

Wrestlemania Count-Up – Wrestlemania XXVIII (2015 Redo): The Era Is Ending

Wrestlemania XXVIII

Date: April 1, 2012

Location: Sun Life Stadium, Miami, Florida

Attendance: 78,363

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

As big as HHH vs. Undertaker is, everything pales in comparison to Rock vs. Cena. This was the biggest match since Rock vs. Austin's heyday and the money it brought in more than validated an entire year spent setting everything up. There's no way the match isn't going to be great and everyone was ready to see it. Let's get to it.

Pre-Show: Tag Team Titles: Usos vs. Primo/Epico vs. Tyson Kidd/Justin Gabriel

Primo and Epico (Carlito and Primo's cousin) are defending and this is one fall to a finish. Primo, Jey and Kidd start things off and you have to tag your partner. Kidd sends Primo to the floor and jumps into a rollup for two. The champs start stomping Tyson gets caught in a DDT for two more. Primo loads up a superplex on Jey but Kidd springboards up to make it a Tower of Doom in a cool spot.

Jimmy and Epico get hot tags and everything breaks down. Jey throws Gabriel up for a Samoan drop but Justin kicks out. Epico gets backdropped over the top and out onto Primo, setting up a dive from Jey. Gabriel moonsaults out onto all three of them, leaving only Jimmy on his feet. Jimmy throws Gabriel back in for a cover, only to have Epico come in for a Backstabber to Jimmy for the pin at 5:11.

Rating: C. Fun tag match here and much better than most of the pre-show matches in recent years. Epico and Primo certainly weren't great champions by any stretch but there were far worse options out there. This

wasn't meant to revitalize the division or anything but it was very suitable for a quick match to fire the crowd up.

Lillian Garcia sings America the Beautiful. The show is outside again and the stadium looks amazing.

The opening video shows the paths that Cena and Rock took to get here in a really nice concept. We also see the montage of Wrestlemania moments before focusing on HHH vs. Undertaker as the last of a generation. Just like two years earlier, they're making no secret of the fact that this is a two match card.

World Heavyweight Championship: Daniel Bryan vs. Sheamus

Notice that the Raw and Smackdown names have been dropped as the Brand Split officially ended in August 2011. Sheamus is challenging after winning the 2012 Royal Rumble and choosing to fight Bryan, who won the title by cashing in a Money in the Bank contract at Tables, Ladders and Chairs 2011. Bryan also has his girlfriend AJ Lee with him. The bell rings, Bryan kisses AJ, and it's a Brogue Kick to give us a new champion at 18 seconds. That fall would haunt Bryan for over a year and indirectly lead to his rise up the card which we'll get to later.

Team Johnny (as in John Laurinitis, one of McMahon's longtime yes men) is ready for the ten man tag later tonight. Miz tries to captain the team but they're not interested in listening. David Otunga (a wrestling lawyer) introduces Johnny in his white suit. Johnny talks about what a big moment this is going to be, just like Austin not submitting and Hogan slamming Andre. There's no punchline or anything here and it's just building up the match later. It's Team Johnny vs. Team Teddy with the winning GM controlling both shows.

Kane vs. Randy Orton

Kane is upset that he shook Randy's hand last year after a street fight and needs to become a monster again. Cole explained that as Kane made his entrance and it was simple, to the point, and told you everything you need to know. Why is that so hard the rest of the year? The fans chant for Bryan as the sun is starting to set.

Orton pounds him down to start and loads up the elevated DDT (which Cole calls a bulldog), only to get draped over the top rope. A big boot to the face sets up a chinlock as the match slows down a bit. Kane's side slam gets two more and we hear a weak BORING chant. Orton gets taken down in a vertical suplex and Kane puts on his third chinlock of the match. They get back up and Orton hooks his backbreaker, followed by the elevated DDT (AGAIN called a bulldog by Cole).

It's Kane up first though and he tries the top rope clothesline, only to dive into the dropkick. The Punt is countered into a chokeslam for two (Do they really need to have finishers kicked out of so often? This is a midcard match, not a main event.) so Kane heads up top. Orton breaks it up and tries the superplex, only to get countered into a super chokeslam to give Kane the pin at 10:57.

Rating: C-. This wasn't bad and it's nice to see Orton lose a match after getting dominated and not just nail a quick RKO for the pin. You can tell this is designed to set up a bunch of rematches, which is part of the problem with Wrestlemania: it should be the big ending to a feud, not the start of one. I liked this more the first time around but the chinlocks really hold it back on another viewing.

Santino Marella talks to a cast member from Deadliest Catch and Mick Foley is there eating crabs while talking like a pirate. Mr. Socko and the Cobra make cameo appearances and destroy the crabs until Ron Simmons comes in for his catchphrase.

Intercontinental Title: Cody Rhodes vs. Big Show

Show is challenging but more importantly he's in search of his Wrestlemania moment. Cody had made fun of him for weeks over being a joke at Wrestlemania because in this universe, Wrestlemania XVI where Big Show was in the main event doesn't exist. Yeah he lost quick but how many main events has Cody been in? Cole makes it even worse by saying Show has won some tag matches but was never involved in the pinfall victory. I guess that quick match last year doesn't count either.

Cody gets Show to chase him to start but dives into Show's arms, meaning it's time for the beating to begin. There are the loud chops in the

corner and Show adds a Stinkface to make up for some of the humiliation. Cody comes back with a series of dropkicks, including one to the leg for a smart move.

Show gets his leg cranked as Cole says he isn't as big when he's on the mat. As usual, this is inaccurate. Actually Show is the same size but he can't use it to his advantage. I know it's stupid but that always gets on my nerves. Show fights up and the Disaster Kick doesn't even knock him down. Cody tries another but gets "speared" (more like a shoulder block which went very low), followed by the WMD (KO Punch) for the pin and the title at 5:20.

Rating: D. So Big Show has the title now, but I guess the whole Wrestlemania moment is the real prize. It's not like the title had meant anything in years anyway so that makes as much sense as anything else. It makes more sense than saying being in the main event of a Wrestlemania doesn't count as a major moment at least.

Video on what it means to be a WWE Diva, which seems to translate to wearing very little clothing and dancing a lot.

We recap the Divas tag match. Kelly Kelly had been a guest on Maria Menunos' (a good looking TV host) Extra when Eve Torres and Beth Phoenix came in and said they should be interviewed. The solution was a tag match of course.

Maria Menunos/Kelly Kelly vs. Beth Phoenix/Eve Torres

Beth is Divas Champion (and has wings on her head for no apparent reason) while Maria has cracked ribs and stress fractures in her feet. A quick rollup gets two for Kelly but her cartwheel into an elbow hits feet to the legs. Eve's moonsault is broken up and Maria comes in for a double Stinkface. Off to a bodyscissors on Maria until Beth comes in for a bearhug from the side.

Eve tries another dancing moonsault but gets kicked out to the floor, allowing for the tag off to Kelly. The screaming headscissors puts Beth down and a top rope seated senton gets two. Beth's Glam Slam is countered into a bulldog (actually a bulldog this time) and the tag is made to the

still injured Maria. Kelly saves her from getting slammed and Maria rolls Beth up for the pin at 6:50.

Rating: D+. I know Kelly is supposed to be this big deal but her theme song is still about hollering in a club to a hot beat. Then you have the Divas Champion lose to a celebrity, who to be fair was clearly trying. The match could have been worse but the division was just dying at this point and this was great proof. Watchable match, horrible ending. You really can't have Eve get pinned here? Really? Also: only Maria would be involved with the next Wrestlemania.

Shawn Michaels says this next match will be the end of an era. It's ironic that he gets to decide which era that will be.

The attendance record is announced.

Jim Ross, now with a goatee, comes out to do commentary.

There's no recap for the Cell match (if you were watching the show you probably knew the story already) but as I said it's the final chapter in the story between these three men. HHH wanted one more shot at the Streak (though the way he talked you would think he already broke it) and Undertaker agreed if it was inside the Cell. Shawn is guest referee to add some more drama.

Undertaker vs. HHH

Inside Hell in a Cell with Shawn as guest referee. Shawn takes a quick lap around the stage before coming to the ring. HHH comes out through a miniature set designed like a war helmet and shoulder pads. Undertaker's hair now shaved into a mohawk with the first reveal coming here, much to the crowd's shock. The Cell is lowered to The Memory Remains by Metallica, allowing JR to talk about how the Cell is morally corrupt.

Undertaker slugs him down to start (with carcinogenic right hands according to JR) and HHH can't hang in a fist fight. They head outside instead with Undertaker backdropping him onto the floor. The announcers talk about how this is the end of an era and we'll never return to it. Undertaker sends him into the cage as Cole's latest stat is HHH winning

every match in which Shawn is a guest referee. So he's what: 2 or 3-0?

Back in and the facebuster has no effect on Undertaker and it's Old School putting HHH down again. The steps off HHH's head surprisingly don't draw blood. The apron legdrop keeps HHH in trouble before we get to the real violence. HHH finally gets in a DDT for a breather but the Pedigree onto the steps is quickly broken up. The spinebuster onto the steps works a lot better and Undertaker is in trouble.

HHH walks right into Hell's Gate from the steps so he lifts Undertaker up (JR: "Sinful strength by HHH!") into a powerbomb onto the mat for the save. The steps are sent to the floor and it's time for the chair shots to Undertaker's back. Shawn tries to pull HHH off but JR accurately says that there are no rules (unfortunately with no strange word choices). Michaels tries to talk Undertaker into quitting (out of sympathy, not cheating) but Undertaker demands that it not be stopped.

That earns him a chair to the ribs and the back for a pretty slow two count. HHH goes to get more weapons and tells Shawn to end it before he does. That means sledgehammer time but Undertaker says keep it going. There's a sledgehammer shot to the face for two (we're getting close to that ridiculous point). Shawn breaks up another one to the back of the head to avoid being a murder witness and thinks about calling the match to save Undertaker.

You don't threaten the Undertaker though so he chokes Shawn out to break it up. That earns him another sledgehammer to the head but there's no referee. Undertaker is still able to kick HHH low, despite probably having about 18 concussions at once. The Hell's Gate has HHH in trouble and here's another referee to take Shawn's place. A chokeslam gets two so Undertaker chokeslams the new referee (barely getting him above shoulder high).

Shawn gets back up and superkicks Undertaker into the Pedigree for maybe the hottest near fall of all time, sending Shawn nearly into tears in the corner. I totally and completely bought that it was over on that cover. HHH gets the sledgehammer and throws an intervening Shawn to the floor....and Undertaker sits up with that look in his eye. You can take

your Brock Lesnar, your old school Vader, your Mankind and your Mr. McMahon at his craziest. For me, ticked off Undertaker is the scariest thing in wrestling.

The big boot and Snake Eyes set up a Tombstone for a very close two and Undertaker's adrenaline comes to a sudden stop. They slug it out from their knees and then their feet until a quick Pedigree gets two. Shawn is still on the verge of tears. Undertaker sits up again but falls when he tries to get to his feet. HHH gets the sledgehammer again but Undertaker steps on it before unloading on HHH with a chair.

The chair is bent over HHH's back and now Shawn has to try to stop Undertaker. All those shots are only good for two and Shawn begs HHH to stop. HHH tries to get the sledgehammer back up but Undertaker easily blocks a swing. Barely able to stand in the corner, HHH fires off a crotch chop as Shawn turns his head. A sledgehammer to the head means it's time for the straps to come down and the Tombstone finally ends HHH at 30:54.

Rating: A+. What a ride. Those are the first words to come to my head after seeing this again because that went from one end of the roller coaster to another with every kind of emotion you could find in the middle. This is one of the best stories ever told in a match and a perfect way to conclude a four year saga between these three men. I'm glad the Streak didn't end here, but that superkick into the Pedigree had me ready to believe that it was over. This is an absolute masterpiece and the definition of wrestling as art. There's nothing left for these three to do and they left it all in the ring. See this if you haven't before.

Shawn has to pull Undertaker up as HHH is still unconscious. They eventually help HHH out and get him up the ramp where they all hug to truly end this in a show of respect. That's what the entire story was based on, even if they went to war for years. It was never a war based on hatred and it's very good that they showcased that at the end.

We get the Hall of Fame video from last night with the Four Horsemen being inducted as a team so Flair could be put in twice. This wound up biting them though as Flair was officially still under contract to TNA so

WWE had to send Christian to Slammiversary 2012 as compensation (while Christian was still Intercontinental Champion).

Here's the Class of 2012: Mil Mascaras, Yokozuna (represented by his children), Ron Simmons, the Four Horsemen (Flair, Arn Anderson, JJ Dillon, Tully Blanchard and Barry Windham. I believe it's just this incarnation and not the group as a whole), Mike Tyson and Edge.

Heath Slater wants to sing a duet with Florida ("That's Flo Rida.") but Rida isn't interested in any sort of partnership. Slater gets beaten up.

Team Teddy vs. Team Johnny

Teddy: Santino Marella, R-Truth, Kofi Kingston, Zack Ryder, Great Khali, Booker T.

Johnny: David Otunga, Mark Henry, Dolph Ziggler, Drew McIntyre, Jack Swagger, The Miz

The winner's team gets to run both shows. Johnny has Vickie Guerrero and Brie Bella, Teddy has Hornswoggle, Eve Torres, Brie Bella and Aksana (Teddy's would-be girlfriend). Ryder is fresh off becoming a grassroots hero who won the US Title, only to lose it all (presumably because he isn't what WWE wanted as a star, as brilliant an idea as that is). Johnny is in a white suit and red tie, making him look like a thin Colonel Sanders. All of the wrestlers (including Captains Otunga and Marella (US Champion)) are in red or blue shirts.

Kofi and Ziggler start (makes sense as they've fought literally about thirty times on TV alone over the years) with Kofi grabbing a headlock and bringing in Truth for a double hiptoss. Ziggler comes back with a dropkick and it's off to Drew as Cole and Lawler bicker over who would be the better GM.

Khali comes in for the big chops before handing it off to Booker (a last minute addition to the team) for two off a side slam. Booker gets in trouble though and it's time for the face in peril (along with Vickie screaming). Mark comes in and throw Booker into the corner before Miz comes in, much to Cole's delight. Booker fights out of a chinlock as the

discussion turns to Vickie's looks.

The World's Strongest Slam drops Booker and everything breaks down. A double flapjack drops Khali but Kofi, Ryder and Truth hit triple flip dives to take out most of Team Johnny. Aksana and Vickie brawl which gets the Bellas into it. The hot tag brings in Santino to clean house, including his saluting top rope headbutt.

There's the Cobra to Miz (Cole: "Oh my God, oh my God.") but Ziggler breaks it up at two. Ryder comes in and takes down Miz and Ziggler, including a Rough Ryder (leg lariat) to Dolph. Eve gets in the ring for no apparent reason other than to distract Ryder, allowing Miz to hit the Skull Crushing Finale for the pin on Zack at 10:38.

Rating: D+. Big mess here but that triple dive was really cool looking. This was another step towards Ryder's complete burial after he ran from Kane, was destroyed by Kane, lost his US Title and lost Eve (the woman of his dreams) a few months ago. It was depressing how bad things got for him and he never recovered. As you probably guessed, this was your annual get everyone on the show match.

Eve kicks Ryder low to make sure you get the idea: don't cheer for people WWE doesn't pick.

Alex Rodriguez and Torrie Wilson are here.

Wrestlemania week video.

CM Punk is ready to defend his WWE World Title but Johnny comes up to say the title can change hands on a DQ.

We recap Jericho vs. Punk. Jericho returned again and accused Punk of ripping him off when Punk called himself the best in the world. Punk eliminated him from the Elimination Chamber by knocking Jericho out due to injury without pinning him. Jericho then won a battle royal to earn this shot and started accusing Punk's family of being a bunch of alcoholics and drug addicts. That's too much for Punk and now he's out for blood.

WWE World Title: CM Punk vs. Chris Jericho

Punk is defending if that wasn't clear and he can lose the title on a DQ, just in case they didn't hammer the idea in well enough at Wrestlemania XXV. The champ takes it to the mat to start before taking Jericho down again with a knee to the ribs. Jericho gets sent into the corner where he shouts "HOW'S YOUR FATHER" to send Punk over the edge again. Punk beats him down again but the threat of the top rope elbow sends Jericho to the floor.

That's fine with Punk as he dives onto Jericho, who then asks about Punk's sister. Punk grabs a chair but opts to kick Jericho in the ribs instead. Just like three years ago, these pauses are killing the flow of the match. A quick dropkick gives Jericho a breather and he suplexes Punk over the top and out to the floor for a big crash. You don't often see that work. Jericho starts working on the back to set up the Walls with a kick to the spine and a backsplash for two. A double arm crank keeps Punk in trouble until he dropkicks Jericho into the corner.

The running knee in the corner sets up the bulldog but Jericho slams him down instead. Punk has to counter the Walls and gets two off the high kick to the head. The Macho Elbow hits Jericho's knees though and a Codebreaker puts Punk on the floor. Back in and a GTS out of nowhere gets two (no way a title match ends on the first finisher). Jericho drapes him ribs first over the top rope and the Lionsault gets two. Cole: "Not often you see somebody kick out of the Lionsault." I don't remember the last time it pinned someone.

The Walls have Punk in trouble but he makes the ropes as you would expect. A knee to the head staggers Jericho but Punk springboards into another Codebreaker for another two. Punk kicks him down again and tries the GTS (Punk: "BEST IN THE WORLD!"), only to be countered into the Lioneater (kneeling Boston crab) and then the Walls. Punk counters into a small package and then the Anaconda Vice. Jericho counters THAT with knees to the head but can't hook the Walls again, allowing Punk to hook the Vice (and duck his head this time) for the tap out at 22:20.

Rating: B+. This got so much better once they got away from the stupid DQ stuff (which would be remedied at the next pay per view with an awesome street fight). I really don't get the thinking behind the DQ idea. I know

it's the evil GM screwing with Punk but it cripples whatever the match could get going. Either let them do the violent stuff that fits the story or just have it be an awesome match like they're clearly capable of having. This half and half stuff almost never works and this only succeeded because of how good both guys are.

Wrestlemania XXIX is in New Jersey.

Here's the still mostly new Funkasaurus Brodus Clay to tell us to call our mamas. Brodus calls his own mama and finds out that she's here, complete with the bridge club. Cue mama and said bridge club (all a bunch of older women (clearly in makeup) and matching dresses) for a massive dance number. This got twelve times the length that Sheamus vs. Bryan had.

Video on G.I. Joe 2, which wasn't released for over a year due to re-shoots.

After all that, we recap John Cena vs. the Rock. This has been built up for over a year now and both guys have spent so much time heavily insulting each other that it actually is epic, as described by a bunch of legends in the video. Several years back, Cena had been on a radio show where he talked about Rock saying he loved WWE and then leaving. Cena on the other hand was here every single day because this is what he loved more than anything.

This turned into a back and forth war until Rock finally returned over a year ago. This is the match that has been set up by both guys trading huge bombs on the mic with Rock saying Cena wasn't serious enough and Cena calling Rock out for using wrestling to become an actor. They flat out did not like each other and made that very clear, setting up this match as the biggest in a generation, which it certainly was. The tagline for the match and the show: Once in a Lifetime.

Since we haven't dragged it out enough, here are Machine Gun Kelly and Skylar Grey to perform the show's theme song and define the word underdog.

John Cena vs. The Rock

Cena is booed out of Miami the second his music hits. And wait again because here's Flo Rida to perform two songs and eat up even more time. Of note: he has a bunch of backup dancers, who I'm assuming are the bridge club after a costume change. After that eats up WAY too much time, Rock's ovation is thunderous. Ignore him having to walk through the posing dancers to look out at the people. They talk trash after the big match intros and we finally get the opening bell, nearly twenty minutes after the video package began.

We get the big lockup and Cena shoves him away. Rock does the same as we're firmly in Hogan vs. Warrior territory so far. Some quick armdrags and a majistral cradle get two for Rock, sending Cena into the corner with a stunned look on his face. Rock can't get a Sharpshooter and Cena bails to the floor for a breather.

Back in and Cena takes Rock's head off with a clothesline for one and we hit a bearhug on the mat. That goes nowhere so they head to the floor with Rock being dropped ribs first over the barricade. Cena stays on them with a belly to belly and now it's off to a bearhug. Rock fights back with right hands and the spinebuster but Cena grabs the leg for the STF to break up the People's Elbow. He can't get the hold on so it's a ProtoBomb instead, followed by the Shuffle.

Back up and it's a double clothesline to give us another breather. Another slugout goes to Rock but he tries his own You Can't See Me and walks into the AA for two. The Rock Bottom gets the same but Cena comes back with a side slam. The top rope Fameasser gets another two and both guys are spent. Something like a spear (it was supposed to be a spinebuster) sets up the Sharpshooter (with Rock pulling back with his hands instead of his arm), only to have Cena quickly make it to the ropes.

Rock sends him hard into the steps to keep Cena in trouble but he grabs the STF (with almost no torque). The hold stays on WAY too long and Rock starts to fade, even drawing an arm check. Rock finally makes the ropes after about two minutes and grabs a Samoan drop to get a breather.

The AA is countered into a spinebuster (Rock might have said "Yabba

dabba" on the way down) and the People's Elbow for a really close near fall. A catapult of all things sends Rock into the buckle (as opposed to a Buick sending him into it), only to have Rock break up a superplex. Rock goes nuts with a high cross body but Cena counters into an AA for two more. With nothing else working, Cena tries his own People's Elbow but charges into the Rock Bottom for the pin at 30:54.

Rating: A. Just because it's not quite as good as the Cell. That was the main event of Wrestlemania. What else can you ask for from these two, especially after all this build and the Rock having one match in eight years? This was almost all about the atmosphere coming in and then they had a great match on top of it. It's one of the best main events ever and certainly one of the biggest, which is exactly what it needed to be.

So did the right guy win? I really don't think so the more I look at it. Everything that Cena had said over the year was true: win or lose, Rock was going back to Hollywood to star in another blockbuster so why should he win here? It really doesn't help Cena either as he got beat by a guy who hasn't wrestled in eight years, though at the same time I don't want to imagine how bad the reaction would have been if Rock had lost in his hometown. I would have gone with Cena, though I think I can understand their reasons behind going with Rock. Maybe.

Now for the second iconic image of the show: Rock poses on the ropes and Cena sits on the ramp, totally lost.

Overall Rating: B+. This is almost all about the two main events which ate up nearly half the show when you consider buildup and fallout. Those two matches were both home runs and that's all you need to make this a good show. Jericho vs. Punk is good but not great...and that's about the extent of the positives on the show. Everything else is just ok at best but again, nearly two hours of great is more than you get on several months of shows most of the time, which easily makes this a very good show.

Ratings Comparison

Daniel Bryan vs. Sheamus

Original: N/A

2013 Redo: N/A

2015 Redo: N/A

Kane vs. Randy Orton

Original: B-

2013 Redo: B-

2015 Redo: C-

Cody Rhodes vs. Big Show

Original: D+

2013 Redo: D+

2015 Redo: D

Kelly Kelly/Maria Menunos vs. Beth Phoenix/Eve Torres

Original: C+

2013 Redo: D+

2015 Redo: D+

HHH vs. Undertaker

Original: A+

2013 Redo: A+

2015 Redo: A+

Team Johnny vs. Team Teddy

Original: C

2013 Redo: D+

2015 Redo: D+

Chris Jericho vs. CM Punk

Original: A

2013 Redo: A

2015 Redo: B+

The Rock vs. John Cena

Original: B+

2013 Redo: A+

2015 Redo: A

Overall Rating

Original: A+

2013 Redo: A

2015 Redo: B+

The top matches on this card are as good as WWE has done in a long time.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2012/04/01/wrestlemania-xxviii-one-of-the-best-shows-of-all-time/>

And the 2013 Redo:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2013/04/06/wrestlemania-count-up-wrestlemania-xxviii-this-show-got-me-excited-all-over-again/>

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