

Royal Rumble Count-Up: 2013 Redo – 2011: The Ending Still Makes Me Jump

Royal Rumble 2011

Date: January 30, 2011

Location: TD Garden, Boston, Massachusetts

Attendance: 15,113

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, Matt Striker

This is a weird Rumble as for one year only they tried having forty people in the Rumble instead of the usual thirty. It didn't quite work so they never tried it again, but for this year as a result there are only four matches on the whole card: two world titles, a Divas match and the Rumble itself. This is one of those rumbles I barely remember. Let's get to it.

The opening video is exactly what you would expect.

Smackdown World Title: Edge vs. Dolph Ziggler

Edge is defending and if he uses the spear here, Ziggler wins the title because Vickie is a crooked boss. Dolph takes over early and pounds on Edge in the corner but gets whipped across the ring to shift momentum. This is during Cole's heel phase so he's very annoying at this point. A gutbuster gets two for the champion and he takes things to the floor. Ziggler is rammed into the apron and the barricade for good measure as Edge stands tall.

As they come back in, Ziggler grabs a neckbreaker for two and hits an elbow to the chest. Off to a chinlock as Dolph stays on the neck. The fans cheer for Edge of course and he fights up, only to get caught in a middle rope sunset flip. Edge comes back with a slingshot into the buckle and now Dolph is in trouble. A rollup out of the corner gets two for Edge but Dolph hits another neckbreaker for two of his own.

Off to the chinlock until Edge rolls out to the apron. Ziggler knocks him into the barricade and it's back inside for the chinlock. Edge fights up but they both try cross bodies to put both guys down. Ziggy misses a Stinger Splash in the corner and Edge catches him in a flapjack to put both guys down again. Edge counters the Fameasser into a sitout powerbomb for two more but he can't follow up.

The champion goes up but has to fight out of a superplex. Ziggler gets knocked down and hit by a top rope cross body, only for Ziggler to roll through for two. Now the fans start cheering for Ziggler as he gets two off a dropkick. The Zig Zag misses and Edge busts out the Edgecator of all things. Dolph grabs the rope so Edge dives at him on said ropes, only to clothesline himself on them.

The Fameasser gets two and both guys are down again. A big boot puts Ziggler down for about the seventh time and Edge gets into spear position. Like an idiot, Vickie reminds him of this, allowing Dolph to catch Edge in the sleeper. Edge rolls out of it and hits the Impaler for two as Vickie pulls the referee out of the ring. Vickie slaps Edge but the champion dodges a charging Dolph into a rollup for two.

She slaps Edge AGAIN so here's Kelly Kelly to take Vickie down. In the melee the Zig Zag hits for two and a BIG pop on the kickout. There's the sleeper and while trying to escape it, Edge knocks the referee down. Edge escapes the hold with a kind of Stunner and realizes there's no referee or Vickie so there's the spear to Ziggler. The referee wakes up and Edge hits an Unprettier to retain the title.

Rating: A-. Good stuff here again although the ending is kind of stupid. Eventually Edge would be stripped of the title for using the spear (I can't remember if it was here or another match) and Ziggler would have a stupid 45 minutes or less reign. I don't think anyone, including Dolph, considers that a real reign but hey, Ziggler is a former world champion so we have to respect him, right WWE?

We recap Orton vs. Miz. The champion Miz cashed in MITB on Orton back in November and beat him in a tables match at TLC. Tonight it's an actual match which means Miz is likely in trouble.

Miz says he'll win.

Raw World Title: The Miz vs. Randy Orton

Miz has Riley with him here. Orton pounds away to start as Cole is already on his knees to suck Miz off. The champ is knocked out to the floor and gets sent into the barricades a few time. Back in and Orton kicks him in the face before stomping away a bit. Cole is already on one of his rants about how noble Miz is in comparison to Edge. Orton chokes on the ropes a bit as Cole says that Orton should have stated in advance that he wanted to brawl.

Riley finally guillotines Orton on the top rope to give Miz a chance. Orton shrugs the offense off and slugs Miz down, only to miss a running knee in the corner. Cole stays on his rant about how awesome Miz is as Riley interferes some more. Cole high fives Riley and Miz hooks a chinlock for a bit. Striker continues his brilliance by saying Miz is working on the midsection to set up the SKULL Crushing Finale. A running knee to Orton's face gets two and it's back to the chinlock.

Randy blocks a German Suplex and elbows Miz down to break the momentum. Miz comes right back with a big boot to the face for two and the champion is getting frustrated. Miz goes up and gets crotched right back down, allowing Orton to hit his daddy's superplex for two. Randy starts his comeback with the clotheslines and the backbreaker to send Miz to the apron. Why would you go there against Orton? Perhaps it's because he can backdrop Orton out to the floor to counter and have Riley stomp away a bit.

A top rope ax handle gets two for Miz so he pounds away on Orton's head. Back to the chinlock but Orton fights out of this one much faster. Not that it matters though as Orton gets sent through the ropes and out to the floor where Miz catapults him into the post. Orton gets back in at nine and is all fired up, only to get punched into the corner. Randy comes back with a clothesline and the powerslam before hitting the circle stomp.

Riley breaks up something like a powerbomb, allowing Miz to hit a modified Reality Check for two. Both finishers are countered and Orton

hits an Angle Slam of all things for two. I vaguely remember him using that around this time. Miz's attempt at walking out fails but he gets in something we can't see for two back inside.

Randy gets two off a rollup and there's the Elevated DDT. Orton loads up the RK0 but here's the New Nexus for a distraction. Riley tries to come in but in a great looking spot, Orton LAUNCHES Riley over the top (and over the referee) onto Nexus. The RK0 hits but Punk runs in with a GTS to keep the belt on Miz. Cole literally jumps for joy.

Rating: B. I was digging this match a lot and the ending would wind up making a lot more sense than it does on paper here. While Punk would obviously go on to feud with Punk for a few months, Miz would face Jerry Lawler of all people at Elimination Chamber before moving on to the main event of Wrestlemania. Good stuff here though and one of Miz's best matches ever. Gee you hear that a lot when Orton is the opponent don't you?

Dashing Cody Rhodes will not be here tonight because of his shattered face. This would lead to Dr. Cody Doom which was pretty awesome and then wound up being wasted.

Fans say who they think is going to win the Rumble.

Divas Title: Natalya vs. Laycool

Nattie beat them in a handicap match to win the title and this is the rematch. Before anything gets going though, we have an e-mail from the anonymous GM. We're going to make it a four way just for the sake of making it a fourway and we want to have a new champion.

Divas Title: Michelle McCool vs. Layla vs. Eve Torres vs. Natalya

Nattie is defending as I said and this is one fall to a finish. Laycool goes after both other chicks to start and Eve gets double teamed. Natalya comes back with a slingshot to send Layla into Michelle as Matt actually tries to analyze this match. We get down to Laycool squaring off but before they do anything, Eve and Nattie come back in.

Layla breaks up the Sharpshooter on Eve so Natalya puts the Sharpshooter

on BOTH OF THEM AT ONCE. Layla hits the neckbreaker on Eve to send her to the floor but Michelle kicks Eve out to the floor. Michelle misses a bit boot and takes Layla's head off by mistake. She and the champ fight to the floor, allowing Eve to sneak in and steal the pin with a moonsault.

Rating: D+. That might become my default rating for Divas matches as most of them fall into the same category: not bad but nothing worth seeing at all for the most part. The double Sharpshooter was cool but it's a five second sequence out of a five minute match. Also, why am I supposed to be excited about Eve winning the title when she wasn't even important enough to put into the match in the first place?

Michelle is mad because she had Natalya covered at the same time but the referee didn't see it.

A cleanshaven Daniel Bryan is excited for the Rumble because he could win. He's with Gail at this point and the Bells come up to offer their condolences for trying to hook up with Bryan. The Bellas imply they're better looking than Gail and a fight breaks out.

Rumble By The Numbers time!

40 entrants

1 winner

24 winners

656 losing entrants

39 eliminations by Shawn, a record

26 WWE Hall of Famers who have competed

183,932lbs that has competed in the Rumble, or 92 tons or 492 Big Shows

2 women who have competed in the Rumble

11 eliminations by Kane in 2001, a record

13 straight Rumbles for Kane, also a record

62:12 Mysterio lasted in the 2006 Rumble

1 second, the record for shortest time in the Rumble, held by Santino Marella

3 wins by Austin

2, the number of wins that spot #1 has produced, the same as #30

70% of winners have gone on to win the title at Mania

Royal Rumble

40 entrants this year and it's Punk at #1 and before #2 comes out, here's the Corre (Barrett, Jackson, Slater and Gabriel) to surround Punk. They jump him until Punk's Nexus guys come out for the save. The GM sends an e-mail that says everyone not named CM Punk needs to get out or they're out of the Rumble. Anyway Daniel Bryan is #2 and the internet explodes.

They speed things up to start and Bryan fires off some kicks to the ribs. Striker talks about how the internet loves this match as Bryan is sent to the apron. The dueling chants begin and Bryan misses a dropkick in the corner. Justin Gabriel is #3 and immediately goes after Punk. Bryan clotheslines CM down and Gabriel misses the 450, allowing Bryan to dump Justin out.

Zack Ryder, still a heel, is #4. He immediately takes Bryan down and hits the Broski Boot to both guys. Bryan launches Ryder into the air for a Rough Ryder into Punk, only to get dumped to the floor by Daniel. Back to Punk vs. Bryan until William Regal is #5. He starts busting out the knees to the face and some suplexes before hitting the knee trembler to Punk. The student and the teacher (Bryan and Regal) slug it out before Punk kicks the teacher in the head. Bryan kicks Punk in the head for kicking Regal in the head and only Daniel is left standing.

Ted DiBiase is #6 along with Maryse. Bryan rips off kicks to Regal before trying to dump Ted out. John Morrison is #7 to a BIG pop. He comes in (after slipping) with a slingshot kick to Regal and the Flying Chuck to Punk. A C4 takes Bryan down but DiBiase dumps Morrison to the apron. As Regal is eliminated, we get at the time the best Rumble save ever, as

Morrison is knocked from the apron but catches himself on the barricade. His feet never touch as he pulls himself up to the barricade, tightrope walks down to the steps, jumps to said steps, kicks Regal in the head, and gets back in. That blew my mind live.

Yoshi Tatsu (Striker calls him the Poison Fist of the Pacific Rim because Striker likes to think he's smart) is #8 and goes right after Punk. Husky Harris is #9 and he beats everyone not named Punk before standing guard over his leader. Chavo Guerrero is #10 as these intervals are getting really short. Chavo loads up Three Amigos on DiBiase but Punk breaks it up. Now Punk takes two of them but Morrison breaks it up at two. So this time Morrison takes two suplexes but BRYAN breaks it up and finally Daniel takes all three suplexes.

Chavo takes Harris down with a middle rope missile dropkick and Mark Henry is #11. For some reason Chavo dives on him and is immediately dumped out. Yoshi is sent out as well as JTG is #12. Michael McGillicutty is #13 and he takes out JTG almost immediately before teaming up with Harris to dump DiBiase. Christ Masters is #14 and puts Punk to the apron with the Masterlock until McGillicutty makes the save. Masters and Bryan slug it out until Otunga is #15, giving Punk and the Nexus four members.

They gang up on and toss Bryan pretty easily and there goes Masters as well. There goes Morrison too and the elimination of Henry clears the ring. Tyler Reks from ECW gets to come in at #16 and you can figure out what happens to him in about 40 seconds. Vladimir Kozlov is #17 but the numbers catch up with him and it's Punk who gets to do the honors. We're just waiting for Cena to come out now.

Instead it's R-Truth at #18 and it's the same result. The only highlight is Punk hitting the knee in the corner and saying WHAT'S UP with a big goofy grin on his face. There goes Truth but Great Khali returns at #19 to scare Punk half to death. He fights all of the Nexus off and manages to dump Harris which is a big breakthrough. Khali chops Punk down and Mason Ryan, also of the Nexus, is #20. After a brief slugout he puts Khali out and we're right back where we were.

In our second major return of the Rumble, Booker T is #21 and Striker

FREAKS. Booker fires off as many kicks as he can and hits the Bookend on McGillicutty. You know we're getting the Spinarooni but Ryan throws Booker out as soon as it's over. Punk: "WE'RE GOING TO WRESTLEMANIA!" All hope seems to be lost but heeeeeeeeeeeere's Cena at #22. The hometown boy charges at the ring and puts out McGillicutty, Ryan and Otunga to get us down to one on one.

Cena pounds away and escapes the GTS before a double clothesline puts both guys down. Hornswoggle is #23 and is immediately kicked down by Punk. Atta boy CM! Punk loads up the GTS but Cena escapes and this the AA to toss Punk out. In next is Tyson Kidd at #24 and he gets caught between Cena and Horny. The Swogg busts out a headscissors before Cena hits the AA. In a decent visual, Horny hits an AA of his own allowing for the elimination by Cena.

Heath Slater is #25 and DEAR GOODNESS he looks hilarious in trunks. He might be as pale as Sheamus used to be and the visual is horrible. Horny hits some Sweet Shin Music and a Stunner followed by a double Five Knuckle Shuffle. There's a Tadpole Splash and Slater is gone. Cole sounds like he's about to be sick. Kofi Kingston is #26 and this should be interesting. Kofi fires off some kicks of course followed by some punches in the corner until Jack Swagger is #27.

Cole talks about the luck of #27 and Jerry correctly points out that the number is lucky in 30 man matches, not 40. Swagger hits the Vader Bomb on both full sized guys but as he goes after Hornswoggle, Kofi cross bodies Swagger down. There's the Boom Drop with horny as a stepping stone and it's King Sheamus at #28. Cena takes the Irish Curse and there's only Horny left to face Sheamus. Horny loads up Sweet Shin Music but Cena saves Horny from elimination. The tiny man loads up the Tadpole Splash but gets Brogue Kicked out, thank goodness.

Mysterio is #29 and he hits a pair of headscissors on Swagger and Sheamus but Sheamus breaks up the 619. Trouble in Paradise takes Sheamus down but Swagger takes Kofi down. Rey hits a headscissors to put Swagger on the apron and a 619 gets the elimination. Wade Barrett is #30 and it turns into a bunch of mini brawls. Winds of Change take Cena down and Ziggyler is #31. There's a pretty big talent pool in there at the moment with

Cena, Mysterio, Sheamus, Kingston, Ziggler and Barrett.

Barrett and Dolph go after Cena but Mysterio makes a save for no apparent reason. Diesel is the final big return at #32 and there's your big pop. This is the appearance that set up Diesel vs. HHH and Punk for the latter half of the year. Everyone is stunned but I think it's just at how black Diesel has gotten his hair. That's some high quality polish. We get a Diesel chant and he cleans house in a much more effective way than you would expect. Diesel's style is really good for something like this as he does so many basic moves but he's so big that they look that much more impressive.

Drew McIntyre is #33 and we get a LOUD let's go Diesel chant. Diesel gets caught in 619 position and in a very rare occurrence, the move gets booed. Alex Riley is #34 and Cole loses his mind when Miz's music hits again. Diesel misses a big boot and gets kicked out by Barrett. The DIESEL chant rocks the Garden as Miz sits in on commentary. Big Show is in at #35, so Striker talks about how much taller Show is than the tallest player in the NHL. For once I agree with Cole when he says "WHO CARES???" We know Big Show is tall, and simply telling us he's taller than a guy who is 6'9 doesn't change anything.

Show and Diesel have a staredown in the aisle which is a FAR better (and actual) illustration of how big Show is. McIntyre and Sheamus get dropped by Show and there's a chokeslam for Barrett. Show dumps Ziggler as Cena dumps Riley. Show shoves McIntyre out as Big Zeke is #36. He immediately throws out Show to a shockingly non-reaction. We have Barrett, Jackson, Kingston, Cena, Mysterio and Sheamus at the moment.

Santino is #37 and literally immediately breaks his record of 1 second in the Rumble. Jackson almost immediately decks him and knocks Santino to the mat and out to the floor which isn't an elimination. Remember that. Jackson tries to put Cena out and Del Rio is #38. He's still new at this point and hasn't gotten on almost everyone's nerves yet.

Striker tells us that Riley has been eliminated five minutes after it happens. Not only is he annoying but he's a bad broadcaster on top of that. Alberto wisely takes forever to get into the ring as Miz's voice

sounds really hoarse. By long enough I mean Orton jumps him in the aisle at #39. There's a quick RK0 to Del Rio and one for Sheamus as well. A third hits Kofi and he's gone. Sheamus is out too and it's time for Cena vs. Orton. John points to the sign but Kane's pyro goes off at #40 to complete the field and scare Cena to death.

So we've got Cena, Mystério, Barrett, Jackson, Del Rio, Orton and Kane in the ring. I've seen far worse. Kane focuses on Orton and hits the side slam, only to be run over by Big Zeke. Jackson misses a charge though and goes out via a low bridge. Mystério jumps into a chokeslam grip but Rey headscissors him out, only to be dumped by Barrett. Orton goes after Alberto while Cena beats up Barrett. Cena gets sent to the apron but gets back in via a shoulder to Wade's ribs.

Things slow down again and NOW we get Cena vs. Orton. The fans barely react to it though so Barrett breaks it up. There's an AA to Del Rio and here's Riley again. He distracts Cena enough to have Miz run in and dump Cena to get us down to Orton, Barrett and Del Rio in the ring. There's the backbreaker to Del Rio and Orton dumps Barrett, only to have Alberto sneak in on him to win the Rumble.

Rating: A. This was a VERY well done Rumble as they hit the three act structure and had a great balance of main event guys as well as new stars and legends. While it doesn't seem like a big shock now, Del Rio had only been around for about four months. This would be like a member of the Shield winning the Rumble in 2013. Excellent Rumble though and one of the best ever.

Del Rio celebrates.....AND SANTINO CRAWLS BACK IN! He went UNDER remember so the match isn't over yet. Del Rio doesn't see him coming and Santino hits the Cobra! Cole: "OH MY GOD!!!" He goes for the elimination but Del Rio reverses and dumps Santino out to really win. I remember watching this and my heart STOPPED as soon as Santino got back in. The exact words I said: "THEY WOULDN'T! THEY COULDN'T! Oh they didn't." This makes the match even better as the fans LOST IT when he got back in.

Ricardo is literally on the floor screaming Del Rio to end the show.

Overall Rating: A. The worst and only bad match was the Divas and you had

looks in that one so how can this be anything below great? 2011 was the start of the good period for WWE and they kicked it off with a bang with a great Rumble here. This is an excellent show and well worth checking out. Good stuff here.

Ratings Comparison

Edge vs. Dolph Ziggler

Original: A-

Redo: A-

Miz vs. Randy Orton

Original: B

Redo: B

Eve Torres vs. Natalya vs. Layla vs. Michelle McCool

Original: D

Redo: D+

Royal Rumble

Original: A

Redo: A

Overall Rating

Original: A

Redo: A

This is why I don't see the point in redoing the newer shows: my taste hasn't changed much.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/30/royal-rumble-2011-his-name-is-al>

berto-del-rio/

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Next Week: Five by Five

Stay tuned.

Monday Night Raw – November 22, 1993 (Survivor Series Showdown): The Lost Episode

Monday Night Raw (Survivor Series Showdown)

Date: November 22, 1993

Location: Fernwood Resort, Bushkill, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Gorilla Monsoon, Jim Ross

I'm not sure why this is a significant show but apparently it's a "lost" episode of Raw because both this and some other episode of Raw was listed as production #41 and therefore this isn't part of the 1000 episodes of Raw. Given how hard it was to figure out which episode was #100 and #200 etc, this doesn't surprise me at all. This is the go home show for the Survivor Series and may be called Survivor Series Showdown. Let's get to it.

Yep it's the special. Based on what I can find, there was no official Raw for this date but it's WWF so are you expecting them to be able to pull

off this counting thing? This may or may not have been a clipped version of another show called Survivor Series Showdown that aired the previous day which I'll get to eventually.

Vince and Bobby are in the studio and talk about all of the eliminations of the upcoming main event Survivor Series match. Tatanka has been injured and replaced by Undertaker, just like Pierre being replaced by Crush. Jerry Lawler is also out for legal reasons (a 13 year old made up a story that he raped her but he would be back pretty quickly so Shawn is replacing him in the match against the Harts. Mr. Perfect also might have allowed for Randy Savage to replace him. So why was Heenan so shocked when Savage showed up?

WWF World Title: Bret Hart vs. Yokozuna

There's an opening match for you. Yoko is defending as I'm guessing this is the end of a TV taping or something. The champion shoves Bret around to start but gets dropkicked out to the floor for his efforts. JR points out the flaw of the USA chant but Gorilla brushes it off. Yoko stays on the floor for about two minutes without being counted out somehow. Back in (finally) and Bret pounds away before throwing on a sleeper.

That goes about as well as you would expect for a small guy trying a sleeper on a monster so the champion takes over again. A knee drop crushes Bret and Yoko rips at his face for a bit. The Canadian is sent to the floor where Fuji gets in a cheap shot with the flag and we take a break. Back with Bret pounding away out of the corner but getting taken down by a cheap shot to the throat.

Off to the nerve hold by the champion which lasts for a good long while. Bret fights up and charges into Yoko for no good reason and bounces out to the floor as you would expect. Yoko follows him out and gets sent into the steps to no effect, so there's a chair shot to Hart's back. More chair shots keep Bret down and we take a second break. Back with Yoko hitting the fat man legdrop for no cover.

Yoko misses a big charge in the corner and Bret has his rocking. The Hart Attack clothesline is enough for two but Bret has to deck Fuji before he can follow up. Hart goes up but dives into a bearhug but immediately bites his way out of it. A middle rope bulldog is enough for another two as the fans are WAY into it now.

The middle rope elbow hits but Bret might have hurt his knee in the process. The Canadian goes up again but dives into a belly to belly as both guys are down again. The champ misses a splash so Bret hooks the Sharpshooter but Owen walks to ringside for absolutely no apparent reason. Fuji hits Bret with the bucket so Owen runs in and hits Yoko with the same bucket for the DQ.

Rating: B. When you can drag a good match out of the fat man Yoko, you can tell you've got something special on your hands. This was a LONG match too, hitting nearly half an hour which was unthinkable for a free TV match back in the day. Owen coming out was foreshadowing the heel turn on Wednesday. Yeah Survivor Series was on Wednesday in 1993.

We're going to get a feature on Stu and Helen Hart later. That could be good.

Survivor Series Report. This was a segment you would get around PPV time which was a rundown of the card and a few quick promos from people on the show. Part of this is a clip of Doink saying that he'll have Four Doinks of his own on Wednesday (he wouldn't be one of them) in one of the worst matches I've ever seen. We also get a clip of Team IRS fighting amongst themselves.

Marty Jannetty vs. IRS

Before this match we get a gem from Vince: "Tonight it's Marty Jannetty vs. IRS but this Wednesday night on the PPV they'll be opposing each other." Slow match to start with IRS hitting a slam and then backing off. Marty does the same and dropkicks IRS to the floor as we take a break.

Back with IRS holding a chinlock followed by an abdominal stretch as the fans chant Irwin. Marty fights back with right hands and a knee lift for two. A sunset flip gets two for Marty and a suplex gets two for IRS but his big running clothesline gets the pin on Marty out of nowhere. Yeah that was his finisher.

Rating: D. This was really dull for the most part until it picked up ever so slightly at the end of the match. IRS was the captain of the team due to having no one else that was head and shoulders above his partners. That's not true as Diesel was on the team but you get what I mean. Jannetty would actually get the winning pin on Sunday I believe.

Vince tops himself by saying "an excellent matchup there but it has nothing to do with the Survivor Series." So why did you put it on the card dude?

We go to the "Hart Family house" with Reo Rogers, a parody of Dusty Rhodes as performed by Bruce Prichard. Shawn is here too and even though it's the dead of night, they go up to the door and a REALLY old woman answers the door. We go inside (where there is a camera waiting) and a Bret poster on the wall. There's a tiny Owen one next to it as the turn is pushed even further. They go to see an old "Stu" but Vince cuts it off and ends the show. Dang that could have been funny stuff.

Overall Rating: B-. The show is an hour long and one match is nearly half of that. Since that match is good, how can you not say the whole show was solid? The PPV wound up being pretty terrible and the world title match here was better than anything on there, but that's the nature of 1993. Decent show here but it's nothing worth going out of your way to see.

Here's Survivor Series if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2012/10/30/survivor-series-count-up-2012-edition-1993-good-old-fashioned-american-xenophobia/>

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Impact Wrestling – January 24, 2013: Aces And 8's Looks Strong. You Read That Right.

Impact Wrestling

Date: January 24, 2013

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Mike Tenay, Todd Keneley, Tazz

So the wedding was last week and as most weddings do, it drew a good audience. The main surprise from last week's events though was that Tazz was introduced as the newest member of Aces and 8's. While shocking, it doesn't address the main issues the team has. Kennedy is their biggest star I guess, but that doesn't really make them intimidating. This stable is almost eight months old. Don't you think it's time we got a bit more out of them? Oh and Hardy defends against Daniels tonight. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap from last week.

Keneley and Tenay are disturbed by Tazz's actions.

There's kind of an opening sequence now.

Here are Aces and 8's to open things up with Tazz leading the way. Tazz immediately gives us more about the team than we've gotten in the time they've been around: they're out for revenge and redemption and they have a higher power. Last week was the wedding and there was a chance to step on the Hogans' faces. They were just another victim and nothing more. As for Dixie Carter, Tazz signed a contract that says if anyone puts a hand

on him that says he'll make a fortune. Fast promo here.

Jesse hypes up Tara while bragging about himself.

Video on Daniels being around since the dawn of TNA.

Daniels says this is a turning point for his career tonight.

Tazz is back on commentary.

Knockouts Title: Tara vs. Velvet Sky

Velvet is back in the classic outfit instead of the catsuit which is a downgrade for me. Tara poses as the bell rings so Velvet grabs a quick rollup for two. Tara fights her back but stops to pose again and gets kicked out to the floor as we take a break. Back with Tara in control as Tazz won't answer questions about why he turned because it's club business. Translation: it isn't important enough/the writers haven't figured out the answer yet.

The shaky moonsault gets two for Tara but she goes up top for no apparent reason and gets slammed down accordingly. Velvet comes back with a headscissors and a spinning faceplant but Jesse has the referee's attention. Tara knocks Jesse down and a rollup gets two for Velvet. Sky loads up a suplex but Jesse hooks her foot ala Bobby Heenan and Ultimate Warrior at Wrestlemania 5 to give Tara the win at 9:42.

Rating: C-. This wasn't horrible but the first part of the match was pretty sloppy. The division is at a standstill at this point as nothing has really changed for awhile. It's the same set of girls having the same matches that we've seen for years now. Velvet's big return basically means nothing at this point and hasn't changed anything. Also, can more than two Knockouts appear on screen at once or is that against the rules?

Open Fight Night is back next week.

Sting has something to say later on.

Kenny King talks to himself in the mirror when Zema Ion comes up to talk strategy. Tension is teased and I can't bring myself to be interested.

Here's Joseph Park to say that his place is here on Impact instead of in the courtroom. He never got that win though, or that W as the boys call it. He's here to be the best he can be and holds up a passport, saying he'll be here next week in Manchester to compete in Open Fight Night. He doesn't know who he's facing but he's going to spend the week watching film. Next week he'll deliver his verdict and then hold his own court and get that W.

Zema Ion/Kenny King vs. Rob Van Dam/Christian York

York and Ion start things off as Tazz talks about which of these guys would be a good addition to the team. Off to Van Dam who goes after King on the apron and gets in trouble for his efforts. King comes in legally and hits a nice snap suplex for two. Back to Ion for his usual lame stuff as we hear about Bellator for the 100th time in two weeks.

Ion misses a 450 and everything breaks down. Rob loads up the split legged moonsault on Zema but King crotches him, only to get elbowed back down. Rob gets kicked off the top and Ion tags himself in. A tornado DDT is countered but King hits a springboard Blockbuster to give Ion the pin at 5:09.

Rating: C. I'm trying to care about Ion and it's just not working at all. The guy just isn't that good but he of all the people that have been brought in to the division over the last few years, they pick HIM to stick around and push? York and King looked fine here while Van Dam was Van Dam. I'm hoping King wins the title soon as it would shake the division up a bit while also being logical progression.

Tazz leaves to take a phone call.

Bully and Brooke arrive and will do their talking in the ring.

Joe tells Garrett and Wes that they can't suck up to him like they do to Angle. Kurt pops up and says he's still hurt but he can fight.

We recap the wedding. Again.

Here are Bully and Brooke to the ring. Bully says that he expected this

from D-Von but not Tazz. Last week Aces and 8's hurt Sting who is the only person that has trusted Ray. They also hurt Hogan who it took forever to get to accept Ray, but more importantly they hurt Brooke. Ray tells Aces and 8's to sleep with their eyes open until he takes care of all of them. However he needs the absent Hulk to lift his suspension to do that. Cue Sting who begs Hulk to take this all the way like he does with everything else. He believes that Hogan will do the right thing next week in Manchester.

Aries and Roode praise each other to try to get out of a match with Hernandez. Aries: "You were the longest reigning champion ever." Roode: "Then you beat me." Aries: "Well yeah but..." Eventually Roode is tricked into taking the match because he's the power guy and Aries should clean up. Roode is confused but Aries leaves before Bobby can complain.

Video on Hardy before Hardy says (out loud!) that he'll win.

Hernandez vs. Bobby Roode

Roode tries to pound away a bit but gets backdropped for his efforts. Tenay thinks Roode is a better singles wrestler than Hernandez. The PROFESSOR ladies and gentlemen. There's the delayed vertical suplex to Roode but he immediately comes back with a guillotine on the top rope. Tazz says he could see either of these guys joining Aces and 8's in the future. Roode hooks a chinlock but SuperMex fights out of it and hits the slingshot shoulder to take over.

There's the corner splash and the over the shoulder backbreaker for no cover. Roode comes back with a chop but gets sent to the floor. Hernandez loads up a dive but Aries runs out for the save. He and Chavo get in a fight on the floor as Roode hits a bulldog on Hernandez for the clean pin at 5:41.

Rating: C-. A bulldog is enough for a pin? The problem here is that Hernandez is completely uninteresting and Chavo doesn't help much. They're very dull champions as they don't really do anything other than hold the titles and have decent matches. Roode and Aries are hilarious but I don't really care to see them as tag champions. The match was ok at best.

Here's Angle to say that next week he's calling out Anderson on Open Fight Night. Cue Anderson in full Aces and 8's gear to say that he wants to fight right now. After the brawl erupts, Angle clears the ring and says that it's going to be in a cage next week.

Post break Anderson is panicking over the cage match but D-Von says drink beer and calm down. He has a plan apparently.

TNA World Title: Jeff Hardy vs. Christopher Daniels

Daniels is challenging here and literally dances to the ring. Tazz predicts that Hardy is going to have trouble in the year 2013. Feeling out process to start with Hardy taking over, only to miss a charge in the corner and fall to the floor. Kaz comes in to celebrate and we take a break. Back with Daniels hitting a clothesline and choking away on Hardy for a bit. A modified neckbreaker hits for two on Hardy and it's off to the chinlock.

Hardy comes back with a clothesline and speeds things way up before getting two off the mule kick. A middle rope splash gets two but Hardy jumps into a Death Valley Driver for two. Daniels busts out the Koji Clutch which we haven't seen in years and that no one seems to know the name of. Christopher loads up something like a superplex but gets caught in the front suplex from the top for two. The Twist is countered into the Angel's Wings for two but the BME and Swanton both miss, the latter of which gives Hardy two. Hardy counters Angel's Wings into a rana and it's double Twist and Swanton to retain at 14:10.

Rating: B. Good match here with both guys looking great. Daniels is SO much more fun to watch when he's not against AJ all the time and his latest run has been all kinds of entertaining. The promos are way better than the matches, which is saying a lot as the match here was solid stuff. Hardy winning was pretty clear but that's not always a bad thing. Good main event here.

Post match Tazz distracts Hardy and a masked biker hits Jeff in the knee with a hammer to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. This was ok but not much better than that. At the end

of the day not a lot was really explained that we didn't know already and there wasn't much followup at all to the wedding stuff from last week. The main event was solid and the post match stuff is likely due to Hardy not being able to appear in the UK due to his legal issues over the years. Pretty decent stuff here but the wrestling wasn't all that great save for one match.

Results

Tara b. Velvet Sky – Tara pinned Sky after Jesse tripped her

Zema Ion/Kenny King b. Rob Van Dam/Christian York – Ion pinned York after a springboard Blockbuster from King

Bobby Roode b. Hernandez – Bulldog

Jeff Hardy b. Christopher Daniels – Swanton Bomb

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NXT – January 23, 2013: It's Tournament Time Again

NXT

Date: January 23, 2013

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: William Regal, Tony Dawson

On the 29th anniversary of the birth of modern wrestling, we're back in Florida for more NXT. After last week's transitional show we should be ready for something new tonight. Odds are Langston is going to get his next challenger tonight which should be interesting as he has no one else to fight at the moment. Let's get to it.

Shawn Michaels is in the ring to open the show. Fans: "HBK! HBK! HBK!" Shawn: "Aw come on." The fans quiet down. Shawn: "No don't stop!" Anyway, Shawn is here and he's got two belts which are apparently the new NXT Tag Team Championships. Shawn says that there's a tournament starting tonight and the winners will be the stars of the future. He says that as a former tag team champion he knows what kind of a springboard these belts can be. Nice little cameo here that didn't take up much time at all and made things feel special.

Opening video.

NXT Tag Team Title Tournament First Round: Wyatt Family vs. Yoshi Tatsu/Percy Watson

It's Harper/Rowan here. Watson and Rowan start things off with Watson jumping WAY over Rowan's head in a leap frog and taking him down with a leg lariat. Off to Tatsu as Regal gives us an idea of the mentality behind being in a tag team. Rowan chops Tatsu into the corner and it's off to Harper to pound away in the corner.

Luke puts on a chinlock and circles around the ring at the same time to keep Yoshi disoriented. I don't think I've ever seen that before. A jawbreaker finally gets Tatsu out of trouble but it's off to Rowan to slam him down for two. Rowan cranks on the neck for a bit and here's Harper again, but he lets Yoshi crawl over and bring in Watson. Everything breaks down and Harper takes Watson's head off with a clothesline for the pin at 4:55.

Rating: C. This was just a squash but the Wyatt Family has a great presence to them. There's something disturbing to them where they're just a bit off and that's a great characteristic to have. At this point Wyatt doesn't even need to be in the ring which is good as I think he's still recovering from his injury. The Family is doing fine just being creepy right now but them getting some gold would be nice.

Dusty is with Derrick Bateman and Alex Riley and offers them a tournament match against Kruger and Ohno. Corey Graves comes up to complain about not getting an NXT Title rematch and not being in the tournament. Riley gets in his face and Bateman hums a circus tune. The tag team leaves and Dusty makes it Graves vs. his former partner Jake Carter tonight. Graves says tell Carter that Carter is in his path to the title.

Sasha Banks vs. Alicia Fox

Alicia makes fun of Sasha for being tiny and having the nickname of Small Package. Fox sends her into the ropes but walks into a headscissors to take her down. Sasha sends her to the apron but gets popped in the face for two. A bridging northern lights suplex (called a fisherman's suplex in a rare mistake by Regal) gets two for Fox and we hit the chinlock. Sasha comes back with a monkey flip and an armdrag out of the corner, only to be caught in a wheelbarrow front slam for no cover. Fox picks her up for a slam but it's the Ricky Steamboat/Randy Savage small package pin for Banks at 3:23.

Rating: C-. This was too short to mean much but at least Banks looks good and got to show off a bit here. The Divas are nowhere near as irritating here as they are on the main shows as they're actually treated somewhat seriously on NXT. Decent stuff here and Banks got to look good despite being a tiny little thing.

Video on Paige who is here to be a champion.

Some new blonde interviewer asks Aksana about her match next week with Paige. Aksana accuses Paige of stealing her look and says 2013 is her year.

Conor O'Brien says he's the true Ascension and he will rise.

Corey Graves vs. Jake Carter

Graves seems to get a face pop on his way to the ring. Carter grabs a headlock to start but gets shoved into the corner. That goes nowhere for Graves as Jake pounds away in the corner and the middle of the ring. Corey comes back with a suplex and into an arm trap chinlock which Regal says can be called a Gator Hold. Carter fight up and hits a clothesline for two but gets sent into the corner and chop blocked down. The 13th Step leg lock ends Carter at 3:09.

Rating: C-. Another just ok match here as Graves gets to run over Carter and remind us that he exists after the title match from a few weeks ago. Graves got a good reaction and definitely has a unique look which will be nothing but good for him. Carter on the other hand looked pretty generic out there and didn't appear to get any of his dad's good qualities.

Post match Graves says that he's been screwed out of a rematch for the title and kept out of the title tournament because he's an "outcast". As the savior of misbehavior (terrible name) he's declaring anarchy on NXT. Oh and if Riley sees him, stay down.

NXT Tag Team Title Tournament: 3MB vs. Oliver Grey/Adrian Neville

It's Slater and McIntyre here. We start with Drew vs. Neville with Drew taking him down to the mat with ease. Off to a chinlock by McIntyre which is eventually countered by a headscissors but Drew is able to tag in Slater. Heath immediately lets Neville backflip out of a hold and bring in Grey for the first time. Off to an armbar on Slater followed by a dropkick to send Slater to the outside.

The Brits cause some heel miscommunication before Neville dives on McIntyre on the floor. We take a break and come back with Drew getting two on Grey. A clothesline gets two on Grey and it's back to Slater for a superkick for two of his own. Slater hooks a chinlock as we hear about Grey being a lumberjack. Oliver quickly escapes and brings in Adrian who starts flipping around as fast as he can. After kicking Slater in the face, the now legal McIntyre gets caught with that corkscrew shooting

star for the pin by Neville at 6:26 shown of 9:56.

Rating: C+. This was a basic formula match but Neville got to show off a lot more than he had did last week. That big shooting star is a great finisher and looks awesome but we haven't seen yet if he can pull off the other stuff that it takes to fill out a match. Decent little tag match here as Grey and Neville look good as a fast little team.

Big E. Langston vs. Axl Keegan

Non-title here. I love the look of glee on Langston's face during his entrance and the kind of dance he does with the powder on his hands. We hear about Langston's association with Ziggler but the fans don't seem to mind at all. Langston literally runs him over and wins with the Big Ending at 56 seconds.

Langston loads up the second Big Ending when Conor O'Brien pops up on screen. He says that in two weeks there will be an awakening. Langston should be there so O'Brien can show him what he thinks of the five count. After an evil laugh from Conor, Big E. hits the Big Ending anyway. A third Big Ending and another five count end the show.

Overall Rating: C. This wasn't their strongest show but they set a lot of stuff up tonight. We've got some new titles in play and the start of what could be a decent tournament to earn them. Also O'Brien is back and Langston has his first challenger for the title. Sometimes you have to have a slower show to set up something down the line and that's what happened here. Not bad at all but nothing to see in the matches department.

Results

Wyatt Family b. Yoshi Tatsu/Percy Watson – Clothesline to Watson

Sasha Banks b. Alicia Fox – Small Package

Corey Graves b. Jake Carter – 13th Step

Oliver Grey/Adrian Neville b. 3MB – Corkscrew Shooting Star Press to McIntyre

Big E. Langston b. Axl Keegan – Big Ending

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On This Day: January 24, 1998 – Souled Out 1998: One Of WCW's Best

Souled Out 1998

Date: January 24, 1998

Location: Hara Arena, Dayton, Ohio

Attendance: 5,486

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Bobby Heenan, Dusty Rhodes

More back to back reviews so I can have a full series done, in this case Souled Out as I'll be doing this and 2000 back to back to get these off my list. Anyway this show never was much as far as importance goes and the card makes that pretty clear. There's a double main event of a grudge match with Luger vs. Savage (which I'll get to later about why you could tell this company was in trouble) and Hart vs. Flair in Bret's first big WCW match. Let's get to it.

This is on a Saturday if that means anything to you.

We open with a video about Nash vs. Giant which is actually happening tonight as Nash had bailed on the match at Starrcade. Both had to put up 1.5 million dollars bond to guarantee various things that don't matter. The video is about Bischoff collecting souls or something. Whatever.

The announcers run down the card while the fans chant for the Weasel. We're going to get an announcement about the world title that is vacant because WCW was incredibly stupid and managed to screw up the unscrewupable.

Juventud Guerrera/Super Calo/Lizmark Jr/Chavo Guerrero vs. La Parka/Silver King/Psicosis/El Dandy

I'm not sure who the favorites are here but I'd never be one to doubt El Dandy. This is under Lucha Libre rules which means if you hit the floor that's as good as a tag. Calo vs. Psicosis to start us off. Calo gets an armdrag to send Psicosis to the floor but he comes back in. No substitution which is kind of odd but whatever. Psicosis chops away and drops an elbow on the back to take over.

Powerslam by Calo and a tilt-a-whirl slam and it's off to Silver King vs. Lizmark. This is one of those matches where it's nearly impossible to keep up with what's going on and that more or less isn't the point at all. Silver King gets a tornado DDT but it's off to Chavo vs. El Dandy. Big monkey flip to Dandy and they're out rather quickly.

Off to La Parka vs. Juvy now. They're moving in very quickly out there. They fight on the apron with La Parka falling on his face in a funny

spot. Back in the ring and Guerrera gets a kick to the face and a SWEET top rope rana puts Parka on the floor. Off to Lizmark who gets a moonsault to take Juvy down. Off to Psicosis who gets rolled up. Dandy is in and gets La Magistrol for two.

Calo comes in to face Silver King but the whole thing breaks down. Tenay says he more or less has no idea what's going on. Juvy botches the heck out of a rana on Silver King but Juvy escapes and mostly hits a 450 for two. Parka gets a powerbomb on Guerrera for two. Falcon Arrow to Chavo sets up the guillotine legdrop by Psicosis. Some people are thrown to the floor so it's Silver King vs. Super Calo.

LET THE DIVING BEGIN as everyone goes after everyone and there is no point at all to try to call this. The only ones left in the ring are Chavo and Psicosis with Chavo in control. Psicosis misses a charge and Chavo hits the tornado DDT (his finisher) to end this. La Parka kills them all with chairs because he feels like it. He beats up his own partners too and does his chair dance to a big reaction.

Rating: B. WOW. This is one of the most insanely fast matches you'll ever see and for an opener, THIS IS HOW YOU DO IT. Was it technically sound or really even sound at all? Not in the slightest, but that's not the point here. The idea here was to just go insane and have everyone look awesome and that's what they did. Fun mach.

Raven vs. Chris Benoit

Raven is listed at 239lbs. That's much lighter than I would expect. The Flock is with him and they actually come out from the entrance. There's no Saturn here as he would start his rebellion. The Flock is

barred from ringside apparently. Raven complains about things and doesn't seem to care. This is Raven's Rules, as in No DQ.

Raven gets a baseball slide to Benoit as he comes in and we head to the floor early. Back in the ring and Benoit grabs a quick backslide for two. This is far more of a brawl than a match but Benoit can easily pull that off so it works well. Back to the floor and Raven grabs a chair. Bulldog onto the unfolded chair gets two as Benoit gets a foot on the ropes. Benoit pulls a Raven with a drop toehold onto the chair for two in a sick looking spot.

Benoit chops away and down he goes. Suplex onto the chair gets two. Benoit gets the shirt off of Raven and returns the favor of the baseball slide, sending Raven into the railing. A whip into the steps follows as Raven tries to run away. They go up the aisle and Raven is suplexed to keep Benoit's advantage. Back in the ring and Benoit puts the chair on Raven's face. The Swan Dive CRACKS into the chair and both guys are out. FREAKING OW MAN! That looked incredible but DANG it must have hurt.

Somehow that only gets two. The crowd is insane here by the way. See what a great opener can get you? Northern Lights is countered by the DDT which is kind of known as Raven's finisher but not officially. Fans are totally behind Benoit here. Another DDT is countered into the Crossface and Raven....smiles while in it. That boy is not right. He passes out in the hold and we're done.

Rating: B+. This was a war. These are two of the hottest openers I can remember in a very long time. Total beating from both guys here as we got incredibly physical. That swan dive is something else. Raven could have been totally awesome but instead we got more NWO. Anyway, great war here and Benoit looks like a killer.

Kidman of the Flock comes out for the beatdown but Malenko comes out for the save for no apparent reason. The whole Flock comes out but Raven is done. Benoit and Malenko look at each other...and that's about it.

Cruiserweight Title: Chris Jericho vs. Rey Mysterio

Rey is champion here and Jericho is a heel. We keep hearing about how big of a heart he has. Shouldn't he see a cardiologist already? Rey has a legit bad knee here (shocking I know) and is going away after this match (not announced of course) so I think you know the ending here. Jericho tries to be a bully and gets slapped instead. Jericho runs him over with a shoulder. When do you see Jericho with a size and power advantage?

Rey gets a nice headscissors to send Jericho to the floor. He uses what would evolve into the 619 but his knee goes out in mid move. Rey locks on a chinlock which is countered for a bit but that counter is countered into a victory roll by Rey for two. Rey wants a rana to the floor but with Jericho on the apron he catches Rey and drops him throat first on the top rope while jumping to the floor. Cool counter.

Jericho gets a butterfly backbreaker and sets up the steps before heading back into the ring. Rey fights back and gets what was kind of a jumping Killswitch to take Jericho down. Baseball slide to Jericho's leg takes Jericho to the floor. Running tope con hilo into a seated senton puts Jericho down again but the knee is gone.

Rey manages to get a flapjack to Jericho to send him into the steps. West Coast Pop is broken up and the knee is wrenched all over again. Jericho

goes up and Rey tries the rana which is countered into the Walls (Liontamer at the time but you get the idea). Finish was out of NOWHERE which makes me think the knee was completely destroyed. Rey would be gone until July so that knee was really messed up.

Rating: B-. A lot of that is for the knee. Rey was legitimately trying out there but there comes a point where the injury is too much to deal with. They did everything they could out there but with the knee falling apart mid match there's only so much you can do. Rey's knees would never really work again for the most part.

Jericho gloats post match and beats up Mysterio with the knee brace. Cody Rhodes is smiling somewhere. He slams an anvil case into the knee which goes into the steps.

JJ Dillon and Gene are in the ring. Dillon has the vacant world title and it's time for an announcement about it. Ok so in case you don't know what happened, Sting had been the Crow that didn't talk forever and Hogan had been champion more or less for 16 months. Sting finally got his shot at Hogan at Starrcade in what should have been a massacre of Hogan with Sting dominating him to win the title.

However since this is WCW, they screwed it up. Hogan more or less beat Sting up and the fans simply did not accept this. The whole thing was rejected and the audience steadily began to head over to WWF. The problem was simple: WCW had built this up for over a year and the fans wanted to see something.

I've heard the excuse of Sting was high or something when they got there, but if he can at least perform at all, Hogan should not have had a

chance. Hogan danced around out there and Sting looked like a fool. I still stand by my statement that this was the bullet that took WCW down. Read the Starrcade 97 review for the full details.

So anyway, the title was held up at the first Thunder and there's a rematch. Unfortunately it's not tonight as that would be giving too much credit to the fans I guess, so if you REALLY want to see Hogan vs. Sting, BUY SUPERBRAWL!!!! Oh wait I'm getting ahead of myself. Dillon brings out Roddy Piper who was interim commissioner and was consulted on this. He hasn't been seen since the terrible main event of Halloween Havoc.

Ah apparently he made Hogan vs. Piper in the first place. He talks about everyone involved including Scott Hall who won World War 3 and is the official #1 contender. Piper calls out Sting, Hall and Hogan. Sting comes first and then the others do as well but along with Bischoff. Naturally they take forever.

Hall is #1 contender to the world champion but we have no world champion. Piper says that Hogan has a claim to the title but he doesn't get it. The rematch is made for Superbrawl and Hall would eventually get the title match at Uncensored (albeit in the second to last match as Hogan vs. Savage was the main event). In other words, it took five months for him to win his shot and then actually get it. Hall walks away and is like "whatever". Sting chases Hogan and Bischoff off. This took over ten minutes somehow.

TV Title: Rick Martel vs. Booker T

Booker has the title here. No one is really sure why Martel came back as he was old and not the Model or anything but just a guy in a leather

jacket that you've likely heard of. They feel each other out to start us off with both guys getting two. I'm still trying to figure out why Martel is getting a push like this. He's certainly not bad and could wrestle a perfectly watchable match at this point (he destroyed his knee at the next PPV and had to retire) but it's still a really weird pick.

Booker works on the arm for a bit. Suplex and a side kick get two and we're back to the arm. Pretty much all Booker so far as he gets a hook kick for two. Martel makes Booker miss but gets caught in an armdrag and it's the armbar again. Leap frog by Martel is countered by what might be a headbutt to the balls. Martel might have been faking it and suckers Booker in to hammer away, almost doing a mid-match heel turn.

Off to the chinlock now by Martel who is all evil now. Booker hammers away but a spinebuster takes him down for two. More back work by Martel, this time in the form of an abdominal stretch. Booker tries a comeback but misses a dropkick. Quebec (Boston) Crab goes on and Booker is in trouble. Oh never mind as he grabs a rope. This is a pretty generic although decent match. Axe kick out of nowhere gets no cover as Booker goes up. The Harlem Hangover ends this. It's a front flip legdrop if you're unfamiliar.

Rating: C+. Not bad but just kind of generic like I said. Martel was ok but he wasn't interesting in the slightest. He never could get anywhere with the comeback due to his knee injury but this was as good as it was going to get I think. Could have been on Nitro though, which is rarely a good sign.

Post match Martel hands Booker the belt. After Booker leaves Saturn pops up to beat up Martel. Booker would face Martel at the next PPV and then face Saturn immediately thereafter.

Scott Hall vs. Larry Zbyszko

This is the culmination of some weird AWA angle that no one cared about but it resulted in Larry having a few matches. Hall has the soon dead Louie Spicolli with him. Dusty wonders who is coming out with Larry, and to the shock of no one, it's Dusty himself. Bobby thinks the fans at home are standing over this pick. Uh, why? Also who thought purple and gold/yellow were good signature colors for a wrestling company?

The announcers touch on the AWA stuff a bit but never say any specifics. Larry controls early with amateur/mat stuff. Heenan talks about Ted DiBiase for no apparent reason. The other announcers point out that he has the wrong person and Heenan ADMITS HE'S WRONG!!! They're taking their sweet time out here with nothing going on at all really. Larry gets an abdominal stretch which is countered by a hiptoss for the biggest spot of the match so far.

The hold goes right back on and it's the same counter. Larry goes for the neck so Hall gets to the ropes. Big old right hand to Larry puts Larry down and Spicolli adds in a shot. Cue Dusty to something resembling a good reaction going after Spicolli. This is rather boring so far and the fans seem to realize that. The fans chant for Larry and he starts the comeback. Hall goes for the legs as this is really boring. Also, this is the #1 contender remember.

LOUD Larry sucks chant starts up with Tony more or less saying the fans have no idea what they're talking about. A Hall sucks chant starts up so Tony is all happy. The dueling chants begin as Hall gets the fall away slam. Oh and Hall/Nash are the tag champions here. A backdrop gets Larry out of the Outsider Edge and here's the comeback again.

Larry, the old man, pounds Hall down and shoves the referee which lets Hall come back. Somehow that isn't a DQ but since when does WCW keep their DQ rules the same for more than one show in a row? Larry accidentally kicks the referee and Hall takes Zbyszko down. Larry plays possum on Hall and gets his guillotine choke on him. Spicolli comes in and punches Larry but THAT isn't enough for the DQ.

Dusty comes in to a big reaction to hammer away and do something that I think is supposed to be dancing. He drills Louie with a bunch of elbows to the cranium...and joins the NWO by hitting Larry and taking off his shirt to reveal the black and white. Does this really surprise anyone? The big beatdown leads to the DQ and Tony and Bobby are disgusted.

Rating: D. This was whatever really. No one, and I mean no one, cared about Dusty turning here. He wouldn't be around that long at all as he would head over to ECW and then come back in like a year and a half. Spicolli was supposed to fight Zbyszko at Superbrawl but he wouldn't be alive in 30 days. Weak match here and a waste of Hall who was being pushed at this point.

We recap the segment and Tony hates it. The fans still think Larry sucks, proving that the whole thing failed.

Scott Norton/Buff Bagwell/Konnan vs. Ray Traylor/Steiner Brothers

Traylor is the Big Boss Man. Tony walks off set for a bit so Tenay comes out to give us Tenay and Heenan on commentary. Ok dude, EVERYONE has joined the NWO and this is supposed to be a big deal. The Steiner team

has DiBiase with them and the NWO has Vincent which is kind of cool. Scott Steiner is teasing a heel turn as he has been doing for about the last six months. He would finally turn the next month.

Tony comes back and whines about Dusty. Yep this is going to go on forever isn't it? Scott Steiner (blast it I have to specify in this match don't I) wants to start but his partners won't let him because they know he won't tag out. Buff and Rick officially start. We talk about Dusty a lot and completely ignore the match at hand, which makes sense as there's nothing to this match anyway.

Buff destroys him to start until a powerslam or something like one gets Rick out of trouble. Off to Traylor who hammers away. Two minutes in and Tony stops posting in his Livejournal about how much he hates Dusty now. Basically this is a handicap match since Rick and Traylor won't tag Scott in due to him being a whiny twerp as I said. I know I'm repeating a lot of stuff but there's nothing to say here otherwise.

Rick rips away at Buff's face and Norton finally comes in. It's weird that the team wrestling with two guys had made more tags than the team with three. Traylor hammers away on Norton and beats on Buff too. The numbers catch up with them and Heenan has a Freudian slip by talking about Dusty again. For the love of tar shut up about him! Konnan vs. Traylor at the moment in this boring match.

Tony announces again that he's going to stop thinking about it. Naturally it takes him 15 seconds to stop talking about how he's going to stop talking about it. Traylor and Norton collide and everyone is down. Scott Steiner hasn't been in yet at all. Konnan gets a DDT to take down Rick as Tony tries to say Dusty is the reason the crowd is dead. Well at least he's funny about it.

Rick gets beaten up on the floor as the VERY ANGRY Scott Steiner won't even get off the apron to help. He's kind of being a jerk when you think about it. The problem is that we keep seeing the same combinations of five guys that aren't interesting in the slightest. Scott Steiner gets over next to Traylor on the same side which isn't something you see often. They argue about it because they feel like annoying me.

Chinlock by Buff to Rick and Scott Steiner continues to be annoying as he wants a tag. Konnan beats on Rick for awhile as we need this to end or at least do something already. The fans are bored out of their minds and the announcers keep blaming it on Dusty instead of a terribly bad 6 man tag. For a nice change of pace, Norton beats on Rick for awhile now. This beating segment has been going on for like 4 minutes now.

Rolling dropkick by Konnan but Rick FINALLY breaks off some offense and everyone is down. Scott Steiner and Traylor tag in at the same time so no one is sure what's going on. The future Big Poppa Pump shoves the referee and gets tagged in....somehow. Steiner Screwdriver (look that insane move up) to Konnan ends this.

Rating: D-. WAY too long here with Rick being in there forever. This was boring beyond belief and the crowd died from it. The announcers didn't care at all and they talked about the Dusty turn the entire turn. Steiner would FINALLY turn next month and then do nothing of note for about six months due to Goldberg getting the focus as he should have.

Scott Steiner and Bagwell have some weird moment post match for even more foreshadowing.

Giant vs. Kevin Nash

This is the match that was supposed to happen for months but Nash didn't show up at Starrcade because he didn't want to lose to Giant. Remember that. After all the months of waiting, they lock up. Riveting stuff so far. Hogan and Bischoff are here with Nash because Hogan put up the 1.5 million dollars required to get Nash here. The deal was Nash had to ensure he'd be here (think about that for a minute) and Giant had to put it up to ensure he wouldn't touch Nash. Riveting stuff.

Giant beats on him for awhile and Nash bails. Bobby literally whispers things into Tony's ear and Tony gets annoyed at him for it. Giant chokes away in the corner with the foot and it's more or less all future Big Show. Nash busts out a freaking leap frog of all things and puts Giant on the floor. NASH JUMPS OVER THE TOP ONTO GIANT AND GETS CAUGHT IN THE AIR!!! Think about that for a few seconds. Once your minds are done getting blown and you towel off, I'll be here waiting.

Giant throws Nash in and Bischoff distracts the referee, allowing Hogan to DRILL Giant in the back with a chair. Giant makes it back in at about 9.8 and here comes Nash. We need a name for the spot where a guy is in position for a 619 and a guy gets a running start to jump on his back/neck. Giant shrugs the offense off and takes Nash down with a clothesline.

Both guys try big boots at the same time and they're both down. Nash hammers away with his usual big power spots but walks into an atomic drop and some headbutts to take him down. Big boot puts Nash down as does a slam. Bischoff pops up and gets a chokeslam as a late Christmas present. Nash gets coffee from....somewhere and throws it in Giant's eyes. Nash then tries the Jackknife and drops Giant ON HIS HEAD, looking like he killed

him dead to end it. The crowd is completely silent after that for a second as that was terrifying. Giant would be out about a month because of it.

Rating: D. Well some of the spots were cool but giant vs. giant matches get kind of dull after awhile. The powerbomb at the end is absolutely terrifying though. Naturally they show the replay twice. One other thing to note here: Nash won the match. In other words, he avoided jobbing by not showing up and got to win a month later. And people said they didn't have stroke backstage.

Bret Hart vs. Ric Flair

Basically just an "I'm better than you" match. Somehow this is Bret's in ring debut for WCW. How in the world did they wait this long, AND WHY IN THE WORLD WAS THIS NOT AT STARRCADE??? Oh that's right: we needed a boring six man on that show! Bret grabs a headlock and eventually takes him to the mat with it. This has a ton of time for it and Heenan wastes some of it by talking about Flair's sex life.

Flair is only 48 here and is still rather good in the ring. My goodness did he go downhill during the Evolution years. Bret grabs a figure four for a bit but a rope is grabbed quickly. Suplex gets two and we're back to that headlock. Bret slaps Flair down and the blonde haired one takes a break on the floor. Back in and Bret throws Flair around a bit and it's back to the headlock.

A quick thumb to the eye and down goes the Canadian. Hart grabs a sleeper out of nowhere but gets reversed into a belly to back almost immediately. Flair gets a low blow in and of course Heenan defends it. Heenan and

Flair are hilarious. Tony: "You know you're an idiot." Off to a chinlock by Naitch which doesn't last long. Flair chokes away and is clearly the heel in this match.

Chops vs. punches is won by the puncher and I think you know who that is. Swinging neckbreaker by Bret gives us a little breather. Bret gets a bulldog for two. Well he used to be a cowboy so he has to have a bulldog every now and then I guess. Bret goes after the knee as is his custom. The figure four around the post doesn't work as we hear about Jim Neidhart for no apparent reason.

Back in and Flair unleashes the knee crusher. You have to admit they know their formula if nothing else. Another knee crusher and Bret is in trouble. Bret gets an enziguri out of nowhere to put Flair down. Good back and forth stuff here. Bret tries another figure four but gets caught in a rollup for two. And there's the chop block and Bret is right back down again.

There's the REAL Figure Four (by the REAL World's Champion for you old school fans out there) and Bret grabs the referee. The crowd doesn't seem to care here which is kind of weird. Flair slaps Bret in the face because that's always worked so well for him over the years.

Bret reverses which stays on for all of a second. Flair goes up and it's apparent that Flair suffers from extreme memory loss as he continues to try thing after thing and it never works at all. There's the Russian leg sweep by the Canadian to the Flairian (like he's actually human) but Flair pops up and chops away in the corner.

Hart takes the straps down and is all like BRING IT ON! Bret hammers away

in the corner and Flair is in trouble. Atomic drop out of the corner by Ric is in trouble. Here are the five moves of doom and amazingly enough, they actually work and Flair gives up to the Sharpshooter. I don't remember those ever working but you have to have it work once I guess.

Rating: B+. Good stuff here but it felt like they never got it into that highest gear. Definitely the match of the night that actually meant something and a third great match tonight. Bret's WCW run would pretty steadily go downhill from here though other than a few matches here and there, which is impressive since they managed to screw up BRET HART.

Randy Savage vs. Lex Luger

Yep, this is the main event. Why would you have a classic for the main event when you can have THIS? Well there are two arguments there. The first is that Luger and Savage were the "draws". Considering you had Bret Hart and Ric Flair in the previous match, I find that really odd. The other answer is that Hogan gets involved in this match and he has to be in the last match of the night.

I have no idea why these two are fighting but it's WCW so that is perfectly normal. Tony talks about how Flair erases the memory of Dusty Rhodes. Hey Tony, maybe you would forget about it faster IF YOU SHUT UP ABOUT IT! Savage walks around to start and Liz pops Luger in the back to let Savage take over to start. Savage controls early and gets a belly to back suplex for two. We talk about Dick the Bruiser for some reason and Savage gets a back elbow for two.

Liz chokes away with Savage's bandana as she's pretty awesome when she's evil. All Savage so far. Luger tries to get going again but Liz grabs his

foot and the problems continue. Savage gets a double axe to Luger who is on the floor. They head into the crowd and Luger finally gets something going.

Back to the ring now and Luger hammers away with clotheslines. Forearm (which somehow isn't made of lead anymore) hits Savage and here comes Scott Hall with Hogan behind him. Hall has a chair but Hogan gets involved. Hall is knocked off the apron and in the distraction Luger gets the Rack for the submission. Somehow this was the main event. My mind is blown.

Rating: D. This was terrible and everyone knew it. This going on last was idiotic and shows another sign of how this company was in real trouble. All night long it was WCW vs. the NWO which was a feud that went on for a year and a half at this point and would eventually split into a 3 way feud as the Wolfpack debuted. Either way, bad main event that shouldn't have been a main event.

The NWO comes out for the beatdown, Sting runs out for the save, Rack for Nash, Scorpion for Hogan, WCW IS AWESOME (despite the fans liking the NWO more), show over.

Overall Rating: B+. This was a very good show with two great matches and some other very good stuff sprinkled in. See, notice two things here also. 1. Hogan didn't wrestle. 2. Clean finishes other than in the Zbyszko match. 3. Great PPV. Now notice what came later. 1. More Hogan/NWO. 2. More screwy finishes. 3. Worse PPVs.

This was a high buyrate for a PPV in this time frame and yet Hogan didn't wrestle. DO YOU GET THE POINT WCW??? Of course they didn't because it

went right back to Hogan as he would be champion again in April. WCW could have been saved and it was all there in front of them but they never got it and they died. Still though, great stuff here but don't watch the "main event."

WWE Ending Single Branded House Shows

That's the big news of the day. Apparently the Raw and Smackdown brand names will be phased out of the live events but they'll still be running two tours. This is how it was back in the 80s and that means... That I like this idea. Back in the day you didn't know who was going to be on a show other than the top matches, so having a nice mix of people underneath the main events is a good idea. It gives you an incentive to go because even if you don't like just Raw or just Smackdown, you might see someone from another show that you like. That's a smart move.

ECW on Sci-Fi – November 7, 2006: The Chamber Is Coming And There's Nothing We Can Do

About It

ECW on Sci-Fi

Date: November 7, 2006

Location: The Mark of the Quad Cities, Moline, Illinois

Commentators: Joey Styles, Tazz

Yep I'm still doing these. It's been nearly three months but I'm still doing these. In case you've forgotten, we're getting close to December to Dismember and the Extreme Elimination Chamber which is pretty much the worst PPV ever. Tonight we've got some qualifying matches which I don't think we've had up to this point. Then again there's a good chance I've just forgotten them. Let's get to it.

After a recap of last week's main event (Big Show/Test vs. Holly/RVD) we're ready to go.

Extreme Elimination Chamber Qualifying Match: CM Punk vs. Mike Knox

Before we get going, Kelly gets caught smiling at Punk so Knox sends her to the back. A fast rollup gets two for Punk as does a leg lariat as Knox is in trouble early. Punk hooks the Vice in the ropes ala the Tarantula and the springboard clothesline puts Knox on the floor. All Punk so far. Mike finally hits a knee to the ribs to take over and gets two off a bicycle (Brogue) kick. What is with big guys that use that move?

Punk gets a forearm up in the corner but a springboard rana is caught in a powerbomb for another close two. Knox, the big oaf that he is, misses a charge in the corner so Punk can fire off some kicks. The corner knee looks to set up the corner bulldog but of course it fails completely as Knox counters into a backbreaker. Knox loads up a superplex but Punk shoves him down and hits a high cross body for another close two. Since we're still in 2006, a bunch of kicks set up the Rock Bottom and the Anaconda Vice gets the tap out for Punk.

Rating: B-. You could tell Punk was good because he got Mike Knox to look solid in nearly every match they had. Punk going to the Chamber was obvious as he was the hottest thing they had on ECW at this point and he

was destined to be a star. Good stuff here and one of Knox's better matches ever.

Sylvester Terkay and Elijah Burke are here and promise to bring Elijah Burke Productions to ECW. Great.

Here are Heyman and his security guards with something to say. Heyman has the gorilla head from last week and we get a clip of him costing RVD the main event last week. Tonight it's Big Show/Heyman vs. RVD/Holly where either someone will get their face kicked in or someone will be extremely embarrassed. Also there's an open contract for anyone from Raw or Smackdown that wants the last spot in the Chamber and they'll be able to sign it next week. Heyman says he has to leave to go do some cardio which sends Tazz into hysterics.

Daivari vs. Little Guido

Daivari tries to jump Guido early but gets punched in the face for his efforts. Guido hits some really basic stuff before walking into a hot shot to stop him cold. Daivari stomps on him a bit but walks into an elbow to the face for two. This clearly isn't going to last long. That would be correct as Daivari sends Guido hard into the corner and hits an arm trap DDT for a quick pin. Nothing to see here.

Khali hits the Plunge on Guido post match.

Video on The Marine.

Extreme Elimination Chamber Qualifying Match: Test vs. Tommy Dreamer

They start fast with Dreamer hitting a Cactus Clothesline to put both guys on the floor. Since we're in a Dreamer match though he's in trouble early with Test ramming him back first into the post. Back in and Test loads up the pumphandle slam, only to have Dreamer slip down his back and hit a neckbreaker for two. A sitout spinebuster gets two more for Dreamer and he chokes away on the ropes. That's not a nice guy there Tommy. Test kicks him low as he deserves, setting up the big boot and the Test Drive to advance to the Chamber.

Rating: D+. Eh it's Test vs. Tommy Dreamer. Was there ever a doubt as to

who was going to win here? At the end of the day there was nothing surprising either way here as Test gets a push he doesn't deserve and Dreamer is a jobber who can't pull off his ultimate goal. This was watchable but pinning Dreamer is hardly an accomplishment.

Rob Van Dam/Hardcore Holly vs. Paul Heyman/Big Show

I smell either a screwjob or a comedy match or even worse: both. Show and Van Dam start with the big man talking trash until Van Dam kicked him in the legs to shut him up. Rob immediately goes after Heyman but gets crushed by a splash and chopped in the corner. Show pounds him down and breaks up a few tag attempts to Holly. The fans are clamoring for a hot tag here which sounds like the screwjob to me.

We head to the floor and Holly backs down from the security. So much for being HARDCORE I guess. We head back in for a clothesline from Show who isn't interested in trying to get a pin. In a disturbing image, Heyman does jumping jacks on the apron, much to Taz's disgust. Show holds Rob's arms so Paul can slap him in the face.

Another Van Dam comeback is stopped by Show but he misses a charge and gets kicked in the face. The chokeslam is countered via a DDT and there's the hot tag, immediately followed by the turn from Holly. Yep I was right. Holly beats the tar out of him and hits an Alabama Slam on a chair as the match is thrown out.

Rating: C-. The crowd reaction on the heel turn was surprisingly solid but the match before it was generic stuff. Heyman never actually got into the match which doesn't really surprise me. At least it wasn't unfunny comedy and they went with the only interesting combo they had. Holly turning was probably a good idea as he's a natural jerk in the first place.

The heels celebrate to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. For an ECW on Sci-Fi, this was about as good as you're going to get. The Chamber is coming, but man alive is it going to SUCK. Holly turning is the big story here and it's the right move to turn him as I don't think people were really buying him as a face. On top of

that we've got the incoming star next week to enter the Chamber match. Good show this year.

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KB's Top 26 WCW Matches

As is usual with me, I started off planning to have about 10 matches on this list and it got out of hand. These are in NO order other than the top five which will be separated. This is a mixture of favorites and best which is how my lists tend to go. Let's get to it.

1. Sting vs. Vader – Starrcade 1992

If I'm ever in the mood to have fun watching a wrestling match, this is the one I throw on. It's the rematch from Great American Bash where Vader ripped out the heart of the WCW fans, crushed it in his hand and sprinkled it on a slice of Sting pizza. The rematch is Sting's revenge and is one of the best fights you will ever see. If you want to see David vs. Goliath and some AMAZING displays of strength from

Sting, go watch this.

1. Sting's Squadron vs. Dangerous Alliance – WrestleWar 1992

It's violent, it's bloody, it's everything WarGames is supposed to be. This was the BIG blowoff to the amazing Dangerous Alliance feud and there's almost nothing wrong with it. If you want a GREAT fight with a ton of blood along with Sting, Steve Austin, Rick Rude, Arn Anderson and Ricky Steamboat in the same match, check this one out.

3. Sting vs. Cactus Jack – Beach Blast 1992

First of all, check this show out as it's excellent. Just make sure that you watch it out of order and put this one last. Anyway, you have two of my top three favorite wrestlers ever in a WAR. This was the culmination of about a year of Cactus torturing Sting and finally Sting gets to fight back. It's falls count anywhere and according to Foley himself, one of his best matches ever. I love this one.

4. Vader vs. Cactus Jack – Halloween Havoc 1993

Again, take two guys with some hatred for each other and let them beat each other up. This was another great match which I don't think was for the title. It also led to WCW screwing up what could have been a huge push for Foley, but instead Hogan came in and WCW decided people wanted to see Paul Orndorff and Brutus Beefcake instead of guys like Cactus Jack.

5. Chris Benoit vs. Kevin Sullivan – Great American Bash 1996

Dang I'm in a violent mood tonight. If you've never seen this, go watch it. You will hardly ever see a more BRUTAL fight. These two hated each other in real life so you know they enjoyed a chance to beat the tar out of each other for a bit. They did this same match (at one point almost literally spot for spot) for the next year or so but this is by far the best. This is one of Benoit's best matches ever and definitely his best fight.

As of this point, the rest are in no particular order.

6. Diamond Dallas Page vs. Randy Savage – Spring Stampede 1997

This is the match that made DDP and there's a great story to it as well. Savage is the grizzled veteran that refuses to take DDP seriously and Page is the guy that won't give up no matter what he faces. This also showed off how cool the sets were in WCW as the set was a big wild west theme with wagons and bales of hay. You NEVER get that anymore outside of Wrestlemania.

7. Steiner Brothers vs. Lex Luger/Sting – SuperBrawl I

Take four faces, give them no story and let them have a great match. It's the only thing on this show worth anything at all and it still holds up to this day. The Steiners were untouchable at this point so having two superstars against them was the only conceivable way they could lose. This is also one of the times where Scott got to show off what he could do in the main event.

7. Ricky Steamboat vs. Rick Rude – Beach Blast 1992

Also from the great Beach Blast 92, this is fallout from WrestleWar 1992 with Steamboat wanting to get his hands on Rude and his US Title, but for some reason it wasn't on the line here. This was a thirty minute iron man match and it has a story going throughout the entire thing. WCW was on fire in 1992 and this was a great match in that year.

9. Brian Pillman vs. Jushin Thunder Liger – SuperBrawl II

Speaking of WCW in 1992, this is the opening match from the first PPV of the year. Later in the big era for WCW they used this same formula: take two small guys and let them go insane for about ten minutes. The crowd had no idea what they were seeing here but they ate it up. It's easily one of the best opening matches ever if not the best of all time and probably Pillman's best match ever.

9. Steve Austin vs. Ricky Steamboat – Bash at the Beach 1994

Seriously, do you not expect these two to be awesome together? Austin was rapidly getting awesome and the best way to do that was through having Steamboat tear the house down with him. Steamboat would get injured before they could really end the feud, but the first match in it was awesome. I'm running out of things to say about these matches.

10. Ric Flair vs. Vader – Starrcade 1993

So Sid kind of went nuts and stabbed Arn Anderson with a pair of scissors, earning himself a firing right before the biggest show of the year. When all else fails in WCW, get Ric Flair to main

event Starrcade. The idea was that Vader was invincible and Flair couldn't wrestle his usual cerebral style to beat him. Flair's career was on the line to add some drama and the end result (in North Carolina of course) was a great match with Flair getting another world title.

11. Rey Mysterio vs. Eddie Guerrero – Halloween Havoc 1997

Of all the great matches in 1997, this might have been the best in ring match of them all. You take two great wrestlers and let them go at it for almost fifteen minutes in a title vs. mask match. This is all about wowing the crowd and it's probably both guys' best match ever. Think about their careers and let that sink in for a bit.

12. Ric Flair vs. Ricky Steamboat – Chi-Town Rumble

All three matches are great but I always liked the first one best. It's a faster pace match than the other two and they keep things fast enough to never get boring. Also it helps that this is where Steamboat finally gets his world title after being the best in the world to never be champion. The rematches were great too but I've always liked this one better than the other two.

13. Ric Flair vs. Sting – Clash of the Champions #1

Why WWE.com put the unification match on the list and not this one is likely due to the NWA thing but screw that jazz. If the WWE can say that the World Heavyweight Championship is related to the WCW World Title then I can say this counts. This is the definition of putting someone over with Flair making Sting a huge star in one night. The match runs 45 minutes but feels like about half of that. This is the first of many matches they have and it might actually be the best.

14. Magnum TA vs. Tully Blanchard – Starrcade 1985

So we have a redneck who wears jeans and the wrestler's wrestler in a blood feud in an I Quit match. Now this is the story of Bret

vs. Shawn but they copied it from this match in the first place. This was another huge feud where the only way to end it was to lock two guys in a box and the first man to quit loses. The ending is legendary with Magnum taking a piece of a wooden chair and driving it into Blanchard's eye to finally quit, only to hate himself for what he did to win the title.

15. Ric Flair vs. Arn Anderson – Fall Brawl 1995

They were partners for years but they FINALLY had a match here, in North Carolina of course. This was all part of the rebirth of the Horsemen but it took a few months to get there. They knew each other so well that at the end of the day, you knew they were going to have a great match against each other. The fans had no idea who to cheer for which made it even better. To the surprise of a lot of people, Anderson won in I think their only match ever.

16. Brian Pillman vs. Johnny B. Badd – Fall Brawl 1995

I don't think anyone remembers this match but it opens the same show as the previous match. Both guys were on an absolute roll at this point and they were fighting for a title shot. This match runs half an hour and it never once gets boring with the ending being perfect as well. You won't see this on many lists but it's an awesome fast paced match that works very well.

17. Bret Hart vs. Chris Benoit – Nitro

For the Bret Hart fans, this is a must. It's the Owen Hart Tribute match in the building where he died and it's by far and away Bret's best match ever in WCW. It's also the only match where he was clearly trying for the whole match and there was no stupid story holding him back. This was about two guys putting on a wrestling display and it works to this day. Great match.

18. Ric Flair vs. Barry Windham (pick one)

Seriously, pick one. These two had so many great matches that you can't just pick a single one. Windham could have been HUGE if he

had kept trying but by 1991 or so he was done. His matches with Flair though were amazing and produced some of the best TV matches you'll ever see. Barry would eventually join the Horsemen in a spot he was perfect for.

19. Flair vs. Funk – Great American Bash 1989

The idea here is simple: Funk had injured Flair's neck and this was about revenge. The problem is that even though Funk was old and mostly retired, you couldn't quite write him off as a contender to Flair's title. This is considered the best show WCW ever put on and while I think the show is overrated, the main event is excellent. I'm in the minority that likes it better than the I Quit match but it's really that good.

20. Sting vs. Rick Rude – Clash of the Champions #17

We have one of the best heels ever against one of the best faces ever. This is all backstory from earlier in the show as Sting was injured by I believe Luger earlier in the night and was at the hospital. He was told that if he missed the match he would lose the title and the race was on to get back. Rude was sure he was going to be champion but Sting walked through the curtain at the last minute and the place EXPLODED. This is all atmosphere but it was great atmosphere.

21. Dustin Rhodes/Ricky Steamboat vs. The Enforcers – Clash of the Champions #17

From the same show as the previous match, this is all about the entrance but then the match is awesome on top of it. The Enforcers (Anderson and Zbyszko) had broken Dustin's partner Barry Windham's hand at Halloween Havoc so Dustin had a new mystery partner. A guy in a dragon costume came out before revealing himself to be Ricky Steamboat, making his return to the company. Anderson FREAKING and shouting "HE'S JUST A MAN" at Larry to try to convince himself not to panic is great stuff. Oh and the match is great too.

22. Southern Boys vs. Midnight Express – Great American Bash 1990

Jim Cornette has called this one of the greatest Midnight Express match ever which should sum things up for you. This was another one of those “take two teams, let them go nuts” matches from right before the Express left WCW to form SMW. The Pistols weren’t a great team but when they clicked they could have an excellent match and that’s what they did here.

24. Four Horsemen vs. Sting’s Team – WrestleWar 1991

WarGames is that one match that you can almost never screw up and this is the second great one. It’s also the only one the Horsemen managed to win I think, which makes their nickname of the Masters of WarGames kind of odd. Anyway, this is a GREAT brawl with everyone beating on everyone and a horrible looking ending with Pillman nearly dying (literally) to end the match. Again, it’s Sting (noticing a theme here) against Flair and it works perfectly.

25. Lex Luger vs. Ric Flair – WrestleWar 1990

Here’s another great one from these two with Luger substituting for his injured best friend Sting who had been injured at the Horsemen’s hands (not really). The idea is that while it was pretty clear Sting would get to dethrone Flair, Luger gets to beat the tar out of him first. The ending is a mini screwjob but for once it makes perfect sense and is the absolute right finish that hurts no one. This is a great beating and another solid Luger vs. Flair match.

26. Lex Luger vs. Ric Flair – Starrcade 1988

If you ever want to see the Flair Formula worked to perfection, this is the match for you. It’s about 35 minutes long with three separate stages: Flair getting killed, Luger getting beaten up and the finish. These two had one of the hottest feuds of the 80s and this is probably the best match they had in the whole series. Luger should have won the title here and he was branded as a choker because he never got there.

2012 Wrestling Observer Newsletter Awards Announced

Oh boy you know I look forward to these. I'll give my thoughts on most of them but I'll be omitting the MMA stuff because, unlike Meltzer's site, I actually talk about **wrestling** and only **wrestling**. Second and third place listed in order in parentheses. Let's get to it.

Wrestler of the Year – Hiroshi Tanahashi (CM Punk, Kazuchika Okada)

CM Punk was WWE Champion for the entire year. I think that sums up the case against Tanahashi pretty well.

Most Outstanding Wrestler – Hiroshi Tanahashi (Kazuchika Okada, CM Punk)

I'm still not sure what the difference between this and wrestler of the year is.

Best Box Office Draw – The Rock (John Cena, Brock Lesnar)

I had a feeling he'd beat out Edge for Bending the Rules. Lesnar at 3 though is kind of a headscratcher. I guess it's because of not enough appearances.

Feud of the Year – Hiroshi Tanahashi vs. Katsuchika Okada (Anderson Silva vs. Chael Sonnen, John Cena vs. The Rock)

Hey look: more Japanese guys. Punk vs. everyone? Bryan vs. the crowd? Punk vs. Jericho? Rock vs. Cena? Maybe? No wait they're American. Never mind.

Tag Team of the Year – Bad Influence (Kane and Daniel Bryan, Young Bucks)

This was a toss up between them and HELL NO. I would have gone with the WWE guys but I can live with this.

Most Improved – Katsuchika Okada (Michael Elgin, Rush)

This would be Samoa Joe's friend who was in TNA for like five minutes. Eh I guess this is fine. No one jumped out for me in this category. Oh wait: BULLY FREAKING RAY ANYONE???

Best on Interviews – CM Punk (Chael Sonnen, Rock)

No problem there, but I could see HELL NO getting this. They were hysterical.

Most Charismatic – The Rock (Hiroshi Tanahashi, John Cena)

Fine again here.

Best Technical Wrestler – Daniel Bryan (Prince Devitt, Davey Richards)

That's 8 years in a row. Just name the thing after him already. Oh and unless Davey Richards has COMPLETELY changed his style, that's absolutely absurd. Brodus Clay is more technical than Richards.

Best Brawler – Kevin Steen (Togi Makabe, Bully Ray)

Not many people brawl anymore so this is no surprise.

Best High Flier – Kota Ibushi (Ricochet, Pac)

No surprise there either as he's won three out of four years in a row and was injured the year he didn't win.

Most Overrated – Ryback (The Miz, Garrett Bischoff)

You mean the guy who caused HIAC to get its highest amount of buys in two years? Yeah there's no value there. Who actually rates Garrett Bischoff as anything?

Most Underrated – Tyson Kidd (Dolph Ziggler, Daniel Bryan)

Eh he's good but the day people buy a ticket to see Tyson Kidd is the day I learn to do the Charleston. The runners up here blow my mind. Dolph Ziggler is apparently the second coming and Bryan has been a champion forever, yet he's UNDERrated?

Promotion of the Year – New Japan (UFC, WWE)

Well it certainly wasn't anything in America. I'll let this one go.

Best Weekly Television Show – Impact Wrestling (Ring of Honor, NXT)

VIVA LOS ACES AND 8'S! First time it's ever won this. If they're counting the end of the fifth season of NXT in there, I can certainly understand this.

Match of the Year – Hiroshi Tanahashi vs. Minoru Suzuki (John Cena vs. Brock Lesnar, Davey Richards vs. Michael Elgin)

Having not seen this, I'm going to go on a limb and say HHH vs. Undertaker inside the Cell at Wrestlemania was about ten times better.

Rookie of the Year – Dinastia (Mr. Touchdown, Eita Kobayashi)

Anyone from Mexico that can help me out here? This depends on your definition of rookie so I can live with this one going another way.

Best Non-Wrestler – Paul Heyman (Ricardo Rodriguez, Vickie Guerrero)

He could sit in the back reading the newspaper and earn an award from an internet wrestling writer. He was fine but as usual, I don't get the massive appeal of him. Ricardo continues to crack me up though.

Best Television Announcer – Jim Ross, Nigel McGuinness, William Regal)

He's on TV enough to qualify for this?

Worst Television Announcer – Michael Cole (Taz, Booker T)

Oh come on. King had a heart attack and nearly died on Raw. That has to make him worse.

Best Major Show – King of Pro Wrestling – New Japan (Extreme Rules, Wrestlemania)

Is anyone surprised at this point?

Worst Major Wrestling Show – No Surrender

Final Resolution was worse but whatever. Actually I'm getting two reports for who won this so after the UFC (IT ISN'T A FREAKING MMA AWARD) show, the worst WRESTLING show might have been Extreme Reunion

Best Wrestling Manuever – Rainmaker: Kazuchika Okada (Neutralizer, NO Lock)

It's an arm thing apparently. Sure why not.

Most Disgusting Promotional Tactic – WWE broadcasting a dead Jerry Lawler being revived after a heart attack, and then having CM Punk and Paul Heyman mock the heart attack in front of Lawler (Extreme Rising using a photo of Sabu passing out from an overdose to promote, some UFC thing)

Someone answer this for me: does Meltzer EVER complain about the show being PG? If he does, he's a hypocrite for this one.

Worst Television Show – Raw (Impact, Ultimate Fighter)

Eh yeah probably. Also, Impact WINS best and comes second in

worst? These are some fickle voters.

Worst Match of the Year – John Cena vs. John Laurinitis
(Santino Marella vs. Ricardo Rodriguez, some UFC fight)

No. Aksana vs. Kaitlyn was literally a four minute headlock.
No way this was worse.

Worst Feud of the Year – John Cena vs. Kane (TNA vs. Aces and 8's, John Cena vs. John Laurinitis)

It was bad yeah but I don't think it was even around long enough to qualify as bad. Seriously, Aces and 8's? Clair Lynch? They're better than Cena vs. Kane? I don't think so.

Worst Promotion of the Year – TNA (ROH, WWE)

Their only US TV show is the best show but they're the worst company? How do these awards work anyway?

Best Booker – Jado and Gedo (UFC guy, Mike Quackenbush)

New Japan, duh.

Best Gimmick – Joseph Park (Damien Sandow, Daniel Bryan)

If this didn't win, the awards are a joke.

Worst Gimmick – Aces and 8's (Tensai, Natalya)

You knew they were winning SOMETHING. But hey, the show

they're ALWAYS ON is still the best show right?

Best Wrestling Book – Shooters by Jonathan Snowden (Heroes and Icons by Oliver/Johnson/Mooneyham, From Prison to Promise by Booker T)

Never heard of it but sure why not.

Best Wrestling DVD – CM Punk: Best in the World (Last of McGuinness, some UFC thing)

If you didn't see this coming, go watch PBS as it's more your speed.

So yeah, Japan rules the internet wrestling world again, and no I don't want to watch puro.