

No Way Out 2007: They Made It Big

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Date: February 18, 2007

Location: Staples Center, Los Angeles, California

Attendance: 14,000

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

It's that show where WWE pretends that it matters while showing us a commercial for Wrestlemania. The main event is a tag match between the Wrestlemania main events, which should be a quality though unimportant match. Other than that, we are getting a Divas Talent Show, which should be as exciting as it sounds. Let's get to it.

The opening video focuses on the tag match, because that's about all that matters around here.

Commentary welcomes us to the show, with JBL ranting about the Spanish team.

Chris Benoit/Hardys vs. MVP/MNM

Bonus match which combines...well just one feud as MVP and Benoit haven't had any major issues. Matt and Mercury slug it out to start until Mercury charges into a raised boot in the corner. The Hardys start taking over on the arm until Mercury pulls him down by the hair. Nitro comes in and gets his arm cranked as well so MVP will try it instead. That's fine with Benoit, who is right there to slam him down.

MVP gets chopped into the corner and MNM bails away in a hurry. Benoit gets two off a snap suplex and hands it off to Jeff, who gets slowed down by a rake to the eyes. Nitro comes in for the big staredown and suckers Jeff outside, where Mercury gets in a cheap shot. Back in and we hit the chinlock

from Nitro, followed by one from Mercury. A suplex gives MVP two but Jeff gets to the corner for a quick Whisper in the Wind. It's back to Matt to pick up the pace but MVP takes him down into a cravate.

Ballin gets two on Matt and Mercury comes in to go after Matt's face again. Matt fights out of Nitro's front facelock and hits a clothesline, allowing the hot tag off to Benoit. A double German suplex drops MNM and everything breaks down. Poetry In Motion hits MVP and another suplex gets two on Mercury. Nitro dives off the apron with a clothesline to Jeff but has to dive back in to break up the Crossface on MVP. Matt saves Benoit from the Snapshot and it's the Crossface to make Mercury tap.

Rating: B. I can always go for a good six man and they were going pretty fast throughout here. Mixing up a pair of feuds (or at least one feud and two more people) opens up some extra options and keeps things from being the same stuff over and over. Really good opener here and that shouldn't be the biggest surprise.

Vickie Guerrero has some options and one of her biggest is coming true on Smackdown. She hugs Krystal and thanks her for everything.

Finlay talks with the Leprechaun (who can speak fine here), who is scared of the Boogeyman. Well the Little Boogeyman, because little people are scary. Finlay throws him into a trashcan so he won't be so scared and then leaves...and the Boogeyman smoke comes up. Little Boogeyman pops up and screaming ensues.

Cruiserweight Title: Cruiserweight Open

Gregory Helms is defending in a gauntlet match. Scotty 2 Hotty is in at #1 and Daivari is in at #2. Daivari sends him into the corner for some right hands but Scotty comes back with the bulldog. There's the Worm and Daivari is done in a hurry.

Gregory Helms is in at #1 and hammers on Scotty, including a catapult to send him throat first into the middle rope. Scotty is back with a belly to back suplex but the Worm is broken up. What would become known as the Codebreaker gets rid of Scotty so it's Funaki in at #4.

Helms small packages him for the pin in about five seconds and it's Shannon Moore in at #5. A spinning backbreaker gives Helms a fast two and a belly to belly superplex drops Moore again. Another Codebreaker gets rid of Moore and it's Jimmy Wang Yang in at #6. Yang goes right after him and hits a standing moonsault for two. A Russian legsweep sets up some weird arm hold on the mat but Helms is back up in a hurry with a hard right hand. Yang grabs a quick hurricanrana for the pin out of nowhere, guaranteeing a new champion.

Jamie Noble is in at #7 as JBL demands more time to talk about Helms losing the title. A hard shot to the face sets up a chinlock on Yang and Noble sends him hard into the post for two. Yang fights back with a few clotheslines and the spinwheel kick for two of his own. The moonsault press gets rid of Noble and Yang thinks he has won...but it's Chavo Guerrero in at #8 to complete the field.

Chavo uppercuts him down a few times and kicks Yang in the back to take over in a hurry. A spinwheel kick gives Yang a breather and the big dive to the floor drops Chavo again. Back in and Chavo hits Three Amigos, which Cole calls disrespectful for some reason. Yang gets in another shot to the face and goes up, only to miss the twisting moonsault. The frog splash gives Chavo the pin and the title.

Rating: D+. I'm really not a fan of this style as it's a bunch of mini matches rather than anything getting time. Chavo winning the title is fine, but the rapid fire falls brings up the same thing I always wonder with this format: why is it so much easier to get a fall in this one than in any given match? Either way, at least the title is off of Helms, who was

getting hammered with losses that WWE didn't seem to think counted because he was still champion.

John Cena isn't worried about teaming with Shawn Michaels tonight. What does have him concerned is facing Batista and Undertaker tonight. As for Michaels, what is going to happen when you can feel this much tension? Cena doesn't know either.

Finlay/Leprechaun vs. Boogeyman/Little Boogeyman

The Leprechaun is as terrified as you would expect and hides underneath the ring, leaving this as a handicap match. Cole finds it funny, sending JBL into a rant about how Cole is xenophobic for hating Irish people. Boogeyman punches Finlay down to start and they head outside with Finlay being sent into the apron. Back in and Boogeyman hits a powerslam for two, allowing Little Boogeyman to come in for a seated senton. The Leprechaun comes in, puts his hat on Finlay and rolls up his sleeves, allowing Finlay to kick Little Boogeyman in the head.

JBL has no idea what he is watching as Finlay stomps away on Little Boogeyman and grabs a short arm scissors. Little Boogeyman gets out and goes underneath the ring, but Boogeyman comes out. Back in and Boogeyman catapults Finlay into the corner and a double splash connects, with the Leprechaun making the save. Boogeyman loads up the worms to chase the Leprechaun off, leaving Finlay to hit the Little Boogeyman with the Shillelagh for the pin.

Rating: D. The goofiness was high with this one but it's kind of hard to get that angry about it. They made no secret of what they were going for here and the match went about as well as it was going to with all the nuttiness. Finlay and the Leprechaun do well together and it's kind of funny to have a Little Boogeyman to balance things out. That and Finlay hitting Little Boogeyman in the head with a club was worth a chuckle at the end.

Of note: we are about an hour into the show and Cole's voice is almost gone. This could be an interesting remaining two hours.

Shawn Michaels says he can't trust John Cena because he only trusts HHH. No matter what happens tonight though, he has to make sure that nothing happens to Cena until Wrestlemania.

King Booker vs. Kane

Booker has Queen Sharmell in his corner, and we get a quick recap (Booker eliminated Kane from the Royal Rumble after being eliminated himself) during the entrances. Booker tries to run to start but gets caught in the corner for some elbows to the face. Kane doesn't seem to mind getting hit in the face and takes Booker outside for elbow on the apron. As the beating continues, JBL goes into the Inferno match AGAIN, with Cole asking what JBL would have done to win the match.

The side slam and big boot set up a clothesline to the floor as Booker is still in trouble. Booker gets in a few shots of his own though and a missile dropkick connects for two back inside. The armbar goes on for a bit, followed by a kick to the face to give Booker two. Kane gets chopped down in the corner but he comes back with a suplex for a breather.

Booker kicks him in the ribs but misses the ax kick, allowing Kane to hit a running clothesline. The right hands in the corner rock Booker again and there's the side slam. Kane's top rope clothesline (closer to a right hand) draws Sharmell up to the apron and Booker nails the side kick. Not that it matters as Kane pops up with the chokeslam for the pin.

Rating: C. Perfectly fine match here as Kane gets a nice boost and King Booker's run continues to cool off. There isn't much left for him to do very high up on the card and that makes sense. King Booker wasn't a gimmick that was going to have a very long term run on top and it has taken its course. Putting someone like Kane over is a good thing, as he could be used to

make someone look bigger later.

Batista says Raw is going to lose tonight and he isn't intimidated by Undertaker, John Cena or Shawn Michaels.

Tag Team Titles: Paul London/Brian Kendrick vs. Deuce and Domino

Deuce and Domino, with Cherry, are challenging after winning back to back non-title matches. Domino drives London into the corner to start and they trade slaps. A jumping elbow drops Domino and it's off to Kendrick to work on the arm. The champs clear the ring in a hurry and it's time for a breather on the floor. Back in and Domino gets in a shot from behind on London to take over for the first time.

London gets whipped into some raised knees in the corner and we hit the double arm crank with a knee in the back. Deuce sends London hard into the corner and there's a double backdrop for two. The chinlock goes on, allowing the referee to go over and say something to Kendrick in a weird visual. London fights up and gets the tag, setting up a quick spinning backslide for two on Deuce. Domino is back in but misses a Doomsday Device clothesline, allowing Kendrick to victory roll Deuce for the pin to retain.

Rating: C+. I liked the match but I'm a bit confused by the ending. This was set up for the title change and there was little reason for them to not change the belts here. London and Kendrick have cooled down a bit in recent weeks and it is time for them to drop the titles already. Deuce and Domino are kind of perfect for that, but I guess they have to be slowed a bit on the way there.

Cole's voice is barely holding up.

Video on Bobby Lashley's childhood, which led to his successful amateur wrestling career. This is the same thing that aired on ECW last week.

Mr. Kennedy thinks Bobby Lashley is just like everyone here in Los Angeles: a phony wannabe. Everyone has a dream but he is standing here and they are all out there. He has beaten Lashley before and he can do it again, this time becoming the new ECW World Cha...and here is Lashley to say the one word for Kennedy is halitosis. Lashley drops him too, giving us a great confused Kennedy look.

ECW World Title: Mr. Kennedy vs. Bobby Lashley

Lashley is defending and Kennedy jumps him from behind during the entrances. That doesn't exactly work on Lashley, who beats him near the barricade and takes it inside for the opening bell. A backdrop into a slam has Kennedy in more trouble and the delayed vertical suplex gets two. Kennedy slips away though and kicks Lashley down in the corner. Lashley grabs a torture rack but a rake to the eyes gets Kennedy out of trouble.

JBL talks about how this is the Wrestlemania of the future as Kennedy puts on something like a reverse Figure Four (with Lashley face down and Kennedy face up). With that broken up, Kennedy switches to a half crab so Lashley has to grab a rope. Back up and Lashley tries a slam but the leg gives out, allowing Kennedy to take him down again. A running dropkick to the knee gets two, with JBL saying to take notes if you want to be a sports entertainer.

More stomping in the corner sets up a DDT for two as the fans are not exactly thrilled. The half crab goes on again but this time Kennedy lets it go and puts him down again. The Kenton Bomb hits raised knees though and the leg is fine enough for the torture rack into the kneeling backbreaker. Kennedy "accidentally" bumps the referee and takes out Lashley's leg again before grabbing a chair. Lashley takes it away and hits Kennedy for the lame DQ.

Rating: C-. I don't get the boring chants from the fans but

the ending wasn't very good. Sure you don't want Kennedy to take a fall (as he has done enough as of late) so why put them in this situation if that is all you have? They were in a bad place here and the match might not have been thrilling, but it could have been a lot worse. It could have been a lot shorter too, but I don't think I would have said boring.

Rey Mysterio is back on Smackdown, but just to talk.

The Condemned is coming.

Vinnie Jones, co-star in the Condemned, says he is the real star of the movie and he beat up Steve Austin...presumably in the movie?

The Miz hosts the Divas Talent Invitational, starting with Extreme Expose. They dance, people drool, next act.

Next up is Jillian Hall, who is excited to have her big break in front of these music executives. First she has to warm up and doesn't like the lack of bass. She sings her original version, with Miz saying she is the female version of William Hung. Jillian goes into a rant about how Extreme Expose couldn't even be her backup dancers. She goes on about the other women's "talents" and calls them b*****. Cue the rest of the women to beat her up for the catfight, with referees breaking it up.

Ashley comes out with the talent of showing her Playboy cover and taking off her top, revealing strategically placed Playboy Bunny stickers. That's enough for the win, shockingly enough.

Wrestlemania is All Grown Up. I like that one, though I'm still not sure I get it.

We recap the main event of Undertaker/Batista vs. Shawn Michaels/John Cena. Undertaker won the Royal Rumble and is facing Batista, while Shawn Michaels, the Royal Rumble runner up, is challenging Cena. Take two Wrestlemania main events and

make a tag match.

John Cena/Shawn Michaels vs. Batista/Undertaker

Non-title. Shawn comes out to the DX theme and entrance as he continues to reach post-Strike Force Tito Santana levels of not being able to let it go. Batista knocks Cena into the corner to start but Cena comes back with right hands. That earns him a Regal Roll of all things and an early powerslam gets two. Cena avoids a charge into the corner though and it's off to Shawn to fire off the chops.

That doesn't last long as Batista powers him down and brings in Undertaker for a quick Old School. Undertaker shoves away the right hands in the corner and gets two off the big boot. Batista comes back in but misses an elbow, allowing the tag back to Cena. Undertaker is right back in as well and you can feel the energy coming up for the showdown. Cena catches Undertaker going up top (that's a rare one) with a superplex but Undertaker sits back up.

The right hands rock Undertaker, who drops Cena again. This time it's Undertaker missing an elbow of his own so it's back to Shawn, who is gorilla pressed out to the floor in the big crash. Back in and Cena makes the save, leaving Shawn to get pounded down in the corner. Shawn gets in a shot to Undertaker's knee and starts firing off right hands in the corner, as JBL compares this to getting to see WWE vs. WCW. Egads I'd hope it's better than that.

Batista comes in for a series of clotheslines into a headlock but Shawn manages a running DDT. The hot tag brings in Cena to start cleaning house, including the Shuffle to Batista. Undertaker breaks up the FU and fights outside with Shawn, leaving Batista to hit a spinebuster. The Batista Bomb is broken up by Shawn's shot to the knee and it's time to take turns on Batista for a change. Cena blasts him with a clothesline for two as Cole has just stopped talking as his

voice is gone. Shawn grabs a front facelock but Batista powers him off without much effort.

That's not enough for the tag though as Cena is right there with a sleeper on the suddenly busted open Batista. The STFU has Batista in trouble in the middle of the ring, with Undertaker taking his time to make the save. It's back to Shawn for the top rope elbow but Sweet Chin Music is countered into a swinging Boss Man Slam. That's enough for the hot tag back to Undertaker as everything breaks down. Undertaker beats up both of them without much trouble...until Batista spinebusters him down. Batista watches from ringside as it's Sweet Chin Music into the FU to finish Undertaker.

Rating: B. The word for this match is big, as it felt like a match that belonged in a main event spot. It didn't matter that there were no stakes and it won't matter until Wrestlemania, but they got into a groove so that it felt like a match between two teams. That made Batista turning on Undertaker at the end feel important, and gives us the closest thing to a villain in the title match, even if it is more of an edgy good guy instead. Heck of a match here and a nice surprise.

Batista stares at Undertaker, who pulls himself up to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. The show is bookended by a pair of good matches but the middle is pretty all over the place. What helps this show more than anything else is the complete lack of expectations coming in. There was no reason to expect a good show here and we wound up getting a fine one, though only the opener and main event are really worth seeing. It is time to get ready for Wrestlemania now though, and that could not come soon enough.

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