

Does Funny = Money?



IMG Credit: WrestlePro

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This is from WrestlePro, a promotion I've heard about before but I don't think I've ever seen a full show. From the description, it seems like it's going to be a comedy show and that's appropriate given that it's the first show of Wrestlemania weekend. Hopefully the show has some redeeming value to it, but I'm not getting my hopes up. Let's get to it.

As usual: I have no idea what's going on around here so if I miss storyline/character stuff, I apologize in advance.

The host tries to introduce the first match but McKenzie Mitchell (former Impact backstage interviewer) interrupts. She thinks the host needs a co-host and a fan poll convinces him to let her.

Bobby Wayward vs. Kikutaro

Kikutaro is a Japanese comedy guy in a weird looking mask. Wayward takes him up against the ropes for a clean break and Kikutaro applauds his politeness. Kikutaro does the same and it's off to an exchange of shoulders. Some armdrags into an armbar has Wayward in trouble until he pulls Kikutaro throat first into the top rope. Hang on though as Kikutaro

wants time out. Ever the scoundrel, Wayward stomps him down anyway as the slow pace continues.

With nothing else working, Kikutaro whips the referee into Wayward in the corner. The low blow behind the referee's back has Wayward in more trouble but he's fine enough to do the same to Kikutaro. There's a low blow to the referee as well and everyone is grabbing...yeah. Kikutaro Hulks Up and gets kicked in the face to Hulk him back down. Wayward grabs a fisherman's suplex for two but the referee collapses before three. The referee gets whipped into the corner but Kikutaro reverses it and the referee clotheslines Wayward. Now the referee DDTs him and a Shining Wizard gives Kikutaro the pin at 9:47.

Rating: D+. Oh I'm in for a long night. This wasn't exactly my style of wrestling but that's the point of the show so I should have known what I was getting myself into. Kikutaro doesn't exactly make me laugh but having him beat up a villain like Wayward is about as good as you were going to get here.

Here's Dan Lambert (American Top Team owner who showed up in Impact and was the best villain in the company for awhile) with Colby Covington (UFC Champion) and John Harnett to issue a challenge to the locker room. Wrestling today sucks so if Lambert wants to watch good wrestling, he'll have to watch on YouTube. Lambert lists off some great wrestlers and the fans applaud, which isn't the best way to go. He was told that WrestlePro was better but after what he's seen, he knows that his instincts were right: today's wrestling sucks. Cue Scarlett Bordeaux and we have an answer to the challenge.

Scarlett Bordeaux vs. John Harnett

Scarlett goes straight at him and slaps away in the corner, setting up a running hip attack. An over the back reverse kneeling piledriver finishes Harnett at 55 seconds. Well that proved the point well enough.

Post match Lambert shoves Scarlett down and pulls out a board but Scarlett spears Harnett through it instead.

Pat Buck vs. Santana Jackson

Buck is a big star around here and has a cage around his head. He's also called the Buzzkiller because he's beating anyone with any kind of buzz. Buck isn't having any of Santana's Michael Jackson dancing (REALLY bad timing with that one) so he tries a test of strength. That's broken up with more dancing and a dancing top rope wristdrag ticks Buck off so badly that he fires off a clothesline. A spinning Tombstone makes it worse...but Jackson sits up as Thriller starts to play.

Jackson hits a Stunner into a dancing People's Elbow but Buck gets serious. In something a little different, Jackson grabs Buck's hand and makes him punch himself low, which technically isn't illegal. The Moonwalk DDT gets two and Buck bails to the floor, setting up a suicide dive (with Jackson losing a shoe). Buck carries him back inside for an AA over the top, setting up something close to the One Winged Angle (pulling the arm instead of lowering the head) for the pin at 6:14.

Rating: C. Now that was a little more like it as Jackson's stuff was actually funny at times, with the Thriller bit being an actually good gag. Buck winning is the better move of course as you rarely want a comedy guy going over a top star but at least they did something good here with Jackson getting some strong reactions.

Johnny Clash vs. Anthony Bowens vs. Jake Manning vs. Matt Macintosh

Clash is the Create-A-Pro Champion though I don't think the title is on the line. The same seems to be true of Macintosh's WrestlePro Gold Title. Manning brings his tent with him because we need a prop that big. The tent is in the middle of the ring but Macintosh (The Bad Apple. Get it?) throws it out so they can, you know, wrestle. Macintosh sends Manning into the post as Clash and Bowens fight in the ring.

Macintosh's jumping knee to the head rocks Bowens and he gets tied in the Tree of Woe for a boot to the crotch. Macintosh: "HOW DO YOU LIKE THEM APPLES???" Manning grabs a headlock and reads the scout manual, which has Mackenzie wondering what passage he's picked. Back up and Macintosh keeps running the ropes as Manning has stepped aside to read in peace. Bowens is back up with a low superkick to Clash but Manning has found...a rope? Clash gets tied up and then untied for some dizzifying effects.

Manning makes it even worse with an airplane spin and then Bowens adds one of his own. A collision puts Bowens and Clash down and it's time to throw the tent in again. Everyone but Manning gets thrown in and he zips it shut...but gets pulled in as what seems to be a struggle ensues. The fans call it awesome, because this is a shaking tent crowd. Clash dives over the top onto Bowens and Macintosh dives onto both of them.

Manning throws the tent onto them and while he can carry it by himself, three people can't manage to have it dropped all of a foot and a half onto their raised arms. Back in and Bowens hits a Blockbuster for two on Macintosh with Clash making the save. Manning throws the tent in AGAIN (ok the joke is old now) but Bowens elbows him into it. Manning gets out of the tent and it's a Tower of Doom through the tent (devastating McKenzie) to give Manning the pin on Macintosh at 10:38.

Rating: D+. The tent was a funny idea but they went back to it over and over to diminishing returns. I was sick of the thing at the end and the whole thing would have been better off if it was about two minutes shorter. The wrestlers were fairly talented though and I could see them moving up to bigger promotions later on. Maybe not Manning as he's a rather gimmicky character, but the other three have a chance.

Team Tremendous vs. Demon Bunny

Team Tremendous is Dan Barry and Bill Carr (both detectives for some reason) while Demon Bunny is Rosemary/Allie, who are apparently best friends outside of the ring. That's always cool to see. Team Tremendous steals belts from the crowd, along with the Gold Title which was left at ringside from the previous match, and throws them inside. With that out of the way, Barry and Allie start things up.

Allie works on the arm but Barry dances his way into a wristlock. Some armdrags into an armbar have Barry in trouble and it's off to Rosemary to stay on the arm. The women keep alternating on the arm as this isn't exactly funny so far. Rosemary pulls his nose so it's off to the much bigger Carr, who sticks up his fingers like a gun. As Allie surrenders, Rosemary bites the fingers and it's back to Barry for a dropkick. Carr can't bring himself to chop Rosemary though so Barry comes in again, this

time to get choked over the ropes.

A top rope DDT sends Barry into the corner and the hot tag brings in Allie. Some forearms have no effect on Carr but he misses a charge in the corner, allowing Allie to hit some sliding elbows. Rosemary comes back in and gets planted for her troubles, followed by a reverse Razor's Edge toss into a Codebreaker to Allie (cool move). That's broken up at two and the Doomsday Sliced Bread is broken up as well. Rosemary mists Carr and it's a Codebreaker into a German suplex for the double pin on Barry at 9:35.

Rating: C-. I like Rosemary and Allie but I really don't get the comedy here. This wasn't overly funny and could have been on any given show. Team Tremendous come off as a low level team who don't have a lot of success and probably bragged about how they would win easily here. Not a bad match, but I have no idea why it was on here.

Fifteen minute intermission.

Shawn Donovan vs. Buster Jackson

Bird Box (blindfold) match and Donovan is billed from the fifth floor of Trump Tower. Hang on as the referee is blindfolded as well to make it even more confusing. They take less time to make contact than Jake Roberts and Rick Martel but Jackson ducks away and Donovan yells at the turnbuckle. Jackson takes him down and hammers away as the announcers spoil Bird Box. The referee has barely left the corner as Donovan gets knocked down but comes right back with a slam.

Donovan grabs the referee, who hiptosses him in self defense. A shoulder puts Jackson on the floor and Donovan follows as Jackson gets back in. Not being able to figure out what's going on, Donovan grabs a chair and hits the post (ala Roberts vs. Martel) before getting back in as well. Donovan finally gets smart and takes his blindfold off but he's insane (ala the movie) and tries a Swanton with no one on the mat. Jackson covers and, after the referee crawls over (how he knew there was a cover isn't clear) and checks the shoulders, counts the pin at 6:50.

Rating: F. And that's supposed to be funny? This was another dumb idea

that just kept going despite being a short match. It's the same problem any match with this gimmick has and there's no way around it. This isn't something that works and it was just stupid instead of entertaining or funny. Also, if you haven't seen Bird Box (which came out a few months ago and isn't a big deal anymore), this made no sense at all, especially the ending.

Gauntlet Match

When did gauntlet matches become the hottest thing in wrestling? Grim and Freddie IV (pronounced I V, not Four/Fourth) are in first and the Shook Crew (Bryce Donovan and Max Caster with Bobby Orlando) are in second. Freddie is a hippie and keeps giving people flower necklaces but uses one to pull Caster down to get us started. A double hanging suplex (including a limbo) has Caster in trouble so it's off to Donovan (Two wrestlers on the roster named Donovan?), who gets chopped by the bigger Grim. We get the required Stink Face and Freddie comes in to drop a backsplash on Caster for a bonus.

A big legdrop gets two and Grim does the Whale (a heavy version of the Worm, consisting of dropping down, standing up and dropping down again), sending the Crew out to the floor. Back in and Grim is so winded that he collapses into the corner for the tag to Freddie. A low blow into a rollup with tights gives Donovan the pin at 4:14.

The Breakfast Club (CPA/Kip Francis Stevens) are in third and thankfully they come out to Don't You Forget About Me (as they should). Once they get to the ring, Caster has laid out cones to create a safe space (because that's a thing Caster does). It's a ruse though (Gee you think?) as Orlando is taking Donovan's place. Orlando hits Caster by mistake and we get the stupid spot of Orlando DDTing Caster by mistake because he can't just let go.

We go wide and see Grim still out cold due to exhaustion as the match continues. Things settle down to Orlando suplexing CPA for two and Caster grabbing a chinlock. That's broken up in a hurry and the villains are knocked into the corner in a Human Centipede pose. The hot tag brings in Stevens for a bunch of clotheslines, including one to the freshly

conscious Grim. CPA goes to the apron for a dive, followed by a big one from Kip to knock everyone down. Back in and a Hart Attack gets rid of the Crew at 10:08.

Naturally they beat down the Club until Massage Force (Yes MASSAGE FORCE. Dorian Graves and VSK because all you need are initials instead of a full name these days.) is in fourth. The Club gets neck massages until a double rollup gets a double near fall. We settle down to Graves (the masked man, oddly enough) rubbing Stevens' neck before it's off to VSK, who gets a massage from Graves. It's good enough to bring in CPA for two off a missile dropkick.

Another Hart Attack misses so CPA has to hit a suicide dive on Graves instead. Back inside and VSK kicks Stevens in the face for two, followed by a Backstabber for the same. Massage Force wants the oil and it's VSK sliding across Graves' back (just go with it) for a headbutt to Stevens' crotch. A Shatter Machine gets rid of the Club (Why are an accountant and a guy in business casual called the Breakfast Club?) at 17:17.

Job Security (Big Malcolm and Officer Ronald) are in fifth and try to beat the fun out of Massage Force. The World's Greatest Tag Team's jump over your partner onto someone's back gets two on VSK but it's quickly back to Graves to massage Ronald. A Swanton/reverse DDT combination hits Malcolm and it's more oil so Malcolm can get sent into Ronald's crotch. Another Shatter Machine gets rid of Job Security at 21:18.

KM and Fallah Bahh are in sixth and you can tell these two are rather popular here. They seem to like McKenzie, who sounds touched. Bahh puts VSK in a front facelock and adds a splash...before oiling up KM's back. The slide is more of a crushing this time and everything breaks down. KM and Bahh both roll over Massage Force and they make the referee do it too. That's not good enough though as they have McKenzie do it as well. A Banzai Drop finishes VSK at 28:22.

And just in case we haven't gone over the edge already, the BW0 (Nova/Blue Meanie) is in seventh. KM works on Nova's arm for a good while to start, with the announcers wondering how many times a single arm can be turned around. Nova is back with a big boot that knocks KM out of the

ring and up the ramp to the stage. Back in and KM wants Meanie...and then tags out to Bahh for the sumo wrestling collision. They argue over NO NO NO/YES YES YES and it's Meanie tickling Bahh.

Everyone but Meanie head outside and the big dive is teased, sending the three of them running around the building in fear. Bahh runs so far away that he gets counted out at 37:12. KM asks where Bahh went because he's riding Bahh's coattails on TV. KM: "I'm his Marty Jannetty! I need him!" Bahh comes back with hot dogs...for everyone in the ring!

As they eat, Team Espana (Jos A and Jos B, the Tag Team Champions and thankfully with labeled shirts) are in eighth as the final team. Meanie gets beaten down in the corner but it's off to Nova to throw the right hands. Everything breaks down and Nova's suplex to B is broken up as A pulls the foot, allowing B to fall on top for the pin at 42:42.

Rating: D-. The only thing I learned from this is that the WrestlePro tag division is awful with some very goofy teams. I was rather bored with most of this because most of the teams barely stand out from the others and they seem to have one note gimmicks at best. I'll give some credit to KM and Bahh though: they looked like stars compared to the other teams, though that's not saying much. Crazy long here and there had to be a team or two that could be cut.

The BWO gets cheered out of the ring.

Dan Maff vs. Swoggle

Street fight. Maff weighs over 300lb and is kind of a legend around here. Swoggle brings in his own weapons and they talk trash to start. Some chairs are set up in the middle and they sit down in front of each other for a slap fight at the opening bell. Swoggle gets the better of it until Maff stands up and kicks him down.

The weapons are brought in and it's a stepladder to Maff's back. The trashcan goes over his head and Swoggle beats on him with a kendo stick and there's a big shot to the head, which just annoys Maff even more. An even bigger trashcan shot to the head drops Swoggle and it's time for the barbed wire chair. Swoggle pours out the building blocks (they're not

Legos) because that's the big thing these days.

The staple gun doesn't work for Maff as Swoggle bites him and staples his crotch. A Stunner gives Swoggle two and it's a side slam onto the blocks. Swoggle kendo sticks him off the top and blasts Maff with the barbed wire chair for two. Maff shrugs it off and loads up the Burning Hammer but lets Swoggle down. Swoggle flips him off though and hits a low blow, setting up a small package for two. That's it for Maff, who wraps the ladder around Swoggle's head and pulls back like a camel clutch for the tap at 8:53.

Rating: D+. This was actually tolerable, though just having Swoggle in there didn't make it funny. The spots were your usual hardcore deals, though the ending was good. Swoggle is a lot more than just a comedy act as he works hard and can have a match, which is a lot more than you would expect from him.

They show respect and trade shirts after the match.

Colt Cabana/Santino Marella vs. Heavenly Bodies

That would be Desirable Dustin/Gigolo Justin for this Bodies incarnation. We get the rapid tags before any contact is made with the first lockup coming nearly two minutes in. Justin bails away from the threat of the Cobra so it's off to Dustin, who gets made fun of for having a large stomach. The threat of the Cobra makes him run away twice as that lockup is about all that has happened so far. Everything breaks down and it's a power walk from Cabana and Santino, setting up the double Bionic elbows.

We settle down to Justin's arm getting worked over with Santino climbing to the top but getting nervous and coming off the bottom rope instead. Colt and Santino can't get their double teams on the same page and jokingly yell at each other. A sunset flip doesn't work for Colt as Dustin gets the tag but a tag to Santino doesn't count because he's not in the corner. Therefore, being clever, Santino extends the tag rope and stands halfway down the apron while still holding the rope.

A belly to back suplex into a moonsault gets two on Cabana (the Flippy Doo) and Colt stays in trouble in the corner. Cabana's diving tag lands

about three feet short so he tries again, this time with Dustin pulling Santino off the apron. Colt finally shrugs off some stomping in the corner and brings in Santino for his usual comeback. The referee gets bumped and Santino loads up the Cobra but Killer Kross runs in to jump him.

Kross does a Rick Rude impression and says he's here to prove that funny doesn't equal money because it's not best for business. He beats up Colt and Santino while mocking comedy wrestling. Cue Joey Ryan of all people but Kross immediately says he's not going near it. Kross tries the low blow and hurts his leg so Joey hits a dropkick. The lollipop goes into Kross' mouth for the superkick and it's time for the Cobra. Hang on though as Cabana puts a sock on his own hand. We get a double You Plex and a pair of Cobras for the double pin at 16:26.

Rating: D+. I really can't get mad at this as it kind of went exactly as you would expect it to with the run-ins being the right choices. The ending was never in doubt and it was really just a matter of time before the Cobra got the win. If this had been the featured goofy match at the end of a more balanced show it could have worked better, but you can only get so much after this long of a show.

Overall Rating: D. The one thing I've learned from this show is why it's called comedy relief. The idea behind a comedy match is to give you some breathing room after everything gets serious on a show. By having the entire (over three hour long) card be comedy, and in some cases it's a big stretch to call it such, it's really hard to stay in the right mood for it.

This didn't work and while it's certainly an idea, it isn't one that works throughout. By the end it felt like a sketch comedy show that had run out of ideas and they were just throwing stuff out there and hoping it was funny. That's why this kind of an idea doesn't work. You need a serious match to look forward to because once the jokes stop working, you're just watching mostly bad matches.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the paperback edition of KB's Complete 2000 Monday Nitro and

Thunder Reviews Part 1 (also available as an e-book) from Amazon. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2019/02/22/new-book-kbs-monday-nitro-thunder-reviews-volume-vii-january-june-2000/>

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Wrestlemania XXXV Preview: Overall Thoughts

Finally.

I'm exhausted just reading the card and that's a bad sign the day before the show. WrestleMania is supposed to be the top show of the year and the most important thing that happens in the WWE year. The problem is WWE can't get out of its own way most of the time and I'm worried that they're going to do it again this year.

As usual, this year is going to be about the moments, and if WWE doesn't give us enough of them, it's not going to work. A happy ending (Lynch finally conquering Rousey and holding up both titles) is the right way to go and if Kingston happens to win as well, we're in good shape. That's all that matters, but I just can't imagine WWE actually going in the right direction every single time.

Wrestlemania XXXV Preview: Raw Women's Title/Smackdown Women's Title: Ronda Rousey(c) vs. Becky Lynch vs. Charlotte(c)

History has been made.

And now we have the truly historic moment in something that I didn't think would ever actually happen. The women's match is headlining the show to complete the Women's Revolution, as they're finally reaching the unreachable goal. With the history out of the way, we get on to the important part, which is the result itself. It should be an obvious ending...but it's WWE.

With a close of my eyes and a deep breath, I'll take Lynch to win in the moment that we've been building towards for months now. As much as I could see Rousey winning here and then losing the title in her post-pay per view title defense or Charlotte because SHE'S CHARLOTTE and we need to build towards one more (of many) Lynch vs. Charlotte match. I'll go with Lynch and hope that WWE doesn't overthink things for once in my life.

Wrestlemania XXXV Preview: SmackDown World Title: Daniel Bryan(c) vs. Kofi Kingston

A B+ isn't that bad.

I've gone back and forth on this one since before the match was announced and that hasn't changed yet. We're at the point now where Kingston either needs to win the title or do something completely different because he has all the momentum in the world right now. Kingston is more than qualified to win the title (period) and it would be the awesome moment if he wins the title.

I'll take the plunge here and say the title changes hands here, though there's next to no chance of Kingston making it to the middle of May as champion, which is just fine. The whole point here is the title win, which is the kind of moment that you need on a show like this. Kingston doesn't need to be a main eventer long term, but being a former WWE Champion sounds just fine.

Wrestlemania XXXV Preview: Universal Title: Brock Lesnar(c) vs. Seth Rollins

No more happy ending?

Now we're down to the final three matches and since it's WWE, we're just not getting three happy endings (it's all about the

chase and the heat you see). That makes you wonder which face has to take the fall and you could go with any of the three. Starting here, we have the Royal Rumble winner against Lesnar, who is STILL Universal Champion, as has been the case for almost two years straight now and somehow WWE is cool with that.

And yes I think Lesnar retains the title here, mainly because WWE still thinks he'll win the UFC Heavyweight Title again and hold up both titles. You know, as has been promised for YEARS now. I'm still not sure how that instantly equals money, but WWE seems obsessed with seeing it happen. I think Rollins falls short here though, as we get another Lesnar vs. Reigns match down the line. Or here, if Lesnar pulls a WrestleMania IX and somehow Reigns gets the title back Sunday. Would it really shock you?

Wrestlemania XXXV Preview: Triple H vs. Batista

In case it wasn't clear.

I've been pleasantly surprised by this build as Batista has been nearly perfect with being a delusional jerk, which tended to be his strong suit. Triple H's comedic promo responding to him was good, though completely missing the point of the story so far. With Triple H's career on the line, you kind of know what's coming here, again proving that Triple H is the smartest man/best politician in wrestling.

Yeah Triple H wins here because Batista doesn't need to wrestle again and Triple H can still wrestle an occasional match when necessary. The match itself should be a solid brawl

because these two know how to do a street fight style match very well. I'm sure it will be entertaining and get a lot of time (because Triple H) and hopefully they don't go too long and ruin things.

Wrestlemania XXXV Preview: SmackDown Tag Team Titles: Usos (c) vs. Aleister Black/Ricochet vs. The Bar vs. Shinsuke Nakamura/Rusev

Expect what should be expected.

This is another match that doesn't need to be on the show but is anyway because we need to get these eight people, most of whom have been inconsequential in recent weeks, on the show. It should be a nice little nine minute match at most, but the entrances alone will add close to ten more. I like the Usos but I'd definitely prefer seeing them face the Hardys in an actual dream match.

I'll actually go with Black vs. Ricochet just to mix things up a little bit. The SmackDown tag team division is dying for some fresh blood and it makes sense to have the newer teams getting the titles. That being said, since it makes sense, the Bar or Nakamura/Rusev are probably the favorites. I'll take what I want to see, though with very little confidence in seeing it happening.

Wrestlemania XXXV Preview: Women's Tag Team Titles: Boss N Hug Connection(c) vs. IIconics vs. Beth Phoenix/Natalya vs. Nia Jax/Tamina

For those of you who think Natalya is a legend.

So we have the first champions, the annoying challengers, not Trish Stratus and Lita and those two monsters who won't stop appearing on every single show for reasons. I'm not sure why we need Phoenix and Natalya on the show but I guess since they came up with the idea of a legends team (Natalya: Legend), they couldn't just drop it and do champions vs. red team vs. blue team.

I'll go with the champs retaining, though the IIconics stealing the titles wouldn't shock me. Bayley and Sasha Banks are way too early into their reign to lose and it's not like there are a ton of teams for either heel team to face anyway. Keep them on the champs and figure out what you want to do with the belts later on.

Wrestlemania XXXV Preview: United States Title: Samoa Joe(c) vs. Rey Mysterio

Or so it seems.

Now here's one where I'm not sure because it's not clear who's going to be in the match. Mysterio is already injured and might not be able to make the match...and it just so happens that John Cena has been rumored for a match on the show, which has just so happened to have Cena vs. Samoa Joe for weeks. As much as I'd like to see Samoa Joe vs. Mysterio, I think you can tell where I'm going.

So yeah, I'm going with the theory that the injury is a work and Cena comes out to challenge Samoa Joe instead. I'll go with the champ retaining in a surprise, which doesn't feel right but would be a great way to push him. The problem with putting the title on Cena is that he'd have to lose it, and unless that takes place in the next two nights, I'm not sure I see that happening. Unless....say to someone debuting on Monday Night Raw or SmackDown Live in a US Open Challenge? But what kind of a Freak would you have to be to do that?

Wrestlemania XXXV Preview: Intercontinental Title: Bobby

Lashley(c) vs. Finn Balor

I still don't know if it makes sense.

I'll spare you a long rant about how little this story makes sense, or at least how horrible of a job WWE has done at explaining Balor's use of the Demon. Or how little sense it made to have Balor win the title for a few weeks and drop it back almost immediately. This is the Demon's debut at Wrestlemania and I'm not sure what to expect from it. I don't think the match's result is really in doubt, but the question is how we get to that ending.

Balor will get the title back once and for all, but I'm not sure if it's in a squash or a competitive match. It's one thing to have the Demon destroy Corbin at Summerslam but having him do it to Lashley here doesn't make sense. You don't squash a monster like that and that leaves a dilemma for Balor. I'm sure he'll win, but if it's too competitive then it doesn't make that much sense.