

# Wrestlemania Count-Up – Wrestlemania XXXV (2020 Edition): It Does Help Things

## Wrestlemania XXXV

Date: April 7, 2019

Location: MetLife Stadium, East Rutherford, New Jersey

Attendance: 82,265

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Renee Young, Byron Saxton, Tom Phillips

America the Beautiful: Yolanda Adams

We're back to this show after a year away and I'm not sure what to think about this one. I wasn't in the stadium for this one and for once that is making me remember the show a little bit better. This whole thing is centered around a few matches, as Wrestlemania always tends to be. Let's get to it.

## Kickoff Show: Cruiserweight Title: Buddy Murphy vs. Tony Nese

Murphy is defending and this is during Nese's (who won a tournament to get here) not so great face run. First good thing: there are a bunch of people in their seats already so the place doesn't look ridiculous. Murphy misses a running knee at the bell so Nese hammers away in the corner and tells the fans that this is his Wrestlemania moment. A cartwheel off the apron lets Nese hit him in the jaw but Murphy grabs a fireman's carry drop onto the corner (Colt Cabana's Chicago Skyline) as we take a break.

Back with Murphy holding a chinlock but getting suplexed into the corner to cut things off. Some running elbows to the face rock Murphy and the Lionsault, with Murphy hanging in the ropes, gets two. Nese catches him on the ropes with a palm strike, only to get pulled into a Cheeky Nandos kick. A powerbomb into a spinning faceplant gives Murphy two as we get the "still filing in line" from commentary. Murphy's Law is countered and Nese hits a reverse hurricanrana to put them both down again.

Murphy wins a strike off but Nese is right back with a sunset driver for his own near fall as the fans are finally getting into this. The running Nese doesn't get to launch so Nese hits the Fosbury Flop instead. Back in and the 450 gets two in a surprising near fall. The jumping knee connects out of nowhere and Murphy's Law gets two as Nese gets a foot on the rope. Ever the villain, Murphy tries his own running Nese, which is cut off by a superkick. The real running Nese finishes Murphy at 10:44.

**Rating:** C. The 205 Live guys had several matches that would blow this one away but at least they had a nice moment in the end with the fans getting into things. Nese as a face didn't exactly click but beating Murphy felt like a bit deal. It's a nice mini feel good moment to start what is going to be a long night.

#### Kickoff Show: Wrestlemania Women's Battle Royal

Zelina Vega, Kairi Sane, Ember Moon, Liv Morgan, Sarah Logan, Ruby Riott, Mandy Rose, Carmella, Maria Kanellis, Asuka, Sonya Deville, Candice LeRae, Naomi, Nikki Cross, Lana, Dana Brooke, Mickie James

Only Naomi and Asuka get entrances. Nikki goes nuts to start and it's a big brawl, as a battle royal should be. Maria is out in a hurry and Asuka knocks out Candice and Nikki back to back. Ember and Naomi trade hurricanranas until the former hits a quick springboard Eclipse on Lana. Another Eclipse gets rid of Naomi and there's the real version to Mandy. Ember goes up again but Lana (the one in the designated Captain Marvel attire) shoves her out.

Sane hits an Alabama Slam on Lana and goes up like a schnook, only to get shoved to the apron by Logan. Even the bigger schnook, Logan doesn't eliminate her but rather joins the rest of the Riott Squad to go after Lana. The elimination doesn't take long but Sane drops Logan. The Insane Elbow connects, only to have the Squad get together and eliminate Sane without much trouble. An assisted flipping Stunner rocks Vega but AGAIN Logan doesn't get the elimination.

Instead the Squad goes after Asuka and again they don't eliminate her. Brooke gets to fight off all three of them and manages a slow motion Thesz press on Morgan. Riott goes after Brooke and gets tossed, with

Morgan following her out. Brooke's handspring elbow hits Vega's knees though and the running knees in the corner make it worse. Rose and Deville get rid of Vega and Brooke, meaning we can get a big hug.

We're down to Rose, Deville, Asuka, James, Logan and Carmella, the latter of whom seems to be on the floor because that's something you have to have in battle royals these days. James hurricanranas Rose to the apron and superkicks her out, only to get dropped by Deville. Asuka beats up Logan and Deville at once but she manages to toss Deville. Logan gets rid of Asuka but, say it with me, Carmella is still in and superkicks Logan out for the win at 10:33.

**Rating:** D. Holy sweet goodness I can't stand that finish and yet we seem to get it in every few battle royals (including last year's women's battle royal). I know Carmella getting the win is for the sake of the New York fans but egads this feels like a waste of a match, which tends to be the case with so many of these pre-show battle royals. In other words: more of the same stuff that wasn't good in the first place.

Kickoff Show: Raw Tag Team Titles: Revival vs. Curt Hawkins/Zack Ryder

Revival is defending and picked the match because they thought it would be an easy win. See, Hawkins hasn't won a match in two and a half years so of course he gets a Wrestlemania title shot (you have to keep the New York crowd happy you see). Dawson shoves Hawkins down to start and then pats him on the cheek in the corner. We get a recap of the Edgeheads as Dawson headlocks Hawkins down.

Ryder comes in as we hear about how the show in "the shadow of New York", which is acknowledged as New Jersey, likely for one of the only times tonight. A middle rope missile dropkick puts Wilder down but Dawson low bridges him out to the floor. Something close to a top rope Demolition Decapitator gets two and the armbar goes on. Dawson comes back in and rips at the face before working on his own armbar.

That's enough of that so Wilder grabs another armbar (he's up 2-1 on Dawson) to keep Ryder down. Ryder fights up again but neckbreakers his way out of a double suplex. With Hawkins being distracted, the champs cheat to set up a hard clothesline for two more. The assisted legdrop

gives Wilder two and we hit the chinlock as this keeps going. Ryder finally suplexes his way to freedom and there's the hot tag to Hawkins.

House is cleaned until it's a double clothesline to put Hawkins and Dawson down at the same time. The middle rope Rough Ryder hits Dawson but Ryder and Wilder crash out to the floor. Wilder saves Dawson at two and tornado DDTs Ryder on the floor. A brainbuster drops Hawkins outside as well and they're all down for a bit. Back in and Hawkins is dead but manages a small package for the pin and the titles at 13:20. Hawkins slowly realizing that not only is the match over but that they won is kind of awesome.

**Rating:** D+. This went on too long but the ending was fine after setting everything up for so long with the losing streak. Hawkins and Ryder are a likable team so it's not like them winning the titles is a bad idea. Besides, WWE has already taken away anything that the Revival could offer (and yet it would still get worse) so the loss doesn't do a ton of damage to them anyway.

#### Kickoff Show: Andre the Giant Memorial Battle Royal

Otis, Karl Anderson, Andrade, Gran Metalik, Chad Gable, Heath Slater, Bo Dallas, Colin Jost Jeff Hardy, No Way Jose, Lince Dorado, Bobby Roode, Konnor, Tyler Breeze, Viktor, Luke Harper, Ali, Apollo Crews, Michael Che, Titus O'Neil, Tucker, Braun Strowman, Shelton Benjamin, Jinder Mahal, Matt Hardy, Curtis Axel, Rhyno, Luke Gallows, EC3, Kalisto

So the big deal here is Jost and Che are from Saturday Night Live and Strowman doesn't like them. The two of them bail to the floor and hide under the ring as Axel is out in about ten seconds. Dorado takes a SCARY bump to the floor with Breeze, EC3 and Benjamin following him out. There goes Dallas as well but it's time for a staredown with Strowman and Harper.

That's broken up in a hurry and Titus gets rid of Slater. As expected, Titus is out a few seconds later off a missed charge and Ali gets rid of Jose. Ascension sends Strowman shoulder first into the post for a crash to the floor (through the

ropes so no elimination). Anderson isn't so lucky as he gets tossed and the Hardys do the same to Rhyno. Roode and Metalik are out next as the ring is starting to empty a bit.

Andrade tosses Kalisto onto Metalik but Gable rolls Andrade with German suplexes. Since it's Gable though, Andrade throws him out in a hurry, leaving Otis to hit a double Caterpillar on the Ascension. They're both out as well but Strowman is back in to get rid of Gallows, Tucker and Otis in a row. There goes Mahal as Harper tries to suplex Ali over the top. With Ali hanging upside down, Strowman kicks Harper out, nearly dropping Ali on his head in a very near miss.

We're down to Strowman, Andrade, Matt, Jeff and Crews in the ring with Che and Jost still underneath the ring. Andrade and Crews go to the apron and Andrade tries a hurricanrana for no intelligent reason in a double elimination. Strowman puts the Hardys on the apron in the battle of North Carolina as Che and Jost get back inside. They can't get rid of Strowman, who dumps the Hardys and is ready for the destruction.

Jost grabs a mic though and says this doesn't need to end in violence. He presents his personal therapist, whose breathing exercises earn him a chokeslam. Che tries to eliminate himself but Strowman punches himself out instead. Strowman misses a charge and almost gets eliminated but powers through it and tosses Jost for the win at 10:27.

**Rating:** D+. Yeah it's stupid and the SNL guys added nothing to the whole thing but Strowman won in the end and there were some nice spots (granted they went with some scary ones) throughout. It isn't anything better or worse than your usual "get them all in there" battle royal and it could have been worse. That's high praise for something like this anymore.

And with that Smackdown length Kickoff Show out of the way, we can get on with the real show. Isn't modern WWE great?

Yolanda Adams sings America the Beautiful and we get the big

helicopter flyover.

The opening video, complete with a WWE Presents, features the wrestlers talking about how Shakespeare said all the world's a stage. Tonight, this is their stage and they are the players. We get the classic moments of course because this show is built around history. They do a good job of starting this slowly and then building it up into a big feeling. As usual, WWE's promo videos are nothing short of incredible and somehow they manage to get better a lot of the time. That being said, wrestlers calling themselves storytellers doesn't sound right.

Maybe it's how many times I've heard the song on highlight packages since then, but that Love Runs Out theme song is really catchy.

Here's Alexa Bliss, the host for the evening, to open things up. Bliss talks about how this show needs a goddess and if she snaps her fingers, she can make a Wrestlemania moment. A snap of her fingers produces Hulk Hogan, who is happy to be back here in the Silverdome. That gets a chuckle so then he calls it the MetLife Center in a joke that doesn't go over as well. Hogan and Bliss pose together in a cute moment.

Hold on though as Paul Heyman storms out and says we're doing the Universal Title match RIGHT NOW. The faster Lesnar wins, the faster he can go to Las Vegas where he is ULTIMATELY appreciated.

#### Raw World Title: Brock Lesnar vs. Seth Rollins

Rollins is defending after winning the Royal Rumble and gets a big BEAST SLAYER intro. At least BURN IT DOWN gets a big reaction so they're doing something right. Lesnar jumps him before the bell and knees Rollins off the apron. An F5 plants Rollins on the floor and a hard whip into the barricade makes it even worse. Rollins gets tossed over the announcers' table as the beating is on in a big way. That's not enough for Lesnar so he throws Rollins over another table before throwing

Rollins inside.

Heyman and Lesnar talk the angry trash but it's back to the floor before the opening bell. Cole: "Seth Rollins never had a chance!" And there's your usual WWE line that gives away the ending. Brock throws Rollins over the announcers' table for a third time and then through the cover of the announcers' table. They go back in for the opening bell and there's the first German suplex. Lesnar: "SUPLEX CITY B\*\*\*\*\*!" Give him his t-shirt money.

The second suplex sends him flying again as Cole brings up the Wrestlemania XXXI cash-in. The F5 is countered though and Rollins gets in a low blow. That means a low superkick and three straight Stomps make Rollins champion at 2:30. It was an exciting start and the whole thing from Lesnar's first attack ran about 7:00. They had to get the title onto Rollins here (though more importantly off of Lesnar) and this was certainly a memorable way to do it. Certainly more so than when they did it again in a longer form four and a half months later.

### AJ Styles vs. Randy Orton

This is your "here are two big names without much else to do" match. Orton eliminated him from the Elimination Chamber and they got in an argument about who built Smackdown. Orton's big CGI snakes really don't look great but those things are hit and miss for everyone. AJ headlocks him to start and is promptly driven into the corner. A very early threat of an RKO sends AJ bailing to the corner and it's another standoff.

Orton pokes him in the eye and hits a dropkick to take over, including a boot across the eye to make it even worse. AJ gets in his own dropkick though as they're pretty even in the early minutes. With Orton taking a breather on the floor, AJ scores with the slingshot forearm, only to get knocked off the apron and hard into the barricade. Back in and the chinlock goes on as the fans start chanting something I can't understand.

That's broken up so AJ hits the sliding forearm, setting up the fireman's carry backbreaker for two. An early Styles Clash attempt is countered into a powerslam to give Orton his own near fall as the slow pace continues. The Calf Crusher attempt is countered without much trouble but the second attempt is slapped on in the middle of the ring. Not that the fans are exactly interested but AJ did get it on. That's broken up in a hurry so AJ heads to the apron for the Phenomenal Forearm.

Orton jumps up to RK0 him out of the air (as he had done last week) but AJ holds back, leaving Orton to crash. The springboard 450 gets two but Orton is right back with the backbreaker. Orton's rather good looking top rope superplex has AJ crashing down for two and an uppercut gets a crazy loud pop (that had to be for something else). The hanging DDT gets no reaction but Orton walking around does, as I'm almost scared to imagine what had the fans' attention.

AJ hits an enziguri to block the RK0, only to walk into it on the second attempt. That's only good for two as well and Orton is shocked. With nothing else working, Orton loads up a super RK0, which is escaped without a lot of effort. A Pele sends Orton to the floor and the Phenomenal Forearm knock him even sillier. Back in and Orton still can't hit the RK0, meaning it's another Phenomenal Forearm to give AJ the pin at 16:12.

**Rating:** C-. Things got a bit better by the end but it never got going at any intense level. These two are capable of a lot but it was rather slow paced for the most part and when the match is going that long, it can get pretty tiresome in a hurry. It's not bad in any sense but it wasn't exciting and you know these two could do a lot better. That makes it more frustrating than anything else, as I kept waiting for them to get going and they never really did.

Here's Lacey Evans to continue doing her thing of walking around, smiling, and then walking back.



## Smackdown Tag Team Titles: Usos vs. Rusev/Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Bar vs. Ricochet/Aleister Black

The Usos are defending and it's one fall to a finish. There is something so awesome about seeing the look on Ricochet's face as he walks onto the stage. You can see what it means to him and there is no faking that kind of a feeling. This also marks Ricochet and Black's third shot at different titles this week, after Raw and NXT title shots earlier in the week. Jimmy and Black start things off with a feeling out process until Sheamus tags himself in to face Black.

The armbar doesn't last long as Rusev tags Sheamus and runs Black over. Nakamura comes in for a kick to the back but the rapid fire tags continue, with Jimmy coming in to Samoa drop Black. Nakamura kicks Jimmy into a tag to Ricochet, who does a very spinny headscissors on Cesaro. Since it's just a headscissors though, Cesaro uppercuts Ricochet down and starts swinging him, as Sheamus forearms everyone else.

After a nearly 40 second swing (geez), the Sharpshooter goes on in the middle of the ring. Black makes the save and strikes away, setting up a springboard moonsault for two on Rusev. Nakamura is back in with some running knees to Black, meaning Ricochet has to make a save of his own. That earns him a swinging Rock Bottom from Rusev and it's time for the nine man Tower of Doom. Just to show off, Ricochet flips out and lands safely in the corner, setting up the 630 for two on Sheamus. We hit the parade of kicks to the face with the Usos superkicking Sheamus down. The Double Us retains the titles at 10:05.

**Rating:** B. This was almost all action from bell to bell and that's all you can do with a match like this one. Let them do whatever they want and get in spot after spot for a little while. They didn't overstay their welcome either, as this match got in the right amount of time. Good stuff here and one of the more entertaining things all night so far.

Hall of Fame recap. Thankfully Bret being attacked isn't mentioned whatsoever.

Here's the class being presented in the stadium:

Honky Tonk Man (How was he not in yet?)

Harlem Heat (Perfectly fine.)

Torrie Wilson (The new low benchmark.)

Brutus Beefcake (Again, how was he not in yet?)

Hart Foundation (Should have been earlier so Neidhart could be there but long overdue as well.)

Sue Aitchison (Warrior Award.)

D-Generation X (I'm sure they had to twist their arms to get here. Deserved of course.)

We recap Miz vs. Shane McMahon. Somehow Shane won the World Cup despite not being in the tournament and Miz, the man he replaced in the finals, was jealous. Miz's dad thought they should team together so they won the Tag Team Titles. The reign didn't last long though and they split up, with Shane turning on Miz. Tonight, it's Falls Count Anywhere. This was in the middle of Shane's RIDICULOUS run near the top of Smackdown where he was all over the show and beating main eventers, including that Tag Team Title win. Of course he gets a big Wrestlemania match, because that's what makes sense for such a star.

### Shane McMahon vs. The Miz

Falls Count Anywhere, but hang on as Shane needs to hear his introduction three times in a row. With that out of the way, Shane bails to the floor at the bell so the chase is on, with Shane hitting his horrible punches. In a smart move, Shane grabs Miz's dad (in the front row) and again, the chase goes badly for Miz as Shane hammers away. They head outside again with Shane loading up the announcers' table.

A monitor shot to the head puts Miz on the table but Miz's dad blocks the

big elbow. Shane gets down so Miz's dad gets inside for the showdown, with Miz's dad doing the pose that launched a subplot on the upcoming season of Miz and Mrs. Shane takes him into the corner and stomps away, drawing Miz back in for the beating. They fight to to the floor with Shane falling over the barricade but hold on as Miz wants someone to check on his dad.

With the medics doing their job, Miz dives over the barricade to take Shane down again. They fight over towards one of the big pillars that holds up the canopy over the ring but Shane fights out of the Skull Crushing Finale. Instead Shane grabs a DDT for two but Miz kicks him down off the stage. Shane is sent knee first into a barricade and Miz beats on him with a chair to blow off some more steam.

They wreck announcers' row with Miz throwing him over every chair he can find, plus throwing some chairs around. Shane gets sent through a table for two, followed by a monitor shot to knock him over a barricade and onto the top of a well placed golf cart. That gives Miz a delayed two so he punches Shane up towards a production tower. A Skull Crushing Finale onto the platform gets two, because he's Shane and Miz is just a former World Champion.

Shane fights back (of course) and climbs up to the top of the tower. Miz pursues so Shane begs off, even dropping to one knee. That earns him some left hands to the head and Miz superplexes him all the way down (after asking if Shane is ready) onto a crash pad. Worry not though as Shane lands on top for the pin at 15:25.

**Rating:** D-. I knew the ending was coming here and I still shake my head at the ending. Shane is the boss' son but my goodness how hard can you push him? The worst part is that it is only going to get worse as the summer goes on, but this was a punch to the gut as Shane wins AGAIN, meaning he isn't going away anytime soon. The superplex was a nice idea but showing the landing on the pad (which just happened to be there) took away all of the impact that it had. That is, whatever was left before Shane won of course.

Paige joins commentary.

## Women's Tag Team Titles: IIconics vs. Beth Phoenix/Natalya vs. Nia Jax/Tamina vs. Sasha Banks/Bayley

Banks and Bayley are defending and it's one fall to a finish. Bret Hart is here with Beth and Natalya (who really feel like fill ins for Trish Stratus/Lita), though he doesn't go beyond the stage. Tamina shoves Bayley down to start and superkicks Natalya for a bonus. Everything breaks down in a hurry with Nia being sent outside for a ram into the steps. Back in and Peyton rolls Sasha up for two and it's a double kick to put drop Sasha again.

The Hardys' Spin Cycle gets two on Banks but she's right back with a backslide for the same. It's back to Bayley for a sliding clothesline for two on Beth but Billie tags herself in. The IIconics take over on Beth, who is right back with a suplex to both of them at once. Natalya comes in for two but Bayley makes a fast save. The champs get in a fight with Beth and Natalya and it's a Bank Statement to Phoenix. That's broken up but the Glam Slam is countered into a rollup into the corner.

Natalya drops Sasha onto Bayley and they get the always fairly dumb looking double Sharpshooter treatment. This time it's Tamina making the save and Nia comes back in to wreck everyone else. The IIconics get crushed with stereo Samoan drops but Beth shoves Nia off the top to break up a splash. Sasha takes Beth down as well and Bayley drops the top rope elbow, followed by Banks' frog splash. The Tower of Doom is broken up so Beth hits a super Glam Slam on Bayley, with Kay making a blind tag. With Beth sent outside, Kay steals the pin and the titles at 10:47.

**Rating:** D. This went on too long and wasn't all that interesting in the first place. The titles were brand new at this point and they already seemed pretty worthless, which would be proven over the next year. The fallout here is more interesting than the match itself, as you Nia would go away for about a year with double ACL surgery and Sasha (allegedly) threw a fit over losing and took the summer off.

The pilots from the Kickoff Show flyover are in the crowd. That's always cool.

We recap Kofi Kingston vs. Daniel Bryan for the Smackdown World Title.

Kofi replaced the injured Ali in the Elimination Chamber and got down to the final two. That set up one of the most dramatic things that WWE has ever done, as Kofi got inches away from winning the title and the fans ate it up. It was clear that Kofi had to get the title at Wrestlemania or he never would, which sent Kofi and New Day into a crusade to finally get the title shot that had eluded him for eleven years.

After jumping through all kinds of hoops set by Vince McMahon, it took New Day winning a gauntlet match to get the shot, with their longtime rivals the Usos stepping aside in a great show of respect for Kofi. At the same time, Bryan said that Kofi was a B+ player in an awesome role reversal from his legendary run five years earlier.

The match was finally set and it was a heck of a story, as Kofi had put in so many years of building credibility to get here and was finally cashing in. This wasn't JBL jumping up to the main event scene, as Kofi had pretty much won every title other than the World Title. That's not a big jump, but it was hard to believe that they would actually pull the trigger here. In other words, this was EXCELLENT and would have headlined any other year.

#### Smackdown World Title: Kofi Kingston vs. Daniel Bryan

Kofi is challenging and has New Day in his corner, while Bryan has Rowan. Big E. has a gift for Kofi and promises it for after the match. I had forgotten how nice of a touch Bryan's eco-friendly belt really was. They stare each other down to start and the fans are behind Kofi, which is almost hard to fathom until you realize that Bryan might be a better heel than face. Kofi's headlock doesn't get anywhere so they fight over a backslide. Bryan monkey flips him so Kofi lands on his feet, setting up a dropkick to the floor.

The big dive takes Bryan down again and the roster is behind Kofi in the back. Things slow down a bit as Bryan needs a breather with Rowan. Back in and Bryan uppercuts him a few times to set up the surfboard, which always looks awesome. That's broken up in a hurry as usual, allowing Kofi to kick away in the corner. Bryan's moonsault into the running clothesline is countered into something resembling the standing double

stomp (almost a Thesz press as Kofi can't hit it properly) for two.

Kofi's jumping clothesline works a bit better and the Boom Drop connects. Bryan heads outside again so Kofi tries a springboard dive, which lands ribs first on the announcers' table. You don't have to ask Bryan twice to go after the ribs like that so he drops Kofi ribs first across the top rope. The ribs get sent into the corner and it's off to a waistlock, which works a lot better this time around. Kofi fights up and elbows in the corner but a very quick Trouble in Paradise is countered into a Boston crab.

Bryan's belly to back superplex is broken up with elbows to the face and Kofi hits a top rope splash to the back for two. They slug it out but Trouble in Paradise is countered again, only to countered into a small package to give Kofi two more. Kofi's crossbody is rolled through though and Bryan pulls him into a failed LeBell Lock attempt so they're both down for a second. The running knee is countered into the SOS but Bryan reverses into the LeBell Lock, with Bryan letting go for some more elbows to the ribs.

Kofi finally gets his foot on the rope and you can hear the sigh of relief. Bryan YES Kicks at the ribs even more but Kofi fires up and tells Bryan to kick him even harder. As Bryan backs away, Kofi throws his own kicks and busts out a reverse suplex for two. They head outside again so Rowan can go after New Day, earning himself Trouble in Paradise. The Midnight Hour on the floor takes care of Rowan and Kofi blocks Bryan's suicide dive.

Back in and Bryan hits the running knee....for two and a big pop on the kickout. Bryan has had it and unloads with stomps to the head to set up the LeBell Lock. Kofi breaks out again and blasts Bryan with forearms to the face with more aggression than you usually see from him. Bryan won't let go of the wrist so Kofi stomps him right back, knocking Bryan silly. Trouble in Paradise gives Kofi the clean pin and the title at 23:45.

**Rating:** A. That is the definition of the Wrestlemania moment and it holds up to perfection a year later. The fans completely bought into the idea of Kofi fighting through everything and winning the title in the end and

that's all it should have been. Kofi is the kind of guy who has been around forever and built up so much good will that when he finally went after the title, everyone was on his side. That made for a special moment and it was amazing throughout as it's something that I never thought I would see, but here it is. That's a great thing to see as rare as it can be.

On top of that, this was an awesome match with both guys giving it everything they had. The story here was perfect with Kofi not being the wrestler Bryan was but knowing that this was his one shot and giving everything he had to achieve his dream when he could. The fans believed in him and there was no way he could lose in this spot. Outstanding stuff and if not for the historic main event, this would have headlined in a landslide. Watch this again and smile a lot.

Post match Woods and Big E. pull out the classic WWE Championship and hand it to Kofi for the first time (Kofi kneeling in the ring and waiting to have it presented to him is a great visual). The pyro goes off and Kofi's sons get in the ring to celebrate with him and one of them holds up the title, which is almost bigger than he is. We're not done yet though as Big E. brings in the present from earlier. It's the first New Day shirt featuring Kofi as champion and his kids get to hold them up for a perfect visual. Woods: "THEY SAID WE COULDN'T MAKE IT! WE MADE IT TO THE TOP!" Outstanding.

Che and Jost are banged up so Bliss introduces them to Dr. Scott Hall and Dr. Kevin Nash. Ok then.

Booker T. is the next guest commentator.

#### US Title: Samoa Joe vs. Rey Mysterio

Mysterio is challenging and this year's comic gear is....well Mysterio appropriately enough. Now how did he never do that one before? Joe kicks him in the face but Rey is right back with the springboard hurricanrana. The 619 connects but Joe pulls him out of the air into the Koquina Clutch and Rey is out at 1:00, which may have something to do with Rey injuring his ankle on Monday. Booker being annoyed at wasting all the time on prep work is good for a chuckle.

Sneak peak of Batista's new movie Stuber.

We recap Roman Reigns vs. Drew McIntyre. Reigns returned from leukemia after a four month absence and he needs a first victim. Drew has run through the rest of the Shield as a bonus. This is your likely layup result of the show and that's fine.

### Roman Reigns vs. Drew McIntyre

Drew gets played to the ring by the New York Bagpipe Band. They trade shots to the face to start so Reigns snaps off a Samoan drop for an early two. McIntyre is right back with a spinebuster into a jackknife cover for two of his own. The Glasgow Kiss knocks Reigns down again and McIntyre throws him into the corner for two. The chinlock/armbar goes on until Reigns powers out and knocks him to the floor. Reigns' running kick to the face is blocked though and McIntyre suplexes him down.

Back in and the reverse Alabama slam gives McIntyre two so he takes Reigns up top. That earns him a crotching, only to have Drew pull himself up from the Tree of Woe to send Reigns flying with a belly to belly superplex. Reasons of general heelishness cause McIntyre to slap him in the face, meaning the comeback is on. McIntyre gets knocked outside again for the Samoan drop on the floor, followed by the Superman Punch back inside. The spear finishes McIntyre at 10:06.

**Rating:** D. The fans didn't care and why should they have? As usual, it was clear that Reigns was going to win and that happens far too often at Wrestlemania. It's amazing that Reigns got to come back here but it's Reigns, who almost always wins, winning again in a match where the ending was obvious throughout. Nothing to see here, and the fans were silent throughout.

Post match Reigns gets to pose in a rather emotional moment.

Here's Elias for his self described greatest performance ever. He's on screen playing drums, with a second Elias joining him on piano and the real thing in the ring playing guitar. They jam for a bit and guitar Elias says the other two deserve a standing ovation. Elias teases more members of the band and gets in his catchphrase before loading up the



song....but here's a SPECIAL BULLETIN on Babe Ruth calling his shot in the 1932 World Series.

Cue John Cena in Dr. of Thuganomics gear and the fans seem rather pleased. Cena raps about how he's about to turn heel and how bad his own movies are. WWE doesn't stand for Walk With Elias because it really means Wasted Wrestling Experiment. We get a nuts joke, followed by the FU to leave Elias laying. They have history together so this was as good as you were going to get. This was funny for a change if nothing else and that's a cool Wrestlemania feeling.

We recap Batista vs. HHH. Back at Smackdown 1000, Batista had mentioned that HHH never beat him but laughed it off. Then in February, Ric Flair was having a 70<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration but Batista attacked him, while asking HHH if he had his attention. This set up the match, with Batista demanding that HHH give him what he wanted (over and over and over). HHH has put up his career just in case the ending was in the slightest bit of doubt.

Shawn Michaels is guest commentator.

#### Batista vs. HHH

No holds barred with HHH's career on the line. Batista goes out to glare at Shawn but here's HHH, riding in a Mad Max style cart because of course he is. Batista drives him straight into the corner to start so HHH is back with some right hands to the face. A backdrop sends Batista outside but he throws HHH over the announcers' table in a crash. HHH is right back up with a ram into the barricade and busts out a chain to whip Batista over the back.

The chain is pulled into Batista's mouth (Shawn: "That's not going to help his movie career.") and HHH whips him into the steps. To ramp up the pain, HHH busts out some pliers to bend Batista's fingers around a bit. HHH isn't done with the toolbox so he grabs some needle nose pliers and ribs Batista's nose ring out. To be fair, that thing looked horrible. Cole: "HHH just ripped a nose ring out of the nose of Batista." So the nose ring in his ear is still intact.

Batista's nose is good enough to drop HHH onto the announcers' table and then he does it again onto a different one. A chair to the back sets up the shoulders in the corner for two as things have slowed way down. Batista slams him down for two more and let's go outside again. The steps are set on the table and another table is cleared off as this is taking quite a long time for one big spot.

The huge Batista Bomb through the table is countered with a backdrop onto (not through) the other table and they're both down again. HHH gets up, spinebusters him through the table, and we get another breather. HHH pulls out the sledgehammer but it's a spear to cut him down for two. This time it's HHH knocking the sledgehammer away from Batista, earning himself a spinebuster in the process. The Batista Bomb, which makes HHH drop the sledgehammer again, connects for two.

With nothing else working, Batista brings in the steps but goes up top for some reason. That reason would be so HHH can powerbomb him onto the steps, setting up a Pedigree for two (Because this MUST KEEP GOING!). They're both down again so here's Flair to slip HHH the sledgehammer. HHH gets up and uses the steps as a launchpad to hammer Batista in the head. Since that's not enough to pin him (or KILL HIM as it probably should have), Batista pops up to take the Pedigree for the pin at 25:45.

**Rating:** D. Why does HHH do this? They could have had the same match with at least ten minutes chopped off but for some reason we needed to get HHH's latest big epic match, no matter how much people aren't interested in seeing it. This was terrible with Batista looking like a shell of his glory days (fair enough) and the match going WAY longer than it should have. Horrible match, and did you expect anything else given this style of match's history?

The B Team model Daniel Bryan WWE Champion shirts but here's Ron Simmons for the joke.

JBL is your next guest commentator.

Baron Corbin vs. Kurt Angle

This is Angle's retirement match as he can barely get in the ring without

injuring himself these days and needs to limp away for good. Corbin is here because we all did something horrible in a past life. Angle goes after him to start but gets knocked into the corner to put him in early trouble. Corbin takes it to the corner and pounds away before mocking Angle's family a bit. A missed middle rope ax handle sends Corbin throat first into the rope so Angle snaps off some suplexes for two.

Angle walks into a big boot but is fine enough to grab a quickly broken ankle lock. Deep Six gives Corbin two more but he misses a charge, allowing the Angle Slam to connect for two. The straps come down and the ankle lock goes on until Corbin rolls him into the corner for the break. Corbin throws in a You Can't See Me so Angle punches him into more rolling German suplexes. The moonsault misses though and the End of Days finishes Kurt's career at 5:59.

**Rating:** D. Angle does seem fine with putting Corbin over on the way out but this was another step in the seemingly eternal nonsense that was/is the Corbin push. It's a lot to take and while I can live with Angle going out on his back, it's a lot to take because Corbin really is going way above his pay grade every time he's in a match like this.

Post match Angle thanks the fans and asks for one more YOU SUCK chant for the road.

#### Intercontinental Title: Bobby Lashley vs. Finn Balor

Lashley, with Lio Rush, is defending and they've traded the title, so tonight it's the Demon to make the match feel big. Balor gets a special entrance by coming down off a raised platform, though it's not as creepy as his NXT entrances. Lashley has very bright green contacts in for some reason. Some early dropkicks put Lashley on the floor and Balor takes him out with a dive for a bonus.

A hard drive into the apron cuts Balor off though and there's a suplex to make it worse. Lashley clotheslines him hard to the floor but a Sling Blade gets Balor out of trouble. Rush's distraction lets Lashley hit a HARD spear through the ropes though and a regular one gets two back inside. Balor fights out of a powerbomb and hits one of his own, setting up the Coup de Grace for the pin and the title at 4:01.

**Rating:** C. The match was entertaining enough for something that was going so fast but at the same time, the booking still doesn't make a ton of sense. Balor has already shown that he can beat Lashley so now he needs to bring up the powers to win? And the extraordinary thing was just a powerbomb? I'm glad to see the Demon again but this wasn't exactly the most logical thing in the world.

Here's Alexa Bliss to announce the attendance record of 82,265. Cue R-Truth and Carmella for the Wrestlemania Dance Break (Remember those?).

We recap the main event of Raw Women's Champion Ronda Rousey and Smackdown Women's Champion Charlotte defending against Becky Lynch in a winner take all match. Rousey is the unstoppable force, Charlotte is Charlotte and Becky is here because she's the hottest name in wrestling at the moment and won the Royal Rumble. Tonight the winner leaves with both titles and it's the biggest women's match in history.

Raw Women's Title/Smackdown Women's Title: Ronda Rousey vs. Charlotte vs. Becky Lynch

Lynch is challenging both. In a nod to her father and the Four Horsemen, Charlotte lance in a helicopter outside and walks into the stadium. Already inside, Joan Jett and the Blackhearts play Rousey to the ring. There is something so cool about watching Becky walk down the ramp in a wide shot as Cole talks about how she has started a movement. I'm not sure if that is the right term but it looked awesome. The bell rings and even a year later I still can't believe this happened. The women's division was a joke just a few years ago and now it's the biggest match of the year. That's hard to believe and it's very cool.

They stare at each other for a good bit to start until Becky goes after Rousey's arm. Rousey kicks her to the floor without much trouble and that means a Samoan drop into the barricade. Charlotte follows and takes Piper's Pit but pops right back up for a fall away slam to send Rousey into the barricade for a change. That sets up the required Charlotte vs. Becky fight with Becky getting the better of things but can't get the Figure Four, allowing Rousey to come and hammer away.

Charlotte breaks up an armbar attempt but gets pulled into a triangle choke over the ropes. Becky hits a running dropkick though and Rousey falls HARD onto the floor in a nasty crash. That leaves Charlotte to knee Becky in the head as the fans get behind Becky in a big way. Charlotte's moonsault hits knees and Becky gets the Disarm-Her but Rousey make the save in a hurry. A double Natural Selection gives Charlotte two each and it's Becky going outside this time.

For some reason Charlotte tries to slug it out with Rousey, earning herself a knee to the head. Charlotte pulls her into a Boston crab, drawing Becky in for her own save. Becky and Charlotte slug it out again until Charlotte is sent to the apron. Charlotte gets caught up top with a super Bexploder for two but Rousey drops both of them with a high crossbody for a double near fall. The double armbar goes on so Becky and Charlotte powerbomb her for the break. It took three attempts but they finally got out.

Everyone is down for a bit until Becky hits a Rock Bottom for two on Charlotte. Rousey goes after Becky and gets pulled straight into the Disarm-Her so she uses the ropes to power up in the corner. That's fine with Becky, who puts it on again in the corner until Charlotte boots her in the face. Charlotte's super Spanish Fly gets two but she might have banged up her knee. Rousey's knee is banged up as well so Charlotte stomps away and grabs the Figure Four around the post.

After sending Becky into the barricade, Charlotte grabs the Figure Eight but Becky dives in off the top for another save. Just because, let's bring in a table but Charlotte decks Becky for taking too long to set it up. Rousey shoves Charlotte off the top and turns the table over because she doesn't need it. A double spear takes down Becky and Rousey so Charlotte sets up the table in the corner.

Charlotte sends Rousey face first into the table and spears Becky for two more. Back up and Charlotte gets hiptossed through the table, leaving Becky and Rousey to have the slugout we've been waiting for. They throw some serious hands but Piper's Pit is countered into a crucifix (with Rousey's shoulder a good six inches off the mat in a bad botch) to give Becky both titles at 21:28.

**Rating:** B. I don't know if it's because I didn't watch it in one sitting this time around but I liked the match a good bit better on a second viewing. These three beat each other up and while Becky winning was the presumed finish, it wasn't entirely a lock given who she was in there against. It was a heck of a fight and the three of them all came out looking great. This is much more historic than good, but it's really rather good and that's always a positive way to go out.

Rousey is ticked as Becky celebrates to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. The positives are better than the negatives but not by much. There are some flat out bad matches on here but they are overcome by some great feelings with the faces winning all of the big matches for a change. That felt like an old school style as for the first time in what felt like forever, they didn't cut the fans off for the sake of dragging things out until later. For once it felt like a season finale and that's what Wrestlemania should be when it gets the chance. Good show, but it could have been a lot better.

How you ask? CUT THE SHOW DOWN! Look at how long this show is and tell me that it's well put together. There is no need for a sixteen match card, especially with some of the matches that feel tacked on. All three Tag Team Title matches feel like they're here for the sake of being here and some of the matches just need to be shortened. Either that or find a way to get people to the ring faster. I know it seems simple but how much of these shows are spent on ring entrances alone? Just find a way to shorten things, please.

Overall there are more good things than bad, but this isn't a show that you need to watch in one sitting. As soon as you get to the point where the show is five hours plus an episode of Smackdown before it starts (and a Smackdown with more wrestling than usual at that), you're hitting a firm ceiling of how much you can enjoy this. I know you can't cut out big chunks, but find a way to get this under six hours. Do that and it's a lot better, but that has been the case for years now and it keeps getting longer. Either way, at least we had enough nice stuff on here, but don't watch it all at once.

## Ratings Comparison

Tony Nese vs. Buddy Murphy

Original: C+

Redo: C

Women's Battle Royal

Original: D

Redo: D

Revival vs. Zack Ryder/Curt Hawkins

Original: C

Redo: D+

Men's Battle Royal

Original: D

Redo: D+

Brock Lesnar vs. Seth Rollins

Original: N/A

Redo: N/A

AJ Styles vs. Randy Orton

Original: B-

Redo: C-

Usos vs. Shinsuke Nakamura/Rusev vs. The Bar vs. Aleister Black/Ricochet

Original: C+

Redo: B

Shane McMahon vs. The Miz

Original: C-

Redo: D-

Boss N Hug Connection vs. Natalya/Beth Phoenix vs. IIconics vs. Nia Jax/Tamina

Original: D

Redo: D

Kofi Kingston vs. Daniel Bryan

Original: A-

Redo: A

Samoa Joe vs. Rey Mysterio

Original: N/A

Redo: N/A

Drew McIntyre vs. Roman Reigns

Original: C-

Redo: D

Batista vs. HHH

Original: D+

Redo: D

Baron Corbin vs. Kurt Angle

Original: F

Redo: D

Finn Balor vs. Bobby Lashley



Original: C

Redo: C

Ronda Rousey vs. Becky Lynch vs. Charlotte

Original: B

Redo: B

Overall Rating

Original: B-

Redo: C+

About the same all around, but some of those earlier ones are a good bit off. Still though, too long, despite some of the very good parts.

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

<https://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2019/04/08/wrestlemania-xxxv-so-much-for-no-happy-endings/>

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