

Wrestlemania Count-Up – Wrestlemania XXII (2015 Redo): They're Fighting Over Montreal

Wrestlemania XXII

Date: April 2, 2006

Location: Allstate Arena, Chicago, Illinois

Attendance: 17,159

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

Really there isn't much else to talk about here. The other major match on the show is Shawn Michaels vs. Vince McMahon in a match over Vince not being willing to grow up and let go of some things in his past. The card just doesn't feel big this year which was the case with most of the stuff this year. Let's get to it.

Pre-Show: Battle Royal

Raw: Eugene, Viscera, Goldust, Rob Conway, Lance Cade, Matt Striker, Trevor Murdoch, Tyson Tomko, Snitsky

Smackdown: Funaki, Super Crazy, Simon Dean, Steven Richards, Johnny Nitro, William Regal, Road Warrior, Joey Mercury, Psicosis

They're keeping it a lot smaller this year with just eighteen names. Cade and Murdoch are a southern team, Striker is a former teacher who would become an annoying announcer, Road Warrior is our old friend Animal, Mercury and Nitro are partners in MNM (Smackdown Tag Team Champions) and Super Crazy and Psicosis are part of a group called the Mexicools. Also Viscera is now a self professed love machine.

Simon tries to make a sales pitch to start and gets superkicked for an elimination. Conway poses while beating on Richards and gets dumped for his efforts. Funaki gets catapulted out and Cade quickly follows him.

Richards is stupid enough to pose on the apron and gets knocked out with Striker getting eliminated a few seconds later. Murdoch eliminates Crazy as the ring is quickly clearing out. Psicosis puts out Goldust in a pretty big upset.

Snitsky throws Regal out and MNM plants Eugene with the Snapshot (elevated DDT) for an easy elimination. The final eight (Snitsky, Viscera, Murdoch and Tomko for Raw, Mercury, Nitro, Psicosis and Road Warrior for Smackdown) have the big staredown with Psicosis quickly eliminating Murdoch, only to be put out by Tomko. Viscera tortures MNM as Snitsky and Tomko forget their allegiance by starting a brawl that no one cares about.

MNM avoids a corner splash from Viscera and actually tries the Snapshot, resulting in a severely sore back. Viscera stacks them both up for a splash and the Visagra, which can only be described as rhythmic thrusting on the mat. MNM are thankfully eliminated and Snitsky kicks Tomko out by mistake. Road Warrior stares Viscera down and the fans chant for the LOD. A big splash crushes Road Warrior and the elimination is academic, leaving Viscera to avoid a running boot to eliminate Snitsky for the win at 9:04.

Rating: D-. This was a horrible battle royal with the speed of the eliminations and the winner really holding things back. I mean.....VISCERA? The long space near the end with no eliminations felt long too and really made the match drag, despite it not even breaking ten minutes. While last year's felt fun, this one really felt tacked on and that's not a good thing.

Viscera kisses Lillian post match.

Michelle Williams of Destiny's Child sings America the Beautiful.

The opening video is set to I Dare You by Shinedown and gives us the required history of Wrestlemania package (very good this year) before shifting to the major matches this year. I like the song but this really isn't making me want to see the show.

The set is much simpler this year as it looks like the side of a

skyscraper and is shaped liked the Chicago skyline, which fits the theme of "Big Time". The highlight though is a bunch of portraits of various wrestlers around the arena for a unique and cool look.

Raw Tag Team Titles: Big Show/Kane vs. Chris Masters/Carlito

Masters and Carlito are challenging as Big Show and Kane decided they were friends again and easily won the belts. Masters and Kane get things going with Kane using a very rare dropkick. It's off to Show for the loud chops in the corner but a rake to the eyes allows the tag off to Carlito, who looks terrified. The challengers are quickly deposited on top of each other outside, followed by a big clothesline from Kane. He's feeling aerial tonight. The referee yells at Kane and in the meantime, Carlito and Masters get the turnbuckle pad off. That almost feels like a Wrestlemania tradition at this point.

Show goes face first into the steel and a double flapjack gets two. A double suplex goes as well as you would expect and it's off to Kane to almost no reaction. Everything breaks down and Kane dives into the Master Lock (Chris' full nelson), only to have Show break it up with a kick to the face. A Backstabber puts Show down and Kane sidesteps a Masters ax handle, sending him into Carlito instead. The chokeslam ends Carlito and retains the titles at 6:43.

Rating: D+. That's their opener? They really didn't have anything better than this? Kane and Show were pretty boring champions as almost no one could give them a real challenge, which is why they lost to a team of five male cheerleaders the following night on Raw. Masters and Carlito never got as far as they were supposed to in WWE, which is really a trend of the era.

Masters and Carlito argue post match.

Shawn Michaels is ready for his no holds barred match against Vince McMahon tonight. A few months ago, Shawn told Vince to grow up and forget about Montreal, prompting Vince to go to war against Shawn. That doesn't mean he's going to take back what he said because he still believes every word of it. Tonight isn't going to be a five star classic because it's going to get ugly. Shawn isn't going to be his 1995 self or his 2006

self. Instead he's going somewhere he's never been before and Vince better be ready.

Matt Hardy vs. Shelton Benjamin vs. Finlay vs. Rob Van Dam vs. Bobby Lashley vs. Ric Flair

Money in the Bank. Matt is serious again, Shelton is Intercontinental Champion again, Finlay is a tough Irish brawler and Lashley is an athletic freak and a powerhouse (originally described as Brock Lesnar times ten). To make it even better, all four commentators are on the match to make sure we never get a second of silence. Everyone goes after Lashley to start as the fans are all behind RVD.

Van Dam is there for them as he baseball slides a ladder into Matt's face, followed by a plancha to land on the ladder on Hardy. Shelton won't stand for being shown up though so he bridges the ladder against the ropes and flip dives out onto a pile of guys in a HUGE crash. Flair and Finlay are left in the ring for something that could be very interesting. Ric quickly dispatches him and goes up but Matt makes the save and SUPERPLEXES A FIFTY SEVEN YEAR OLD MAN OFF A LADDER!!!

Flair is taken to the back so we're down to five for now which could make the match even better. Van Dam's Rolling Thunder only hits ladder so Shelton and Lashley handle the climbing for now. Shelton tries a sunset bomb off the ladder but it takes Matt and Finlay to help make it happen. Cole again tries to get the whole Smackdown vs. Raw nonsense in and it still doesn't work.

With most of the people down, Matt decides to charge at Finlay and a ladder in the corner, resulting in one of them being launched at Matt's face. I'll let you figure out which was which. Finlay loads up a ladder but here's Flair because Heaven forbid we don't have him around for five minutes. Ric cleans house with chops and goes up, only to have Finlay hit him in the back with the shillelagh (Irish club), sending Flair crashing down to the mat on his back.

The briefcase is swinging though, allowing Shelton to make the save. Lashley uses more power though as he uses another ladder to knock over the standing one to drop everyone again. Rob is right there though,

coming off the top with a chair, dropkicking it into Lashley's back for another save. Now it's Matt's turn to do something stupid as he drops a legdrop off the ladder to crush Lashley. That's not enough either though as Matt Side Effects Finlay off the ladder, followed by Rob dropping the Five Star (well more like a regular one so he didn't kill himself) from the top of the ladder onto Finlay.

That was a REALLY bad stretch for logic. All of the big spots looked really cool but what sends did most of them make? One of the dangers of Money in the Bank or any ladder match for that matter is doing crazy spots for the sake of doing crazy spots. You could say that they're doing them to keep other people down, but the logical move, and what they did last year, is just throw people outside and then climb. It made for a higher quality match last year and it would do so again here if they tried the same thing.

Rob goes up now and in the spot of the match, Shelton springboards from the top rope ONTO THE STANDING LADDER and hammers away at Van Dam. Matt climbs another ladder so Shelton steps over to fight him but it's Rob shoving them both down and pulling down the briefcase at 12:22.

Rating: B. Good stuff here but a major step below last year with too much insanity going around but still more than enough insanity to make the whole thing work. Van Dam is a really good choice for the winner as he's been one of the most popular guys in the company for a long time so it was time to give him a shot, especially with Batista on the shelf. Good match here but it's now a spot fest instead of a logical, well thought out match. Both are entertaining, though for far different reasons.

Gene Okerlund is happy to have been inducted into the Hall of Fame (not so happy with his bar tab, because Okerlund likes to drink you see) but Randy Orton comes in to say that he'll be in the Hall of Fame for actions, not holding a microphone for 35 years. After Gene leaves while rambling about Orton's old man, Batista comes up and says the title is being kept warm for him. He'll be back soon.

It's Hall of Fame time with the Class of 2006 consisting of Gene Okerlund, Sensational Sherri, Tony Atlas, Verne Gagne, William Perry

(Celebrity inductee in some rather ugly street clothes. He couldn't bring a suit?), the Blackjacks, Eddie Guerrero (accepted by Vickie to the loudest ovation of the group) and Bret Hart, who is still a few years away from appearing on WWE TV. Eddie would have been in one day and the reaction he gets here brings a smile to my face, even though I wasn't a huge fan.

US Title: John Bradshaw Layfield vs. Chris Benoit

Benoit is defending and there isn't much of a story here other than JBL wants the title and they tried to break each other's hands (with only Benoit succeeding). In a really cool entrance, the ramp raises up and JBL's limo comes out from underneath it to deliver him to the ring. JBL even Texas Two Steps to the ring with image consultant Jillian Hall (a good looking blonde) accompanying him. This is quite the drop down the card for both guys, though it's not quite King Kong Bundy levels of bad.

JBL runs him over to start but has to block the Crossface. Benoit fires off some chops in the corner but the Sharpshooter doesn't work either. Back up and Benoit chops him in the chest so JBL kicks him in the face. Chris still doesn't let up and rolls some Germans, only to get crotched going for the Swan Dive. To make sure you know who the villain is here, JBL mocks Eddie's signature dance (Benoit inducted Eddie into the Hall of Fame) before superplexing Benoit down for a delayed two.

Now it's time for Three Amigos from JBL which is such an awesome piece of heel work. Jillian yells for some reason and we hit a chinlock on the champion. Benoit fights up and shows us the real way to do the Three Amigos (for those of you going to wrestling school by correspondence, though Benoit doesn't have Eddie's roll down just yet), followed by a big Swan Dive for two. Therefore it's time for the Crossface but JBL rolls over and grabs the rope for the pin and the title at 9:44.

Rating: D+. Really good heel stuff from JBL aside, this felt like it was missing the middle. Instead of building to something, it felt like they ran out of time and just went straight to the finish. I do really like JBL's heel actions but that doesn't lead to being good between the bells. Benoit was his normal self here, which may be a step down from last year

but it's still good stuff.

We recap Edge vs. Mick Foley. Edge had cashed in the first Money in the Bank briefcase to steal Cena's Raw World Title but he dropped it back to Cena three weeks later with Foley as guest referee. Therefore Edge wanted revenge at Wrestlemania, teasing Foley with the Wrestlemania moment performance. Foley accepted if they could make it hardcore, which Edge accepted by giving him a Conchairto (crushing Foley's head between two chairs). This only woke up the hardcore legend inside Foley and the war was on.

Joey Styles, the voice of ECW, takes over for JR.

Edge vs. Mick Foley

Hardcore. Lawler's reaction to Lita's (now with Edge) look: "Whoa." The cargo pants, Edge vest and bra look does have merit. Edge has a baseball bat and Foley's flannel shirt is buttoned up for some reason. The bat misses to start and Foley bulldogs him down, followed by putting him in the Tree of Woe for a running ax handle to the face. Lita throws in some weapons to crack Foley upside the head.

The spear connects but Edge rolls away in pain, because Foley had barbed wire wrapped around his waist. The gray flannel comes off and NOW we get the classic red. Edge gets tied up in the ropes and it's time for Barbie, the baseball bat wrapped in barbed wire. Edge is already bleeding from the arm but he's able to hiptoss Foley into the steps for another sick crash. A baseball slide knocks Foley's broken body back to the floor and of course it's table time.

Foley rolls off the table before Edge can drop a top rope splash. That's fine with Edge who slams Foley head first onto the steel ramp for two. That sound made me cringe....and so does Edge covering Foley in lighter fluid. It wakes Foley up though and he grabs a piledriver for two. Lita breaks up a Conchairto (well a Conchair-cookie sheeto) and Edge gets even more violent with a Barbie shot to the face, followed by just raking the wire over Mick's forehead (ala Cactus Jack vs. HHH in 2000).

Edge is getting frustrated so he turns over more steps to reveal a bag of

thumbtacks. Foley escapes and throws Edge into the tacks instead, sending Edge into shock. A barbed wire Socko appears (ok that's awesome) and Edge is bleeding from the mouth. Shots to the ribs and head make it even worse and my goodness Edge is gushing.

In perhaps the scariest part of the match, Foley gets the lighter fluid. There is no way this can end well. The table is covered in it but Lita hits Foley in the knee with Barbie....and lights the table on fire. Edge spears Foley through the ropes and through the fire, sending both men into shock. With Foley rolling around, Edge gets an arm over his chest for the pin at 14:37.

Rating: A. This is the kind of violence that they needed to have and the last shots with both guys in shock and rolling around in agony from the fire more than sold the whole thing. Foley is the perfect choice to bring in for something like this as this is the match that really made Edge. Yeah he was a big deal already, but this showed his mean streak for a change, which is one of the big steps up to the main event. This is the only match people remember from this show and it holds up very, very well.

Booker T. is trying to calm down his wife Sharmell over their handicap match against the Boogeyman (exactly what he sounds like). Sharmell thinks Booker attracts freaks but Booker says no and they walk down the hall. I think you know what's coming. First up they run into Paul Burchill, who is embracing his family's history as a pirate. After he calls them mateys, they find Ted DiBiase offering to pay Eugene money if he can bounce a basketball 100 times, only to kick the ball away at 99 (an old trick of his, once tried on Rob Van Dam himself when he was a kid).

Snitsky is kissing Mae Young's feet (again, a thing of his), followed by Goldust dressed as Oprah Winfrey. Goldust gives him a pep talk, telling him to embrace his inner freak to defeat the Boogeyman. The real advice is to take the worms from Boogeyman's mouth (Yeah he eats worms. Like, real live worms). Goldust whispers something in Booker's ears and freaks him out even worse, sending Booker off for his match. These cameos would become a tradition.

Some fans won a contest to come to Wrestlemania, plus free Snickers.

Booker T./Sharmell vs. Boogeyman

Booker and Sharmell are terrified and we might be in for a comedy match here. This match has been a long time in the making as Booker keeps faking injuries so he can avoid fighting Boogeyman but it finally happens here. Sharmell has to start, only to have Booker get in a cheap shot and tag in a few seconds later.

There's a bunch of fog in the ring from Boogeyman's entrance as Booker superkicks him down. The Book End gets two and Boogeyman reaches into his pocket to pull out a bunch of worms. As you do. He eats the worms and kisses them into Sharmell's mouth, sending her running in terror. A chokebomb puts Booker away at 3:54.

Rating: F. Booker is a former World Champion and would win his first World Title in WWE about four months after this. For some reason, he's losing in a gross comedy match to a guy named the Boogeyman. Like I said: this was a very strange time for the company and this is a very good example of why. Also, was there any reason that this wasn't one on one?

We recap Mickie James vs. Trish Stratus (good again and in the same reign with the Women's Title from last year). Mickie debuted a few months ago as an obsessed fan who had a big crush on Trish. That was too much for Trish who told her to calm down, earning her a kick to the head and shouts of "DO YOU LOVE ME NOW" from Mickie. It got even worse as Mickie kidnapped Trish's friend Ashley and laid out Trish during the save attempt, ending with a kiss to the unconscious Trish.

Women's Title: Mickie James vs. Trish Stratus

Trish is defending. Lawler thinks Mickie is crazy but JR says Lawler would date her anyway, even if she's a bit old for Jerry (JR: "She's in her early 20s." Lawler: "Can she cook?"). Mickie slaps her in the back of the head to start so Trish elbows her right in the jaw. The Thesz press (JR: "Maybe the Louise Thesz press.") has Mickie in more trouble and Trish throws her down, only to have Mickie land in the splits. Trish kicks the post by mistake and Mickie wraps it around the post, followed

by dropkicking it out for two.

The fans are behind Mickie as I guess they don't go for the talented blonde bombshell look. There's a half crab to stay on the leg before Mickie wraps it up in the ropes and stomps down on it. Now it's a LET'S GO MICKIE chant and the fans boo as Trish comes back with a headscissors. Even JR isn't sure why Trish is being booed so badly, though it could be the whole gorgeous brunette in a very short skirt which keeps flying up and down thing. Mickie's hurricanrana out of the corner is countered with a sweet sitout powerbomb.

The Stratusfaction (springboard bulldog) is broken up with a grab between the legs, followed by Mickie licking her hand (edited out of most DVD versions). Trish blasts her in the face with a forearm and tries the Stratusfaction but the knee gives out (this is also edited though it might have been a bad attempt at selling the knee injury instead of a botch), allowing Mickie to kick her in the head for the pin and the title at 8:49. JR gets in a great line with "the nutjob has won the title."

Rating: B-. Good stuff here with an actual story and two women who can actually work a match instead of models who have no idea what they're doing. These two had a good, long feud with Mickie eventually becoming the new face of the division due to Trish and Lita retiring later in the year. This is still one of the best Divas matches ever and pretty easily the best of this era.

Vince is with the other three McMahons and decides to lead them in a prayer. Vince: "God, I don't like you and you don't like me." He brags about his physique and wealth before promising to destroy God's favorite wrestler tonight.

Undertaker vs. Mark Henry

Casket match. Henry destroyed Undertaker AS NO ONE HAD DONE BEFORE to set this up. This was rumored to be Angle vs. Undertaker but why do something awesome when you can do something boring? At least we get the full druid entrance for the casket, plus the classic story of "I'm not scared of the dark" from Henry. I say classic because EVERY HEEL EVER SAYS THAT TO UNDERTAKER. Undertaker's entrance goes so long that Cole is able to go

through every match in the Streak.

Henry jumps Undertaker during the nearly three minute entrance and pounds him down using big clubbing blows. Yes I said BIG CLUBBING BLOWS. Undertaker tries running him over but a clothesline puts him right back down. They head outside with both guys going into the steps. Slow progress so far. Back in and Henry breaks up Old School and chokes Undertaker near the open casket.

Anything goes though so Undertaker hits him low for the break. Old School works the second time around and Henry misses a charge, sending him down into the casket. Undertaker joins him and they choke each other a lot until Henry gets punched back into the ring. Isn't that bad strategy for Undertaker? There's the World's Strongest Slam and Henry covers out of instinct.

Another trip to the casket goes nowhere so Henry pounds away with even more right hands. Since those don't work well enough, Mark goes to the middle rope and gets powerbombed down. Not quite the Last Ride but it's as close as Undertaker was going to get with Henry. Mark is sent to the floor and takes the Taker Dive, followed by a Tombstone to put him in the casket for the win at 9:27.

Rating: D-. This was as going through the motions as you were going to get with neither guy looking like they were trying with any sort of effort. That being said though, if you were scheduled to get Kurt Angle and got Mark Henry instead, how fired up would you be? Bad match here as it was nearly nine minutes of punching and forearms until the ending.

We recap Vince vs. Shawn which I covered earlier. After the grow up line set him off, Vince sent Shane and the Spirit Squad (five male cheerleaders in an odd gimmick choice) after Shawn and even forced him to join his special club. As in the one that involved Vince lower his pants and a kiss from the other person. Figure out the details for yourself.

Shawn Michaels vs. Vince McMahon

No holds barred. JR apologizes in advance for being so biased in this match. Oh thanks for the warning Jimmy. Vince shows off a framed cover of

his Muscle and Fitness Magazine cover, which really is amazing considering he's 60 here. Shawn doesn't want to wait and sends Vince over the table, choking him with an electric cord. The fans want Bret (maybe he could pick this show up a bit) but have to settle for the framed picture (minus the glass) going around Vince's head.

Cue the Spirit Squad to take Shawn out, including their five man lifting slam. Nicky (later known as Dolph Ziggler and the only one who went anywhere) sends Kenny to the top for a guillotine legdrop but Shawn moves away. Their megaphone goes upside the Squad's heads and Kenny is sent flying over the top onto the rest of the team.

Vince finally gets back into it with shoulders and choking, first with hands and then with the belt. See? He's versatile! Vince is all fired up and runs around in a circle before tuning up the band. JR: "He can't carry a tune." The kick is caught though and it's the forearm into the nipp. That means it's time for Vince to get whipped with his own belt (oh the irony) as JR is even more annoying than usual, ranting about how Vince is a businessman with no heart.

Shane comes in with a kendo stick to break up the real Sweet Chin Music and pulls out some handcuffs. Vince would rather lower his pants though, only to have Shawn hit Shane in the ribs and send him face first into his dad. This is one of those moments that makes you embarrassed to be a wrestling fan but you have to expect it from Vince. Now Shane gets cuffed to the middle rope and Shawn takes the key away for safekeeping and even mocks Shane's trademark dance. He was always good at that thing.

Back in and Shawn hits a GREAT chair shot to the head (Lawler: "CUBS WIN! CUBS WIN!") to bust the boss open. Sweet Chin Music is canceled because Shawn would rather pull out a ladder. The top of said ladder goes into Vince's face and this year it's JR making the Home Depot joke. That's still not enough for the superkick though as Shawn would rather bring in three trashcans. Oh and a table of course. You can see another can, ladder and table in case we have another wild brawl later.

Some can shots are followed by Shawn putting Vince on the table and climbing the ladder. That's not enough though so Shawn climbs down and

pulls out the big ladder for the elbow (after some crotch chops) through a trashcan through Vince. Sweet Chin Music FINALLY puts Vince away at 18:27.

Rating: D. This went on WAY too long as the last six or seven minutes were just Shawn beating Vince up with no offense from McMahon whatsoever. It's entertaining in a perverse violent way but at the same time, how long can you see Shawn hit Vince with various metal objects before it gets dull? Even JR was saying end it already. Cut out five minutes of this and it's way better as this was six minutes longer than Money in the Bank. That's too much no matter how you look at it. On top of that, this led to a DX reunion and a one sided feud that went on for another five months, even after this total destruction.

Vince flips Shawn off from the stretcher in a perfect touch.

Wrestlemania XXIII is in Detroit.

We recap the Smackdown World Title match. Rey Mysterio had dedicated his Royal Rumble performance to the late Eddie Guerrero, last eliminating Randy Orton to win. Orton wasn't happy with this and played on Rey's emotions by bringing up Eddie's name and saying he would burn forever. This made Rey put his title shot on the line at No Way Out 2006 where Orton defeated him. Smackdown General Manager Teddy Long put Mysterio into the title match anyway to make it a triple threat against champion Kurt Angle (who won the vacant title in a battle royal due to Batista's injury). This gets the music video treatment.

Smackdown World Title: Rey Mysterio vs. Kurt Angle vs. Randy Orton

Angle is defending and P.O.D. plays Mysterio to the ring. No superhero again this year as Rey has an Aztec eagle theme instead. Orton takes the belt from the referee to blast Kurt in the face and runs Rey over for two. Kurt, in black boots for some reason, comes back in with a German suplex to both guys at once. Rey is down so Randy has to take Kurt's full wrath. This was a great period for Angle as he was on fire and really feeling the Wrestling Machine persona.

The ankle lock attempt is abandoned as Angle has to deal with Mysterio,

who headscissors him to the middle rope. This time the ankle lock goes on though as Kurt counters the 619 but Orton gets on the apron with a chair so the referee doesn't see Rey tap (what a hero: giving up five minutes in when he's trying to honor his friend's memory). Now it's time to unleash the Germans with Angle not even leaving his feet as he throws Mysterio.

An Angle Slam puts Rey on the floor and now Randy gets caught in the hold to make him tap behind the referee's back. Rey comes back in with a springboard legdrop for two on the champ but he sends Mysterio shoulder first into the post. An RKO out of nowhere (he even did it back then) gets two on Kurt with the ankle delaying the cover. Ever the rocket scientist, Orton goes up top on a bad ankle against Kurt Angle, who gladly runs up the corner for the belly to belly superplex.

Rey's springboard seated senton gets two on Angle and Randy throws the champ to the floor. His powerbomb into a neckbreaker (a cool move I wish he would use more often) gets two on Rey but a quick Angle Slam gets the same on Orton. Rey armdrags the champ to the floor and it's the 619 and West Coast Pop to pin Orton for the title at 9:25.

Rating: C+. Where's the rest of the match? The World Title change at Wrestlemania can't even get ten minutes but Boogeyman vs. Booker T./Sharmell and the next match can get four minutes each? Mysterio winning is a cool moment but this should have been just beating Orton while Angle fights Undertaker in a classic. At least we had a cool moment though and a good way to cap off Eddie's legacy while giving Rey a surprise title win.

Vickie and Chavo Guerrero come out to celebrate.

HHH and John Cena are getting ready in the back and JR talks about Cena being defiant like his fans. Fans: "CENA SUCKS!"

Candice Michelle vs. Torrie Wilson

They've both been in Playboy before so here's a pillow fight on a bed. JR: "This next match will not resemble Gotch and Hackenschmidt." Of note: Torrie comes out to what would become Laycool's music and carrying a

puppy. Lilian also can't pronounce Torrie's hometown of Boise, Idaho. They brawl to start and Torrie turns the bed over. There goes Candice's dress but she still chokes Torrie with her legs while bending over the top rope. Candice drops a knee and cuts Torrie's dress off with some scissors. She rubs a copy of Playboy in Torrie's face but charges into a rollup to give Torrie the pin at 3:55.

Rating: F. Again, this got about four minutes or nearly half the time of a World Title match. That's really their best use of Wrestlemania time? As has been the case in the past, I get the appeal and thinking here but this really didn't need to be the next to last match at the biggest show of the year.

Clips of the Wrestlemania press conference from earlier in the week. HHH called this the easiest match of his life because sooner or later, they all bow down to the king. He won a quick tournament to get the shot.

Raw World Title: HHH vs. John Cena

HHH is challenging and comes out first with a full on Conan the Barbarian look, complete with throne rising through the stage, fur pelt, and of course a bottle of water. Just like Kane in 1998 though, his entrance is trumped almost instantly. We see an old newsreel style video of Chicago in the Great Depression. Gangsters were the only people living the American Dream and a group in Chicago lived harder than anybody. To survive, those people needed three things: Hustle, Loyalty and Respect.

The stage rises up again and a 1930s car with gangsters hanging off the side (one of which is CM Punk) holding Tommy guns. Cena's music hits and the booing gets even louder. He comes out in a black trench coat and fedora before firing off a Tommy gun of his own. This isn't the best received entrance but it certainly makes an impression. With all that out of the way, we get the big match intros and it's time to go. Well after we hear all of HHH's nicknames of course.

Feeling out process to start with HHH grabbing a hammerlock and throwing Cena to the ground. A kick to the back sends him into the corner as this is all HHH in the very early going. The fans are all over Cena with some very bad words so he tries a quick FU, only to eat a right hand to the

jaw to put him down again. To mix things up a bit, HHH throws him out to the floor as they're taking their time here.

A backdrop of all things gets two for the champ as Lawler says Cena might not be the best wrestler but he can fight. JR jumps to the champ's defense as he throws HHH into the corner and puts on a chinlock to take a breather. Fans: "YOU CAN'T WRESTLE!" A big whip sends HHH over the corner and out to the floor in a big crash, followed by a slam to put HHH on the ramp.

Back in and they start slugging it out, followed by HHH taking it to the floor again for a whip through the steps. Things slow down with the HHH knee to the mat, followed by one heck of a clothesline for two. Back to back neckbreakers get the same and HHH is as over as free beer in a frat house. JR tries to get over Monarch of the Mat as a new nickname for HHH as he cranks on Cena's head. A sleeper takes Cena down and turns into a chinlock.

Back up and Cena takes his head off with a clothesline and follows with two more. A powerslam gets two and the ProtoBomb looks to set up the Shuffle, only to have HHH pop up with a spinebuster. It's back to the sleeper but Cena quickly suplexes out and now the Shuffle connects. The STFU (the U would eventually be dropped) goes on but HHH is too close to the ropes. With that not working, Cena tries the FU but gets rammed into the referee. HHH uses the opportunity to get in a low blow, which hits Cena and the referee at the same time.

That means it's time for a sledgehammer to the face for two, because a 6'4 270lb man HITTING YOU IN THE FACE WITH A SLEDGEHAMMER is only going to knock you out for two seconds at a time. HHH loads up the Pedigree ("I hit him in the face with a hammer as hard as I could. Maybe my wrestling move can beat him!") but Cena reverses into the FU (looking like he's been out there five minutes and hasn't been touched) for a near fall. A high cross body misses and it's back to the Pedigree but Cena reverses into the STFU to eventually retain at 22:04.

Rating: C. Cena was coming but he really wasn't there yet. This is similar to Rock vs. Austin back in 1999 where the first match wasn't

great (though certainly not bad) but the rematch the next month was WAY better (partially due to Edge being added to spice things up a bit). The match didn't work for the most part though and that sledgehammer shot was WAY more than I could handle. I repeat: he hit Cena in the face WITH A SLEDGEHAMMER FOR TWO.

That being said, this is the match that made Cena the biggest star in the company. He had always been a big deal and the top star of Raw, but this is the match that made him special. Until then he had been living in Batista's shadow, but now it's all about Cena and his in ring abilities would mature to back it up. The match is good, though much more important than anything else.

Highlight package ends the show.

Overall Rating: C-. This show just does not hold up. It felt like something used to set up stuff for the future which is fine, but aside from Edge vs. Foley and a good Money in the Bank, what is there on here of value? We have a pretty lame Tag Team Title match where the titles changed hands the next night, a forgettable US Title change, Boogeyman vs. Booker T. (for all intents and purposes), a good Women's Title match, a REALLY bad casket match, a way too long squash, a World Title change that was far too short though memorable and a pillow fight. Does that sound like Wrestlemania to you?

Now that being said, this isn't the worst show ever as they kept most of the bad stuff short. The long bad match with Vince vs. Shawn certainly had some good moments with some of Vince's head trauma and the sheer amusement of seeing the boss get beaten up. Basically, as usual, this show needed another edit and to have about an hour cut out. If you lose some of the short matches entirely (Booker T. vs. Boogeyman to start. Do that nonsense on Raw.), trim off some of Vince's destruction and add it to the triple threat and cut the show down by at least half an hour, it's WAY better in a hurry.

This show fell into one of the most common traps for Wrestlemania: trying to squeeze in too much stuff, including a lot of stuff that really didn't need to be here. There were eleven matches on the card which really is

too much. It made for a lot of short and forgettable matches, plus a handful that are actually good. That doesn't really make up for a good Wrestlemania, though there are worse. We'll go with this one on the very bottom of the good list but with the weaker stuff on here being much more forgettable and dull than bad.

Ratings Comparison

Big Show/Kane vs. Carlito/Chris Masters

Original: D+

2013 Redo: C

2015 Redo: D+

Rob Van Dam vs. Shelton Benjamin vs. Ric Flair vs. Finlay vs. Matt Hardy vs. Bobby Lashley

Original: B

2013 Redo: B

2015 Redo: B

John Bradshaw Layfield vs. Chris Benoit

Original: D+

2013 Redo: C+

2015 Redo: D+

Edge vs. Mick Foley

Original: A

2013 Redo: A

2015 Redo: A

Boogeyman vs. Booker T/Sharmell

Original: F

2013 Redo: F

2015 Redo: F

Mickie James vs. Trish Stratus

Original: B

2013 Redo: B-

2015 Redo: B-

Undertaker vs. Mark Henry

Original: D

2013 Redo: D+

2015 Redo: D-

Shawn Michaels vs. Vince McMahon

Original: C+

2013 Redo: C+

2015 Redo: D

Rey Mysterio vs. Kurt Angle vs. Randy Orton

Original: D+

2013 Redo: C-

2015 Redo: C+

Torrie Wilson vs. Candice Michelle

Original: F

2013 Redo: F

2015 Redo: F

HHH vs. John Cena

Original: A-

2013 Redo: B-

2015 Redo: C

Overall Rating

Original: B

2013 Redo: D+

2015 Redo: C-

In the first one I said it wasn't something I'd want to see again. Apparently that was accurate as the rating PLUNGED on a second viewing.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/03/29/history-of-wrestlemania-with-kb-wrestlemania-22-i-barely-remember-this-show/>

And the 2013 Redo:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2013/03/31/wrestlemania-count-up-wrestlemania-xxii-hhh-does-it-again/>

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