

# Wrestlemania Count-Up – Wrestlemania XX (2018 Redo): Home Again

## Wrestlemania XX

Date: March 14, 2004

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

Attendance: 18,500

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

We have arrived right back where we started. There is something special about a WWE show in Madison Square Garden and there was really no other option for such a big milestone. You could argue that it's a triple main event with Goldberg vs. Brock Lesnar and Eddie Guerrero vs. Kurt Angle, but really this is going to be about HHH, Chris Benoit and Shawn Michaels, as it really should be. Let's get to it.

Here are last week's [Raw results](#) and [Smackdown results](#) if you need a recap.

The Harlem Boys Choir sings America the Beautiful. That's one of those Wrestlemania traditions that always makes me smile.

It's so strange seeing Wrestlemania in an arena instead of a stadium.

The opening video starts with Vince McMahon in the dark and turns into a talk of the history of Wrestlemania. That means old Wrestlemania clips and I'm always good with those. WWE does know how to do these historical videos and you know they're going to do it well on such a big occasion. The wrestlers talk about the importance of the Garden and how big this one night really is. We go back to Vince with the narration talking about how it all begins again, and the camera pans over to Shane, holding Vince's newborn first grandson. That's a really, really cool idea.

The ramp is on the left but there's a small video screen opposite the hard camera as a nice homage to the old days in the Garden.

## US Title: John Cena vs. Big Show

Show is defending for the third time since winning the title in October. Before the match, Cena says he isn't losing to a gorilla like Big Show and implies that Show has small genitals. They stare each other down and Cena starts sticking and moving in a smart strategy. Well smart enough until Show shoves him to the floor.

Back in and a powerslam gets two on Cena, who gets a very loud chant from the crowd. Another slam keeps the pace slow and Show easily pulls him up for a suplex. Cole is hitting every Show line he can get, including the size 22 5E boot, the typewriter head and the frying pan chop. I don't even want to imagine how much Vince is in his ear on this show. Cena's comeback is cut off by a superkick and the standing legdrop gets two.

Show slaps on a cobra clutch and of course Cena fights up after a few moments. A raised boot in the corner sets up an FU (that never stops being impressive) for two and Cena is STUNNED. He's so stunned that he grabs the chain but the referee takes it away, allowing Cena to hit Show with the brass knuckles, setting up another FU for the pin and the title.

**Rating:** D+. The crowd pulled this one up a bit though it's still not a very good match. Show wasn't exactly going to do anything at this point and that was on full display here. That being said, Cena hitting the FU for the pin was all that mattered and they nailed the finish. What more can you ask?

Jonathan Coachman is walking through the back and runs into a few people, such as Tom Prichard and Teddy Long, before finding Eric Bischoff and Johnny Spade/Blaze/whatever else. Eric has a job for him tonight: go find the Undertaker because there have been reports of strange noises.

Evolution (minus HHH of course) is in the same stairwell where Randy Orton kicked Mick Foley down the stairs to start their issues last June. We see some clips that really set up tonight's match, mostly including Orton and Evolution beating up Foley and later, the Rock. Orton says it all begins again here, right where it started. Nice stuff here, as you can tell they're working hard for Wrestlemania.

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

Booker and Van Dam are defending and it's one fall to a finish. Van Dam starts with Dupree and sends the French guy flying off a monkey flip. It's off to Booker to beat up both Dupree and Conway so it's Bubba coming in for some more successful forearms to the back. Say it with me: the fans want tables. For those fans who aren't impressed enough by WRESTLEMANIA I guess.

Booker hits the side kick but Jindrak has the referee, allowing D-Von to make the save. Jindrak and Cade, thankfully in matching gear, take over with left hands to the face but Dupree tags himself in to steal a near fall. The double arm crank allows Conway to insult USA, which fires Booker up enough to hit a spinebuster. The hot tag brings in Van Dam to clean house as everything breaks down. Jindrak breaks up a 3D to Booker, who hits the ax kick into the Five Star on Conway to retain.

**Rating:** D. For the last few weeks, I've said that I didn't think this warranted being on Wrestlemania. I'd now like to change that to knowing that it shouldn't have been on Wrestlemania. The match doesn't even run eight minutes and Booker was in there for more than six of those. Just do the Dudleys vs. Booker/Van Dam, or any of the regular teams for that matter. I mean, the better move would have been to not do the match and let the show be a bit shorter but that's never been WWE's style.

Coach investigates the sounds and finds Gene Okerlund and Bobby Heenan (BIG pop for those two) in a small room, pulling their clothes back on. Heenan insists that it's NOT that kind of thing because they were playing cards. Heenan: "He was dealing!" Fabulous Moolah and Mae Young pull them back in, despite their screaming protests. Heenan: "I haven't been well! My doctor would never allow me to go!" Coach just walks away. To be fair, this is way above his talent grade.

We recap Christian vs. Chris Jericho. They were best friends and made a bet over who could get together with Trish Stratus or Lita first. The girls found out about the bet and Trish snapped, only to have Jericho say he was falling for her. Jericho and Christian's team suffered though and

he attacked Jericho in the name of tough love. Christian even hit on Trish a bit as well, but then put her out of action with a Walls of Jericho. Now it's time for Jericho to fight back in the first big showdown.

### Christian vs. Chris Jericho

Jericho wastes no time by punching him in the jaw and adding a clothesline for a bonus. A backdrop puts Christian on the floor and Jericho follows him out with a springboard dive. Back in and Christian backdrops him over the top and the big crash has Jericho in trouble for the first time. Back in and Christian cranks on the neck, followed by a chinlock for a change of pace.

A spinwheel kick gives Christian two but they ram heads to knock each other down. An exchange of rollups with an exchange of cheating get two each so Jericho goes with the bulldog. The Lionsault hits knees though and Christian grabs a backbreaker for two of his own. Christian grabs a Texas Cloverleaf to work on Jericho's recently injured knee, which the announcers don't actually mention.

That's one of the reasons I was looking forward to watching this show with the TV beforehand. The Cloverleaf makes more sense when you know Jericho is coming in with a recent injury, but the commentators don't bother mentioning it here, making the Cloverleaf seem a bit random. Jericho slips out and sends Christian to the floor, followed by a butterfly superplex for a delayed two. I believe there was a botched attempt that has been edited out of the Network version.

They're both down so here's Trish, with Lawler saying she can make jogging a spectator sport. An implant DDT gives Christian two and he drags Trish inside. Jericho makes the save and checks on her but Trish accidentally elbows him in the face. Christian's rollup gives him the surprise pin.

**Rating:** B. This whole story has always been one of my favorites so it's cool to see the match be a good one. It's certainly no classic but Christian winning was the right call and the story can move forward from here. Both guys have gotten something out of this story and Trish is

advancing as well. Good match, easily the best thing on the card so far.

Post match Trish apologizes to Jericho as Christian runs back in. Trish tries to hold Jericho back and then slaps him in the face over and over, morphing into Evil Trish (works for me), allowing Christian to hit the Unprettier. Christian and Trish leave but stop to kiss on the stage. This worked for everyone, especially Trish who works far better in this role.

A serious Mick Foley is getting ready in the back but Rock pops in to hijack the interview. Rock is very fired up to be in the Garden and it's time to have the cameraman see who all is here. We have Hurricane and Rosey (another case that isn't as random when you've seen the recent TV), Don Muraco and Jimmy Snuka and of course the people, with the camera going inside the arena for a shot of the crowd. They're going to take care of Evolution tonight, if ya smell what the Rock (Foley: "And Sock!") is cooking. You can tell Rock is extra fired up here.

#### Evolution vs. The Rock/Mick Foley

The energy is really high here. I always forget how young Foley looks here, mainly because he's only 38. He retired at 34 so it's not like he's some guy who is fifteen years past his prime. Rock N Sock clears the ring to start, wisely making sure to double team Batista. Rock and Flair start things off with Rock offering his own strut. They head to the floor with Flair poking him in the eye (pop for that), only to get backdropped down.

Foley is right there with the elbow off the apron so it's off to Foley vs. Orton (another pop from the hot crowd). That sends Orton bailing to the floor, because going outside against Mick Foley is a great idea. Back in and Orton get tied in the Tree of Woe for a rather low (Or is it high?) right hand. Batista low bridges Rock to the floor though and drops him face first onto the barricade to take over. Flair comes in (Flair: "All right!") for some of the loudest chops I've ever heard him throw but one strut too many allows Rock to get in a clothesline.

Just because he has to, Flair goes up (Lawler: "Oh no.") and get slammed down. Batista comes in but quickly allows the hot tag to Foley. Some right hands in the corner have Batista in trouble but he comes out with the big running clothesline to send Foley outside. Orton sends Foley hard

(and loud) into the steps and it's Flair coming in for more loud chops. These are even more impressive with Foley wearing a shirt so the sound is toned down a bit.

Orton rips at Foley's face and hair as they're doing a great job at building the energy up for the hot tag. Batista comes back in and walks into a swinging neckbreaker. A double clothesline to Batista and a forearm to Flair are enough for the tag to Rock and house is cleaned quickly. The numbers game cuts him off and Flair loads up his own People's Elbow, with more strutting than should be legally allowed. It takes so long that Rock nips up and spinebusters Flair, setting up the real People's Elbow, with a Rock strut because of course, for two.

Orton walks into the Rock Bottom for the same but Batista comes in for a Batista Bomb. That's only good for a near fall in the same way Orton won at Survivor Series last year. The second hot tag brings in Foley to finally face off with Orton, meaning the double arm DDT connects in a hurry. It's time for Mr. Socko but Orton grabs the RK0 out of nowhere for the pin. Foley looks around to see what happened and Orton is shocked, both adding a great touch.

**Rating:** B+. This one has really grown on me over the years with all five guys playing their roles well. You knew Rock and Flair were going to ham it up out there and Batista is really starting to figure out the power monster role. Then you have Foley, who came off like the old serious version out there and looked like someone who could still beat anyone on the right night. Orton winning on a surprise RK0 was the perfect ending with he and Foley reacting to it perfectly. Just a great performance from all five guys and an outstanding spectacle that paves the way for Orton vs. Foley.

Rock and Foley are upset by the loss but get the big ovation with Foley getting the bigger share.

Video on last night's Hall of Fame induction ceremony. Heenan's line of "I wish Monsoon was here" is one of the only things in wrestling that makes me tear up a bit.

Here's Gene Okerlund to present the class:

Bobby Heenan (still playing to the crowd as he's presented)

Tito Santana (one of my all time favorites)

Big John Studd (represented by his kids)

Harley Race (somehow looking younger than he did in WCW)

Pete Rose (booed heavily, though said to be incredibly gracious for the induction)

Don Muraco (in a Hawaiian shirt under his coat)

Greg Valentine (bigger reaction than you might think, and WHY DOES HE NEVER AGE???)

Junkyard Dog (represented by his daughter)

Billy Graham (biggest reaction so far)

Sgt. Slaughter (gets a loud USA chant and plays to the crowd as well)

Jesse Ventura (It wouldn't have been Wrestlemania without him)

This was much more a tribute to the earlier days of Wrestlemania but it didn't have the big time headliner. Race is the biggest name, but he's not known for his WWE stuff.

### Sable/Torrie Wilson vs. Miss Jackie/Stacy Keibler

They're all in evening gowns to start, which is totally what I think of when I think of Playboy. Sable wants to just wrestle with nothing on but she just strips down to her her lingerie. Torrie and Stacy follow suit as Cole and Tazz are way too excited over this. Jackie won't strip though and stands on the apron in her gown. So she's the Ivory of the match.

The gown is ripped off in about five seconds and Sable kicks her in the ribs. Torrie does a high crossbody for the sake of...I'm sure you get the idea. Stacy comes in for a cartwheel (Tazz: "I LOVE CARTWHEELS!") and the leg choke in the corner. We get the sunset flip spot for an ovation, followed by Jackie and Torrie rolling over the referee. Torrie rolls

Jackie up (showing off the tag hanging off the underwear) for the pin, plus a spank and a pull of the underwear. It was short and did what it was there to do.

Video on fans coming from all over the world for Wrestlemania.

Eddie Guerrero is in the locker room with Chris Benoit and says he's proud of Benoit no matter what. Benoit doesn't like the word lose but Eddie says it's a possibility with the people he's in there against. Nobody really believes in him but Benoit shouts that he does, demanding that Eddie looks at him. Benoit wants to know why Eddie is saying this on Benoit's night. Last month Eddie won his WWE Title and tonight Benoit wins his. That's the fire that Eddie was trying to draw out of him because that's the Benoit he believes in. Benoit is winning the title tonight.

#### Cruiserweight Title: Cruiserweight Open

Chavo Guerrero is defending and we finally find out that it's a gauntlet match with Chavo entering last. While they never specifically said so in the lead up, it was implied that this would be a ten way match with everyone in there at once. Everyone comes out and stands at ringside and thankfully both of Ultimo Dragon's botches are edited on the Network (the one at the entrance is mostly covered by a wide shot but you can still make it out while him slipping on the middle rope is edited out completely). Rey Mysterio is the Flash this year to continue his great tradition.

Dragon and Shannon Moore start things off with Shannon shouldering him down for two. A belly to back suplex gets the same but Dragon avoids a flip dive. The Asai DDT (very similar to a Salida Del Sol) eliminates Moore and Jamie Noble is in third. Dragon kicks him down for a fast two but has to bail out of a moonsault. The Asai DDT is countered into a neckbreaker and Noble makes him tap with a guillotine choke.

There's no bell like after the first fall but Funaki comes in with a high crossbody, which Noble rolls through for a pin in five seconds. Nunzio comes in and it's never fun to see family fight. Some rollups give Nunzio two and a middle rope dropkick to the head gets the same. Nunzio is sent



outside for a big flip dive from Noble and Nunzio gets counted out.

Billy Kidman is in next and hits a HUGE springboard shooting star to take out Noble and Nunzio, nearly killing himself in the process. Back in and Noble's guillotine choke doesn't work but he's able to break up the shooting star. Noble loads up a superplex but gets reversed into a super BK Bomb for the pin and the elimination. Rey Mysterio comes in next to pick up the pace, only to get caught up top. A super sunset bomb gets rid of Kidman and it's Tajiri in next.

The Tarantula has Rey in fast trouble but he's out in a hurry for the 619. Akio tries to grab Rey's leg but takes Tajiri's mist instead. Rey rolls Tajiri up for the pin and since Akio can't go due to the mist, it's Chavo vs. Mysterio for the title. Tajiri kicks Mysterio in the head before leaving and Chavo gets an easy two but Rey is right back up with a springboard hurricanrana. Rey dropkicks Chavo Sr. down and hits him with a big flip dive. A sunset flip has Chavo in trouble but Sr. grabs his son's hands to give him the retaining pin.

**Rating:** D. I've never liked these things and it was the same case here: if these people can pin each other in a minute or so, why do regular matches take seven minutes? This was another way to get a bunch of people on the show, which is rarely a good sign for a lot of them. Chavo vs. Mysterio would have been fine and I'm not sure how many people care that Kidman and Funaki made the show.

We recap Goldberg vs. Brock Lesnar. Goldberg was dominating the Royal Rumble but Lesnar ran in and caused him to be eliminated. The next month at No Way Out, Goldberg interfered in Lesnar's Smackdown World Title defense against Eddie Guerrero, costing him the title. Lesnar begged for a match with Goldberg, which Vince McMahon granted, albeit with Steve Austin as referee. With Goldberg off TV, Lesnar and Austin have had a mini feud over Austin's ATV. It doesn't help that both Goldberg and Lesnar are gone after this show, which could make this, ahem, interesting.

### Brock Lesnar vs. Goldberg

Steve Austin is guest referee. We start with a loud YOU SOLD OUT chant,

presumably at Lesnar (who is sporting a very weak goatee). There's no contact in the first minute so the fans start singing the Goodbye Song. JR has to acknowledge the crowd and mentions Lesnar wanting to go to the NFL as we're two minutes in with no contact. The fans start chanting for Austin so Goldberg looks at him instead.

They lock up at 2:46 as we hear about Goldberg being an MMA aficionado. The lockup lasts about forty seconds and goes nowhere so Lesnar laughs at him a bit. A second lockup lasts about as long as JR tries to pass this off as a great struggle. They break up again as the fans are now openly booing, saying THIS MATCH SUCKS. Lesnar puts in a headlock five minutes in and the exchange of shoulders goes nowhere.

A double shoulder means a double knockdown, because that's what this match needed. Lesnar starts kicking away but gets gorilla pressed into a spinebuster for the first big move of the match. The spear hits buckle though and they fight to the floor as the fans think Goldberg sucks. Back in and Lesnar gets two off a suplex, followed by a standing choke after that strenuous...oh I'd say minute and a half.

The fans chant for Hogan and it's ANOTHER double knockdown until Lesnar covers for two. Goldberg fights up with some clotheslines and the spear for two, despite pulling Lesnar's shoulder off the mat. An argument with Austin lets Lesnar grab an F5 for a near fall of his own. Lesnar goes shoulder first into the post and it's the spear and Jackhammer to give Goldberg the pin.

**Rating:** F. Does this need an explanation? There's a reason this is considered one of the worst Wrestlemania matches of all time and it's embarrassing all around. These guys are capable of having a good match and they went out there and put in no effort, instead being satisfied with screwing over the fans who wanted to and perhaps paid to see this match. I can understand two people just not clicking, but I have little patience for them not trying. It didn't even have the entertainment value of being that bad.

Post match Austin Stuns them both out of the company and neither Goldberg nor Lesnar was ever seen in WWE again.

Pyro goes off from the roof of the building. I've been outside for that after Wrestlemania in New Orleans and it will make you jump out of your skin.

Here's Vince McMahon to talk about the theme of It All Begins Again. There wouldn't be a Wrestlemania without the fans though and he's here to thank all of us. The locker room, the WWE and the McMahon Family thanks the fans for making Wrestlemania and the WWE what it is today. This was a very nice little moment.

Next year: Wrestlemania Goes Hollywood.

Smackdown Tag Team Titles: Rikishi/Scotty 2 Hotty vs. Basham Brothers vs. World's Greatest Tag Team vs. APA

Rikishi and Scotty are defending and again it's one fall to a finish. Shelton punches Bradshaw to start but gets taken down by a running shoulder for one. Doug comes in to take over on Shelton with Charlie making a save. It's off to Scotty vs. Charlie as the fans are just gone after that match (granted this match isn't helping things). Scotty tries to skin the cat but Charlie catches him, allowing Shelton to jump onto his back.

A bearhug slows things down even more until Doug tags himself in and kicks Scotty in the head. Danny pulls him away from the hot tag to Rikishi but, of course, the tag goes through a few seconds later. Rikishi DDTs Danny to no reaction and gives Charlie a Stink Face. Everything breaks down and Bradshaw Clotheslines Doug. That earns him a Samoan drop from Rikishi, who sits on Danny's chest to retain.

**Rating:** D-. Nothing match again but at least this served the purpose of giving the fans a chance to get Goldberg vs. Lesnar out of their system. As was the case earlier though, there wasn't much of a need for this match to be on the card. It would have been fine as a Kickoff Show match, but even at six minutes it felt long.

Post match, dancing ensues.

Edge is coming back after over a year away.

Here's Jesse Ventura...to interview Donald Trump in the front row. Trump praises the show and Vince and Jesse asks him about a donation to a Presidential run. And now we move on to ANYTHING else before this turns into...whatever it's going to turn into.

### Women's Title: Victoria vs. Molly Holly

Victoria's title vs. Molly's hair so a fan has a creative sign featuring Molly with hair that goes up and down. Molly powers her into the corner to start but Victoria chases her to the floor. Back in and Molly gets two off a suplex before grabbing a reverse cravate. The fans are getting a bit more into this and at least have some interest compared to the previous one.

With nothing else to talk about, Lawler gets into a discussion of Molly's underwear. JR: "What does that have to do with this wrestling match?" Victoria comes back with a powerslam as the discussion moves on to underwear color. Molly catches Victoria on top and gets two off a sunset bomb, albeit landing on her knees first. As frustration sets in, Molly tries the Widow's Peak, which is reversed into a backslide to retain Victoria's title.

**Rating:** D+. They tried here and that's about all you can ask for. They didn't even have five minutes and it's not like the feud had much of a build in the first place. I'll give them points for being willing to go with a bigger stipulation for the sake of getting on Wrestlemania, which shows quite the level of dedication. Not terrible, but they were hamstrung by the time.

Post match Molly snaps and tries to cut Victoria's hair but Victoria knocks her out and straps her into the chair. The unconscious Molly gets her hair cut but wakes up in the middle, freaking out as you might expect.

We recap Eddie Guerrero vs. Kurt Angle. Eddie won the Smackdown World Title in February and Angle wasn't happy that a former drug addict was champion. He attacked Eddie FOR THE FUTURE OF AMERICA because the country needed someone who could be a role model as champion. Eddie has been attacked when he wasn't able to fight back but tonight it's a fair

playing field. I've been digging the heck out of this feud watching it back and this is the match I've been wanting to see again more than anything else.

After the video, Molly is still getting her head shaved. She's actually bald too, rather than just having it trimmed. Like I said earlier: that's some dedication.

### Smackdown World Title: Eddie Guerrero vs. Kurt Angle

Eddie is defending. A lockup has Eddie driven into the corner to start as Tazz thinks Angle should take it to the mat. Angle headlocks him down but Eddie is out in a hurry with a headscissors. A longer headlock is broken the same way as the fans are in a dueling LET'S GO ANGLE/ANGLE SUCKS chant. Eddie's headlock is broken up as well and it's a standoff as they're still in the feeling out period here.

Some shoulder blocks work better for Eddie as Angle bails out to the floor. Back in and Angle takes him down into a front facelock and this time Eddie can't get out as quickly. After staying down for a bit, Eddie fights up and armdrags him into an armbar. Angle knees the ribs to break it up and puts on an abdominal stretch. The ribs are fine enough for some rolling verticals, but the third is reversed into Angle's rolling German suplexes.

They go to the apron and Angle can't hit the German suplex off the apron. Eddie kicks him to the floor and dive out after Angle but the ribs go straight into the barricade. Back in again and Eddie gets caught in a chinlock with a grapevine to stay on the ribs. A hot shot sends Eddie ribs first onto the ropes and it's time for the belly to belly suplexes. Angle puts on a waistlock before another belly to belly gets two.

Since the regular ones not being enough, Angle puts him on top for a belly to belly superplex. Eddie breaks that up but misses the frog splash, making the ribs even worse. Angle is getting cocky so Eddie tells him to bring it on. Some right hands just make Eddie madder and he clotheslines Angle down. A belly to back suplex rocks Angle and Eddie reverses a German suplex attempt into a cradle for two.

That earns Eddie a hard clothesline but he reverses the Angle Slam into an armdrag. The third rolling suplex is reversed into the ankle lock this time so Eddie kicks him away. It's still too early for the frog splash though as Angle runs the corner for a super belly to belly. The ankle lock goes on again but Eddie counters into a rollup. Another German suplex rocks Eddie again but the Angle Slam is countered into a DDT.

The frog splash gets two and you can hear the fans being surprised. Angle gets the ankle lock for the third time so Eddie rolls him outside for another break. With Angle down, Eddie unlaces his boot and backs away as Angle gets back in. That means an ankle lock but Eddie's boot comes off. Angle is confused and Eddie small packages him (with his feet in the ropes of course) to retain.

**Rating:** A. That's a brilliant finish with Eddie keeping his cool long enough to catch Angle being too aggressive in going after the ankle. Angle thinks that he's better than Eddie and is going to smell blood as soon as he thinks Eddie is in trouble. Eddie was ready for it and suckered the livid Angle in to retain. The rest of the match with a great back and forth chess match with Eddie staying in there until he could get around Angle's physical advantages. There was some incredible storytelling here and it was one of the best matches either of them has ever had.

We recap Undertaker vs. Kane. Back at Survivor Series, Kane literally buried Undertaker and then gave him a eulogy. Kane proclaimed Undertaker dead and gone, but you know that's not going to be the case. The Undertaker's gong went off at the Royal Rumble and Kane freaked out, setting us on a path to this match. We've been seeing signs of Undertaker's powers, which range from creepy to stupid, but that's standard Undertaker procedure.

### Undertaker vs. Kane

Kane's intro is cool as the New York City set is covered in flames as well. Then Paul Bearer returns with an 000000HHHHHHH YEEEEESSSSSS and no one cares about Kane anymore. We've got the druids with the burning torches and the fog throughout the aisle. Undertaker's new look: slightly

longer hair, a new hat and a singlet top. Kane looks terrified and...well yeah the Undertaker's entrance at Wrestlemania can be chilling.

They stare at each other for a bit with Kane trying to make himself believe that Undertaker is real. He reaches out to touch Undertaker and gets punched up against the ropes. The threat of a chokeslam sends Kane bailing to the floor but Undertaker is right back with an elbow to the throat. There's the apron legdrop as I would expect a lot of signature stuff here. Back in and Undertaker loads up the Last Ride but Kane backdrops him...hands first into the ropes. They misjudged the heck out of that one if that was supposed to be a backdrop to the floor.

It turns into a slugout on the mat until Kane gets in a side slam. The top rope clothesline gets two but Undertaker is right back with a big boot and legdrop. Old School (still not yet named as such) is countered into a chokeslam. Kane walks around though and there's the sit up. Undertaker hits his own chokeslam (losing the grip on the way down) and the Tombstone makes Undertaker 12-0.

**Rating:** D. That's all you could have expected here, save for maybe a shorter and more dominant win. No one was expecting this Kane to beat the returning Undertaker so this was all about a big return. Undertaker was back to his slow pace here, though it was still better than the last few months (if not years) of Biker Taker. It's not a good match, but Undertaker at Wrestlemania is always worth at least a glance.

We recap HHH vs. Chris Benoit vs. Shawn Michaels. HHH and Michaels went to a draw both at the last Raw of 2003 and in a Last Man Standing match at the Royal Rumble. Shawn, never being able to let something go, said he needed to face HHH again, even though Benoit won the Royal Rumble. Michaels signed the Wrestlemania contract instead of Benoit (contracts still don't work that way and Shawn vs. HHH is barely six years in the making, let alone the nearly ten Michaels said that it was) so Austin made it a triple threat match. This gets the music video treatment.

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

HHH is defending and wearing white boots for a really weird look. We don't get Big Match Intros but we do have a weapons check. The fans are

behind Benoit here, to the surprise of no one paying attention. Benoit goes after both of them to start but Shawn wants to beat on HHH. A way too early Crossface attempt doesn't work on Shawn, who is sent into HHH to knock the champ outside. The second Crossface attempt is countered into a rollup for two but HHH is back in to clothesline Michaels.

Now it's Benoit being sent outside so Shawn and HHH can have their big showdown. That doesn't last long (you save the big stuff for later) as HHH goes outside to drive Benoit into the barricade. Shawn is right up with a moonsault onto the two of them for a big crash. Back in and HHH hits the facebuster on Shawn but Benoit breaks up the Pedigree. Shawn goes shoulder first into the post, again leaving us with two instead of the three.

Benoit can't get a belly to back superplex as HHH pulls him down into the Tree of Woe and whips Shawn into him for a near fall of his own. HHH gets sent into him as well for the same two but Benoit gets free for the rolling German suplexes. Michaels is right there to break up the Swan dive though, only to eat a DDT from HHH. With Shawn on the floor, HHH pulls Benoit off the top and hammers away.

That's reversed into a Crossface with Shawn diving in for a save. Shawn tries his own rolling German suplexes on Benoit and I'll let you guess how that goes. After Shawn bounces off the mat from Benoit's third straight German suplex, the Swan Dive connects for two. Shawn forearms Benoit to the floor and nips up for the fight against HHH. The champ gets knocked down for the top rope elbow and Sweet Chin Music connects.

Benoit is right there to pull HHH to the floor of course and he sends Shawn into the post. The busted open Shawn (it wouldn't feel right otherwise) gets caught in the Crossface so HHH grabs his hand to prevent the tap out. Benoit beats up HHH on the floor but gets sent into the steps. HHH loads up the announcers' table and Shawn joins him to double suplex Benoit through the table. NOW we get the big Shawn vs. HHH showdown and it lasts all of fifteen seconds with Shawn whipping HHH over the corner and back outside.

Back in and HHH (also bleeding) hits a quick Pedigree but can't cover.



Benoit dives in for a last second save and all three are down. A Pedigree to Benoit is reversed into a Sharpshooter in the middle of the ring so it's Shawn coming back in with more Sweet Chin Music. That's only good for two so Shawn tries it again, only to be sent to the floor. The Pedigree is countered into the Crossface and Benoit rolls him into the middle for the tap and the title.

**Rating:** A+. I never realized how much the Wrestlemania XXX match copied this one, down to the big double team through the table, the technical star who had worked forever to get here and winning with a very similar hold, plus other things I'm probably overlooking. Anyway, there isn't much to say here as the match speaks for itself. It's long in the right way, the near falls were great, the work and visuals were incredible and the right guy won. I'm sure you've seen this one at least once and if you haven't, find the time to sit down and watch Benoit's crowning achievement.

Benoit is in tears as Eddie comes out for the big celebration. Confetti falls (another Wrestlemania XXX scene) and JR has almost lost his voice shouting about how amazing this was. The ending is a spectacular visual and what should have been one of the most memorable moments ever.

A five minute highlight package takes us out.

**Overall Rating:** B+. They were this close to being one of the all time great shows but as it is, they're only a few steps behind. The positives here ranges from outstanding to very good but the bad is in either absolutely horrid to unnecessary stuff, which is where the biggest problem comes from: they stretched a three hour and forty five minute show to over four and a half hour one and that doesn't work. If you trim things down a bit here and there, (a Kickoff Show would have been better, or just not putting everything on the card in the first place) this is one of the best shows ever.

The other thing that worked so well here was the feeling. Wrestlemania is a major show every year but this was a milestone edition and it felt like one. They had a great balance of the history, present and future in one night and the whole event came off as a spectacle. That's the right kind

of feeling and the great action all night helped too. This show feels special and it's worth seeing at least once (if you somehow hadn't) or again if you haven't in a long time, though fast forward some of the lower card stuff to make things easier.

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