

Backlash 2008 (2023 Redo): The Power Of The Followup Show

Backlash 2008

Date: April 27, 2008

Location: 1st Mariner Arena, Baltimore, Maryland

Attendance: 11,277

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole, Mick Foley, Tazz, Mike Adamle

We are at the official Wrestlemania followup pay per view and the top of the card is rather stacked. First up we have a Wrestlemania rematch for the Smackdown World Title, though this time Edge is challenging Undertaker. On Raw, it's a similar situation from Wrestlemania, but this time JBL is added to the John Cena/Randy Orton/HHH mix and it's elimination Rules. Let's get to it.

The opening video looks at how this is the Wrestlemania fallout, including the bigger matches.

Mick Foley is replacing Coach on commentary, which has to be a nice upgrade.

US Title: Matt Hardy vs. MVP

MVP is defending in a match almost a year in the making, as they had a big feud going but then health issues slowed both of them down at different times. Feeling out process to start with neither being able to get very far early on. Matt drops the wrestler and hits him in the face, followed by a hiptoss for a quick one.

MVP puts him on top but gets elbowed back down, setting up a moonsault onto MVP's raised knees. The abdominal stretch stays

on the banged up ribs and MVP is evil enough to grab the rope. Matt grabs the leg and counters with something like a Samoan drop but MVP goes right back to the ribs. A big clothesline gets Matt out of trouble but MVP hot shots him ribs first onto the top.

The Playmaker is countered into the Side Effect for two and Matt goes up. This still doesn't go well for him as MVP crotches him down but a super Side Effect gives Matt another near fall. MVP goes a little more basic by kicking him in the head and then does it again for a bonus. The running boot in the corner misses though and the Twist of Fate gives Matt the pin and the title.

Rating: B. The ending was a little flat but what mattered here was giving Matt the big win to FINALLY pay off the feud. Other than that, they had a hard hitting match with Matt having to fight from behind for a good portion but he managed to hang in there enough. The ending was clean too and now Matt can move on to something else, albeit likely after a big rematch with MVP first.

In the back, Matt Hardy talks about how this is the biggest win of his career and emphatically says he is BETTER THAN MVP.

ECW Title: Kane vs. Chavo Guerrero

Guerrero, with Bam Neely, is challenging. Kane sends him into the corner to start and hits a basement dropkick but seems to be limping a bit. A gorilla press plants Chavo but he's right back with some shots to the hip/leg. The still limping Kane sends him outside and gets in a ramp into the apron to work on Chavo's back. The rather wise Chavo goes right back to the leg, sending it into the apron and post.

Neely gets in a cheap shot to validate his presence before Chavo is right back to a leglock. Kane powers up with an electric chair drop and some corner clotheslines. The side slam gets two and the top rope clothesline knocks Chavo to the

apron. That's enough for a tornado DDT to get Chavo out of trouble and it's right back to the knee. The frog splash connects...with Kane's hand, as he grabs Chavo by the throat for the chokeslam to retain.

Rating: C-. The problem with Kane vs. Chavo continues, as there is no reason to believe that Chavo, even with help, is going to be able to beat Kane. Throw in Neely doing almost nothing here and there was no reason to get involved here. Kane limped around a lot and then shrugged it off to take over in the end. There isn't much to get invested in here and it shows worse every week this feud has continued.

Randy Orton isn't worried about defending against three challengers tonight because he's retaining the title.

Great Khali vs. Big Show

The fans seem interested as we get the big staredown to start, followed by the slugout. They trade headbutts and chops until Khali drops him with a clothesline. Show's attempt at a slam doesn't work as Khali knocks him out to the floor with another clothesline. A big boot drops Show back inside and Khali grabs something like a crossface (ok then). Show fights up but Khali falls on him to break up a slam attempt. The nerve hold goes on before the big chop to the head drops Show again. Show fights to his feet again and finally gets the slam, followed by the chokeslam for the pin.

Rating: D+. It wasn't good, it was very slow paced, and I have no idea why anyone would have expected anything else. There is only so much that Khali is going to be able to do in the ring and they didn't deviate from that plan, with a lot of Khali's stuff involving him standing still. Not a good match by any means, but it was exactly how this should have gone and was far from some disaster.

John Cena and Jimmy Wang Yang seem to be talking country music when Randy Orton comes in. Cena and Orton trade threats for

the main event.

We recap Batista vs. Shawn Michaels. Batista was unhappy that Shawn Michaels didn't lay down for Ric Flair to keep his career alive. Shawn more or less told Batista to get over it and the match was set. Chris Jericho got involved as the guest referee and seems to be more on the Batista side, despite Batista sounding incredibly whiny in the whole thing.

Batista vs. Shawn Michaels

Chris Jericho is the guest referee. They circle each other a bit to start and both miss their early finisher attempts. Michaels tries to go after the arm by driving in some knees and grabbing the short arm scissors. Batista powers up but they fall over the top, cranking the arm even more.

The bad arm is sent into the post and the armbars goes on back inside. Batista finally powers out of it and hits a Samoan drop, followed by a clothesline to turn Shawn inside out (that always looks cool). The good arm is used for some shoulders in the corner but Shawn counters the Batista Bomb into a Crossface. With Batista getting too close to the ropes, Shawn is smart enough to roll it back into the middle to keep cranking.

The rope is finally grabbed but Jericho has to pull Shawn off (rather quickly at that). Batista is back up with a side slam and a spear cuts Shawn in half for two. Shawn is placed up top but shoves Batista down, setting up the top rope elbow. The superkick is countered into a heck of a one armed spinebuster and Batista is shaking the ropes levels of fired up. The Batista Bomb is countered...but Shawn has hurt his knee on the landing. Batista, ever the genius, falls for it and gets superkicked for the pin.

Rating: B. This was a somewhat slower paced match but the psychology worked well. Shawn knew that he couldn't handle Batista in a straight fight but he also knew that Batista was

so mad he was going to come right for him. That let Shawn pick him apart, mainly with the arm, before outsmarting him in the end. That's how the match should have gone and it worked well, with Jericho not being much of a factor whatsoever.

Shawn's knee is banged up enough that he has to be helped to the back. Why do I not quite believe him?

HHH and Randy Orton have their own psych out session, with HHH saying that pride comes before the fall.

Beth Phoenix/Jillian Hall/Layla/Melina/Natalya/Victoria vs. Ashley/Cherry/Kelly Kelly/Maria/Michelle McCool/Mickie James

Beth wants Michelle to start and shoves her down early on. Michelle's kicks to the back don't do much as Phoenix grabs a powerslam to take over. Melina comes in and gets beaten up by Mickie but Victoria comes in to slam her down. The dancing moonsault misses and everything breaks down fast. We actually settle back down to Beth chinlocking Ashley, who slips out of the Glam Slam. Everything breaks down again and we hit the parade of finishers. Beth's release fisherman's suplex finishes Ashley.

Rating: C-. This is one of those matches where there wasn't much else that could have been done. You had twelve women sharing less than seven minutes and that is not going to go well. Maybe they were never given the time to do anything or they were trying to hide some of the limitations, but the Smackdown women really need something to fight over other than bragging rights.

We recap Edge challenging Undertaker for the Smackdown World Title. Undertaker took the title from Edge, but Vickie Guerrero has set up the rematch and put Undertaker through a bunch of opponents on the way. Simple story but Vickie knows how to sell it very well.

Smackdown World Title: Edge vs. Undertaker

Edge is challenging and is shoved outside rather quickly to start. Back in and Undertaker starts working on the arm to keep Edge in trouble and a good bit of cranking ensues. Edge gets smart by raking the eyes and knocking Undertaker outside, where a baseball slide knocks him down again. That doesn't last long as Undertaker runs him over back inside and drops a leg for two.

Edge fights back again and gets in a shot to Undertaker's banged up back, setting up the bodyscissors. A dropkick to the back, followed by a sliding dropkick to the back, has Undertaker in more trouble. Edge's camel clutch goes on twice in a row, with Undertaker having to drop backwards onto him for the break.

They collide in the middle for a double knockdown but it's Undertaker up first with Snake Eyes into the big boot. Undertaker shoves him off the top but misses a top rope legdrop of all things. With that odd visual out of the way, Edge grabs the title, only to have to counter a chokeslam to save himself. Edge goes for the turnbuckle pad, which the referee fixes, allowing Curt Hawkins to run in with a belt shot for two. Undertaker fights up again, takes out Zack Ryder, and grabs the triangle choke to retain the title.

Rating: B. This was a far cry from the Wrestlemania match and felt like a good TV match rather than a pay per view co main event. That being said, there is nothing to suggest that Edge can win a straight match against Undertaker so the ending was what made sense. Odds are this somehow still isn't over though, as Vickie Guerrero dragging it out would not be a surprise. On top of that, who else is there on Smackdown that would make an interesting challenger right now? Anyway, nice match here, but nothing great or memorable.

Post match Undertaker keeps the hold on, with Vickie Guerrero coming out as Edge is bleeding from the nose/mouth. Undertaker leaves him laying and Vickie freaks out as Edge is taken away

on a stretcher.

CM Punk wishes Randy Orton good luck, even as Orton is knocking on JBL's door.

We recap the Raw World Title match. Randy Orton retained over John Cena and HHH at Wrestlemania so let's do it again, with JBL added, and under elimination rules.

Raw World Title: JBL vs. HHH vs. John Cena vs. Randy Orton

Orton is defending under elimination rules. We get the Big Match Intros and Orton goes for the belt, only to get knocked outside by JBL. That leaves Cena to hammer on HHH in the corner but HHH sends him outside. Cena runs Orton over on the floor and hammers away, only to get knocked off the apron and into the announcers' table.

Orton and JBL double team HHH inside, only to have him double clothesline his way to freedom. HHH sends JBL into the steps but it's Cena back in with the top rope Fameasser to Orton. The STFU goes on and JBL...is smart enough to not break it up. HHH crossfaces JBL, who pokes Cena in the eye to save Orton. With the crossface broken up as well, JBL boots Orton in the face for two but he clotheslines JBL right back.

JBL catches Orton on top and let's just turn that into a Tower Of Doom for the big knockdown. Cena is back up to initiate the finishing sequence on HHH, who cuts him off with a spinebuster. A backdrop sends HHH to the floor and Cena STFU's JBL for the tap. Before Cena can get up, Orton Punts him for the pin ten seconds later and we're down to Orton vs. HHH.

Orton gets sent outside and rammed into the announcers' table, only to reverse a whip into the steps. A catapult sends HHH over the barricade but a suplex brings him back to ringside. They get back inside with Orton slowly hammering away, including the backbreaker for two.

HHH fights out of the chinlock (eventually) but Orton knocks him right back down. The RKO is shoved off though and HHH scores with the jumping knee to the face. Back up and HHH hits a running clothesline to put Orton on the floor again, setting up a toss over the announcers' table. HHH drops him onto the steps to make it even worse but Orton manages to counter the Pedigree back inside. An RKO out of nowhere gets two but the Punt, the RKO and the Pedigree all miss, setting up the Pedigree to make HHH champion again.

Rating: B-. This was weird, as the majority of the match was spent on HHH vs. Randy Orton, with Cena and JBL feeling like window dressing. That feels like a big shift over to a new feud and that might be more interesting than the three way or multi person feud. As for the match itself, the first part was quite entertaining but it got pretty dull once it got down to two, which has been the case for HHH vs. Orton over the years. The title change was a surprise though and that is kind of nice to see.

Overall Rating: B. It's a rather unique show as you had good action and stuff did happen with some title changes, but it still didn't exactly feel like a major event. What matters here is moving some things forward though, with the Wrestlemania rematch season wrapping up and hopefully getting us on to something else. It's almost a hidden gem, as the action is worth seeing and nothing is too bad, but I'll be hoping to remember this show in another day or two.

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