

A Few More Thoughts on Wrestlemania/The Raw Crowd

Since we're now about four days removed from Wrestlemania and three from Raw, I figured I'd take another quick look at the two shows since a lot of their impacts were probably lost during the live reviews. Wrestlemania

The more I think about it, the worse the show looks. To begin with, how in the world can you have a nine match card running FOUR HOURS and have to cut a match due to time constraints? There were no backstage segments, the Hall of Fame stuff was quick, five matches didn't even make it to eleven minutes, and the longest match was 24:01. But somehow we had to cut a match for time? Let's see. Could it have been:

Rock vs. Cena promo – 2 minutes

Announcers play with WWE action figures – 1 minute

Package on the Special Olympics – 3 minutes

John Cena Make-A-Wish video – 2 minutes

Video on the Pre-Show – 1 minute

Rock vs. Cena promo – 2 minutes

Diddy Intro – 2 minutes

Diddy Concert – 8 minutes

Video on Slim Jims – 1 minute

Rock vs. Cena promo – 2 minutes

Gee, could it be the TWENTY FOUR MINUTES spent either hyping up stuff we ALREADY BOUGHT or WWE patting themselves on the back for how great they are? Yeah instead of having Ryder and

3MB in the back doing something amusing, we need to hear about how awesome it is that WWE has sent Slim Jims to soldiers.

Moving on, there's the major problem with this show: it wasn't that good. The best match was either Undertaker vs. Punk or HHH vs. Lesnar and neither of them are anything resembling a classic. They're both good but I want a bit more when I think of two of the biggest matches of the year. Both were more than fine for second and third biggest matches on Wrestlemania though.

This brings us to the main event which just wasn't very good. It was exactly what we were expecting and while there were some good spots in there, the majority of the match did nothing for me. I'm very tired of the idea of using five finishers a match as the only offense as they stop being finishers and are just moves at that point. Cena winning was the right move, but the problem at the end of the day was that Rock winning the title didn't do much. It wasn't a good title reign and he was really just there to pass the title along to Cena.

As for the other major matches, let's take a quick look at a few.

Swagger vs. Del Rio: meh. This feud stopped being interesting about two weeks in and Swagger not even getting an intro showed how lame it was in the eyes of the company. The match was nothing of note (again clipped because of time, because WE NEED DIDDY!) and Swagger looks like the jobber he's been for years.

Lesnar vs. HHH. While the opening part ran long, the match was

very physical and brutal. Now that being said, why in the world am I supposed to look at Brock as a serious threat again? The match vs. Cena made Brock look like a BEAST and Cena looked like he was trying to survive rather than win the match. That made for a great showcase and a great match. The matches with HHH on the other hand were ALL about HHH. Think about it: Brock was a guy there for HHH to get beaten down by and then make the Superman comeback against months later. Lesnar was just a guy for HHH to beat and nothing more. This is Brock Lesnar, not Khali or Henry, but he's being treated like a regular monster.

Overall Wrestlemania was entirely forgettable. Nothing on the show was incredibly fun or interesting, so it came off as very lame. Out of the 29 shows in the series, it's probably not even in the top 20. That's not a good sign coming off last year's incredible show.

Now on to Raw, which was very interesting for a lot of different reasons.

Let's get the big one out of the way right now: Raw sucked this week. Here are the matches:

Squash

Rematch from Mania's pre-show with a stupid booking decision

VERY boring handicap match

MITB cash-in

6 man tag to get people not on Wrestlemania on TV

The bizarre match

90 second Fandango match ending in a run-in

Mania match on Raw because WWE LOVES SLIM JIMS!

3 minute match to set up the show ending angle

Other stupid stuff on Raw:

Booker not letting us just have Henry vs. Cena for the title (which would have been a better booking move given the ending)

Colter and Swagger trying to get a heel reaction by asking the fans to chant USA

Ziggler being world champion

The Twitter Poll being canceled after the results were shown on screen

Now we get to the big deal of the show: the crowd. Let me get this out of the way: that crowd was not a good thing. It was entertaining for a bit, but eventually they decided to take over the show and make it all about them, because those 12,000 or so people are more important than the fans at home or the people in the ring. Were they amusing for a bit? Yes they were, but as soon as they made the entire show about them, it was too much. It was annoying in ECW and it was annoying here, along with being disrespectful to the people who are working hard in the ring.

Raw sucked on Monday and they're not going to have a crowd like that to take the focus off that in the future. That's a very bad sign for them going forward.

Monday Night Raw – April 8, 2013: I've Never Seen Anything Like This

Monday Night Raw

Date: April 8, 2013

Location: IZOD Center, East Rutherford, New Jersey

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, John Bradshaw Layfield

It's the night after Wrestlemania and we have a new world champion here on Raw. Cena pinned Rock after a somewhat lackluster match, giving Cena not only his 14th world title but his 4th title win at Mania alone. Other than that, HHH still has a job, Undertaker has still never lost at Wrestlemania, Shield is still undefeated and Del Rio retained the title. Tonight is usually a huge show with a big surprise, so let's get to it.

Here's Cena to open the show. We also get a Tweet from Rock saying that he tore his abdominal muscles off the bone during his match last night. Cena says it should be everyone's dream to win in the main event of Wrestlemania, because you get the adulation, the respect and the cheers (of which he gets very few on all counts). He says the fans have known him for ten years now and it seems they're angry tonight. Actually Cena is upset too because Wrestlemania is over.

However, it's the night after Wrestlemania which is when things happen. Last year he got beaten up by Lesnar but he's still here now. Maybe he'll do a little dance. Maybe with a kick. Maybe with a little shake. "Maybe even a little heel turn?" Anyway he says he's the champion and this is what he wants for a Wrestlemania celebration: to defend the WWE Championship. He doesn't care who it is....and here's Mark Henry.

Henry gets in Cena's face and says that he won his match too, just like

the champion. The fans chant for Sexual Chocolate so Cena cracks a joke. Henry yells some more about Ryback so Cena cracks more jokes. Cena agrees to defend the title tonight against Henry but here's Booker T. He says Rock is #1 contender to the WWE Championship (Cena: "Once in a lifetime best two out of three?") because Rock has a guaranteed rematch. Therefore, if Henry wants a shot, he has to beat Cena in a one on one match tonight. Henry promises to put Cena in the Hall of Pain.

Alberto faces Colter/Swagger in a handicap match tonight.

Daniel Bryan vs. Big E. Langston

We get a Tweet from Shield saying that they're going to do something historic. Langston shoves Bryan down to start and hits a hard running charge into the corner to keep control. A delayed backdrop puts Bryan down and Langston pounds away in the corner. Bryan comes back with a bunch of kicks to the chest and a hard one to the head, but an AJ distraction lets Ziggler crotch Bryan. As Kane goes after Dolph, Big E. throws Daniel over the top and onto Kane for the save. Back inside and the Big Ending gets the pin on Bryan at 2:17. Total squash.

Kurt Warner, former NFL quarterback, hosts a new reality show called The Moment on USA and is at Raw tonight.

Intercontinental Title: The Miz vs. Wade Barrett

Barrett is challenging after losing the title last night on the pre-show. Wade pounds away in the corner to start but Miz comes back with a left hand and a snap suplex for two. Off to a chinlock by the champion as the fans chant for Barrett. Wade escapes but gets caught in a quick sunset flip for two more and it's back to the chinlock. That's easily broken up as we now talk about the rugby player Barrett is named after. Wade comes back and sends Miz into the ropes for a neckbreaker to the apron as we take a break.

Back with Barrett getting a near fall off the Winds of Change. Miz rolls to the floor so Wade can drop an elbow off the apron for two. Off to a chinlock on the champion for a bit but Miz fights up and pounds away. A running knee and big boot put Barrett down but they botch the Reality

Check (the backbreaker went fine but Wade fell down before the neckbreaker started).

The corner clothesline hits a bit better and Miz's short DDT gets two. Wasteland is escaped and Miz puts on the Figure Four, only to have Wade make the rope. Barrett comes back with a quick elbow and goes to the middle rope (since nothing has been done to his leg at all so far right?). Miz breaks it up but gets slammed into the top turnbuckle. Barrett hits the Bull Hammer and regains the title at 13:00.

Rating: C+. The match wasn't bad actually but the booking makes less than no sense. This puts Barrett at 1-2 in the last three weeks against Miz, but he walks out with the title anyway. Naturally there's going to be a third match because that's how WWE works, but this whole feud (what are they fighting over anyway?) is worthless and done for.

Vickie and Maddox are arguing in the back when Sheamus comes in. He wants Big Show tonight but Brad says Sheamus will owe them one. Sheamus glares him down so Vickie says she'll give Sheamus a match. She doesn't say who it's going to be against though.

Randy Orton comes up to Booker in the back and asks for a match with Big Show tonight. Booker says Sheamus has already gotten that match tonight but Orton says Booker is a GM and a Hall of Famer. This makes Booker overrule Vickie and give Orton the match instead. Great. Now we get battling GMs. Again.

Here are Colter and Swagger with Zeb asking for the fans' support for their handicap match up next against Del Rio. He wants the fans to chant USA when Del Rio comes out.

Alberto Del Rio vs. Zeb Colter/Jack Swagger

The heels have to tag so Swagger starts things off. The fans want Ziggler. Not much of note to start until Swagger is sent to the floor. Del Rio hits a suicide dive to send Swagger into the announce table and hits a running stomp for good measure. A top rope cross body gets two on Swagger but Zeb gets in a cheap shot, allowing Swagger to take out the world champion's knee.

The knee is worked on even more until Del Rio fights back and tries for the enziguri in the corner. It misses by six inches but thankfully Swagger doesn't sell it. They trade some standing switches and there's the Patriot Lock, but Del Rio rolls out quickly. Del Rio puts the armbreaker on over the top rope until a four count but is knocked into the barricade for good measure as we take a break.

Back with Jack hitting a belly to back suplex for two and cranking on the leg some more. Jack misses a charge into the corner and hits the post, allowing Alberto to make his comeback with some clotheslines and the tilt-a-whirl backbreaker. The backbreaker re-injures the champion's knee though and both guys are down again.

A hard kick to Swagger's head gets two but the armbreaker is countered into a belly to belly for two. Off to the Patriot Lock again but Alberto makes a rope. The hold goes on for the third time but Alberto pulls him into the armbreaker as he did last night. Jack taps at 11:06. Colter never got into the match.

Rating: D+. This wasn't terrible but at the same time it's the same.....screw the rating because we've got music.

Post match Alberto has his leg looked at and HERE COMES ZIGGLER!

Smackdown World Title: Alberto Del Rio vs. Dolph Ziggler

The place goes NUTS for Ziggler as he stomps away on the leg and head of Alberto. The Fameasser hits for two but Ziggler misses a splash in the corner. The enziguri in the corner hits for a VERY close two and there's the armbreaker. Ziggler cranks on the bad knee to break the hold and the Zig Zag gives us a new champion at 2:15.

If that's not enough, here's Undertaker. He talks about dedicating the match to Paul Bearer....and here's Shield. They surround the ring and all get on the apron at the same time. Cue Kane and Bryan for the save before there's any contact. As usual, Shield runs when the numbers are even.

In the back, Ziggler says he's going to go show off his new title.

R-Truth/Santino Marella/Zack Ryder vs. 3MB

No entrances for any of these guys in this random tag match. Truth and Heath start things off with Slater being slammed down. Santino comes in, thrusts his pelvis, gets punched once, and bails. Off to Ryder vs. Mahal with Zack getting beaten down on the floor by a cheating McIntyre. Apparently Drew is legal now and hits a big boot to the jaw for no cover.

Off to Slater for some more beating before it's back to McIntyre for an armbar. A neckbreaker puts Drew down and there's the hot tag to Santino. He cleans house on Slater with his usual stuff but Mahal breaks up a near fall. Everything breaks down and the Cobra is enough to pin Slater at 3:30.

Rating: D. I have no idea what the point of this was. Were they running short or something and needed to fill in five minutes with something like this? None of the guys have anything going on right now so let's spend a few minutes on them here to fill in a gap...I guess?

We look at the week in New York/New Jersey to promote Wrestlemania.

Orton and Sheamus argue in the back. Sheamus says he has this and Orton isn't pleased.

Last night Big Show said he didn't turn on his partners but rather they turned on him. He tagged himself in and yeah, he saved the team from the TripleBomb. Then later on, Orton stole the tag which should have belonged to him because Orton had to take his thunder. No one is taking Show's thunder again. That's not the route he wants to take anymore. The only thing important to him anymore is himself.

Here's Sheamus to ask who wants to see him face Big Show. He calls out Vickie to make it official but here's Orton instead. Randy gets in Sheamus' face and says that Big Show is his tonight. He asks the fans who wants to see him beat up Big Show and the fans seem pretty split. The solution? TWITTER POLL!

Back from a break and Orton wins the poll 77-23. Before the match though, here are Booker and Vickie. Instead of Orton vs. Big Show, it's Orton vs. Sheamus and the winner gets Big Show. So the poll happened....why?

Sheamus vs. Randy Orton

They shove each other to start and the fans do an OLE chant. Orton hits a snapmare but Sheamus avoids a knee drop. Sheamus hits a pair of knees for his own for two and starts working on the arm. Orton comes back with another knee to the chest as the match keeps going. Randy hooks a chinlock as the fans think a four minutes old match is boring.

Now Sheamus hooks a chinlock as the announcers talk about going to London in a few weeks for Raw. Now the fans chant for Rob Van Dam. Now it's HBK. Orton slowly stomps away as the match is completely ignored. The fans are now chanting for JBL as Sheamus gets two off the rolling fireman's carry. Sheamus goes up top and the fans chant for Lawler. This is BIZARRE. Orton dropkicks Sheamus out of the air and now they're chanting Cole as we take a break.

Back with the fans chanting what sounded like DDP and then ECW as Sheamus makes a comeback. The Irish Curse hits for two as the crowd is doing the Wave. JBL: "I wish Michael would drown in it." Sheamus hits his knee to the ribs and the ten forearms in the ropes as the fans suddenly start cheering along. A suplex brings Orton back in as Sheamus is smiling. Orton's backbreaker puts Sheamus as we get a Randy Savage chant. Even the announcers are giving up at this point.

The powerslam and t-bone suplex put Sheamus down as the HBK chant starts again. There's the Elevated DDT and Orton loads up the RK0, only to be shoved off into White Noise. I think the fans are booing Sheamus but how can you tell in this match? The Brogue Kick misses and here comes Big Show as I think everyone knew was about to happen. He throws Sheamus into the post, presumably ending the match at 15:10. Fans: "Thank you Big Show."

Rating: N/A. I have almost no idea what happened in this match but the crowd stole the show here. The thing I don't get is that while the match was slow paced, it wasn't THAT bad. This is a case where the fans just did not care what was going on and found ways to entertain themselves. I've never seen anything like this but it was awesome in a way. For an actual grade, we'll go roughly C- or so.

Post match Show KO's Orton and hits a BIG spear on the floor. The fans chant FIRE RANDY as Orton is launched into the announce table. Show picks up the announcers' chairs and tries to throw them into the ring but only hits the ropes both times. Fans: "ONE MORE TIME!" Show walks away instead.

We recap Shield invading Undertaker's speech earlier.

Fandango vs. Kofi Kingston

The fans are still hot and it seems to be for Fandango. Fandango dances around Kofi before Kingston sends him into the corner. The fans are HUMMING FANDANGO'S THEME MUSIC. Not that it matters as Jericho runs in for the DQ at 1:30.

Post match Jericho destroys Fandango by whipping into whatever he can find. They head inside and there are the Walls of Jericho for good measure. Referees finally come out to break it up. A Codebreaker leaves Fandango laying. The referee declares Fandango the winner and from his back in agony, Fandango corrects his pronunciation. The crowd basically starts a dance party to Fandango's music.

Video on Cena's media appearances today.

We look at HHH getting his arm looked at. He's fine apparently.

Here's Heyman (crowd ERUPTS) in the back with something to say. His guys lost last night but it took HHH 23 minutes to beat Lesnar. Shawn and HHH aren't here because of the beatings they took last night at Lesnar's hands. Paul says Lesnar is ready for a fight TONIGHT. That isn't happening though, because Brock doesn't fight for free. Instead, Heyman wants to talk about Punk who is going to tell the fans how he feels....next week.

Rhodes Scholars/Bellas vs. Funkadactyls/Tons of Funk

This was scheduled for last night but got bumped for time reasons. We're joined in progress after a break with Naomi hitting the Rear View on one of the Bellas. Off to Cody but Naomi hits a rana on him anyway. Tensai comes in and launches Cody into the corner before hitting a RUNNING FLIP

DIVE into the corner. Cody hits a Disaster Kick to send Tensai into 619 position.

The Bellas smack their hips onto Tensai's head and the Wind-Up Elbow gets a BIG reaction. The hot tag brings in Brodus for his usual stuff and a kind of slide into a cover gets two. Everything breaks down and Sandow is crushed between the big men. A double splash ends Damien at 2:28.

We look at The Moment again.

John Cena vs. Mark Henry

Non-title here and if Henry wins, he gets a title shot at some point in the future. Cena ducks under Henry and dances a bit. He pounds on Henry but gets run over by a single shot from Mark. The fans are behind Henry of course. Mark pounds on Cena in the corner but misses a splash, allowing Cena to pound away. Henry rolls to the floor as we hear about Rock tearing his abdominal muscle off his pelvis bone in addition to having a hernia.

They go back to the announce table so here's a chant for the table. Henry loads up the announce table but Cena escapes the World's Strongest Slam. Mark rams him back first into the post but Cena sends him into the steps and slides back inside for the countout win at 3:29. Seriously that's it.

Rating: D+. Again what can you expect here? They didn't have the time to do much here but what we got wasn't bad. Cena is the kind of guy who could have a good match against Henry if given the time, but again what can you ask for with about two hundred seconds to a match? Nothing to see here.

Post match Henry lays out Cena but Ryback makes the save. Ryback lays out Henry with a Meat Hook....and turns to look at Cena. The fans chant YES but Ryback pulls Cena to his feet. Cena stares at him and Ryback nods. Cena poses on the ropes and Ryback does FEED ME MORE. Cena looks at Ryback....AND THERE'S THE MEAT HOOK! Shell Shock to Cena ends the show and we've got a heel turn.

Overall Rating: C+. I've seen over 40,000 matches and well over 2000

shows. I have NEVER seen anything like this crowd tonight. I'm pretty sure they started because they were bored and then they just took off. As for the show...eh it wasn't terrible, but the first hour SUCKED. I'm sick of these GM's having to hold our hands through every match being made and taking up so much time because saying "these two have issues, tonight they fight" is too complex. Anyway, a lot of stuff happened tonight and it's going to be interesting to see the fallout of it. Good show overall and FAR more interesting than I was expecting.

Results

Big E. Langston b. Daniel Bryan – Big Ending

Wade Barrett b. The Miz – Bull Hammer

Alberto Del Rio b. Jack Swagger/Zeb Colter – Cross Armbreaker to Swagger

Dolph Ziggler b. Alberto Del Rio – Zig Zag

Zack Ryder/Santino Marella/R-Truth b. 3MB – Cobra to Slater

Sheamus b. Randy Orton via DQ when Big Show interfered

Fandango b. Kofi Kingston via DQ when Chris Jericho interfered

John Cena b. Mark Henry via countout

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