

On This Day: April 21, 2008 – Monday Night Raw 2008: King Me

Monday Night Raw

Date: April 21, 2008

Location: BI-L0 Center, Greenville, South Carolina

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

This is another request and since it's taking forever to download some TNA shows, I figured I might as well knock some of these off in the meantime. This is the King of the Ring tournament so it's a three hour special. Almost everything you have here is a tournament match, plus an eight man tag and a REALLY stupid other match. Let's get to it.

Theme song gets us going. It's still Papa Roach.

We open with Lillian telling us that the tournament is back tonight.

King of the Ring First Round: Chris Jericho vs. MVP

Jericho is IC Champion and MVP is US Champion. There's no bracket yet and even JR and Lawler haven't seen them. I don't mind a champion losing so much here as one of them gets to look stronger. This is also the go home show for Backlash, which is a show I haven't done yet. MVP takes him to the mat to start but Jericho comes back with some knees to the head and a kick to the same area.

MVP punches him in the corner as this is off to a hot start. Jericho drapes him over the top rope and mostly misses a baseball slide to the floor. MVP catches him coming back in with a knee lift and a kind of clothesline for two. He hooks kind of a modified abdominal stretch on the mat but Jericho

gets up pretty quickly. Overhead belly to belly puts Jericho down for two. They do the Flair bridge up into a backslide spot which gets a good reaction in Horsemen country. Big boot gets two for MVP. Jericho comes back with a clothesline but the Lionsault misses. Play of the Day is countered into the Walls and Jericho advances.

Rating: C. Very basic match here but with a one night tournament you have to keep things that way. Again I don't mind MVP losing clean here because it was to another champion and on top of that he would drop the title on Sunday anyway. Not much to see here but it was fine all things considered.

Jericho sits on the throne post match.

King of the Ring First Round: CM Punk vs. Matt Hardy

Punk has the MITB case. Feeling out process to start but it turns into a strike off, won by Punk. He takes Matt down for two and hooks a quick chinlock. Matt comes back with some headbutts and drives an elbow into Punk's back off the middle rope. Matt's bulldog is countered into the clothesline and bulldog out of the corner for two. Punk's springboard clothesline is caught in the Side Effect for two. Twist of Fate is countered into a GTS which is countered into a sunset flip which is countered by Punk sitting on Hardy for the pin. Nice ending.

Rating: C+. Another short match here but this one was a little more fun than the previous one. The ending was pretty quick and that's a good thing as it was certainly entertaining for a four minute match. Punk was on a roll at this point and he would win the world title in about two months. Matt would get the US Title on Sunday.

All we have as far as a bracket is Jericho vs. Punk in the semi-finals.

Tonight it's Barack Obama vs. Hilary Clinton. That's the

really stupid match I warned you about. We see it in Smackdown vs. Raw 2008 for a preview.

We get a clip from Raw last week of HHH vs. JBL when Orton ran in and HHH got double teamed. The fatal fourway on Sunday (those three plus Cena) is now an elimination match.

JBL says this Sunday he'll take his place on top of the WWE. He was in the New York Times today.

King of the Ring First Round: Finlay vs. Great Khali

Khali is having issues with Big Show around this time. Horny is at ringside of course. Finlay charges at Khali but gets shoved down almost immediately. Khali shoves him down but misses a legdrop. Finlay pounds away but Khali shrugs him off and sends him to the corner. Horny comes in with the club but Finlay saves him. The chop puts Finlay down and Khali wraps Finlay's leg around the post....for a DQ? Apparently so. Too short to rate but this was nothing of note.

Big Show comes out but Khali won't go for him until Sunday.

Finlay is helped out because of the knee attack.

King of the Ring First Round: William Regal vs. Hornswoggle

Twenty seconds, Regal Stretch. Finlay comes in to help but Regal beats him down and attacks the knee. Regal is GM at this point so shenanigans seem to be up.

The brackets are set for the semi-finals:

Jericho

Punk

Finlay

Regal

Video on the annual post Wrestlemania European tour.

Here's Shawn for a little chat. Apparently Batista isn't happy about Shawn retiring Flair at Wrestlemania so Shawn wants to talk about it right now. They have a match on Sunday with Jericho as referee for no apparent reason, although it would set up a six month feud between Shawn and Jericho. Here's Batista and Shawn if Batista wanted to face Flair at Mania, which is what Jericho suggested on Smackdown.

Batista asks if that would make Shawn feel better. This isn't about Flair anymore, but rather about Big Dave and Shawn. He respects where Shawn is, but not how he got there. He'll finish this with Shawn at Backlash. Shawn appreciates the honesty but he's everything Batista says he is. Whether Dave likes it or not, Shawn is Mr. Wrestlemania and there definitely is blood on his hands. Batista is going to need luck on Sunday. Shawn goes to leave but Batista spins him back around. Shawn gets into superkick position but Batista just walks past him and leaves.

Hilary Clinton gives the kind of promo/speech that a famous person gives when they talk to a wrestling audience that they don't understand. This one isn't terrible though as she mainly talks about how she'll fight for America and lists some of her issues. It's very corny, but I'll give them points for at least talking like this. Obama and McCain will talk later.

Hardcore Holly vs. Carlito

Just...why? Oh this is something to do with the tag titles. Holly and Rhodes are champions coming into this. Carlito has his partner Santino with him. Feeling out process to start with Holly mainly in control. Carlito comes back with a backbreaker for two. Off to a chinlock which doesn't last long. Carlito works on the back some more but misses a charge. Holly makes his comeback with clotheslines and the dropkick but his back gives out. He loads up the Alabama Slam but his back gives out again. Backstabber gets the pin.

Rating: D. This wasn't much. This would presumably set up the match on Sunday but it didn't happen for some reason. Then again, no one cared at all about the tag titles so it's not like anyone cared. This was really just a breather to allow everyone to transition from the first half of the show to the second.

HHH says he'll win.

King of the Ring Semi-Finals: Chris Jericho vs. CM Punk

Both guys are tentative to start but both get quick twos. The first big move is Jericho draping him over the top rope out of a suplex. Punk tries a springboard but Jericho kicks his legs out and Punk is in trouble. Jericho tries a hammerlock but Punk takes his head off with a clothesline for two. They trade rollups like at the end of Punk's other match but no one gets a pin. Walls are countered into a rollup for two.

Jericho hits an enziguri for two and this is getting good. Punk snaps off a powerslam for two. GTS is countered into the bulldog and Jericho loads up the Lionsault. It looks strange as Jericho tried to land on all fours because Punk had his knees up. Either way he stopped himself and hooks the Walls but Punk makes a rope. Jericho goes up but Punk high kicks him down. He puts Jericho on his shoulders and the GTS sends Punk to the finals clean.

Rating: B-. These two always work well together and this was no exception. Punk got a win here which made him look a lot stronger, which is what someone like Jericho is great at. Even four years later Jericho is still putting people over but it still means something, which is a great sign for a veteran like him.

Senator Obama gives a very corny speech, concluding with "do you smell what the Barack is cooking." Just...no.

King of the Ring Semi-Finals: William Regal vs. Finlay

Finlay has the bad knee coming in. Regal circles him to start but gets monkey flipped to the floor. Regal sends him into the steps and he hits knee first. Back in the ring and it's time for a slugout. Regal goes shoulder first into the post for two. Finlay tries a fireman's carry but the knee gives out. Back to the forearms and a rollup gets two. Regal hits him in the head with a knee and puts on the Regal Stretch. Finlay passes out to send Regal to the finals.

Rating: C. These two always have good matches as they're always physical. The more I see of Finlay the more I appreciate him as he was really good at stuff like this. There was nothing for him to lose out there and he was going to be adequate at worst no matter who you put him out there with. Good stuff but short.

McCain uses a lot of wrestling lines and says go vote.

We run down the card for Backlash.

Cena says that you've heard everyone talk tonight and he has as good a chance as anyone else, but the advantage he has is he doesn't have to go through himself.

Let's get this over with.

Hilary Clinton vs. Barack Obama

There's a Bill impersonator with Hilary, who comes out to Real American. No one reacts AT ALL. Obama comes out to Rock's theme and I guess is the face in this. They're impersonators in case you didn't get that. It's so weird seeing and hearing people not care at all about Hogan's music. I mean there's NOTHING. This is one of those times I feel ashamed about being a wrestling fan. They both cut promos on each other and Hilary's is far better, as she's played by a chick from SHIMMER. The fans still don't care.

Is this supposed to be funny? Are we supposed to be this

stupid to find this entertaining? Rock's theme gets ZERO reaction either and Obama has huge ears. King gets the only funny line of this by saying that if Obama were facing Mike Tyson in this it would be a buffet. They have a "match" which isn't completely terrible as both are played by wrestlers. Obama hits a Rock Bottom but Bill breaks up the People's Elbow. Cue Umaga for a Spike to Obama and a Samoan Drop to Hilary. Bill runs away. This got TEN MINUTES.

Here are a bunch of face Divas to introduce the new Women's Champion Mickie James. She beat Beth who was considered unbeatable so it was a big upset. It still amazes me how much more interesting the Divas were just a few years ago. Mickie thanks the other girls but gets cut off by Beth and some other evil girls. Remember when there were twelve Divas that could be in one segment and could all have at least a passable match? Beth says it's not if she'll win the title back, but when she'll win it back. Michelle slaps Beth and the brawl is on.

Mr. Kennedy is coming back.

King of the Ring Finals: William Regal vs. CM Punk

Punk comes in with bad ribs because of the matches earlier. Regal is basically in his second match after the Horny match and beating an injured Finlay. Punk starts off fast with some kicks in the corner. He tries the bulldog but gets suplexed down and it's off to a bow and arrow hold. Punk fights up from that and hits a spinning kick to the knee.

Regal grabs the arms and forces him right back down to the mat as is his custom. The idea is that it's strikes vs. grapples which is about as natural as you're going to get with these two. Punk fights up again and hits a BIG kick to the head to stagger Regal. Spinning backfist sets up the high kick for two. That sounded great. Punk loads up the GTS but Regal grabs the rope. He escapes and hits the knee trembler, followed by

the Stretch. Punk hangs on for almost thirty seconds but finally has to tap to give Regal the tournament.

Rating: C-. This was too short to mean much but it gave Regal some more psychosis to work with which was a really entertaining time. Then it just stopped cold because it was getting too good and that's how WWE works. Punk giving up because of the rib injury is ok because Regal didn't win fairly (coming in at a big advantage), which is fine.

Regal's psycho look while he sits on the throne is still great.

Here's Orton for the main event but first he brags about how awesome he is and how his title reign will continue after Sunday.

Randy Orton/Edge/Chavo Guerrero/John Bradshaw Layfield vs. John Cena/HHH/Kane/The Undertaker

Orton is Raw champion, Edge is challenging Taker on Sunday, Chavo is challenging Kane, JBL is challenging Orton, Cena is challenging Orton, HHH is challenging Orton, Kane is ECW Champion, Undertaker is Smackdown champion. Now that's a packed main event. How out of place does Chavo look here though? After the entrances take forever to get through we're ready to go. Seriously, there were ten minutes spent on entrances PLUS a commercial. That's ridiculous.

Taker and Orton look to start but Edge jumps Taker in a surprise. This goes badly for the Canadian as a big clothesline puts him down. Old School hits (hasn't that been called old longer than it wasn't called old?) and we take a break after 40 seconds. Back with Chavo tagging Edge in to work over a downed HHH. The spear is countered into a spinebuster and there's the tag to Cena.

He starts his finishing sequence very quickly on Edge but Chavo low bridges him on the Shuffle attempt. JBL throws him

back in clean which shocks Jerry. Off to Orton who does nothing so it's JBL again. Russian legsweep gets two as does a clothesline. Edge comes in and the Cena chants begin. Edge gets a big boot and it's off to Orton for a chinlock. Cena stands up but it's a double clothesline and both guys are down.

The tags are made to Chavo and Kane with the Big Bald cleaning house. All of the evil team goes down and a side slam puts Chavo down. The top rope clothesline mostly gets shoulder and everything breaks down. Chavo counters a slam attempt into a DDT but as he goes for the Frog Splash Kane chokeslams him down. Out of nowhere though Edge spears Kane for the pin.

Rating: C. It's a main event tag match and that's about it. They covered almost everything and they had the most secure winner at the PPV (Kane) take the fall which is a good thing. Not a bad match but it's just a way to throw everyone into the main event at once, which is fine for building up the PPV main events.

Edge takes an FU post match, HHH takes the Clothesline, RK0 to HHH and a double chokeslam to JBL and Orton. Undertaker stands tall to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. This was a really entertaining show that went by fast. I'd have liked to see some better wrestling in there but the matches had to be fast due to the tournament. I'm glad they didn't go to any double eliminations as in an eight man tournament that's kind of excessive. Good show though and I want to watch Backlash now so that's a great sign. Good stuff.

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Impact Wrestling – February 7, 2013: They Can't Even Win A Glorified Handicap Match

Impact Wrestling

Date: February 7, 2013

Location: Manchester Arena, Manchester, England

Commentators: Mike Tenay, Tazz, Todd Keneley

We're still in England for the second of four shows. The main story at the moment is that Garret Bischoff and Wes Brisco FINALLY joined Aces and 8's, shocking a total of no one. Other than that we're on the Road to Lockdown which is four weeks from Sunday. That being said, we need a #1 contender. Oh and we've got Ray/Sting vs. Aces and 8's in a tables match tonight. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the Hogans/Ray and Aces and 8's.

Here are the bikers to open the show. Most of them are sans masks now and I can't say I'm any more impressed. Could it be because they NEVER WIN ANYTHING??? We get a video on Aces and 8's beating up Angle over the last few weeks. Apparently Wes and Garrett have been on the team for awhile now. Yeah I'm stunned too. Garrett says this is his new family and Brisco complains about being introduced in a Gut Check match. D-Von isn't worried about the tables match because Aces and 8's have an ace up their sleeve.

Tara and Jesse annoy Brooke so it's Tara vs. Tessmacher tonight.

X-Division Title: Kenny King vs. Zema Ion vs. Rob Van Dam

Hey look: a triple threat! RVD is defending and gets double teamed to start. Since Zema Ion sucks though, King turns on him and sends both he

and Van Dam to the floor. A corkscrew dive by King takes both guys down and one from Ion....mostly misses both guys. Back in and a missile dropkick takes King down but Van Dam comes back in almost immediately. King sends Ion to the floor again but RVD takes him down.

Ion breaks up Rolling Thunder and hits a middle rope tornado DDT for two. King and Ion go at it a bit with Ion hitting a flipping facebuster for two. Ion takes King down again for two more as the champion is on the floor. This is basically a one on one match with Van Dam popping in every now and then. King hits a pair of running knees to the ribs of Ion followed by a northern lights suplex, but RVD comes in with the Five Star to take out King and follows with the pin on Ion at 5:54.

Rating: C. The match was ok but what difference does this make at all? There's almost no story to it and the division is lucky to get a segment every two weeks. You pretty much saw the entire division out there in one match here, and that's a really bad sign. Bring some fresh blood into this thing or drop it already, because this is nothing worth seeing at all.

We get a package on TNA British Boot Camp, which is their version of Gut Check. A 5'3 guy named Rockstar Spud wins.

We look at the opening promo from Wes and Garrett earlier. It's still not impressive.

Bruce Prichard talks to D'Lo about Brisco sneaking on via Gut Check. I'm still thinking this isn't going to live up to whatever it's supposed to be.

Jesse comes out to run his mouth bout James Storm interrupts. Blah blah blah, I'm going to kick you in the face then drink, ring the bell.

James Storm vs. Jesse Godderz

Jesse takes over to start but Storm comes back with punches and a knee to the ribs followed by the Eye of the Storm. An enziguri from the corner sets up a running neckbreaker for no cover. Last Call ends this at 3:04.

Rating: D. Seriously, is there NO ONE ELSE that Storm can feud with? The

guy is over like free beer in a frat house and he's stuck beating up Jesse Godderz. I know the match with Roode at BFG wasn't that big but it's a bigger deal than what Storm is getting now. Nothing match here as Godderz continues to be decent, but Storm is WAY out of his league.

Tag Titles: Chavo Guerrero/Hernandez vs. Austin Aries/Bobby Roode

The Texans are defending and dear goodness please let the titles change tonight. Chavo and Roode start things off with the champion taking over with some headscissors to start. Aries comes in but runs into Hernandez who scares him away. SuperMex puts Aries on the top rope so Austin cartwheels away. Roode tells a posing Aries to turn around and there's the delayed vertical, but Roode makes the save.

A double suplex with Chavo helping out puts the challengers down and there's a slingshot hilo onto Aries. Roode pulls Chavo to the floor but the suicide dive misses, sending Bobby into the barricade. We take a break and come back with Roode breaking up a cover by Hernandez. Chavo chops away on Aries in the corner and it's back to Hernandez. A running splash gets two for Hernandez and here's Guerrero ago.

Roode finally cheats a bit and hits Chavo in the back so Aries can hit a discus forearm to take down Chavo and give the heels control. Tazz, now part of a team, goes on a rant about how much being in a tag team sucks before talking about how much he loves Aces and 8's. Off to Roode again for a chinlock as Tazz talks about sitting on a boil. Ok then. A top rope double ax hits Chavo on the floor and gets two for Austin back inside.

We hit a LONG chinlock by Roode before Aries comes in with some cheating. Chavo fights up and it's a double clothesline to put both guys down. There's the hot tag to Hernandez who cleans house, only to have Roode pull his own partner into the slingshot shoulder from Hernandez. SuperMex destroys Roode but Aries escapes Three Amigos. The heels are rammed together and Roode walks out, only to return as Aries hits Hernandez low. The spinebuster to Chavo sets up the 450 from Aries for the pin and the titles at 17:29.

Rating: B. I don't like the challengers but this was a very solid tag match. If nothing else these two will actually be interesting instead of

just sitting around doing nothing at all. This had a long heel in peril segment which you hardly ever see anymore. Good match here and nice to see a LONG TV match that means something.

Hulk and Ray have a chat about Ray being a good guy. He says he isn't and he'll prove it against Aces and 8's.

Video on AJ's career falling apart.

Tara vs. Miss Tessmacher

Jesse is barred from ringside and this is non-title. Tara keeps looking back for Jesse and screaming his name. A few headlocks put Tessmacher down but she comes back with the stupid Stink Face. Tara tries to bail but comes back in for the spinning side slam for two. The Widow's Peak doesn't work so it's off to a full nelson instead. Tara hooks a chinlock for a bit before Tessmacher comes back and hits a Tess Shock out of nowhere for the pin at 5:26.

Rating: D+. I don't like them, this match has been done to death, the girls still look good, and the division is still dying before our very eyes. What is the point of these random matches? To set up Tessmacher vs. Tara for the title again? You know, such a FRESH match as that, which we NEVER see anymore?

Here's Rockstar Spud to debut before the crowd. He gives a standard "I made it and this is my dream" promo before the Rob's come out to interrupt. Robbie E sends Big Rob to take him out but Big Rob steps aside to let Spud hit Robbie in the face, furthering the face turn. Big Rob does the fist pump.

Sting and Brooke do nothing of note.

We recap the bikers taking out Hardy's knee.

Sting/Bully Ray vs. D-Von/Doc

Tables match here and the TNA guys have face paint on ala Sting. The bikers are in trouble to start as Tazz goes on a rant about how the other bikers need to come out here for the save. This is still a big brawl for

the most part with nothing from Aces and 8's about two minutes in. Ray hits a Stinger Splash on D-Von in the corner and shakes the rails on the floor. Sting hits one as well and we take a break.

Back with Doc getting kicked down by Ray but the Bully misses an elbow. A big boot puts Ray on the floor and the guys pair off. Since it's an Aces and 8's match though, they get beaten down again and here are the tables. The bikers come back and try a double suplex through the table but Ray makes the save again.

Ray fights both of them off but gets sent to the floor for his efforts. Sting is loaded onto the table again but Ray pulls his brother to the floor. Sting crotches Doc on the top and it's a superplex...not through the table as Knox moves the wood. Sting fights them both off (duh) and Ray hulks up before sending D-Von through a table for the win at 14:07.

Rating: C-. It's a tag team tables match so what am I supposed to say here? These matches are almost always the same and it was clear that the bikers weren't going to win because that's just not what they do. This is clearly setting up Lockdown where hopefully this team is done for good.

The Hogans come out to celebrate of course, despite having nothing to do with this whatsoever.

Overall Rating: C+. This was decent but at the end of the day, Aces and 8's bring nothing to the table (pun intended) whatsoever. They're just not interesting and there's nothing at all to them to make us believe they're intimidating. They lose over and over again and they lose in the main event here. Other than that though the show was pretty solid stuff, even though it didn't set up anything for Lockdown.

Results

Rob Van Dam b. Zema Ion and Kenny King – Van Dam pinned Ion after a northern lights suplex from King

James Storm b. Jesse Godderz – Last Call

Austin Aries/Bobby Roode b. Chavo Guerrero/Hernandez – 450 Splash to Guerrero

Miss Tessmacher b. Tara – Tess Shocker

Sting/Bully Ray b. D-Von/Doc – Ray chokeslammed D-Von through a table

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Thought of the Day: More Proof Tag Wrestling Doesn't Work Anymore

After the big push last year, we're back down to HELL NO vs. the Scholars again and the same formula that has been used for years now. At the end of the day, the division isn't going to last long term and there's really no way around that. The TNA tag division is dead again now too with just the champions and apparently a thrown together team of two main eventers.

Smackdown – December 4, 2003: Chris Benoit's Showcase

Smackdown

Date: December 4, 2003

Location: HP Pavilion, San Jose, California

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

This is a request that I got a few weeks ago. This can best be

described as the Benoit Show, as he's facing Cena in a #1 contenders match with the winner facing Brock for the title in the main event. Yeah that's probably a spoiler, but screw it, this happened almost eight years ago. Other than that, there's not much to say about this show. Let's get to it.

We open with clips of a battle royal for the #1 contendership where Benoit and Cena hit the floor at the same time. This was pretty much perfect as all four feet hit at the same time. Lesnar took out Cena after that and A-Train and Nathan Jones (combining to make Team Lesnar which didn't last long) beat up Benoit. Both guys got F5's as well.

The still cool black and white theme opens us up.

Here's Brock to open the show. Brock starts a you tapped out chant (he tapped to Benoit at Survivor Series) but says that after tonight you'll have nothing to say. After tonight, he'll never tap out again. Unless there's a heel hook involved. Now the chant is starting to get on his nerves. He says Cena and Benoit intentionally tied last week so that no one would have to face him tonight. Lesnar hurts people, like Angle and Holly. He guarantees he'll make someone tap out tonight.

Rikishi/Scotty 2 Hotty vs. Basham Brothers

The Bashams are tag champions but this is non-title. Shaniqua is with the Bashams and is the dominatrix to their....whatever the term for that kind of person is. Danny jumps Rikishi to start and manages to avoid the Samoan Drop. Rikishi drops down onto the chest though and Basham is in trouble quickly. Off to Scotty and now it's Doug in trouble. Shaniqua trips Scotty behind the referee's back but is sent out for her efforts. Doug hits a Vader Bomb Elbow for two.

Off to Danny who works on the back and neck some more. The Bashams hit a double flapjack and a double nipup (nice) for two. Doug hooks an abdominal stretch but Scotty escapes and manages to get the tag to the fat man. Rikishi cleans house

and sets for a Stinkface but Shaniqua comes back and the twins switch. Rikishi gets hit low but Scotty hits the Worm on Doug. Samoan Drop to Danny gets the pin.

Rating: C-. Not a bad match here but I never was huge on Rikishi and Scotty as a team. The Bashams were the flavor of the month of the tag teams and the dominatrix thing never worked that well because no one cared about Linda (who drops two very audible F Bombs in her berating of them post match). Rikishi and Scotty would get the titles in two months.

Dawn Marie (HOT) is in the back with Heyman and Heyman turns down sex with her for some reason. She's his assistant I think. He asks her to take a memo, saying that Hardcore Holly's suspension is extended. Oh and go tell Shannon Moore to get in the ring.

Matt Morgan (yeah that Matt Morgan) is with Nathan Jones in the ring along with Heyman. Morgan was also part of Team Lesnar. We see clips of Morgan and Jones destroying Shannon Moore over the last two weeks. Heyman calls out Moore who is apparently being punished for Matt Hardy bailing to Raw. He says that Moore has the it factor and he keeps coming back for more. Tonight, Moore is in action.

Big Show vs. Shannon Moore

Moore hits a baseball slide to start. That's the extent of his offense in this match. Oh wait that was before the match started so the beating continues. Shannon fires off some forearms and has his head taken off by the US Champion. Show hits his step over legdrop which is called the Hog Log. Chokeslam ends this quick.

We get a tale of the tape between Benoit and Cena. Career accomplishments for Benoit: four IC Titles and two tag titles. Career accomplishments for Cena: PhD in Thuganomics and has battle rapped HALF of the Smackdown roster.

Noble asks Nidia to stay in the back because of her safety (she took mist in the eyes and is blind) but it's really because she costs him matches. Noble says he has an idea.

Sakoda vs. Jamie Noble

Sakoda was Tajiri's wing man. Nidia comes out with Noble anyway. Sakoda is a pretty muscular guy for a cruiserweight. Noble works over the arm so Sakoda uses the other arm to take Noble's head off. Sakoda hits a backbreaker for two and a belly to back for the same. Noble comes back with a neckbreaker and kicks away at Sakoda.

A middle rope legdrop gets two. Sakoda comes back with an exploder suplex but Noble hits a one knee Codebreaker for two and sends Sakoda to the floor. A suicide dive takes Sakoda out and throws Nidia in. Tajiri is with the referee so Noble throws Nidia into Sakoda and rolls him up for the pin.

Rating: C+. This was better than I expected. I don't remember much about Sakoda but I think he was part of what was supposed to be a Yakuza faction that never materialized. Nidia being blind wound up being a ruse like almost all other blind angles. I don't remember her being around much longer after this.

Noble is very excited about winning.

Cena makes fun of Josh Matthews when Benoit comes up and says he can make Cena tap anytime he wants.

Christmas in Iraq is coming.

John Cena vs. Chris Benoit

The winner gets Lesnar later tonight. Cena rhymes about the situation tonight before the match. He's a face at this point. Benoit jumps him immediately and knocks him into the corner. This is going to be mostly brawling. Suplex gets two for Benoit. Cena comes back with the pounding to the back and a

clothesline for two. They're both trying to end this quickly for the sake of conserving energy for Lesnar later.

After a surfboard hold by Cena, a spinebuster gets two for John. Benoit is holding his ribs so Cena adds a delayed vertical suplex for two. Proto Bomb gets two as well. Cena sets for the FU but Benoit counters into the Rolling Germans and says Cena can't see him. Swan Dive misses so Cena pumps the shoes up. Benoit comes back with chops but walks into the FU for the pin out of nowhere.

And never mind because Benoit's feet were in the ropes for a Dusty Finish. We take a break and come back with Benoit ramming Cena's shoulder into the mat and homing in on it to control. Northern Lights suplex gets two. Benoit chops away and hits a clothesline for two. Cena hits a hard right but that's the bad arm so he can't follow up. Benoit drops elbows on the arm for two.

Cena tries to go to the floor but Benoit gets him back in immediately. All Canadian right now. He cranks on the arm with a modified armbar but Cena fights back and hits the Throwback for two. Benoit trips the legs and puts on the Sharpshooter but Cena makes the rope. Benoit goes for the arm again but Cena grabs a bad FU (he fell down so it was more like a Death Valley Driver instead of the release Death Valley Driver that it usually is) and both guys are down. Big Show comes out for no apparent reason and the distraction allows Benoit to grab the Crossface for the tap out.

Rating: B-. Not a classic or anything but this was a good one. I couldn't quite go higher than this because it never hit that next level, but Cena wasn't ready to go there with Benoit yet. Big Show and the Dusty Finish didn't help either but you can't fault the guys in the ring for that. Good match.

Chavo is warming up when Eddie comes up. Eddie is going to the ring with Chavo but Chavo asks Eddie to stay in the back.

They've been having problems lately. He blames Eddie for his knee injury and tonight, it's about Chavo, not Eddie.

Chavo Guerrero vs. Shelton Benjamin

Chavo has a bad knee coming in. Eddie comes out anyway to tick Chavo off. Shelton jumps Chavo to start but Guerrero comes back with a headscissors. Eddie gets a lawn chair out of his lowrider and has an energy drink hat. You know the kind with the cans on the side that you can drink from. Chavo lands on the knee and Shelton superkicks the injury to take him down. He adds a Robinsdale Crunch because he's from Minnesota.

Shelton stays on the knee with a Flair knee crusher and then a basic leg lock. Eddie looks hilarious with the energy cans on the side of his head. Now he's got a magazine to read. Shelton hooks another leg lock and Chavo is in trouble. Chavo comes back with some clotheslines and a dropkick for two. A tornado DDT puts Benjamin down but Haas gets the referee. Eddie comes in and hits the Frog Splash on Shelton and Chavo gets the pin. I don't think Chavo saw the splash.

Rating: D+. Nothing much to the match here but it was more of an angle than a match anyway. Chavo would turn heel soon enough and fight Eddie at the Rumble, followed by Eddie turning into a mega star and winning the world title the following month. These two are always interesting to watch.

Chavo yells at Eddie post match and doesn't want to ride with him.

Tazz plays Final Fantasy.

Video package on Lesnar.

Benoit says that Lesnar is in fact an animal but that video didn't show Lesnar tapping out last month so let's look at it now.

The FBI is taking bets on the main event and Brock is a 3-2

favorite. A-Train bets \$10,000 on Benoit. Remember that he's part of Team Lesnar.

Smackdown World Title: Brock Lesnar vs. Chris Benoit

Brock jumps Benoit during his entrance and hammers on the ribs. Benoit comes back and clotheslines Lesnar to the floor. He chops at the chest and sends Lesnar shoulder first into the post. Benoit throws Lesnar in for a Crossface attempt but Lesnar bails to the floor. Lesnar gets in a shot at the ribs and Brock takes over again. In a cool move, Brock sets for a fisherman's suplex but holds Benoit up almost in a rack position before dropping him down.

Benoit gets sent to the floor and is rammed face first onto the announce table. Cole's mic seems to mess up as he sounds like he's on the arena mic. Back in because Lesnar wants to win by tapout like he promised. Off to a choke with a bodyscissors by the champion. Benoit fights up but walks into a tilt-a-whirl powerslam for two. Brock is bleeding from the nose.

We take a break and come back...with the same thing. I'm not sure if that was a break or not. Taz and Cole are whispering and I don't think we're supposed to hear it. I think this is footage from the break. That would explain something from Cena vs. Benoit as well as the announcers said welcome back but I didn't see anything change. Lesnar puts the hold back on and Cole starts talking again.

Lesnar charges at Benoit and they tumble out to the floor. Benoit goes into the steps and the ribs are in big trouble. Lesnar seems more willing to take the countout win this time. Benoit pulls him to the floor and pounds away, sending Brock into the steps as well. Brock runs back into the ring but catches Benoit in a release German suplex. He charges into the corner but the shoulder goes into the post and Benoit snaps off Rolling Germans.

A shoulder block puts Brock down and Benoit hits the Swan Dive but can't cover. A delayed cover gets two. The crowd is way into this now too. Benoit goes for the Crossface but Brock gets an arm out to block the hold. Chris settles for an armbar instead but Brock counters with an attempted side slam.

Benoit's legs hit the referee though as Benoit grabs the Crossface. Lesnar taps but there's no referee. Benoit lets it go and walks into the F5 which only gets two. The referee goes down again so Lesnar gets a chair and blasts Benoit's knee with it. He hooks the Brock Lock (Benoit's knee goes over Lesnar's neck and Brock sits on his back while cranking on the knee) and Benoit passes out.

Rating: B+. It was around this point and possibly because of this match that there was no way the company could avoid putting the title on Benoit anymore. Lesnar would go on to feud with Hardcore Holly of all people while Benoit would go on to win the Rumble. Very good match that could have been the main event of a PPV.

Brock puts Benoit in a Crossface position and makes him slap the mat post match because he's a jerk.

Benoit is helped up and gets a lot of cheers.

Overall Rating: A. This was back in the day of the single branded PPVs so on the off months for the other brand, you would get super shows like this one. The PPVs sucked most of the time but shows like these were AWESOME. It was a Benoit showcase here and there's nothing wrong with that at all. With two very good matches and some other ok stuff, you can't ask much more from a free TV show than that.

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Smackdown – May 20, 2011 – Just Kind of There

Smackdown

Date: May 20, 2011

Location: American Bank Center Arena Corpus Christi, Texas

Commentators: Michael Cole, Booker T, Josh Matthews

We have one more show before Over the Limit and this is it. I wouldn't expect much tonight other than a final push to the PPV as the card seems to be mostly set already. Orton and Christian will likely have some more interaction tonight but other than that I don't know of anything that's likely to happen. Anyway, let's get to it.

Do You Know Your Enemy? Mine at the moment is a bad cough that I've had all week.

Orton vs. Henry tonight.

Christian vs. Sheamus

We get an old school inset promo from Sheamus as he comes to the ring where he says it took Christian 15 years to win a world title and it took him two months. Rather true actually. Sheamus uses power to take over early and Christian is in trouble. Christian manages to send the pale dude to the floor but gets caught by a shoulder through the ropes.

Christian speeds things up as we hit the floor. And never mind as we go back into the ring and Sheamus shoves him off the top to the floor and we take a break. Back with Sheamus

getting a powerslam for two. Off to a chinlock by Sheamus as they rest a bit. Reverse DDT gets two for Christian as does a cross body. Middle rope elbow looks to set up the Killswitch but Christian walks into the Irish Curse for two.

Tornado DDT by Christian as this is a rather nice TV match so far. That only gets two though because regular moves can't get pins remember? Finishers only. Sheamus is knocked to the apron and hits a slingshot shoulder block to get two as well. And scratch what I said about finishers only as Christian grabs a small package for the pin at 8:43 shown on 12:13.

Rating: B-. The ending was a bit abrupt but this was a pretty solid opening match. Sheamus tends to work rather well with guys a bit smaller than him and this was no exception. Solid back and forth match here but the ending left a bit to be desired with it seeming to not follow the buildup it had for the most part. Still good overall though.

Henry comes out for the double beatdown post match. Orton comes out very slowly for the save but watches a bit first. So Orton is a voyeur now?

Long video on Miz vs. Cena on Sunday.

We run down the rest of the card for Sunday to fill in more time. Brie Bella is defending against Kelly Kelly apparently.

Speaking of the Bellas they're in the back and Grisham asks them about the beatdown on Monday from Kharma. Brie is asked why she let Nikki get beaten down and they get in an argument about why they let each other get beaten down. They agree that they would have done the same thing in each other's place so this is totally pointless.

Natalya vs. Brie Bella

Non-title here as I guess Natalya is now just there to fill in

a space. Booker rambles on about biscuits and butter and Kharma as even Josh laughs at how out there he sounds. Natalya takes her down with relative ease and gets two. What looks like a Boston Crab can't go on so Brie takes over, working on the arm. Discus lariat gets two for Natalya as this is a rather boring match with the fans totally dead. Delayed vertical suplex gets no cover. Brie sends her shoulder first into the corner and gets a horrible looking X-Factor for the pin at 3:01.

Rating: D-. Yeah shockingly enough a match with one of the Bellas was junk. The only thing they're good for is shaking their hips and their in ring work proves that. This was another weak Divas match as Nattie is now losing clean to Brie Bella of all people. It never ceases to amaze me how fast a long running champion can fall like that.

We talk about Big Zeke getting thrown out of Corre and he'll be here next.

Here's Jackson who says he came to SD to write a new chapter in the Book of Ezekiel. He joined the Corre to make an impact and talks about how Corre took over. Not really but we'll go with that. He wants to know if Corre needed him or if he needed Corre. The last two weeks he's taken a beating but they can't break him. He's not going to sleep until they've all suffered.

Here comes Corre for the beatdown but Teddy interrupts them and makes a six man tag.

Corre vs. Ezekiel Jackson/Kane/Big Show

Slater is in tights now instead of trunks. Show starts for the Bald Brotherhood to face Gabriel. The title match on Sunday is against Ryan and Punk. Why would it be against them when McGillicutty and Otunga beat the champions? Why am I

trying to make sense of this? Kane comes in as this has been one sided so far. Off to Slater whose luck is about the same. Booker wants to step outside with Cole. I guess he's afraid to cross the street and needs Cole to hold his hand.

Barrett gets the tag and is rather skeptical to face Kane so he gets Jackson instead. Barrett beats him down but can't suplex him. Jackson clotheslines him to the floor as we take a break. Back with Jackson running over Gabriel and it's off to Big Show. Showstopper (standing leg drop if I remember the name correctly) puts Gabriel down as does something resembling a superkick.

Back to Jackson as the beating continues. Totally one sided so far. Barrett comes in and has the best luck so he tags out to Slater immediately. Jackson runs over Slater now and Kane adds the top rope clothesline. Sidewalk slam gets two but Barrett pulls the top rope down to send Kane to the floor. Corre takes over as Slater throws on a chinlock which gets him nowhere.

Kane suplexes his way out of it but Barrett stops the tag. Double big boot puts both guys

down and it's back off to Slater again. Big uppercut puts Heath down and a double tag brings in Gabriel and Jackson. All Big Zeke here but everything breaks down quickly. Jackson slams Gabriel about four times and a torture rack (love that move for Jackson) ends this at 8:10 shown of 11:40.

Rating: C. Just a six man here with the good guys dominating almost the entire time. I'm skeptical about who wins both title matches on Sunday but it's not like this told us anything about the tag champions really. Either way, not a terrible match but just kind of there really. Zeke having a new finisher is definitely a good thing for him though as he really needed one and a Torture Rack is perfect.

Christian suggests we look at some tape from earlier which is Orton taking his time getting down there for the save. He's going to be 100% on Sunday.

This isn't from the show but as I'm reviewing this news broke that Randy Savage died in a car wreck. That completely blew me away and I have no idea what to even think about it. Sad indeed.

Chavo Guerrero vs. Daniel Bryan

Pre match Chavo says that he brought Sin Cara here and how he's going to beat Bryan in five minutes as opposed to the fifteen it took Cara to do it last week. Chavo vs. Cara is confirmed for the PPV. There's a countdown clock on screen for this. First minute passes with nothing more than basic stuff. Bryan gets a dropkick and drop toehold to take over. Chavo gets his feet up in the corner to get two with 3:25 to go.

Booker and Cole get into it again as has become a tradition on Fridays anymore. Chavo locks in a reverse chinlock which doesn't last long. They exchange rollups and things speed up a bit with about two minutes to go. Here come the kicks and it's LeBell Lock time. He can't quite get it on so he hits the floor with a minute left. Big dive to the floor takes Chavo out and the missile dropkick misses with thirty five seconds left. Chavo goes with Three Amigos with very little time left. Frog Splash only gets two and the clock runs out at 5:00.

Rating: C+. Pretty clear that we were going with the time limit but that was the point in this case so it's nothing to complain about. Chavo as usual works rather well out there and with a guy like Bryan it's not like they were asking much of him. This was absolutely fine and it worked rather well indeed. Good match and nice to see Bryan not get pinned

again.

Chavo throws him to the floor post match and Sin Cara comes out for the save, hitting a rana to send Chavo to the floor.

Here's Cody with Ted for the paper bag thing. PLEASE tell me they're not reforming Legacy and messing up Cody's push for the sake of a weak tag team. Cody gets a bag especially for Ted who doesn't want to put it on but does anyway. It turns out to be a joke for the sake of making fun of Corpus Christi as Ted speaks in a bad Mexican accent. The fans boo and Cody yells at them to put the bags on. Ted takes the bag off and says bring out his opponent.

Ted DiBiase vs. Trent Barreta

Ted hammers him back into the corner as I think we have a squash on our hands here. Apparently Cody called Ted a shrub or something, meaning his career has fallen apart. Trent takes Ted down with a standing Swanton for two. Enziguri has Ted staggering but a tornado DDT is countered into a sitout powerbomb. Dream Street ends this clean in 1:25 for no rating of course. Trent gets paper bagged post match.

Great Khali vs. Jey Uso

What do you think is going to happen here? No Singh with Khali here. Jey tries to get some kicks in but Khali throws him around. A dropkick sends Khali into the corner and here's Jinder Mahal to yell at Khali some more. Khali goes to the floor to stare him down and almost gets counted out because of it. Back in the chop and Khali Bomb ends this at 2:05. Total squash for all intents and purposes. Someone, perhaps Jimmy Uso, comes in and gets chopped also as he checks on Jey.

Apparently Christian said he'll be 100%. Orton says that's not going to be enough.

Randy Orton vs. Mark Henry

Henry takes him back into the corner to start and the power game takes over rather quickly. The less orange than usual Orton is sent to the floor and the beating continues. Back in and Orton gets a few shots in and a dropkick sends Henry to the floor. Back with another dropkick doing the same. It was one of those commercials where nothing changed so I'm not adding the time to the clock.

Back in and Henry gets a powerslam for no cover as Booker freaks out. Oh there's the cover but there was a delay in between. Henry shouts that he owns Orton. I wonder if he sees fried chicken when he looks at Orton. Off to an armbar because when you think big, strong, mad, ticked off Texan, you think armbar. Orton hits the rope and runs over Henry and adds some knee drops to take over.

The Garvin Stomp begins as it amazes me that he's stealing stuff from Ronnie Freaking Garvin. Dude, were there no Kansas Jayhawk moves available? Henry hits the floor to avoid the RK0 but gets caught in position for the elevated DDT. And never mind as here's Sheamus for the DQ at 5:45.

Rating: C-. Not much of a main event at all here but at the same time they were just doing this for the save at the end which is fine. Henry is a guy that I do not get the point in but he's gotten pushes for nearly 15 years now so there you are. Anyway, weak match for the most part and nothing of note at all as it was more there to set up an angle rather than be a match but whatever.

Christian does the same thing that Orton did earlier and waits a bit on the stage before coming in for the save. Randy is

all ticked off about the delay but Christian is like dude I was having an awesome game of Parcheesi with Corre. Anyway the monsters come in again and get beaten down. RK0 to Henry sets up a handshake to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. Not much here but we did get two additional matches for the PPV. There was no real feeling here of needing to see anything but they played up some of the PPV matches with the emphasis being on the world title, which is exactly what they needed to do. I can't imagine that Christian will get the title back on Sunday but they've at least made it seem possible which is the right idea. Not bad, but nothing special at all.

Results

Christian b. Sheamus – Small Package

Brie Bella b. Natalya – Faceplant

Ezekiel Jackson/Kane/Big Show b. Corre – Torture Rack to Gabriel

Daniel Bryan vs. Chavo Guerrero went to a time limit draw

Ted DiBiase b. Trent Barreta – Dream Street

Randy Orton b. Mark Henry via DQ when Sheamus interfered