. There's a big dive by the champion to take Regal down before he drops Sweet Willy B on the barricade. Back inside and a jumping back elbow off the top puts Regal down again before they head to the mat. Jericho tries for the Walls but Regal escapes and sends the still injured shoulder (from the aforementioned beatdowns) of Jericho into the post. A quick suplex gets two for Regal and it's back to the arm.

Jericho comes back with an elbow but Regal takes him down with a rollup for two more. Another suplex puts Jericho down again but Regal can't keep him down. The fans start cheering for Jericho as Regal takes off a turnbuckle pad. The referee is ok with this for some reason as Jericho's shoulder goes into the steel. Jericho comes back with a pair of enziguris before a middle rope missile dropkick gets two.

Jericho misses a charge in the corner and nearly hits the post head first. In a surprising move, Regal goes up top for a butterfly superplex which gets a delayed two. Jericho trips the legs and tries the Walls again but the shoulder gives out, allowing Regal to hook the Regal Stretch (STF with a half nelson) but Jericho makes the rope. Jericho fights back again but gets kicked in the shoulder, only to send Regal into the exposed buckle and hit the Lionsault to retain. That was a really sudden ending and JR sounded surprised so maybe it was called on the fly.

Rating: B-. This was exactly what an opener was supposed to be: fast paced, hard hitting and it told a good story. They beat on each other for seven minutes straight with nothing of note looking bad. The idea of the shoulder injury was a perfectly fine story to keep the match going and the Regal Stretch worked for a climax. This was a really good opener and it hit every point it was supposed to hit.

Shane McMahon in his WCW-1 limo shows up. He bought WCW on Monday, setting the stage for the Alliance.

Bradshaw is worried about Taz not being here for their match so he goes on one heck of a rant about how awesome Texas is before going on about how THIS IS WRESTLEMANIA.

Right to Censor vs. APA/Taz

The RTC is a censorship group with Val Venis, Goodfather and Bull Buchanan with Steven Richards outside. They censor stuff, the other three don't like it, let's fight. Oh and Jackie is with the good guys but no one cares about her. It's a big brawl to start with the RTC getting destroyed very quickly. We start with Faarooq vs. Buchanan with Bull hitting the climb the rope clothesline for an early two. Off to Taz who gets kicked in the head and triple teamed by RTC.

Venis comes in with some knees to the ribs for two before it's off to Goodfather. He continues the destruction of Taz including the non-Ho Train for no cover. There's the hot tag to Bradshaw as the beating shifts. Venis gets caught in the fallaway slam as everything breaks down. A double spinebuster crushes Venis and there's a belly to back superplex for good measure. Goodfather misses a charge in the corner and Bradshaw kills him dead with the Clothesline for the pin.

Rating: C-. This is pretty easily the worst match of the show and it's certainly not bad at all. This was short and almost sweet which is what it was supposed to be. The idea here was to have the censors get beaten up by the Texan and give the fans a good feeling which is exactly what happened. Not a good match or anything but it's completely watchable.

Trish wheels in the comatose Linda to be in attendance for Vince destroying Shane later. Your McMahon Drama Recap of the Night: Vince is screwing Trish while Linda has been medicated to the point where she can't move while Stephanie is being Daddy's Little Girl. Stephanie tells Trish to be ready for the celebration post match and Trish is perfectly fine with this. Yep, perfectly.

Hardcore Title: Raven vs. Big Show vs. Kane

Raven is defending and brings out a shopping cart of goodies with him. Before Show is here, Raven tries to jump Kane for no apparent reason. My guess would be drug related mental issues but that's just speculation. Show makes the LONG walk down the aisle, only to have Raven tossed over the top rope and down onto him. Raven is easily caught so Kane dives off the top and takes them both out, getting two on Kane.

We head into the crowd with Show never getting into the ring and the brawl is on. Bird Boy's philosophy seems to be let the monsters brawl and sneak in some shots where he can. A street sign to Kane's head staggers him, only for Kane to throw Raven nearly through a wall. Show chases Raven away and tries to lock themselves into a kind of storage area. Kane will have none of that and breaks the door down to keep beating up Big Show.

Raven tries to choke Kane with a gardening hose but Kane basically lassos him with it before throwing Raven through the window of a small office. Show knocks Kane through the office door before they brawl through the wall between the offices. Raven stomps away before stealing a golf cart, only to have Big Show jump on the back.

Kane steals one of his own and brings the referee along on the chase. According to Raven, there was supposed to be a chase scene around the arena but it never happened. Also they almost hit some cables that would have cut the power to the entire stadium, which would have been awesome and awful at the same time. They fight to the catering area and the Snapple is destroyed, much to Heyman's chagrin.

Now we head back up the steps to the stage where Kane goes nuts on Big Show, only to get clotheslined back down. Show loads up a gorilla press on Raven but Kane kicks them both off the stage. A legdrop from Kane onto Show is enough for the pin and the title in a crushed part of the set.

Rating: C+. This is a fun hardcore match with the cool brawling spots mixed with the fun and goofy stuff which is how you make for a good hardcore match. These kind of matches were rare, but for the most part this was a more serious kind of Hardcore Title match, which usually makes things better. Kane would hold the title for awhile before it fell back into the goofy style.

Angle tells Edge and Christian that he didn't tap out to Benoit because there wasn't an official bell or an official referee, so it wasn't an official tap out. The Canadians slowly walk away.

Jimmy Snuka is at WWF New York.

A fan from Australia is here. That's rather cool.

The Rock arrives, 40 minutes into the show.

European Title: Eddie Guerrero vs. Test

Test is defending and Eddie has the Perry Saturn with him. Eddie tries to jump him to start but gets thrown around by the pure power of the champion. A spinning powerbomb gets two for Test and they head to the floor almost immediately. Back in and Eddie gets in a shot to take over before pounding away in the corner. The champion comes back with a clothesline for two before heading up top.

While up there though Test has to counter a hurricanrana before hitting a jumping back elbow to the face for two. A big boot from the champion misses Eddie though, causing Test's ankle to be caught in the rope. The match has to stop for a second to get him loose because Eddie can't pin him while in the ropes. Eddie stomps away on the leg on the floor a bit before heading back inside to work on it in the ring.

Off to a sleeper by Guerrero now as the fans seem to be getting a bit bored. Test fights out of it after a few moments and hits the tilt-a-whirl slam to put both guys down. Another tilt-a-whirl ends in a powerbomb for two for Test but Eddie kicks him low to break up a full nelson slam. Saturn slips in while the referee is yelling at Eddie for the Moss Covered Three Handled Family Credenza (a swinging neckbreaker), giving Eddie a two count.

Test gets back up and hits a pumphandle powerslam for two before kicking Saturn's head off. Eddie gets kicked as well but they have to wait for Dean Malenko to come down for his run-in, causing a stupid looking (fits Test perfectly) pause. As Test beats up Dean, Eddie gets the title belt and hits the champ with it for the pin and the title.

Rating: D+. Again, if this is the worst match I have to watch, I'm going to be perfectly fine with this. Test was fine here with Eddie doing almost all of the work and making things as simple for Test as possible. It's pretty dull stuff but another Texan winning isn't going to hurt things at all, especially with it just being for the lower midcard title.

Mick Foley promises to call the street fight fairly.

Austin is here, 55 minutes late.

Kurt Angle vs. Chris Benoit

On his way to the ring, Angle rips on Texas for various reasons, primarily the lone star flag. Oh and cowboy hats are stupid. This match was made on Raw because neither guy had anything to do for Wrestlemania. It's as simple as it sounds, but do you need anything more than that for this pairing? Angle still insists that he didn't tap out to Benoit on Raw. Heyman: "This is as excited as a man can get with his clothes on."

Angle takes it to the mat to start which is fine with Benoit as the struggle begins. Benoit sits out and it's a standoff, drawing a nice ovation from the crowd. It worked so well before that they do it again, drawing a bigger ovation this time. Angle hits a kind of suplex to take it to the mat for a third time but Benoit sits out again as they fight for position. They roll into the ropes for another break and the fans are pleased yet again.

Benoit takes it to the mat again and tries the Crossface, sending Angle into the safety of the ropes. Kurt bails to the floor for a breather as he isn't sure what to do with Benoit here. Back in and Angle has to get to a rope to escape another Crossface attempt. Angle blasts Benoit with a right hand to shift the style and momentum here as they head outside. Benoit goes first into the announce table and shoulder first into the steps to keep Kurt in control.

Back in and Angle gets two off a belly to back suplex. A belly to belly gets no cover by Kurt and neither does the second one Angle hits in a row. Benoit comes back with a clothesline as the only advantage of the match so far is gone. Benoit starts slugging away in the corner before hitting a knee to Angle's ribs. A back elbow to Angle's face gets two as does a snap suplex ala Dynamite Kid. Benoit follows up with a superplex and holds his neck afterwards. He would be about three months from neck surgery that put him out for over a year.

Speaking of neck injuring suplexes, Benoit rolls some Germans but Angle

rolls through the third one into the ankle lock. Benoit escapes that into an ankle lock of his own for good measure. The stealing finishers was one of Angle's major deals so this shouldn't be a surprise. Benoit tries the Crossface but Angle blocks it from going on full. Angle puts Benoit in the Crossface for good measure but Benoit gets a foot on the ropes.

Angle accidentally charges into the referee, just before Benoit puts Angle in the Crossface for an unseen tap out. Benoit releases the hold and gets caught in the Angle Slam for two. Angle's moonsault hits Benoit's knees, allowing Benoit to go up for the Swan Dive. That gets two, but Angle rolls through and hooks the tights for the win.

Rating: B+. It's Angle vs. Benoit at Wrestlemania. Did you expect this to be anything less than awesome? This wasn't as good as their masterpiece at the 2003 Rumble, but it would be a match of the year candidate on any other show. That's what you expect from these two though, and this is an excellent match that is overshadowed by the rematches they would have later.

William Regal is annoyed at Michael Cole but walks into his office to see Kamala standing on his desk and rubbing the picture of Queen Elizabeth on his stomach. It's as disturbing as it sounds.

We get a video from the Wrestlemania pep rally at Fort Hood in Texas with a bunch of wrestlers and Divas. There was a parade and the commander got a chair. The WWE people got plaques and Lita looks so unimpressed it's unreal. Angle of course would rather have a medal. This was pretty cool.

Angle says he won but Benoit jumps him and puts on another Crossface, making Kurt tap again.

We recap Chyna hurting her neck and then coming back as a Playboy cover girl. This doesn't sit well with the RTC, who injured her neck in the first place. Tonight it's Ivory vs. Chyna for the Women's Title again, but this is more about revenge than the title.

Women's Title: Chyna vs. Ivory

For one of the only times ever, Chyna looks great here. Ivory holds the

belt to her face before the bell, but the referee is shoved away to let Ivory hit Chyna in the back with said title. Ivory gets in a few more shots but Chyna catches a boot in the corner. The destruction begins and Ivory is beaten down in the corner. A powerbomb kills Ivory dead but Chyna pulls her up at two. Instead it's a gorilla press slam for the pin and the title. Chyna would bail on the company about a month later without ever losing the title.

Vince gives Trish some instructions about Linda tonight, making sure that Linda won't be brought out until Shane is totally immobile. Cole comes in to ask about Monday night so Vince promises something shocking tonight.

We recap Vince demanding a divorce from Linda while openly having an affair with Trish. Linda had a breakdown so Vince had her medicated to the point that she was basically a vegetable. Shane returned to destroy Vince and challenged him to a match at Wrestlemania. Vince said ok but there were bigger things to take care of.

On March 26, Vince appeared on Nitro saying that he had bought his competition. At the end of the broadcast though, Shane appeared as well, saying that he had bought WCW when Vince had waited too long. Vince had wanted to sign the contracts here at Mania, allowing Shane to swoop in and steal it. I'm thinking that's not legal, but it's wrestling so how much sense does it need to make?

Vince McMahon vs. Shane McMahon

This is a street fight of course with Mick Foley as guest referee. Shane has some WCW "stars" in a private box. You can see Shawn Stasiak, Stacy Keibler and I think Bobby Eaton up there. Stephanie is here with Vince but Trish and Linda are being saved for later. Vince slaps Shane and we're ready to go in a hurry. Shane gets pounded down in the corner but comes back with a spear and a bunch of elbow drops.

Stephanie gets in the ring and slaps Shane in the face, causing a chase sequence. Shane stops to hit Vince in the head with a sign before beating him over and over in the back. A clothesline off the barricade puts Vince down again before Shane whips him into the barricade. Shane blasts him in the back with a kendo stick over and over before peppering him with left

jabs and a big right cross. Other than the brief flurry to start this is all Shane.

A monitor shot to Vince's head knocks him out so Shane can put him on the announce table. For the big spot of the match, Shane loads up the top rope elbow through the table but Stephanie pulls Vince away, sending Shane crashing through the table. Here come Trish and Linda with Linda completely sedated. Vince wakes up and sees them there so Trish helps him to his feet, with an AMAZING cleavage shot.

Trish surprises everyone by slapping Vince, turning face in the process. Stephanie goes after Trish, triggering a catfight in the ring. Mick pulls Stephanie off of Trish, only to get slapped in the face for his efforts. Stephanie runs from Trish and does the worst looking fall in the history of bad looking falls to let Trish catch up before leaving the arena. Back at ringside Vince wakes up and calls his wife a very bad name but Foley stops any potential domestic violence. Vince is fine with that and blasts Mick in the back with a chair.

The oldest McMahon puts Linda into the ring as Shane is still out cold. Linda is sat in the corner of the ring in a chair as Vince throws Shane back into the ring. Now it's time for four garbage cans to be thrown in as well so Shane can get beaten up yet again. Vince picks up the third can but as he takes too long, Linda stands up to an ERUPTION from the crowd. She kicks Vince between the legs to stun him, allowing Foley to come in and beat the tar out of the owner of the company. Mick knocks Vince down in the corner and Shane hits the Coast to Coast dropkick, sending a garbage can into Vince's face for the academic pin.

Rating: B. All things considered, this was excellent. This is what you call intricate storytelling with at least five feuds/stories (Vince vs. Shane, Vince vs. Mick, Vince vs. Linda, Stephanie vs. Linda, Trish's turn) being blown off in one single match. On top of that, the match wasn't that bad with some decent bumps considering that they're both non-wrestlers. The drama was the key here though and it worked REALLY well.

The Hardys aren't sure if any of the three teams will ever be the same after TLC II.

HHH and Undertaker are getting ready. To this day I still want one of those X7 baseball jerseys. They were AWESOME.

Tag Titles: Dudley Boyz vs. Hardy Boyz vs. Edge and Christian

The Dudleys are the champions coming in. There's no story to it, but was there ever to one of these things? Edge and Christian get double teamed to start and the Dudleyz hit a double flapjack on Christian. Both sets of Boys fight in the corner with Jeff hitting Poetry in Motion on both at once. Cue Edge and Christian again with the ladder before Edge brings in a chair. The Canadians put Matt in the Tree of Woe and stand on his crotch. No wonder Lita left him for Edge.

Edge stats to climb but Matt makes the stop and goes up himself. That goes badly for him of course as Edge uses the chair as a stepping stone to take Matt down with a clothesline. Jeff dropkicks Edge off the ladder before joining with his brother to dropkick a ladder into the Dudleys' faces. There are two ladders in the ring now in opposite corners. Christian is slammed down and hit with a stereo splash/legdrop from the Hardys. The Dudleys are back in now and there's What's Up.

It's Table Time with Edge being placed on the first one, but Jeff tries a hurricanrana to Bubba, only to be powerbombed through Edge through the table. This is nonstop action so far. The Dudleys set up four tables at ringside as Paul tells us of Big Daddy Dudley's construction company in Dudleyville. Currently there's a table in the corner and three ladders in the ring. Bubba picks up a ladder and CRACKS Matt in the head with it before setting it up next to the other two. All three are set up in a row in the middle of the ring so here's a six way climb.

Matt and Christian go flying first with Matt landing on the ropes and Christian falling all the way to the floor. Jeff and D-Von fall into the opposite ropes and Edge and Bubba fall backwards, to put all six guys down. Edge is the only one halfway standing and Christian sets up a table on the floor. Bubba dumps a ladder to the floor to clear the ring out a bit as Spike Dudley, Bubba and D-Von's cousin, runs in. He hits Edge low and puts Christian through a table with the Dudley Dog off the apron.

Edge and Christian's friend Rhyno runs in and destroys everyone in sight

before sending Edge up the ladder to get the belts. Cue Lita to jerk Edge off. The ladder. Anyway with the thong sticking WAY out, Rhyno picks her up but gets hit low by Spike. Lita goes up for a rana on Rhyno and Spike cracks him in the head with a chair, sending Rhyno into the ladder, knocking Edge into the ropes. A Doomsday Device puts Rhyno down again but Lita CRACKS Spike in the head with a chair. She then takes off her top, giving us the biggest pop of the night. Not that it matters as she walks into a 3D and is now done for the match.

The Canadians come back in with chairs to take the champions out before Christian brings out the huge ladder. It's on the floor but it's still taller than the ones in the ring. Jeff, ever the crazy man, goes ALL THE WAY to the top and hits a Swanton onto Spike and Rhyno (read as Rhyno barely gets hit and Spike takes every bit of it). The super ladder is set up in the ring now and it's a race between D-Von and Christian. Matt moves the ladder away, leaving both guys hanging from the cord holding the belts.

Both guys fall down, but Jeff gets up on a regular ladder and tries to walk on the other small ladders like a tightrope. Jeff loses his balance though and has to hang from the cord as well. Bubba grabs the ladder and walks away with it while Jeff's feet are still in it, pulling Jeff's body back. The feet pull away and Jeff swings forward, right into a spear from Edge off the super ladder, drawing a BIG gasp from the crowd. That's the spot that made everyone realize Edge was going to be something VERY special.

Matt and Bubba go up on the super ladder, but Rhyno shoves it over, sending them crashing through the four tables at ringside. D-Von goes up now but Edge grabs his feet, allowing Rhyno to give Christian enough of a boost to beat D-Von to the top and get the titles, finally ending this carnage.

Rating: A+. If you're looking for pure insanity and non-stop violence, this is the pinnacle of the genre. These nine people went for over fifteen minutes and never once stopped beating on each other. The spots are insane and the big spots still have you in awe. This match holds up incredibly well and is just as impressive as it was twelve years ago.

Absolute masterpiece that blows away every MITB match that I can remember.

Video on Axxess. I need to go to that someday.

We get the all time attendance record announcement: 67,925. That's AWESOME.

Now for the fun part of the show to give the fans a chance to breathe. Here are MEAN FREAKING GENE OKERLUND and Bobby Heenan to do commentary for the next match.

Gimmick Battle Royal

Luke, Butch, Duke Droese, Iron Sheik, Earthquake, The Goon, Doink, Kamala, Kimchee, Repo Man, Jim Cornette, Nikolai Volkoff, Michael Hayes, One Man Gang (He couldn't fit into the Akeem gear), Gobbledy Gooker (complete with video from Survivor Series 1990), Tugboat, Hillbilly Jim (biggest reaction of the entrants), Brother Love, Sgt. Slaughter

Take eighteen of the goofiest gimmicks of all time, throw them in a match, have fun. I thought this was awesome when I was 13 and it's still awesome to this day. The entrances take nearly three times longer than the match but that's beside the point. Repo Man is put out in about two seconds as is the Gooker. Quake puts Tugboat out before Kamala throws him out as well.

People are thrown out right and left with Doink being eliminated to a chorus of booing. The final four are Brother Love, Slaughter, Hillbilly Jim and the Sheik. Within about 12 seconds it's down to Sheik and Jim with Sheik winning because he can't go over the top to the floor. This was like three minutes long and it worked just fine all things considered. Slaughter puts Sheik in the Cobra Clutch post match.

We recap HHH vs. Undertaker. HHH beat Austin at No Way Out and then said there was nobody left for him to beat, so here came the Dead Man. HHH jumped him from behind and choked him with a chair a week later. Taker came back with a pipe, earning himself a restraining order from Stephanie.

There was no restraining order against Undertaker's brother Kane though, so he kidnapped Stephanie and threatened to throw her off a balcony unless Taker got a one on one match with HHH at Wrestlemania. HHH responded by destroying Undertaker's motorcycle. Taker called the ring his yard, giving HHH the great line of "Your yard is in the middle of his world." This was the match I was looking forward to more than any other on the card.

HHH vs. Undertaker

Taker gets to do his long bike ride down the aisle, meaning he can speed it way up, which looks pretty awesome. I use that word a lot in this but it's true. The fight starts on the floor with HHH losing a slugout. They break ANOTHER Spanish announce table with Taker still pounding away. We get in the ring for the opening bell where HHH hitting the jumping knee to the face. Taker has no interest in selling that though and pounds on HHH in the corner even more.

A big backdrop puts HHH down as do some clotheslines in the corner. Taker powerslams the Game down and there's the jumping clothesline to do it again. HHH breaks up Old School though and hits a neckbreaker for two. A few elbows to Taker's neck have him in even more trouble and there's a neckbreaker for two. See what psychology is like? It's not that hard. Taker comes back with rapid fire punches but gets caught in a facebuster.

HHH goes to the floor and gets the sledgehammer but the referee takes it away from him. Instead HHH loads up a Pedigree but gets catapulted into the referee, crushing him in the process. There's a chokeslam to HHH but the referee is slow to count, meaning it only gets two. Taker beats up the referee to knock him out cold before throwing HHH out to the floor. HHH is backdropped into the crowd and the brawl is on. Taker punches him up to the tech area which is a very rare sight.

HHH tries to climb away to escape, but he climbs up higher and higher. Taker catches him anyway and pounds him in the head before sending him up to the next level. HHH finds a chair and blasts him ten straight times about the head and body. He loads up another shot to the head but Taker grabs him by the throat and chokeslams HHH off the tower onto something

we can't see. It winds up being a crash pad but the throw looked GREAT. Taker wants more and drops an elbow off the tower down onto HHH for good measure.

Before HHH can be taken to the back by EMTs, Taker beats him up even more and even knocks down the medics. We head back to the ring where the referee hasn't moved for six minutes and hasn't been looked at whatsoever. Back to the ring with HHH basically dead. Taker picks up the sledgehammer but HHH kicks him low to save his life. A big boot to the face of HHH takes him down though and it's time for a slugout.

HHH loads up a Tombstone but since he's not Kane (or Sid apparently, Taker easily counters into one of his own. There's STILL no referee though as he's been out cold for ten minutes (from a kick in the back and an elbow drop mind you). Taker finally shakes him back to life before loading up the Last Ride. HHH grabs the sledgehammer though and knocks Undertaker silly with it....for two. I lost my mind on that kickout back in the day.

Taker is busted open and HHH is having a fit. The Game pounds away at the cut in the corner but makes the fatal mistake of going to the middle rope for more leverage, allowing Taker to grab the Last Ride to plant HHH and make himself 9-0 at Wrestlemania. Taker lays on the ropes after the match and the shot of him busted open but smiling is sweet.

Rating: A. This is one of the great matches that no one talks about for various reasons ranging from their rematches to the match that immediately followed it. It's absolutely great though with both guys beating the tar out of each other and some excellent drama on the near falls. This was the match that made sure you knew Taker was still a player while keeping HHH strong at the same time. Great fight.

Some fan won a contest here because of a poster.

As JR says, the time is upon us.

We recap Austin vs. Rock II which is summed up by one line from Austin: "The fact is Rock, you got the WWF Title and I want it." This is backed up by the mother of all hype videos, set to My Way by Limp Bizkit. I'm

not a fan of their music but this video is AMAZING. Debra was originally involved but thankfully that was dropped after about eight seconds. This was the best kind of build there was: take two superstars who seemingly cannot lose and put them together in a title match. These two beat on each other for months on end until this night arrived.

WWF World Title: Steve Austin vs. The Rock

Heyman says this is the match that both men need to win and neither man can afford to lose. Right before the entrances, Fink tells us that this is now No DQ, which is a surprise to everyone. Austin's pop is awe inspiring as the face absolutely lose their minds at his entrance. Rock gets a VERY mixed reaction as Austin is a folk hero here in Texas. The brawl is on immediately and Austin hits the Thesz Press and middle finger elbow, only to be taken down by a swinging neckbreaker. The Rock Bottom and Stunner are countered and Austin throws Rock to the floor. We're maybe 45 seconds in at this point.

They fight into the crowd with Rock taking over with more right hands. Back to ringside with Austin hitting a clothesline to put Rock down before adjusting his knee brace for a bit. They're back in the ring now with Austin hitting a running crotch attack in 619 position followed by a superplex for the first two count of the match. Austin takes off the turnbuckle pad and pounds away to A LOT of booing from the crowd. A back elbow gets two for Rock before he clotheslines Austin to the floor.

They fight over to the announce table with Austin coming back with a bell shot to the face. Rock is knocked onto the announce table which breaks a few seconds later. We head back inside for Austin to pound away to even more pops from the crowd. Rock comes back with right hands but Austin drops both him and a leg for two. Rock is busted open and Austin chokes away in the corner. Austin stops to yell at the referee and gets his head taken off by a lariat from Rock.

The champion pounds away with right hands before getting the bell. It goes upside the head of the also bloody Austin but only gets two. We're at the point now where the pinfall attempts get more and more intense. Rock keeps pounding away but Austin won't stay down. Back to the floor

with Austin firing off more fists as JR is in all his glory calling it. A slingshot sends Rock head first into the post and man did he BOUNCE off that thing. Back inside and Rock scoops the legs for the Sharpshooter in a call back to WM 13 where Austin is dripping blood while in the hold. He makes the rope this time though and we keep going.

Rock flips Austin off, earning himself a Sharpshooter from Austin. Well there's a twist. It's a terrible Sharpshooter but it gets the job done. Rock powers out though with blood dripping in between his teeth, again ala Mania 13. Back to the Sharpshooter on Rock but he makes the rope this time to escape again. Austin busts out the Million Dollar Dream of all things and the bloody Rock is in trouble. Rock fights up though and we get another callback to a Bret vs. Austin masterpiece with Rock climbing the rope and backflipping onto Austin for two, making him break the hold in the process.

Out of nowhere Rock hits a Stunner on Austin but he can't follow up. It eventually gets two...and here's Vince. Austin's whip spienbuster gets two but he walks into one by Rock which sets up the People's Elbow. Vince breaks it up though by pulling Rock off Austin, earning himself a death stare from the champion. Now we know something is afoot given the history between Vince and Austin. Rock chases Vince but runs into a Rock Bottom from Austin for another very close two.

The Stunner is countered and Hebner is knocked to the floor, allowing Austin to hit a low blow. Vince brings in a chair and clocks Rock with it on Austin's instructions, getting another delayed two count. Now the fans are cheering for Rock a lot more but aren't as pleased when Rock hits a Rock Bottom out of nowhere. Vince gets pulled into the ring for a beatdown but it's a Stunner to Rock for only two. That probably should have been the finish, but instead Austin gets the chair and gives Rock the mother of all beatdowns with it, hitting him SIXTEEN TIMES. Rock is DEAD and Austin covers the body for the pin and the title.

Rating: A+. Yes there's kind of weak ending, yes there were some lame points, but it's Rock vs. Austin II for the world title in the main event of Wrestlemania. This is a masterpiece by definition alone. I think I might be the only person on the planet that likes this turn still, but it

was in front of the wrong crowd. If this was ANY other state in the country it would have been booed like there was no tomorrow, but instead gets cheered, which is where the problem came from. Still though, excellent match and worthy of being the main event of the greatest show ever.

Vince and Austin shake hands, officially ending the Attitude Era. Beer is consumed and Rock is hit with the belt one more time for good measure.

Overall Rating: A++. It's the greatest show of all time. Normally I would say if there was a rating higher than an A+ it would get that, so now there's a rating of A++ for this show and this show alone. With a mind blowing four matches at B+ or higher and absolutely nothing bad at all, how can this not be the best show ever? I've seen this show several dozen times and it doesn't get old no matter how many times I see it. It's still excellent and needs to be seen by all fans.

Ratings Comparison

Chris Jericho vs. William Regal

Original: B

Redo: B-

Right to Censor vs. Tazz/A.P.A.

Original: C-

Redo: C-

Raven vs. Kane vs. Big Show

Original: C+

Redo: C+

Eddie Guerrero vs. Test

Original: C-

Redo: D+

Kurt Angle vs. Chris Benoit

Original: B+

Redo: B+

Chyna vs. Ivory

Original: N/A

Redo: N/A

Vince McMahon vs. Shane McMahon

Original: B

Redo: B

Edge and Christian vs. Hardy Boyz vs. Dudley Boyz

Original: A+

Redo: A+

Gimmick Battle Royal

Original: N/A

Redo: N/A

Undertaker vs. HHH

Original: A+

Redo: A

Steve Austin vs. The Rock

Original: A+

Redo: A+

Overall Rating

Original: A+

Redo: A++

Yep it holds up.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/03/24/history-of-wrestlemania-with-kb-wrestlemania-17-oh-yes/>

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