

Thought Of The Day – WWE Is Still The King

In the last four days, WWE has had two great shows and has shocked us with a few great moments. There are a ton of questions that we have now and it's very unclear where things are going. It's WWE proving yet again that they can turn it on at the drop of a hat and be the most intriguing company in the world.

Cue various people saying it's boring and uninteresting because they have to try to sound smart.

Turning Point 2006: Total Ring Time – 75 Minutes

Turning Point 2006

Date: December 10, 2006

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Attendance: 900

Commentators: Don West, Mike Tenay

Wrestlemania is over so it's time to go back to TNA land. This is the final PPV of 2006 but as usual I'll be going backwards for the next few shows. The main event here is Angle vs. Joe II after they hotshotted the first match in their series, which we'll get to next time. The other main event is Abyss defending the world title against Sting and Christian, which I think is the same match that happened next month at Final Resolution. Let's get to it.

The opening video...is a puppet show? I think it's supposed to be Christmas themed but it's really weird and turns into a highlight reel of the feuds. It's 2006 so TNA didn't have this down yet. Now there's a fire extinguisher putting the video out. Ok then.

Senshi vs. Alex Shelley vs. Sonjay Dutt vs. Austin Starr vs. Jay Lethal

This is the opening match of the Paparazzi Championship Series which is something that I don't think anyone really got the definitive idea behind. This is an elimination match and Nash, the guy who started the whole thing, is on commentary. Starr is Aries with longer hair. Nash talks about bringing Jerry Lynn into the X-Division back in Mexico City in 61. Only two in the ring at a time and Lethal starts vs. Shelley.

Shelley crawls on his knees as Tenay explains the PCS as best as he can. Shelley goes into the ropes and gets the rope kicked into him. He tries to show the wound to Starr who isn't that interested. The winner of this gets 5 Series points, the runner up gets 4 and so on down the line. Shelley takes him to the mat and tags in Starr who gets dropkicked. Lethal tags in Dutt who elbows him down for two.

Alex comes in again and takes over for a bit, only to get punched down by Lethal. Dutt and Lethal are a semi-regular tag team so the chemistry makes sense. Nash accuses Dutt of being on steroids in a funny bit. Dutt walks the ropes but Starr crotches him from the apron. Nash: "What do you think feels worse: that or a paper cut?" Senshi comes in and is SERIOUS. He's the wild card in this as he's not affiliated with either "team".

Dutt sends him to the floor and sets for a dive but Starr takes his head off with a clothesline. Starr sets for a dive to the floor but Shelley tags himself in and they yell at each other. Lethal dives on Senshi as they argue and the heel team

decides on stereo suicide dives, but Shelley stops so Starr can dive alone. Back in Dutt DDTs Shelley for two. Nash talks about winning silver in the 68 Olympics in two man synchronized swimming as Dutt DDTs Shelley and puts him in the camel clutch for the submission.

Down to four now and Jay comes in to fight his partner. Dutt runs to the ropes and Senshi tags himself in. Lethal doesn't see it so Senshi can kick his head off for the pin to get rid of Lethal. Off to Starr with the Pendulum Elbow. Jumping elbow gets two. Senshi comes in and fires off a bunch of kicks for two on Dutt. It's basically a handicap match at this point. Dutt avoids a charge in the corner and hits a missile dropkick for two on Starr.

He takes Senshi down as well and a Lionsault gets two on Starr. There's the camel clutch to Starr but Senshi makes the save. Brainbuster is countered and Dutt gets some two counts, but the second brainbuster attempt works, setting up the 450 to pin Dutt. Down to two now and they slug it out. Senshi hits a springboard enziguri for two. Starr escapes a move called the Crusher and loads up the 450 but Shelley comes out for a distraction. Senshi rolls up Starr for the pin.

Rating: C+. Not bad here as all five guys were pretty good. There's nothing great in the whole thing but it was entertaining enough. The PCS thing went on for awhile and got funny after awhile, but I don't think it ever really accomplished anything. I guess it was a BCS parody, but it went on WAY too long.

Eric Young is worried about his bikini contest with Tracy. JB tells Eric to man up.

We recap the Roode vs. Young feud. Roode wants the fans to love him so he wants to sign Young to work for him.

Time for the bikini contest. Brooks looks good, Eric wears a t-shirt with a bikini on it. Roode protests so Eric takes the

shirt off to reveal Spongebob boxer briefs. Those don't count so he takes those off to reveal a Spongebob Speedo. WHAT IS THE POINT OF THIS??? Young wins and Roode jumps him. Roode yells at Brooks, telling her to do whatever it takes to sign Young or she'll be the one that gets fired.

We go to the back where the interviewer is going to talk to "Michael Hickenbottom and Paul Levesque", known as Dumb to the Extreme. Big Fat Oily Guy comes up to visit them. I HATE this stuff. It's not funny, it's not original, and NO ONE BUYS IT. But that didn't stop TNA from doing this for MONTHS.

Quick recap of the X-Title match. It's Sabin vs. Daniels with Lynn as referee. Lynn mentored Sabin and now is worried about what he's created.

X-Division Title: Chris Sabin vs. Christopher Daniels

This is the second match and we're 40 minutes into this show. But hey, we got SPONGEBOB! Jerry Lynn is guest referee and was disrespected by Sabin lately. Feeling out process to start and Sabin controls with a headlock. There's no hair to grab to cheat so he grabs the ear. Daniels speeds things up and takes him to the mat with an armbar. He rams Sabin's face into the mat a few times for good measure.

Suplex sets up a slingshot moonsault for two. Sabin counters with an amateur based stomp to the foot and a drop toehold to put Daniels in 619 position. A springboard missile dropkick puts Daniels on the floor as the challenger is in control. They go to the ramp with Daniels having his back worked over. Back in the ring Daniels is sat down in the ring and Sabin hits a running single boot to the back of the head. Cool move. It was like a one footed dropkick.

Off to a neck crank which Daniels breaks pretty quickly and hooks a backslide for two. The fans chant for the Fallen Angel but Sabin chokes him between the ropes. Legdrop to the back of the neck gets two. We get a dueling chant which is about 95/5

in favor of Daniels. ST0 gets the champ a break and he pounds away. Tilt-a-whirl backbreaker gets two. Out to the floor again and Sabin goes back first into the barricade.

Something like a baseball slide puts Sabin down and Daniels drops an elbow from the top to the floor for two. Back in Sabin dropkicks him down and hits a pretty sweet springboard tornado DDT for two. Daniels comes back with a Blue Thunder Bomb for two. A Death Valley Driver gets two. Downward Spiral sets up a Koji Clutch but Sabin gets a rope. Release Rock Bottom sets up the BME and it's over.

Rating: B-. I was getting into this more during the end, but Daniels dominated him at the end and took some of the drama out of it. Good match though and Sabin was always good for a watch in his solo stuff. Daniels against someone other than AJ is ALWAYS an upgrade and the fans were into him a lot here.

Lynn demands that Sabin shake Daniels' hand but when Sabin won't do it, Daniels gets in Lynn's face and earns himself a slap for some reason. This feud went on for a good while.

We run down the rest of the card almost an hour into a show.

Here's Cornette for an announcement of some sort. He brings out some baseball players, one of whom has a book. One of the EVIL players rips some pages out of it, until Lance Hoyt makes the save. This drew a loud WE WANT WRESTLING chant.

We recap AJ vs. Rhyno, which was the start of AJ's heel turn and subsequent dive into being a clueless schmuck. Rhyno had said he was trying to help him and AJ didn't like it.

Rhyno says he sees selfishness in AJ, which he used to see in himself. AJ jumps him during the promo and we lose the camera so we go to a shot of the crowd. Ok now they're brawling outside. Their match is next but this is just pre-match brawling. They head into the arena with Rhyno throwing him into a wall as they brawl in the crowd. AJ comes back and

pounds away but Rhyno punches him down the steps. This is what we call padding because there are only six matches plus the bikini deal, so they don't have enough wrestling to fill in a three hour show. AJ tries a charge but gets backdropped to ringside. Hey a bell.

AJ Styles vs. Rhyno

AJ pounds on him and whips him into the corner so hard he rolls forward. Off to a surfboard hold and AJ does his drop down into a dropkick sequence. Styles knocks Rhyno to the floor but won't dive on him because the fans would like it too much. Instead he slides to the floor and tries a springboard off the barricade, only to jump into a belly to belly onto the concrete. Back in a spinebuster kills AJ for two.

They slug it out and we finally hear about how this is about AJ growing up poor and wanting to shake that mantle off himself, which Rhyno can relate to but AJ didn't want his help. Rhyno throws him to the floor and AJ hurts his knee. The match stops now as the medics take a look at AJ. He says he can finish but the knee buckles. The referee goes to make the match stoppage announcement...and Styles rolls in rolls Rhyno up for the pin.

Rating: C+. This was going really well until the stoppage in the middle of it for the knee injury. The fans thought it was awesome and while I'm not sure I agree with that, it was certainly a good match but the run time (seven and a half minutes, with two or so being spent on the injury) hurts it a lot. Still pretty fun though.

AJ dances on the ramp.

More stupid DX nonsense with "Vince" here. This actually makes my eyes roll.

Rhyno and AJ brawl even more. This filler stuff is REALLY getting annoying.

We recap the flag match, which is American's Most Wanted vs. AMW for national supremacy I think. LAX points out that they're American citizens with the right to burn a flag, which AMW doesn't care for.

LAX says they'll win and get to hang their flag and have the Mexican national anthem played.

LAX vs. American's Most Wanted

LAX has the tag titles but this is FOR HONOR. You win by hanging your country's flag, even though both teams come in with the other's flag. But EVEN THAT is overly complicated because the flags are already hanging in the corners. I think you have to steal the others' flag and replace the one in your corner with that one. Brawl to start but Gail Kim, AMW's chick, hits a GREAT moonsault to the floor to take out LAX. Storm goes for the American flag, which I guess is how you win.

James gets put in the Tree of Woe but Homicide can't drive a chair into his face. Harris won't free him though as he needs to dive on Hernandez. Yeah apparently you have to steal your own flag (as in the one that represents your country, not the own flag you brought with you, so it's your flag but not YOUR flag) and put it in the corner that's designated yours'. There's a ladder involved for some reason, despite the fact that you could stand on the top rope and get the flag.

LAX is dominating as Homicide hits Three Amigos for a big reaction. Gail offers a distraction and Harris superplexes Homicide down. Hernandez pulls down the Mexican flag and now we're told that you have to hang the flag above the ring like it's in a ladder match. Could this be any more overly complicated? Well yeah actually it could but it's pretty annoying. Gringo Killa is loaded up but Gail comes in and ranas Homicide. You know the good guys are pretty big cheaters in this match.

Now Gail, the Canadian-Korean, takes the American Flag but gets stopped by the Cuban most famous for his success in America as a Mexican import. Now Petey freaking Williams, who is in the middle of this somehow, comes in to try a Destroyer on Konnan but Hernandez makes the save. SuperMex dives onto Storm but mostly misses. Harris and Homicide go up and start to hang the flag but Storm comes up with a beer bottle. He breaks it over the head of Homicide but the glass gets in Homicide's eyes, allowing Hernandez to come in and hang the flag to win.

Rating: D+. The match was ok, but SWEET GOODNESS did they overly complicate things here. There were three run-ins and they didn't bother to explain what in the world Petey had to do with this. This match was just ok but the overbooking really hurt things. If they're this short on time, why in the world are they leaving these matches at like ten minutes?

Gail yells at Storm post match. Konnan brags about winning and says this is about having class. The Mexican national anthem is played and we just kind of sit here and listen to it. That's all it is for about two minutes. LAX stands there saluting while the Mexican national anthem plays. Like I said, there's filler and then there's this show. This is ridiculous.

Video on Samoa Joe.

Storm rants about Chris Harris quitting instead of really being hurt. This would be their split. Storm wants an apology by Thursday.

Here's the Voodoo Kin Mafia to waste even more time. The announcers say this is for, and I quote, "The next really bad skit in their series." They're dressed like "Shawn and HHH". After doing the DX intro, they bring out "cheerleaders", with Tenay and Mike saying spirit more time than should be legally allowed. They bring out Fat Oily Guy for a dance and that's it. Oh wait, no it's not because Road Dogg wants to talk.

He says that sometimes people have issues differentiating between parody and reality TV. "Surprise surprise, we're not Hickenbottom and Levesque." Yes they're actually saying this. They claim that Vince is mad about the parodies they've been doing which I don't buy for a second, but this is TNA so who cares? They claim this is like when they went to WCW in Atlanta and then going to a house show.

This is REAL remember. The fans chant SCREW YOU VINCE and this is freaking stupid. Now they're talking about Vince's balls and issue a million dollar challenge: they offer Vince a million dollars to have a fight ("no angles, no spots, no finish") with Vince's two guys, meaning Shawn and HHH. If Vince doesn't accept, he's gutless. They're FINALLY done after spending ten minutes on this nonsense.

This was one of the DUMBEST segments I've seen in years. TNA is so obsessed with catching WWE and making them look stupid that they have no idea how bad it makes them look. Yes, Shawn and HHH were reunited as DX at this point and had a pretty goofy feud with Vince and Shane over the summer. And you know what? IT DREW RATINGS AND MONEY. Road Dogg and Billy Gunn are standing in a ring complaining about them stomping on DX's legacy, as if ANYONE has cared about the New Age Outlaws in the past 6 years prior to this show. There's a reason you're in some minor league people.

Second, they would wind up claiming victory when no one showed up for their challenge (the same night as a WWE PPV). Do they honestly think ANYONE cares about this nonsense? Did TNA really believe they were going to get fans, as in the smarks they cater to, to believe that Shawn Michaels and HHH or Vince McMahon were going to appear on a show that at this point was pure minor league level stuff? Is that what I'm watching a PPV to see? A "shoot challenge" from a couple of washed up has-beens?

Third, why in the world are we wasting PPV time on it? This

show is already WAY short on wrestling, with tons of brawls and segments already because this company can't manage to put on seven matches. There are six matches on this card, one of which goes past fifteen minutes. Based on what I can find, this show has about SEVENTY FIVE MINUTES of wrestling on it, with the whole broadcast running about 170 minutes.

That translates out to about 44% of the show being used on wrestling. Think about that. We're getting an hour and fifteen minutes of wrestling, but we have time for a bikini contest, two brawls, this nonsense, and who knows what else. This is a great example of why no one took this company seriously for years and why a lot of people still don't.

We recap the world title match. Sting wants Abyss to be his own man and calls him Chris, Mitchell says Abyss is an animal, Christian is involved because you can't have a title match without there being three people in it more than two straight months.

Christian says he'll get the title back while Sting and Abyss are having their soap opera. Tomko knows what Abyss' secret is too.

NWA World Title: Christian Cage vs. Sting vs. Abyss

Abyss beat Sting for the title last month by DQ, in I think the only time that rule (which to be fair was established as a regular rule but has since been taken away) ever came into play. Tomko and Abyss stare it down before the match but nothing comes of it. Sting fights them both to start and sends Abyss out to the floor. Christian gets thrown out there too so Sting dives onto both of them. The guy will do some big spots when asked to.

Tomko throws Sting into the steps and Christian takes over for a bit. He goes back inside and runs into the champion who throws him around like a monster is supposed to. A corner splash puts Christian down and Sting is back in. Total control

for Abyss at the moment as he stomps on Sting. Christian ducks a charge though and hits a tornado DDT for two. The Canadian goes after the knee of Abyss and knocks Sting to the floor.

Abyss tries a gorilla press but Christian escapes and gets to the corner. That doesn't work that well as Abyss tries to load up a superplex but Sting comes in to make it a Tower of Doom. Stinger Splash to Abyss and Sting shrugs off some Christian chops. Stinger Splash to both guys in the same corner but Christian goes to the eyes to break up the Scorpion. Rollup gets two for Sting on Abyss. Abyss gets knocked to the floor and Tomko kicks him in the face. Unprettier is countered and Sting hooks the Scorpion. Sting, ever the idiot, goes after Mitchell and lets the hold go. That guy never learns.

Tomko throws in the belt but Sting avoids the shot and slingshots Christian into Abyss to keep the champion on the floor. Death Drop gets two as Tomko pulls the referee out. Tomko comes in to stomp Sting but Abyss jumps him. A clothesline puts Tomko on the floor and Abyss throws Christian over the top to the outside. Here comes a chokeslam to Sting but Mitchell wants to throw in tacks.

The fans chant for Chris (Abyss, not Christian) and he doesn't want to use the tacks. He pours the tacks out but tries to chokeslam Christian instead, only to have Tomko kick his head off. Abyss gets kicked into the tacks and Sting tries to talk to him. Since this isn't overbooked enough, Christian brings in a chair to pop Sting and a Black Hole Slam lets Abyss retain. They were trying to pull the referee out again there.

Rating: D+. This is where TNA loses me again. It's a Russo problem more than anything else: there's a decent match in there somewhere, but you can't find it because of all the other stuff. We had in a 12 minute match, tacks, a chair, a ref bump, an attempted ref bump, a psychological therapy session, Tomko interfering, Mitchell interfering, and maiming. Why can't it be three guys fighting for a title? Why is that

such a bad thing? TNA comes off like it has a severe inferiority complex so it throws all this other stuff out there because it's ashamed of what their regular product looks like. This was a good example of that.

Angle says this is the last match he'll have with Joe. After tonight everyone will know he's the best.

Angle talks about wrestling a guy from Iran and losing because he never thought he'd see him again. They did have a rematch though, in the gold medal match. Joe deserves a rematch. No one has ever hurt Angle like Joe did and Joe wants to hurt him again. The back and forth verbal servicing goes on for a few minutes, because Heaven forbid two people in TNA don't like each other or don't spend five minutes praising the other first.

Samoa Joe vs. Kurt Angle

The fans chant you tapped out at Joe, because they turn on their favorites at the drop of a hat. Now they say Joe's Gonna Kill You. Now they're split. This crowd needs therapy. They go to the corner quickly and then Angle takes him down with a wristlock. Kurt tries a half crab which goes nowhere. Joe comes back with a short arm clothesline and chops in the corner, followed by punches and kicks.

Angle starts to come back but gets backdropped over the top to the floor. Joe follows him to the outside and they slug it out, only to have Angle take over and hit a dive to the floor. Joe gets his head rammed into the steps a few times HARD. Angle goes inside but Joe is like screw that and comes back, only to get stomped down again. They go to the mat and Joe grabs a keylock.

Angle counters that and sends Joe into the steel cable in the corner to take over. Belly to belly stops a brief Joe comeback. Off to a body vice and Angle is in control. That doesn't last long as Joe comes back with right hands and a

release German suplex to put both guys down. Angle counters the Clutch and it's Rolling German times. There's the ankle lock but Joe rolls through. Angle rolls through the MuscleBuster into an ankle lock and Joe is in trouble.

Joe rolls out of it again but Angle immediately comes back with the Slam for two. Ankle lock goes on but Joe rolls around well enough that he pulls Angle into the Clutch. Angle counters THAT into the ankle lock. Joe does the same counter he did before into the Clutch again and Kurt is in trouble. THAT gets countered into the ankle lock with the grapevine.

Joe makes the rope which puts him in a short list of people that have escaped the grapevine. Angle changes up to going for a pin, in this case off a belly to belly superplex. Joe counters the Slam and down goes the referee. Joe hooks the Clutch again and Angle taps but there's no referee. He goes to get the referee and Angle kicks him low. Angle goes to the floor and gets a chair but it hits the rope and bounces into Angle's face. Joe pulls him into the Clutch and Angle taps for the win.

Rating: B+. Was there any need for the chair ending? Really? Either way it doesn't mean much but Angle tapped like he should have so it doesn't matter. This was a good match though and they had the crowd going really strongly by the end. The problem here though is that this is the second match and it happened at Turning Point after the first one at Genesis. It falls a little lower based on that. Still very good though and a great main event.

We take a long look at the match we just saw.

Overall Rating: D. The main event really is good and is worth checking out, but that's really all that saves this show from being really bad. The problem here is that there are so many things standing in the way of it being a passable show. Stuff like the Voodoo Kin Mafia stuff and the TON of stalling and

six matches on the whole card really makes this show look bad. More importantly than that though, it makes the company look like they have no idea what they're doing and it makes them look like they're incapable of filling up a three hour show. That's a really bad sign, but at least they would improve...eventually.

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Armageddon 2008: Jeffrey Freaking Nero Hardy

Armageddon 2008

Date: December 14, 2008

Location: HSBC Arena, Buffalo, New York

Attendance: 12,500

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler, Matt Striker, Todd Grisham, Michael Cole, Taz

Well this is the final show of the series and thankfully we go out with a big old bang. The main events are Edge vs. HHH vs. Hardy for the Smackdown title and Jericho vs. Cena for the Red Show title. Also there's Batista vs. Orton in the closest thing to a major match they ever had (not counting some random title matches). Let's get to it.

In a not very interesting bit of trivia, the dark match for this show is the same match that was the dark match for the previous year's Armageddon: Jesse and Festus vs. Miz/Morrison. The more famous team lost the first time and won this year.

It's Armageddon and the same theme is used.

Matt Hardy vs. Vladimir Kozlov

Vlad was released on the day this was written. Matt is ECW Champion but this is non-title. Vlad has that rare thing called credibility here and is undefeated. The fans chant USA as is their custom because they're anti-foreigner. Hardy starts off kind of well and is then thrown all over the place because Vlad is Russian and Russians are better fighters. He throws on a key lock and the fans cheer for Hardy.

Vlad shifts off to an armbar and pulls Matt off the mat (oh the irony) by his arm which looked REALLY freaking painful. Trapping headbutts keep Matt from getting any long term offense going. Vlad gets a DDT to either the head or the arm. It looked like a regular one but it seemed like Matt landed on his arm. Back to the keylock as this isn't a very exciting match even though the fans are interested in it.

Matt manages to get up top and hit a top rope elbow to the head. Vlad gets tossed to the floor but Matt's dive doesn't work. He counters the counter though and Vlad tastes the steel. Not really but you get the idea. I doubt Vlad likes to lick posts but who knows, maybe he does. Matt goes up again but jumps into a punch for two. He goes into the corner for ten punches but gets dropped onto the post. The headbutt to the chest and a standing spinebuster end this.

Rating: C. Not a bad match but there's something out of place about a Russian monster using arm holds for the majority of the match. Matt losing was expected because he's Matt Hardy, but Vlad's push more or less stopped soon after this, mainly due to an abysmal fan response at Cyber Sunday. Nothing great here but it was fine for what it was.

Edge, Vickie and Chavo are in the back. Edge leaves to get ready and Chavo asks Vickie how they got rid of Jeff that night in the hotel. Vickie doesn't want to answer and sends

Chavo for coffee.

Horny comes up to Eve and hits her with a rubber hammer. Finlay comes in to help her and Eve says it's cool. Finlay tells his son not to come out for the match later because he might get hurt. Horny is sad.

Here's William Regal with Layla to sit at ringside for the next match.

Intercontinental Championship Tournament Final: CM Punk vs. Rey Mysterio

Why they call it that I have no idea because it's for a shot at the title, held by Regal. Punk is introduced as half of the tag champions but he and Kofi lost the titles at a house show the previous night to Miz and Morrison. There's a pre-match handshake and here we go. Mysterio might have a bad wrist but it isn't taped. Jerry does his job and talks about how having an injury taped up is a bad idea at times.

Some lone fan tries to start a Miz and Morrison chant and the arena shouts him down. Pretty basic back and forth stuff to start but they're speeding up. 619 is avoided but the GTS fails also. Rey is sent to the floor in front of Regal and Punk hits a big dive which gets two in the ring. Tilt-a-whirl backbreaker gets two. Rey tries to speed things up but is caught in the Tree of Woe and Punk fires off some kicks.

He avoids a charge though and hits a moonsault off the top for two. It might have hurt his already injured wrist though and Punk capitalizes it. Punk grabs a weird kind of crossface where he puts Rey's arm behind Punk's back and cranks back on it. Rey gets to the ropes and uses what appears to be La Mistica (Sin Cara's move in Mexico) but Punk makes a rope as well.

A dropkick puts Punk on the floor and Rey hits a big dive off the top, putting both guys down. Back in a victory roll by Rey

gets two but Punk counters into a rollup of his own for two. Pretty back and forth match so far with both guys mirroring each other. Punk hits a running bulldog for two. Regal is finally interested in the match while Layla holds the title up for him.

Punk puts Rey on the ropes but gets put in the 619 position. That misses again and Punk tries the GTS. Rey reverses that into a rana to put CM into 619 position. It finally connects but the splash misses. Crucifix gets two for Rey. Punk counters another rana attempt and hits the GTS out of mostly nowhere for the pin and the shot at Regal. Rey's nose is busted.

Rating: B. Rather good match here and they were moving out there. The ending is kind of out of nowhere but the GTS looked good. Rey would get the title from JBL at Mania in like 30 seconds after JBL beat Punk for it who beat Regal for it like three weeks after this. Good match here though as is par for the course with these two.

Jeff talks about spending the last year to get ready for this moment. He's been told he had to change to get what he wanted, but that's because the people are afraid of him. Tonight he'll prove everyone wrong and become WWE Champion.

We recap JBL and Shawn's issues. The idea is that Shawn is broke due to the 2008 financial crash. He had to take a job with JBL as his servant basically and give up his pride. The problem with all this was simple: Shawn Michaels is a top level WWE Superstar. Are we supposed to believe he doesn't make enough to pay his bills?

Here's JBL who introduces Shawn as his new employee. He says that the financial issues have caught up with him and he's invested his money in the stock market. See, that's the thing: he got his money being a wrestler and he has the same job now. He's still making checks now so why is this such a big issue?

It makes sense in theory but it always came off as a hole in the story to me. Shawn doesn't like JBL but he's not going to become one of those guys that you hear about who is a tragedy and going to a high school gym to wrestle for a quick payday. YOU WERE IN THE MATCH OF THE YEAR LAST YEAR AT WRESTLEMANIA. I THINK YOU HAVE SOME TIME LEFT. Anyway, Shawn shakes JBL's hand and is all sad. He always will have a lifetime job looking for his smile.

Orton says...nothing because Cody and Manu interrupt. Cody says Orton was the star of Evolution and Manu says that Orton has been waiting to prove himself as the better man for years. I can see why Manu didn't keep his job long. Everyone leaves after that in a weird moment.

Some Buffalo Bills are here.

Finlay vs. Mark Henry

This is a Belfast Brawl, which means street fight. Henry had tried to squash Horny but Finlay made the save for his son. Tony Atlas is with Henry. Striker says this has its roots in the streets of Belfast. There are wrestling rings in Belfast streets where you win fights by holding someone down for three seconds in front of 12,000 people? Henry sends him to the floor quickly but Finlay manages to send him into the announce table. Henry takes over and pounds away outside, ramming him into the railing.

No Hornswoggle out here as per his pop's request. Back in the ring the splash misses and Finlay tries to get in some offense. The Irish dude pulls out some weapons, in the form of like three trashcans. The delay lets Henry get up and Finlay goes down fast. Henry hits that move that has no name where you jump on the guy's head when he's in the 619 position. He yells at Finlay, saying you wanted a fight and now you got one.

Finlay manages to fight back with a trashcan shot and another

to put Henry down. He pounds away a bit and gets two. Henry takes over again and stands on Finlay's chest but misses a Banzai Drop from the middle rope. Yokozuna he is not. There's that Irish club that I can't spell but Henry knocks it out of Finlay's hand. Henry breaks the club easily and does the same to a kendo stick.

Bear hug goes on and here's Horny. Henry casually throws him into Finlay's balls from where he came. Or did Finlay come? Not sure actually. I guess Finlay had to so Horny could. And I guess Finlay had to be Horny to come so Horny could come. I love wordplay. Anyway Henry beats Finlay down and picks up the steps but Finlay dropkicks the knee to send Henry's face into the steps. Horny slips him another stick (add that aspect to the aforementioned joke) and a shot to the head with that ends this.

Rating: C-. Eh nothing too horrible here. The weapons probably saved this as I don't even want to imagine these two trying to have a regular match. Not a horrible match here and Horny helping to win is ok. I don't mind him as a sidekick but being on the show week after week gets to be a bit much.

The Divas are decorating a tree and here's Santa-Haas. They all get presents which were already in the room. Santino and Beth come in and show off Beth's Diva of the Year Slammy. Santino tries to get a present out of the box but Boogeyman is inside. He runs for the door and there's Goldust under some mistletoe. Boogey gives Goldust a present and then the two of them along with Santa, the Divas and the drugged out Festus sing We Wish You A Merry Christmas. It's as weird as it sounds.

Kennedy says drink responsibly and don't do drugs. However, do go get his new DVD, Behind Enemy Lines III.

We recap Batista vs. Orton. They were both in Evolution and this fight is basically to decide who was the better young and

future star in the team. Both won world titles and then Orton went all heel and said he was better than everyone else. I don't get why this is at Armageddon and not like at, Wrestlemania or something.

Batista vs. Randy Orton

Cody and Manu are with Orton. They fight over a lockup to start and there's no real advantage yet. Orton takes him to the mat but that gets him nowhere at all. Batista goes to the floor and Rhodes gets involved for generally evil purposes. The two of them get thrown out quickly though so we get down to a regular match. Orton sends the shoulder into the post and works on the arm for the first real advantage.

They're treating this like a clash of the titans which it really is. There's an RKO chant also. Batista snaps and tries a Batista Bomb early but Randy escapes into a neckbreaker for two. Batista tosses him to the floor and Orton may have reinjured his shoulder which was hurt earlier in the year. Back in Orton manages to get the elevated DDT for two. This is when the move made sense as the rope is under Big Dave's knees instead of his ankles, making it a bit harder to escape.

Since we were getting close to something interesting out of Orton, it's the Orton Stomp to the rescue! When you steal moves from Ronnie Garvin, you're not in a good place. Batista goes to the floor as the pace of the match has gone down into negative gears. Orton throws on a chinlock which is broken rather quickly. He's working on the neck so we hit the chinlock again.

The fans aren't sure if they want to chant boring or not. Big Dave gets underneath the chinlock and drops back with the weight crashing down onto Randy. Batista wins a slugout but Orton uses the lethal art of kicking your feet to escape a powerslam. They go outside again which doesn't amount to much. A superplex by Orton gets two.

Spinebuster gets two out of nowhere for Batista. He's too spent to follow up immediately and the Batista Bomb is delayed. Orton gets the backbreaker for two. RKO is blocked and Batista gets a slam for two. The Animal (just a generic animal, not the Viper) is getting frustrated. Another Bomb attempt is countered and Randy gets a DDT for two. The Punt is countered by Batista putting him in the corner and ramming in shoulders and then ten punches. Orton tries to counter into something but winds up in the position for the Batista Bomb and we're done.

Rating: B-. Well the second half was better but at the same time the first half was really boring. Orton got A LOT better over the last year or so and was just dull beyond belief as a heel in 2008. A lot of this match was weak but they turned it around and got something close to a big match going. The pacing was off too though and it looked like they kept wanting to get going but it never clicked.

Recap of the Slammys from Raw on Monday. This is mainly done to set up some more of Cena vs. Jericho. They're fighting for the Raw World Title later. Jeff Hardy, Edge and HHH got involved somehow too.

Maria/Mickie James/Kelly Kelly/Michelle McCool vs. Maryse/Jillian Hall/Victoria/Natalya

Santa's Little Helper's match here. The heels are in green and are elves I guess. Maria's song is really catchy. I miss Michelle. Mickie vs. Maryse starts us off. Mickie keeps going after her and Maryse tries to pose. Off to Mickie vs. Natalya in the real fight here. Nattie is pretty new at this point. Kelly is Jewish and Striker calls her the Hot Hebrew. That sounds like a really bad coffee shop. The announcers are having a fun time with this. The match is totally pointless of course and it's off to Maria. Somehow she gets compared to John Berzerker Nord. Everything breaks down and Michelle hits the Faithbreaker (Styles Clash) to end Maryse.

Rating: C+. Don't bother trying to figure out if the rating is good because it isn't, but there was a weird energy for this one and I had fun with it. Also Michelle in shorts and Maria with her energetic perkiness are never bad things. The girls looks hot and everyone was having fun in a nice breath of air before the main events. What more can you ask for?

Khali comes out for the Kiss Cam with the Divas in the ring still. Michelle runs away with her Divas Title. Instead he's going to kiss the other three. This doesn't work either so Runjin Singh says that it's because he's too much man for them. Singh has a backup plan in the form of Mae Young. This is one of those things you classify as all in good fun. Yes it's stupid, but I like it for some weird reason. The announcers are cracking up over Lawler's one liners.

Preview of Prince of Persia, which is the game sponsoring the show.

We recap Jericho vs. Cena which is a rematch from Survivor Series where Cena came back to beat Jericho for the title after being gone for like three months. Jericho never beat Cena for the most part so what do you think is happening here? Oh and Jericho is the Superstar of the Year, which he probably deserved. The rest of the video is a long beatdown of Cena by Jericho with help from Legacy.

Raw World Title: John Cena vs. Chris Jericho

After some big match intros we're ready to go. Crowd is mostly pro Cena, I'd say 75-80%. Jericho outsmarts him to start and stomps away on the back and the neck. Cena is like screw this and spears him down to hammer away. Jericho fights out and throws on a sleeper. Cena might go to sleep faster if Jericho wasn't calling spot to him. Dueling chants already but the better one is for Jericho.

Cena reverses into an attempted FU but that gets countered into a DDT. Cena rolls to the floor and Jericho gets caught in

another FU attempt but he counters THAT into a bulldog off the apron and onto the steps. Cool sequence there. Jericho stays on the neck which is good psychology from a master of it. Cena counters into his finishing sequence but it's WAY too early for that.

Jericho manages another counter to the FU, this time into the Walls. Scratch that as it's more like a door frame which is reversed by Cena anyway. Missile dropkick from the middle rope gets two. Nice fast paced match here so far. Throwback is blocked and Jericho hits the Lionsault for two. We go up top and Cena blocks a superplex and hits the top rope Fameasser for a delayed cover.

The ninth or so FU attempt is countered as Jericho lands on his feet and the Codebreaker gets two. Jericho charges at Cena again and this time gets caught in the FU. It only gets two and both guys are down. Jericho pulls a Bret and plays possum into a small package for two. Cena grabs the STFU but Jericho counters into the Walls. He manages to crawl through Chris' legs and grabs the STFU for a relatively quick tap out.

Rating: B+. I liked this one as they had both guys moving out there the entire time and constantly countering the finishers. Cena tried the FU about 10 times but he kept hammering away until Jericho ran out of counters and got frustrated, resulting in his downfall. Nice story being told and great execution of it. What more can you ask for from a match like this?

We recap the Smackdown World Title match. Someone jumped Hardy to keep him out of the triple threat match at Survivor Series. Edge returned and stole the title from HHH. The attack on Hardy was called the most disgusting thing of the year for some reason because it implied Jeff was on drugs or something, despite that never being mentioned ever. Oh well I guess.

Smackdown World Title: Edge vs. HHH vs. Jeff Hardy

Solid heat on Edge and a solid gut also. Jeff goes straight for Edge as JR can't remember if Jeff got attacked in Baltimore or Boston. Basic opening so far with Jeff driving the action. He sends Edge and HHH to the floor and dives on the Canadian. Trips takes his head off though so it's Edge vs. HHH in the ring now. How was that never the main event of a bigger show than Great American Bash?

Jumping knee to the face puts Edge down as does a neckbreaker. Edge's bad luck continues as he gets caught in a facebuster. Jeff back in now and he gets a facebuster for Christmas also. HHH tries the Pedigree to Edge but Jeff takes them both out with a Whisper in the Wind. The Game is down and Jeff gets crotched on the top. HHH comes in to get Edge and it's a Doomsday Device with Jeff hitting a Whisper in the Wind instead of a clothesline. Edge's bump is SCARY here as he lands on the back of his head.

Pedigree to Jeff is countered again and he goes into the buckle. Slingshot dropkick hits HHH but the Edge-0-Matic takes Jeff down for two. HHH's bad luck continues in the form of a spear. Twist of Fate and Swanton hit HHH but Edge makes a last second save. Everybody goes to the floor and HHH is mostly dead.

Edge gets whipped around a lot and Jeff loads up the announce table. HHH pops up again and sends Edge onto the table but not through it. Jeff escapes a Pedigree and gets killed with a spear through the third table. Edge vs. HHH in the ring with the Canadian hitting an Edgecution for no cover. Spear is countered into the spinebuster and there's the Pedigree.

Kozlov of all people pops up and breaks up the pin before beating on HHH. Matt Hardy comes out to get rid of Kozlov. Jeff goes up but Kozlov shoves him away before the Swanton can hit. Matt and Vlad go up the aisle and only Edge is in the ring. HHH comes back in but walks into a spear for two. A frustrated Edge goes to the floor and sets for a Conchairto.

Jeff grabs a chair and BLASTS Edge with it. He wants the Swanton but HHH crotches him. That was a sick, sick chair shot and it was only with one hand. HHH grabs the Pedigree in the corner but Jeff dives off the top with the Swanton to HHH and covers Edge for the pin and his first world title. The roof blows off the place and with good reason. The LD exploded and I did too, since I slept through the original broadcast of this and the first thing I saw was Jeff diving onto HHH.

Rating: B. Solid match all around here but the point here was for the ending. That Swanton and the reaction from the crowd was excellent. The whole thing worked perfectly and the match was good. Not sure why they had Kozlov and Matt in there but it wasn't a big issue. The right man won here and that's all that matters.

The last five minutes of this are spent on a huge celebration by Jeff. Totally awesome moment for one simple reason: this has been a year in the making and Jeff felt like he finally earned it. This could have been in the main event of Wrestlemania but the shock of it was a great bonus perk. I'm not a Hardy fan but this is still awesome on every possible level.

Jeff's celebrating on top of the set ends the show.

Overall Rating: A. I really liked this show. The whole thing worked incredibly well and there isn't a bad match to be found. You get an historical moment in the title change at the end, another good match in cena vs. Jericho, a big match in Orton vs. Batista and hot women in Santa outfits. What more can you really ask for from a show? I had a really good time with this and it's worth seeing.

Armageddon is now done, leaving us with Unforgiven, Great American Bash, No Mercy and Backlash. This was a surprisingly good series with some bad shows but when it was good, it was REALLY good. The final one is probably the best or maybe 2005.

Either way some of them are worth seeing but on the other hand some aren't worth seeing at all. Translation: it's just like every other PPV series.

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A Thought About Cena/Lesnar

I read something like this on another site and it makes me think about a few things. Paraphrased:

"It really says a lot about Cena that they have to bring out The Rock and a legit superstar fighter to make him break a sweat. That's how far and away he is above the rest of the current roster."

And that's true. Lesnar is one of those guys that fans talk about in awe. He was a once in a generation talent and he managed to rise to the top of a legitimate sport. THAT is what they had to bring back to give Cena a real challenge.

Think about that for a bit.

Detailed Thoughts On Lesnar's

Return

So last night Brock Lesnar returned to the WWE after an eight year absence. I didn't really say much about it due to the sake of time, so here are a few more thoughts on it. This is a huge deal for WWE as it brings in a new set of fans in the form of UFC fans who watched Brock rampage through the organization for a few years. It's pretty clear that's the main idea behind this and there's nothing wrong with that. This broadens the fanbase a little as a lot of UFC fans are old wrestling fans that got tired of the way the product was going and jumped ship. There aren't many ways to get them back other than to take some UFC talent, and that's what they did here.

Storyline wise this opens up a lot of doors, as Lesnar could feud with anyone from Rock to Cena to Punk to Undertaker and have some excellent matches with them. Lesnar allegedly has signed a one year deal and should appear about every two weeks, which is more than enough to keep people watching instead of the way Rock did it, where he'd show up about once a month for the majority of a year. Lesnar offers something fresh but familiar, but most importantly with Brock is he could have a lot left in the tank.

This is something I find important: Brock is only 34 years old. By comparison, Sheamus is 34, Orton is 32, Punk is 33 and Cena is 34 (35 before the end of April). No one would call any of those guys over the hill, and Brock is a brand new name to a large portion of these fans. If WWE can convince him to stay a little longer than the contract he has, there's a lot of potential to get there.

With Lesnar only appearing every few weeks, it keeps him fresh while still keeping him familiar, which is very important. One of the reasons Cena became unpopular was because he's always on TV. One of the reasons Rock stays popular is he's

rarely on TV, but at the same time he was away enough that he lost some of his luster. Getting a ground in the middle is a very nice touch, and most importantly you can still push stories without him there every week.

That brings us to the most talked about topic: what is Lesnar going to do? Well last night he attacked Cena, but the problem is where do you have that match go down? I really wouldn't like to wait four months for Summerslam for their showdown. That being said, for the life of me I can't see this match happening at Extreme Rules. You also have to throw in the wild card of The Rock, who Cena wanted to see last night before he took the F5. It seems that they're leaving the door open to decide what they're going to do, which is in contrast to last year where they announced the main event of the big show a year in advance, which to me wasn't the greatest idea. This leaves them some options, which is a very good thing for them.

Overall, Brock is a huge coup for WWE as they needed something to bring in some old fans since Rock is probably not going to be available full time. That being said, they need to treat Brock as well as they can. WWE needs Lesnar WAY more than Lesnar needs WWE, so do whatever he likes. he's not going to return full time because he doesn't need to, so use him sparingly and in the right places. Him vs. Cena is a dream match, but I don't know where they're going with Cena at this point as I don't see the point in having him beat Lesnar. That's the fun part about this: it's not clear at all where it's going, which is the best thing you can have in wrestling.

Thoughts/predictions?

I Want To Talk A Little Bit About Burying

I mentioned this in a comment the other night but didn't realize I hadn't published it. This is the term that I hear used the most incorrectly around here and it's time you guys got a brief lesson on what it means.

Let's start by defining a burial. To bury someone in wrestling means that they are shoved down the card and no longer have the spot that they had. On top of that (adding more dirt onto it if you will) it means you're not coming back out of it for a long time. In essence it means you're done. There is next to no hope for your recovery and return to the spot you once had unless something major changes for you and probably others ahead of you.

And now, for one of the most important things I've ever say on here or anywhere else regarding wrestling. If you never pay attention to anything else I say, learn this for the collective intelligence of the planet: [b]You cannot be buried in one match.[/b] This is the biggest problem people seem to have with the term. For some reason there's a mentality that says if you lose EVER, your career is over and you're being buried. This is completely incorrect and I have no idea where this notion came from.

People lose matches. It has to happen. Losses mean nothing in wrestling. It's all about the way you lose. Let's take a look at an example. Christian hasn't won a match that meant anything in months correct? I don't think anyone would argue he's anything less than the third biggest heel on Smackdown and arguably the second biggest. He loses all the time and yet he's still every bit as over as he was when he started losing. For an older example, look at Chris Jericho, who lost clean to Evan Bourne on PPV. Did that bury him? Of course not. It put

Bourne over, which is the point of a win like that.

So many times people mistake a rub for a burial. Tonight on Smackdown Orton lost to Barrett almost clean. Barrett looks like a bigger star and a more credible threat. Orton is going to be the top guy on Smackdown for a very long time even though he lost here. He's down in the card more than he was over the summer, but he's not being buried. Another reason you might lose a match is to turn. Razor Ramon got beat by a jobber named the 1-2-3 Kid clean on Raw but it wasn't to bury him. It was to start his face turn that put him at his greatest glory ever in WWF.

For our final example, let's look at an actual burial: Drew McIntyre. Drew was once the hottest thing in the company, on an undefeated streak and depending on various reports you might read, in line to win the world title by the end of the year. Then his wife got him in trouble and his push stopped. Drew stopped winning matches, stopped being featured, stopped being talked about, and now is lucky to get squashed once a month. It took time for him to go down the card to the point where it's rare to see him on TV. He's been buried and it took months to do so.

Get the idea now? There will be a quiz later.

Brock Lesnar Returns To WWE On Raw

He laid out Cena with an F5, so that's either Wrestlemania or Summerslam, unless they're feeling really stupid. This is a huge moment and I'm sure I'll have more on it later, probably with a proper post tomorrow.

Until then, thoughts/reactions on this?

Monday Night Raw – April 2, 2012: LESNAR!

Monday Night Raw

Date: April 2, 2012

Location: American Airlines Arena, Miami, Florida

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

Tonight is the show after Wrestlemania and we basically start the new year in WWE. The Rock beat John Cena last night in a good match that didn't quite live up to its hype. Other than that, HHH couldn't break the Streak, which shouldn't surprise anyone. I'm not sure what comes next on this show, which is what makes tonight fun. Let's get to it.

We open with a state of the shows speech by Ace but Punk interrupts, saying that everyone knows that Ace is a giant tool box. Ace says that Punk is defending tonight against Mark Henry. This is the era of People Power according to the boss.

Theme song.

Here's Rock for the real opening. The fans chant his latest catchphrase for awhile to keep him from talking for awhile and he does the goosebumps thing. He talks about how he came back 14 months ago and they've done it all since then. It wasn't until last night that Rock stood before 70,000 people and won at Wrestlemania in Sun Life Stadium. Now he can truly say he's come back....home.

Rock explains the goosebumps thing again and says he has to

thank Cena. The fans of course think he sucks because it's what they're programmed to do. Rock says it's an honor to have competed against Cena in the biggest match of all time, and all that matters is they made history for the fans. Rock thanks the people for being there for him last night and for always being behind him.

For some reason Rock talks about being cut from the Canadian Football League. "Do you realize how much you have to suck to be cut from the Canadian Football League???" He thanks the people for making him the people's champion and promises this is only the beginning. The fans chant Thank You Rocky and Rock talks about having a vision last night after partying in Miami. He shows off a bit of the dancing he did (drawing a whistle, apparently from a male Cena fan) and asks if the people want to hear his vision. The vision is that one day he'll be WWE Champion.

US Title: Santino Marella vs. Jack Swagger vs. Dolph Ziggler

Basically it's a handicap match here as both guys corner him. Swagger gets him in the corner and Ziggler kicks him down. There are the sit-ups from Ziggler and Swagger rides him on the mat. Santino fights back with right hands and dumps Dolph to the floor (required great bump) but Swagger runs him over with a tackle as we take a break. Back with Santino in trouble again, more or less just like it's been all match so far.

Ziggy holds him but Santino gets in a boot and a Saito Suplex to Ziggler. He takes over on Jack and loads up the Cobra but Dolph grabs a neckbreaker to put him right back down. An assisted Fameasser gets two as Jack looks like he wants to make the save. Yep we're in triple threat formula territory now. Swagger suplexes Ziggler but the Vader Bomb eats knees. Ziggler dropkicks Swagger and walks into a slingshot. Cobra to Swagger keeps the title at 6:51.

Rating: C-. This was any triple threat match that you've seen

in a long time. The face gets beaten down for awhile, the heels don't get along, the face steals the win to keep the title. There's nothing wrong with that and it worked decently here, but it's something we've seen time after time.

Post match they go after him (after falling for the LOOK OVER THERE gag) and almost catch him on the stage, but Brodus freaking Clay comes out as backup for Santino. Ziggy charges at him but runs into the headbutt. Swagger won't jump him so Clay, the dancers and Santino have a little dance party. LOUD Funkasaurus chant during him staring down Swagger/Ziggler too. That's a really good sign.

Lord Tensai vs. Alex Riley

Tensai has some Japanese guy with him to throw salt. It's clearly Albert/A-Train even though all of his face other than his eyes is covered. Cole says it's known that he's a former WWE Superstar who went to Japan and dominated before coming back. I'm not sure if I like that or not but it's one way to go. He's in red trunks and arm bands and has Japanese symbols across his face diagonally. His face is uncovered now but we haven't heard his old name yet. Total domination with tons of elbow strikes and headbutts and Riley is out. Chokebomb ends this via referee stoppage at 2:46. Standard debuting monster squash.

Riley is almost up a few seconds later so Tensai throws on a claw post match. He spit something on his hand before putting the hold on. They never said A-Train or Albert.

We hear again about how Cena is going to call out Rock tonight for the fallout from last night. We've gotten two clips of him saying he had to win last night, so the question is how he'll react to it.

Raw World Title: Mark Henry vs. CM Punk

Punk gets overpowered to start but manages to get in some

strikes. Those get him absolutely nowhere. Well, unless you count face down on the mat and getting pounded on somewhere of course. Either way, Henry dominates him with pure power. Punk's back is still hurt from the Jericho match last night. There's a bearhug but it never goes on fully, as Punk pounds away and DDTs out of it for two. Running knee to the head gets the same. Henry gets in another shot to the back and sets for a Vader Bomb, but Punk gets in a shot to break it up.

That doesn't really matter though as Henry drills him again and tries a second time. This time Punk moves and Henry crashes down. Henry manages to run him over though and we take a break. Back with Punk diving into a clothesline but getting caught by Henry. He knocks the champ down again and it's nerve hold time. Punk fights out of that and chops the tar out of Henry.

A high kick puts Henry down and a very slow climb sets up the Macho Elbow. It hurts Punk's back again but he manages the running knee in the corner. No bulldog though. Another knee looks to set up the bulldog but Henry throws Punk to the floor. That combo works about 2% of the time. In a very surprising ending, Punk doesn't beat the count back in and Henry wins by countout at 13:00.

Rating: C+. Good stuff here with Punk fighting the odds and trying to hang in there, but I'm not sure I like the ending. It obviously sets up a rematch for Henry which is the right idea, and I think I can live with that. Not a bad match at all, but it wasn't my favorite for some reason. Maybe it's Henry not being that interesting anymore. Actually scratch that about the ending. The match was for the title so there was no other way to end it if that's how they're going forward, which is ok.

Post match Henry gives him the World's Strongest Slam on the floor. The fans want Lesnar. Ace and Otunga come out to say that Punk is going to be defending the title on a much more

consistent basis. Jericho pops up and says that it looks like Punk needs a drink. He pulls out a bottle of what looks like whiskey and pours it on Punk's head, ala Raven or Lawler/Roberts in 1996. Jericho slips on the booze in a funny bit. Jericho goes to get another bottle and breaks this one over Punk's head. Punk's hand shaking is a nice touch.

Here's Sheamus, but he's immediately cut off by the returning Alberto Del Rio in I believe a Lamborghini. Scratch that it's a Mercedes. Del Rio says he wouldn't lose in 18 seconds. Sheamus has a new challenger and his name is Alberto Del Rio, according to Ricardo in a great bit. The fans chant SI SI SI SI in another funny bit. The crowd has been great for the most part tonight. Ace has granted Del Rio a match on Smackdown with Sheamus and if he wins, he gets a future title match. Del Rio's mic goes out and he goes to get another, but turns around into the Brogue Kick. Cool ending to the segment.

Bryan and AJ were watching and Josh pops up. Bryan glares at Josh and that's that.

Cody Rhodes vs. Kofi Kingston

It's weird seeing Cody without the title. Kofi starts fast with a spinning cross body but he walks into the Disaster Kick. He sets for something else but here's Big Show with the title. Show has a clip of last night with Cody's Embarrassing Wrestlemania Moment. Ok that's pretty good. Cody walks into Trouble in Paradise for the pin at 1:50.

More Cena and Rock clips with Cena talking about how he had to win.

Henry is ticked off in the back and Abraham Washington of all people comes in to say it's time for a change for Mark. Washington offers to manage him and leaves Mark with one of his cards.

Here's Eve who says that last night was her Wrestlemania

moment. She manipulated Ryder and can manipulate any man, except the GM, Johnny Ace. People Power!

The Miz vs. Zack Ryder

Cena has just arrived apparently. Ryder takes Miz down with a forearm and pounds away. A sunset flip is rolled through for two for Ryder. He kicks Miz into the corner and is very aggressive here. Miz kicks him down and hooks a chinlock. That's broken quickly and Ryder gets two knees up to Miz's face. Cole compares Eve to Jane Eyre. For some reason I don't think there's a big crossover between Bronte fans and Raw fans, but I could be wrong. Broski Boot gets two. Miz throws Ryder's shoulder into the post and the Skull Crushing Finale gets the clean pin at 2:58.

Overall Rating: B+. This show clicked very well. First of all, it FLEW by. We seemingly have the next world title matches lined up, with two potential challengers for both champions. There's a new manager around now and Tensai's debut was...well it was ok I guess, but it was nothing that came off to me as great. Really good show, although the wrestling needed to be a bit better.

Orton vs. Kane on Friday.

Here's Cena for the big callout. There's going to be a LONG overrun tonight as it's 10:58 when his music starts. Cena says that everyone in life faces defeat, which is paraphrased here but the real line was a Muhammad Ali quote. Cena says he didn't ever think he would lose. During the whole year it never crossed his mind because if you think that way you've already lost. A true champion believes he can win even through his most disappointing loss.

Cena says there was a lot of speculation as to how he'd react to this. Would he lash out? Would he make excuses? The fans chant that he's a loser. Cena says people have wondered if this was the day he finally lashed out at the WWE Universe.

The fans chant YES YES YES in a good bit. Cena says that's not going to happen, drawing heat on the level that he got in the stadium last night. Cena is a man and he was beaten. He admits defeat and apologizes to his supporters. Cena thanks the rapper from last night and gets booed again.

Now let's address the rumors about calling Rock out. He's not going to do that because he doesn't want to fight Rock and they've called each other out for a year. The fans want Lesnar and Cena stops for them to chant it. He says that it's always an interesting crowd at Raw and he wants Rock. Cena invites him down to the ring to talk because he doesn't want to fight. John says he thinks Rock is the greatest in WWE history. Cena wants one more moment of celebration for Rock in the middle of the ring. The fans still want Lesnar. Cena starts a yes chant and says Bryan owes him one. No Rock yet.

LESNAR! HE'S BACK! He poses on the stage (with Cole sounding like he's calling a Superstars main event) and circles the ring before getting in. Cena applauds him and Lesnar picks him up for a HUGE F5. He kicks Cena's hat away and stands tall to end the show.

Overall Rating: A. This show clicked very well. First of all, it FLEW by. We seemingly have the next world title matches lined up, with two potential challengers for both champions. There's a new manager around now and Tensai's debut was...well it was ok I guess, but it was nothing that came off to me as great. Really good show, although the wrestling needed to be a bit better. And then Lesnar came back, to make it a HUGE show.

Results

Santino Marella b. Jack Swagger and Dolph Ziggler – Cobra to Swagger

Lord Tensai b. Alex Riley via referee stoppage

Mark Henry b. CM Punk via countout

Kofi Kingston b. Cody Rhodes – Trouble in Paradise

The Miz b. Zack Ryder – Skull Crushing Finale

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Lord Tensai Debuts

They acknowledged that he's a former WWE superstar but never said his name. He didn't have anything covering his head so it wasn't a secret or anything. I like that WAY better than pretending no one knew who he was because it's not like he has a forgettable face. Tensai squashed Alex Riley.

Thoughts on the debut/character?

Rock Wants To Be WWE Champion

That's his announcement tonight. It's better than just challenging someone I think.

Thoughts on this?