

Monday Night Raw – May 26, 2008: Pay The People Their Money?

Monday Night Raw

Date: May 26, 2008

Location: Pepsi Center, Denver, Colorado

Attendance: 16,524

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

It's the last Raw before One Night Stand and the end of last week's show set up a pair of huge matches for the show. Now we are getting ready for JBL vs. John Cena in a first blood match and HHH vs. Randy Orton in a last man standing match for HHH's Raw World Title. I'm sure we'll get some more tonight so let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

Memorial Day video.

Opening sequence.

Vince McMahon joins us on the Titantron to say William Regal got what he deserved last week, but are the fans getting what they deserve? They deserve appreciation, and tonight they will receive it like never before. He's open to suggestions, including from the wrestlers. By the end of the night, fans will receive appreciation like they have never seen.

Here are HHH and Randy Orton for a face to face standoff. Orton is asked about how he beat HHH in a last man standing match before, but it was HHH's third match of the night and Orton's second. Orton is sick of having his accomplishments downplayed, because what matters is that he beat HHH in this very match.

HHH says the fans are laughing at Orton because he's a censored. He isn't laughing though, because Orton has a tendency to find a cheap way out. If Orton wants to be the best, he has to face the best over and over. Orton says HHH doesn't thrive on competition because he either brings in his threats or just flat out eliminates him.

Like Shawn Michaels or Evolution, because HHH knows he needed to fear them. HHH says Evolution was about making Orton realize his potential but he isn't just going to walk away. Orton promises to win and goes to leave, but HHH promises to end the Age Of Orton like it never happened. There wasn't much left to be said about this feud so this was nothing we haven't heard before.

Melina vs. Jillian Hall

Beth Phoenix is on commentary. Jillian jumps her to start and hits a flipping faceplant before hitting some kicks to the back. Melina fights back and elbows her in the face, setting up an Indian Deathlock for the fast tap.

Chris Jericho comes in to see Vince McMahon with an idea to appreciate the fans: a match with Shawn Michaels tonight. Deal, and we'll make it non-title. Cryme Tyme comes in and steal some of Williams Regal's stuff to sell.

Paul London/Brian Kendrick vs. Cody Rhodes/Hardcore Holly

Non-title. Rhodes dropkicks London down to start but a double dropkick puts Rhodes down for two. Holly comes in to knock Kendrick down but Rhodes misses a middle rope crossbody. It's off to London to dropkick and hurricanrana Holly as everything breaks down. London tries to skin the cat, only to get caught in the Alabama Slam for the pin.

Rating: C. Fast paced stuff here but they only had so much time to make it work. London and Kendrick are still an entertaining team but for some reason WWE insists on sticking

with Rhodes and Holly as champions. The tag division barely exists, though you would think WWE might want to go with the better of the two teams here.

Post match here is Ted DiBiase of all people. He has a special moment for us, in the form of the newest member of the Raw roster: his son Ted DiBiase! Ted Jr. says he has always wanted to become a champion and that is what he is going to do in his debut match. So Holly and Rhodes need to pay attention, because everybody has a price, but he is priceless. That's a great line.

Roddy Piper is training Jimmy Kimmel's Cousin Sal for his match against Santino Marella. Kimmel comes in to watch the training and isn't sure if this is going well as Piper beats up Sal. Oddly enough this is included on Peacock, along with a recap of last week's segment, which wasn't on Peacock.

Mickie James suggests a contest to Vince McMahon where schools get to say why they love WWE and the winner gets a Diva For A Day. JBL comes in to say that sounds like an escort service (working for strangers you see) and suggests the ring mat, covered in John Cena's blood on Sunday, be cut up and sold.

Some soldiers wish us Happy Memorial Day.

John Bradshaw Layfield/Umaga vs. John Cena/Jeff Hardy

Cena and JBL start things off but let's go with Umaga instead. The FU attempt doesn't work but Umaga misses a charge in the corner so Cena can slug away. The swinging release Rock Bottom cuts Cena off though and we take a break. Back with JBL hammering Hardy into the corner and whipping him into another one.

The abdominal stretch goes on but Hardy slips out and hits a Whisper In The Wind. That's enough for the hot tag off to Cena and house is cleaned in a hurry. Umaga knocks Cena into Hardy for the tag but the Swanton misses. With Cena and Umaga on the

floor, the Clothesline From JBL finishes Hardy off.

Rating: C+. The ending came a bit out of nowhere but it was a good enough match to get the people involved out there. Umaga vs. Hardy has been a bit forgotten amid the two main event level matches at One Night Stand so giving them a bit of exposure was a good idea. Then again JBL vs. Cena isn't exactly thrilling and it's more interesting to go in another direction, even for one match.

Shawn Michaels comes to see Vince McMahon and doesn't buy Vince wanting to appreciate the audience. Vince says Shawn will have to give the devil his due. Shawn: "You would know about that wouldn't you?"

Video on the recent tour of Mexico.

Mr. Kennedy vs. Carlito

Carlito takes him down fast and grabs a quickly broken chinlock. The Backstabber is loaded up but Kennedy reverses into the Mic Check for the fast win.

Post match Katie Lea Burchill comes out to say some people aren't happy with Kennedy getting rid of William Regal. Paul Burchill pops up from behind and lays Kennedy out.

Trevor Murdoch tries to sing a country version of No Chance but Vince McMahon sends him away.

One Night Stand rundown.

Video on Randy Orton vs. HHH.

More troops say hi.

Shawn Michaels vs. Chris Jericho

Non-title. They go to the mat a few times to start and that's good for a standoff. Shawn sends him crashing out to the floor and we take a break. Back with Shawn fighting out of a

chinlock but Jericho takes him into the corner for some stomping. Jericho's bulldog is blocked with a shove into the corner and there's the nipup.

The superkick is countered into a Walls attempt, which is countered into a small package for two. The second Walls attempt works far better but Shawn makes the ropes. That doesn't work for Jericho, who takes him to the floor and grabs the Walls again for the double countout.

Rating: B-. Jericho vs. Shawn is going to work almost every time but Jericho is teetering on the brink of a heel turn. I'm curious to see how they get to what should be Jericho as quite the villain, as they could go a few different ways to get there. I'm not sure how much we'll get out of the Shawn vs. Batista match to get there, but they have an interesting story on the way there.

Post match Jericho grabs a chair but puts it down.

Here is Vince McMahon for the big announcement despite there not being much time left. Vince walks through the roster on the stage before talking about how everyone together. Let's do that in four weeks with the WWE Draft. Until then, for the next four weeks, Vince is going to give away MONEY. What if he gave away a thousand dollars? Ten thousand dollars? Or even A HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS? Heck he's a billionaire, so over the next week, he's going to give away the sum of ONE MILLION DOLLARS. End of show.

Overall Rating: C+. They did a nice job of covering just about everything on this side of the One Night Stand card and that is the right idea. Other than that, the money thing at the end was more than a bit different, but at least they're trying to set something up for after the pay per view. WWE certainly needs something fresh at the moment as they continue to milk another pay per view out of feuds they've been running for a long time. Not a bad show, but the build to Summerslam needs

to start fast.

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Summerslam Count-Up – Summerslam 2008 (2013 Redo): What More Could You Need?

Summerslam 2008

Date: August 17, 2008

Location: Conseco Fieldhouse, Indianapolis, Indiana

Attendance: 15,997

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole, Tazz, Todd Grisham, Matt Striker

For the first time in a few years, it feels like we've got a big card tonight. It's a double main event with Undertaker vs. Edge inside the Cell and Cena vs. Batista for the first time ever. I remember being very

fired up for this show when it first aired so hopefully it lives up to the hype after some very lackluster entries the last few years. Let's get to it.

The theme this year is that this is the ultimate summer blockbuster. I've heard worse. This shifts into your standard opening video.

It's another good song here with Ready to Roll by Jet Black Stare.

We run down the card because you might have ordered the show blind or something?

MVP vs. Jeff Hardy

Jeff is in the middle of the biggest story of his life, as he's been chasing the world title all year. This resulted in one of the highest number of buys ever for the Rumble, yet he's opening the show here in a midcard match. Makes sense in WWE world I guess. There isn't much of a story here other than MVP has been messing with Jeff lately. Hardy starts with two right hands to send MVP to the floor and there's a whip into the barricade. Back in and a slingshot legdrop gets two for Jeff and we hit the armbar.

MVP makes the ropes and the referee has to keep pulling Jeff out of the corner. Jeff eventually gets free and charges right into a snap belly to belly for two. MVP kicks him in the back and puts on something like a crucifix hold before rolling over into a camel clutch. Off to something like a side leg bar but MVP eventually lets it go. Jeff goes tot he apron but MVP knocks him out of the air to break up a springboard, getting two.

Jeff is put in the Tree of Woe so MVP picks him up and slams the top of his head into the mat. That's a new one. MVP loads up something like a Gory Bomb but Jeff slips down the back and neckbreakers his way to freedom. The slingshot dropkick in the corner is countered by two feet to Hardy's chest but Jeff avoids the Drive By kick in the corner. A sunset flip gets two for Jeff and the Whisper in the Wind puts MVP down again. Cue US Champion Shelton Benjamin to distract Hardy from the Swanton, allowing MVP to move. The Drive By kick is good for the pin on Jeff.

Rating: B-. Summerslam almost always has good openers and this is a good example. I never got into MVP like a lot of people did but this was a solid performance from him. Shelton had been involved with this feud as an accessory on Smackdown but it's not exactly enough of a connection for the run-in here to work. Good match though.

Glamarella (Santino and Beth) is ready for their mixed tag winner take all match with Kofi and Mickie. Santino talks about the unibrow and how the tabloids love the new name for the two of them. Maria, Santino's ex, is doing the interview so we get a stare down between the girls.

Intercontinental Title/Women's Title: Glamarella vs. Mickie James/Kofi Kingston

Mickie and Kofi have both belts coming in but the winning team walks out with all the gold. Kofi is still relatively new here and has only won the IC Title once, as opposed to his 89 or so reigns now. The girls get things going with Beth easily overpowering James. Mickie comes back with some quick dropkicks for two before it's off to Santino. James easily monkey flips him over before it's off to Kofi for some of his usual stuff. The jumping punches in the corner have Santino on the floor where Beth yells at him.

Kingston loads up a charge but hangs on, only to send Santino jumping into Beth's arms. Kofi pulls him back in but gets his neck snapped across the top rope for one. Beth beats on Kofi for a bit before bringing Santino back in for his basic offense. A suplex sets up a chinlock but Kofi fights up and butts heads with Santino, allowing for the double tags to the girls. Mickie cleans house and clotheslines Beth down before snapping off her hurricanrana on Beth. Kofi comes in and misses a charge like an idiot but the MickieDT puts Santino down. Beth decks Mickie and hits the Glam Slam for both titles.

Rating: D+. The match was nothing special and could have been on any given Raw. I don't know of a better way they could have gotten the title on Santino though so you can't fault them for trying. Kofi would begin his long float in the midcard which would last for the next several years other than a cup of coffee in the upper midcard. The girls looked good

here but that's about it.

Santino gets on Beth's shoulders to celebrate.

Video on Shawn Michaels' eye injury. He may not be able to continue wrestling due to the eye and for the first time he's listening to his doctors. If they tell him it's too bad, he's walking away.

Here's Shawn with his wife for the announcement. Shawn talks about how his doctors have re-evaluated his eye and it looks like he's going to have to walk away. He remembers his first Summerslam and since then the fans have let him become the Heart Break Kid and Mr. Wrestlemania. He's also the guy who screwed Bret Hart (wasn't that Hebner?), the man who formed DX, the man who lost his smile and the man who retired Ric Flair. Now though he can be a full time husband and a full time father....and here's Jericho, the man who injured Shawn's eye.

Jericho, currently an awesome heel rocking a suit, says that he's not accepting this. Shawn isn't leaving due to an eye injury on his own terms. He wants Shawn to admit that he's walking away because of what Jericho did to him and nothing else. Shawn gets serious and says to get out of the ring but Jericho wants to hear that Shawn is leaving because of him. Shawn needs to admit it to his wife, his children, himself and to Jericho. All of Shawn's accomplishments don't matter because the epitaph of his career will be that he was forced to walk away because of Chris Jericho.

Shawn says he'll admit it and tell his wife and kids what Jericho wants to hear on one condition: if Jericho goes home to his wife and kids and tells them that he never could be Shawn Michaels. BURN! Shawn goes to walk away but Jericho swings, only to hit Shawn's wife, knocking her out cold. What a man that Shawn is, ducking when his wife was behind him. You know it's on at Unforgiven now and the fans are eating this stuff up. This was the feud of the year in 2008 and there's no arguing that.

ECW Title: Mark Henry vs. Matt Hardy

Matt earned the title by doing something not important enough to explain to us. These two teamed up on ECW with Mark attacking his partner,

injuring his ribs. Mark hits a quick forearm to the back but misses a charge, allowing Matt to hit the Twist of Fate, drawing in Henry's manager Tony Atlas for the DQ 30 seconds in.

Jeff Hardy comes out to make the save and the Hardys suplex Henry.

We recap CM Punk vs. JBL. Punk cashed in the MITB case a few weeks ago on Raw to bring the World Heavyweight Championship to Raw. JBL bullied Punk and called him a footnote in wrestling. It's a basic story but sometimes that's the best idea, which is the case here.

Raw World Title: CM Punk vs. John Bradshaw Layfield

Punk was basically a glorified midcarder at this point but his time would come. JBL shoves Punk into the corner to start and a hard shoulder puts the champion down. Punk comes back with a flying forearm to send him to the outside and a suicide dive fires the fans up even more. Back in and a high cross body gets a one count for Punk but another shoulder block puts him down. Punk tries to go up, only to be taken down by a middle rope fall away slam for two.

JBL goes after the back and we hit the bearhug. This is a basic big guy vs. little guy formula so far but again there's nothing wrong with that at all. Punk fights out of it as a fan tells JBL he has man boobs. We stay on the back as JBL continues his basic power offense. Back to a side grip on Punk's ribs on the mat before we go old school with an abdominal stretch. Punk fights out and hits the knee in the corner/bulldog combo but the ribs give out on the GTS attempt. JBL takes him back down and drops some elbows for two.

The clothesline misses and Punk starts firing off his strikes, hitting a high kick to the head for two. A springboard clothesline is countered into a powerslam for two and JBL yells at the referee a lot. Another clothesline attempt from JBL is countered with a leg lariat to put both guys down. They hit heads as JBL fell and Punk is busted open from the back of his head. Layfield blocks another knee/bulldog combo by putting Punk on the buckle for a belly to back superplex. There much be something really wrong because Punk pops up and hits a quick GTS to retain. Oh yeah there's a BIG blood spot from where Punk was laying on the mat.

Rating: C+. This needed a few more minutes but with a legit cut that bad you have to go home in a hurry. Obviously Punk was going to win the entire time so it's not like the ending was changed that badly. What we did get was good stuff with a basic story that is going to work time after time and did so here.

We recap HHH vs. Great Khali. Again not much to say here: HHH won the Smackdown Title and dominated for a few months until Khali was one of the few challengers he had left. Again it's your basic hero vs. monster but the question coming in is can HHH Pedigree Khali. He tries for weeks leading up but never could pull it off.

Smackdown World Title: HHH vs. Great Khali

The Game is defending. HHH is a very tall man in his own right and is probably a foot shorter than Khali. The champion pounds away but has to stick and move to not get killed. That doesn't blow HHH's skirt up though so he tries the Pedigree. Khali easily grabs HHH and hits his Punjabi Plunge (two handed chokeslam finisher) but doesn't cover. Instead he loads up his Vice (head squeeze) but HHH kicks at the long legs to escape. A chop block puts Khali down and out to the floor where his manager Runjin Singh tries to calm him down.

HHH, ever the bright guy, charges at Khali again and is chopped down with ease. Back inside and Khali pounds away with some elbows in the corner to drop the champion. The fans tell Khali that he can't wrestle as he puts one foot on HHH for a cover. Off to a nerve hold by the challenger followed by a slam and legdrop. Back to the nerve hold for a bit before HHH fights up and hits the facebuster. It doesn't put Khali on the mat but it does tie him up in the ropes.

Khali will have none of this being in trouble though as he lifts up his boot to kick HHH down before freeing himself from the ropes. Back up and HHH tries the Pedigree again, only to be backdropped out to the floor. A hard chop puts HHH down again and as they come back in there's the vice grip again. HHH almost breaks the hold but Khali gets it back on for a few more seconds. A charge misses the champion in the corner and he FINALLY hits the Pedigree to retain the title.

Rating: C+. This match, while slow, was a great example of psychology in a wrestling match. HHH knew that there was only one move he could use to hurt Khali and give him a chance for the win so it was the only thing he tried for most of the match. This was HHH working around someone and it worked quite well as HHH is a very talented wrestler, which unfortunately is often forgotten.

We recap Cena vs. Batista. Cena accidentally punched Batista in a tag match on Raw, triggering a brawl between the two. It became exactly what it should have been: a showdown between the two guys who had carried the company for the last three years. This was one of the few dream matches they had built up for years and belonged as a PPV main event. Cena said he had been wanting this match for six years because he just didn't know if he could beat Batista.

John Cena vs. Batista

Batista shoves Cena back to start before grabbing a headlock. Cena comes back with a quick slam and Batista stops to take a breather. A big clothesline puts Cena down and a Jackhammer gets two. Cena comes right back with a suplex of his own for two but Batista puts him down with a side slam. A quick FU attempt is countered and Batista goes after the leg. Off to a Figure Four on Cena (just like Flair, he puts it on the wrong leg) who can't power out so we get a rope grab instead for the break.

Back up immediately and Cena throws Batista to the floor in something resembling an FU before collapsing down. Back in again and Cena fires off the shoulder blocks and the ProtoBomb to set up the Shuffle. The FU is countered again and Batista kicks him in the face to put both guys down. Batista drives shoulders into the corner and catches him in the spinebuster to put Cena down. Cena backdrops out of the Batista Bomb and hits a DDT on the leg to set up the STFU. Batista FINALLY crawls over and gets a rope to shock Cena.

Batista gets up and escapes another FU to hook a rear naked choke of all things. Cena fights out of a hold as well, only to get caught by a spear for a VERY close two. They're in full on main event mode here and it's

getting very awesome. Cena counters a powerslam into an FU but can't follow up due to exhaustion. It's finally good for two so Cena goes up with nowhere else to go.

Batista is up as well and they slug it out on top with Batista being knocked to the mat. Cena tries the Fameasser but gets caught in a Batista Bomb....for two, plus a neck injury that required three months off (I seem to remember that happening earlier but WWE said it was here). Not that it matters as Batista goes into Animal Mode and ENDS Cena with a Batista Bomb for the pin.

Rating: A-. This is exactly what it was supposed to be: the two top guys in the company going to war with only one left standing. It's a great fight in the vein of Rock vs. Austin from back in the day. Almost no complaints here and it felt like a major match on a major stage. What else can you ask for here?

The Cell is lowered.

We recap Edge vs. Undertaker. They fought for the world title at Wrestlemania with Taker winning the title (duh) before Edge's wife Vickie Guerrero stripped him of the title for using the Hell's Gate, which was declared illegal. Edge won the title in a TLC match and Taker left for a bit, but Edge got caught cheating with his wedding planner (Alicia Fox). Vickie reinstated Taker and set up the Cell match here tonight. Edge got Mick Foley to try to find out how to beat Undertaker in the Cell (even though Foley lost) and was told to bring back the Rated R Superstar inside of him. Edge beat up Foley and was back.

Edge vs. Undertaker

It takes two minutes and forty five seconds from Taker's gong to him slamming the Cell door closed. Edge fires off right hands in the corner but walks into a big boot. We head outside the ring so Edge can be rammed into the steel. A series of headbutts puts Edge down and Taker whips him hard into the steps. Vickie and company (La Familia) is watching in the back.

Back inside now but with steps involved as well. The Snake Eyes drop Edge

on the steps but he blocks the big boot and sends Taker into the steps instead. Edge hits a spear to a seated dead man but doesn't go for a cover. Instead he grabs a table but stops to knock Taker out with the steps to the head. Edge gets another table but doesn't slide either of them into the ring. The table is set up on the floor instead but Edge has to fight out of a chokeslam attempt instead of sending Taker through it.

Now it's chair time with Edge dropping Taker again. Here's a third table but the first one actually brought into the ring. Edge pulls out a ladder as TLCHIAC continues. Another chair shot puts Taker down as we have a ladder, a table and steps in the ring. Three of the four things are used as Edge puts Taker on the table and picks up the chair before climbing the ladder. He drives the dead man through the table in the same spot he used on Foley a few weeks ago. Nice touch.

It's only good for two though so it's time for a Conchairto, only to have Taker grab Edge by the throat. Edge breaks free but gets caught in a big right hand to put him back down. A big boot sends Edge into the cage and Taker crushes his head with the steps for good measure. Edge posts Taker to get a breather and uses the steps as a launching pad to knock Taker through the Cell. Taker's arm is bleeding a bit.

They fight at the announce table before Edge is sent into the barricade to put him down again. Taker misses a monitor shot to the head, allowing Edge to crack him in the head with it instead. In the big spot of the match, Edge runs the announce tables for a big spear to Undertaker, putting both guys down. Edge can't follow up so Taker wins a slug out and they head back inside, drawing some moderate booing. Back in and a ladder to the face gives Edge control again and a chair shot gets two.

Taker counters the spear into a chokeslam for a close two and Taker is getting frustrated. The Last Ride is countered by a low blow and an Impaler gets two. Back up and Taker loads up the Last Ride again but wants it through the tables on the floor. Edge slips over the top and hits the spear for a very close two. Now the Last Ride connects but Edge gets out at two.

Taker loads up a tombstone off the steps but Edge counters into an Edge-

0-Matic onto the steps for two. Now Edge loads up Old School but Taker crotches him down and chokeslams him through the tables on the floor. Back in and Undertaker spears Edge down and breaks a camera over his head. A Conchairto crushes Edge's skull and the tombstone finally ends this.

Rating: A. THIS is how you blow off a feud. Edge was completely destroyed at the end here with Undertaker hitting every big move he had and Edge not kicking out of them at all. These two had some great action all year long and the Cell is the best way to blow the whole thing off. Having it as a TLC match inside the Cell was fine and it made for a great main event.

Taker leaves but Edge very slowly gets up. The big man goes back inside and sets up the ladder before lifting Edge onto it. Taker throws in another ladder and climbs up next to Edge so he can throw the Canadian down through the mat. He raises his arms up and lights the hole on fire to end the show in a corny moment.

Overall Rating: A-. This was pretty awesome all around. The opener was good, one match didn't count, the title matches were both decent to good and the main events both rocked. You could say the tag match wasn't very good but it's less than six minutes long and Santino makes it entertaining enough. This is one of the better shows they've had in the series and it's well worth checking out.

Ratings Comparison

MVP vs. Jeff Hardy

Original: B

Redo: B-

Kofi Kingston/Mickie James vs. Glamarella

Original: D

Redo: D+

Matt Hardy vs. Mark Henry

Original: N/A

Redo: N/A

CM Punk vs. John Bradshaw Layfield

Original: B-

Redo: C+

Great Khali vs. HHH

Original: B+

Redo: C+

Batista vs. John Cena

Original: A

Redo: A-

Edge vs. Undertaker

Original: A-

Redo: A

Overall Rating

Original: A-

Redo: A-

Yep, it's still great.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/08/11/history-of-summerslam-count-up-2008-punk-as-champion-thatll-never-happen-again/>

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Monday Night Raw – May 19, 2008: The Efficient Show

Monday Night Raw

Date: May 19, 2008

Location: Kemper Arena, Kansas City, Missouri

Attendance: 9,300

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

We're done with Judgment Day and the big Raw story coming out of the show was Shawn Michaels defeating Chris Jericho in a rather good match that didn't seem to wrap up their story. Other than that, HHH successfully defended the World Title against Randy Orton in a feud that will likely never be over. Let's get to it.

[Here is Judgment Day if you need a recap.](#)

Opening sequence.

Jeff Hardy vs. Umaga

Umaga is ticked off after last week and hammers away, only to miss a sitdown splash and get dropkicked in the face. The

Samoan drop cuts Hardy off fast though and we're already into the nerve hold. With that not working, Umaga ties him in the Tree of Woe for the running headbutt, only to miss a middle rope version. The Whisper in the Wind missed as well, but Umaga misses the running hip attack. Jeff knocks him outside in a big crash and follows with the slingshot flip dive. The fight keeps going on the floor, including the swinging release Rock Bottom to Hardy, and that's a double countout.

Rating: C+. This was short and designed to set up a third match but it worked while it lasted. Hardy works well when he is bouncing off of someone and Umaga knows how to do that style incredibly well. What matters here is they kept things interesting, which is exactly what you want to do when you're trying to set up a rematch, likely at One Night Stand.

Post match Jeff has to be checked on.

Batista tells Chris Jericho to stay out of his way to get to Shawn Michaels, but Jericho isn't stepping aside. Threats are made before their match tonight.

Here is General Manager to make Jeff Hardy vs. William Regal in a falls count anywhere match. Regal brings Randy Orton and JBL up on the Titantron and tells them they have a tag match against HHH and John Cena tonight. If Orton and JBL win, they get their respective rematches against HHH and Cena and get to pick the stipulations. If Cena and HHH win, they will face each other in an extreme rules match of Regal's choosing.

Cue Mr. Kennedy to interrupt to offer a challenge for tonight. Regal says he's above Kennedy and the next person to interrupt him will be fired on the spot. Cue Vince McMahon, with Kennedy mocking Regal about his promise. Vince says that since Regal has taken over, there have been ALL KINDS OF COMPLAINTS and he only cares about the money. Regal is a ratings killer but Vince wants Kennedy gone too. So tonight it's Regal vs. Kennedy, loser is fired. Well that's abrupt.

Maria vs. Beth Phoenix

Melina joins commentary and does the splits entrance on the announcers' table. Maria gets quite the pop as Melina says she isn't the kind of girl to do Playboy. Beth wastes no time with a gorilla press to start and then bends Maria's back over her knee. A quick bulldog out of the corner gives Maria two but the Glam Slam (I believe making its debut) into a seated double chickenwing gives Beth the win.

Post match Melina jumps Beth and gets dropped on the ramp for her efforts.

Roddy Piper was at a birthday party for Jimmy Kimmel Live when Santino Marella showed up. A fight with Jimmy's cousin Sal broke out. This is edited off the Peacock version.

Mickie James is in the back with Katie Lea Burchill, with the latter saying she'll be Women's Champion soon. She also accuses Mickie of sleeping with John Cena to get to the top but Mickie denies anything happening. Burchill says more would have happened with her.

Shawn Michaels comes in to see William Regal, who tells him that Shawn is facing the winner of Batista vs. Chris Jericho in a stretcher match.

WWE won an award for how they praise the military.

Batista vs. Chris Jericho

Non-title. Jericho gets powered out of the corner to start as the fans are way behind Batista here. Batista shoves him out of the corner again and hits him in the face, setting up an elbow for two. Hold on though as Jericho grabs his knee and we take a break with Batista not buying it.

We come back with a limping Jericho being whipped into the corner but managing to low bridge Batista to the floor. This time it's Batista grabbing his own knee and Jericho is fine

with going after that as well. Lawler points out how fast Jericho's knee healed as Jericho cranks on Batista's knee. Batista is fine enough to kick Jericho outside and then boot him in the face back inside.

The spinebuster connects but Jericho goes after the leg to break up the Batista Bomb attempt. A half crab goes on (that's a clever twist on the normal Walls) until Batista makes the rope. The leg is fine enough to avoid the Lionsault and a big clothesline drops Jericho again. The charge goes into the post but Batista pulls Jericho off the ropes and into the Batista Bomb for the pin.

Rating: B-. Not exactly a great match here but it turned into a good showdown. The leg injuries were a nice way to tie into everything else they have been doing in recent weeks and they made you wonder what was going on. Batista's seemed to be legitimate but he was able to catch Jericho trying to be too aggressive. Batista vs. Shawn again should work, and you know Jericho is going to be waiting on the other side.

Post match Shawn Michaels comes out to stare Batista down.

Vince McMahon talks to William Regal about the match with Mr. Kennedy tonight. Ted DiBiase of all people comes in and they need to have a money talk.

It's time for the return of Piper's Pit but instead we have Santino Marella dressed as Roddy Piper with a very large fake stomach. As Santino stands next to a birthday cake, he messes up some Piper catchphrases and we see a clip of the Jimmy Kimmel segment from earlier. The real Cousin Sal comes out and Santino mocks Piper for not being able to do anything.

Sal goes off about how Santino can't accomplish anything, including winning a title, beating up Steve Austin or sleeping with a Playboy Playmate, as apparently...something like being built similar to a fourth grader. Santino picks up the cake but the real Roddy Piper comes in to shove it into Santino's

face. Santino vs. Sal is set up as this feud just keeps going. This is also edited off the Peacock version.

William Regal vs. Mr. Kennedy

Loser gets fired and Kennedy promises to win. Kennedy slugs out of the corner to start and a backdrop gets a very early two. A running kick to the head rocks Regal but he sweeps the leg and takes Kennedy down on the apron. Back in and Regal unloads in the corner before grabbing something close to a Tazmission.

Regal charges into a boot in the corner though and Kennedy's spinning kick to the head gets two. They go outside, where Regal decides that this is going to be a No DQ match. The brass knuckles are loaded up and Regal sends him into the steps. Back in and the knuckles shot is countered into the Mic Check to give Kennedy the fast pin.

Rating: C+. And that is how WWE dealt with Regal getting Wellnessed again. Regal was on a tear with the power mad General Manager/King deal and then screwed himself over by breaking the rules. The match itself was an energetic fight and having Regal screw himself over by trying to cheat once too often was some nice poetic justice.

Post break Regal tries to go into his office but Teddy Long walks out.

HHH doesn't are who he faces at One Night Stand.

Randy Orton/JBL vs. HHH/John Cena

If Orton and JBL win, they get their rematches at One Night Stand and pick the stipulations. If HHH and Cena win, they face each other at One Night Stand in a match of...well Regal is fired so there's a snafu in the plan. Cena and HHH clear the ring rather quickly to start and we take an early break.

Back with HHH in trouble but Orton misses a dropkick. The tag

brings in Cena to pick up the pace, including the Shuffle to Orton. The RK0 and FU are both countered and JBL kicks Cena in the face for two. Cena knocks Orton outside though and the hot tag brings in HHH. Everything breaks down and the STFU has JBL in trouble but Orton breaks it up with the Punt to give JBL the pin.

Rating: C+. This was another match where they didn't have a ton of time to get stuff going but it did what it needed to do. The feuds are already set up so getting to the point of a big violent match between the pairings work. Granted they kind of telegraphed the ending with Regal being fired but at least they did what they should have done.

Post match JBL picks a first blood match with Cena while Orton picks last man standing with HHH.

Overall Rating: B-. This was the "ok we need to get the pay per view ready" show and it worked well enough. One Night Stand is the attempt to keep the stories going with some added stipulations and that should be fine. The build to Summerslam can start after that but giving us something this simplistic should work. Not a great show, but an efficient one and that is important too.

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Monday Night Raw – May 12, 2008: Power Couple?

Monday Night Raw

Date: May 12, 2008

Location: Joe Louis Arena, Detroit, Michigan

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

It's the go home Raw for Judgment Day and the title match is set. Unfortunately it hasn't been the most well built match in the world, as it's HHH vs. Randy Orton in a cage, which is only so interesting. Other than that, John vs. JBL and Shawn Michaels vs. Chris Jericho are going to beef up the card well enough, with the final push coming tonight. Oh and General Manage William Regal is insane. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

We open with a recap of HHH and Mr. Kennedy losing to ECW last week, followed by Randy Orton taking HHH out.

Lilian Garcia is in the ring with William Regal, who has her sing God Save The Queen. Regal reminds the fans that he can have everyone thrown out and goes to the floor, where he has two fans ejected. Mickie James comes out to beg Regal to rethink what he did (possibly saying it was her brother and his girlfriend), so Regal threatens to strip her of the Women's Title.

Cue John Cena to interrupt, with James leaving rather quickly. Cena tries to get Regal to calm down, but Regal says Vince

McMahon put him in this spot. Cena: "Vince McMahon is insane." We hear some emails from fans, complaining about Regal's recent actions. Cena: "This is WCW Thunder bad." One fan wants to start a FIRE REGAL chant (yes he included the claps) so there go the live fans.

Regal promises to not cut the lights off tonight and knows that Cena wants revenge on Randy Orton, so they can be in the main event. Cena wants to know when JBL will interfere, but Regal bans interference (how this is different than any other match isn't clear). Regal hopes he has gotten some respect from Cena, but Cena says that was just making a good match. Also, Regal needs to learn that this is the United States of America, so he has Garcia sing Respect. Garcia sings the heck out of it but doesn't get much of a reaction until the ending.

Tag Team Titles: Hardcore Holly/Cody Rhodes vs. Santino Marella/Carlito

Holly and Rhodes are defending and Roddy Piper is sitting at ringside. Holly runs Santino over to start and hangs him over the ropes for the kick to the questionable area (Piper approves). It's off to Carlito for a cheap shot to take over and Santino gets to drop some elbows. A suplex gets Holly out of trouble though and it's Cody coming in to hammer away. Cody hits a crossbody and powerslam but Santino pops back up. Piper offers a distraction though and it's a DDT to retain the titles. Short and to the point here, now PLEASE FIND SOME NEW CHALLENGERS.

We look back at Shawn Michaels hurting his knee at Backlash, with commentary not sure if he is telling the truth or not.

Mr. Kennedy vs. Snitsky

Snitsky powers him into the corner to start and then does it again for a bonus. An elbow gives Snitsky two and we're already in a bearhug. Kennedy slugs his way to freedom but gets shouldered right back down. Back up and Kennedy gets

smart by starting in on the leg, with a chop block getting two. Kennedy has to slip out of a pumphandle and it's the Mic Check for the pin.

Rating: C. It's almost weird to see Kennedy getting a win like this but it did give him a bit of momentum on his way to...whatever it is he has going on at the moment. Kennedy is someone who could be a star if he actually gets a maintained push and beating Snitsky is a tiny start. Snitsky continues to play his role perfectly: a giant with some power who can look intimidating and lose almost every time without much trouble.

Santino Marella is mad about Roddy Piper costing him a title because this isn't the 80s anymore. Vengeance is sworn.

Mickie James thanks John Cena for the save earlier...and invites him out for drinks with her brother and his girlfriend. Cena mocks being too serious to do that and says he'd love to go, but it could be a wild night. Mickie can go for wild and things get a bit awkward but they're cool.

Melina/Beth Phoenix vs. Maria/Mickie James

Mickie kicks Melina up to the ropes to start but Melina reverses, only to knock off the apron by mistake. Mickie gets taken into the corner...as Beth walks out. A neckbreaker gives Mickie the fast pin.

Here is Chris Jericho for a chat. Jericho shows us the clip of Shawn Michaels injuring his knee at Backlash and talks about a fan poll with 72% of the fans giving Shawn the benefit of the doubt. He doesn't buy it though and we see Shawn throwing a superkick in their tag match last week. That superkick made him change his mind and now he's willing to call off their match at Judgment Day.

Cue Shawn to make a confession: yeah he faked the knee injury. Jericho doesn't buy it because he isn't falling for these mind games. Shawn tries to say it's true but Jericho doesn't

believe him....so there's a superkick. Shawn: "Trust me when I tell you: I'm not hurt." He flips out of the ring and walks off just fine. So there's a twist.

We get a surprise as Jeff Hardy returns from a suspension. He didn't want to go but he made a mistake and had to pay for it. Hardy wants the Intercontinental Title back but gets cut off by William Regal. No one wants to hear from Hardy, who deserves punishment. Like a match with this man.

Jeff Hardy vs. Umaga

Umaga runs him over to start and hits the middle rope headbutt. The hip attack misses in the corner though and Hardy hits the Twist of Fate for the pin out of nowhere.

Video on John Cena vs. JBL.

Lance Cade/Trevor Murdoch vs. Cryme Tyme

Murdoch runs JTG into the corner to start but JTG does the same to him, allowing the tag off to Shad. Some hard shots allow JTG to get two off a sunset flip but Cade comes in to kick JTG in the face. Murdoch comes back in and sits down on another sunset flip attempt to pin JTG in another fast match.

Post match Cade is happy with the victory and thinks Murdoch's singing made it work. Murdoch gets to sing the victory song, which is The Gambler by Kenny Rogers. Then Cade punches him in the face and walks off.

Smackdown Rebound.

Melina asks Beth Phoenix what was up with walking out on her earlier. Beth blames Melina for the title loss last week...and then slams her into a locker over and over to leave Melina laying.

Judgment Day rundown.

Randy Orton talks about how he beat John Cena and HHH at Wrestlemania so he'll do it again tonight and at Judgment Day.

Randy Orton vs. John Cena

Orton goes with a headlock to start but Cena is right back out with some right hands. The release fisherman's suplex gives Cena two but Orton's backbreaker gets the same. Orton's stomp to the head is blocked though and Cena shoves him to the floor as we take a break. Back with Orton losing control of a chinlock but snapping off a powerslam for two.

The chinlock goes back on but Cena fights up again. The RK0 is blocked though and the top rope Fameasser connects. Hold on though as here are William Regal...and JBL, who is now guest referee because Mike Chioda is incompetent. Cena knocks JBL off the apron and tries the AA on Orton. JBL is back in with a big boot and a very fast count gives Orton the pin.

Rating: C+. Just like the main event of last week's Smackdown, you could probably count down the time until the evil boss did something evil. You knew Regal wasn't going to let Cena have a clean match with Orton here and it was all about how JBL was going to interfere. Cena and Orton work well enough together and they didn't have time to overstay their welcomes here.

Post match the big brawl is on with HHH coming in. The double brawls are on, with the John's fighting into the crowd. The cage (hey there's a cage) is lowered and HHH knocks Orton to the floor, leaving Orton panicking to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. This was one of those odd shows where pretty much everything was set up for the pay per view so this was all about keeping things settled. Other than Shawn admitting he was faking the injury, there wasn't a ton of new stuff on here. Well save for Cena and James possibly becoming a thing, which is probably going to be something for later anyway. Not an awful show, but not one you need to see either.

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Monday Night Raw – May 5, 2008: Lights Out (Again)

Monday Night Raw

Date: May 5, 2008

Location: Air Canada Center, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Attendance: 16,664

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

We are less than two weeks away from Judgment Day and we have a bit of a crazy boss. Last week saw General Manager William Regal crowned as King, though the power seems to have already gone to his head as he cut the show off so fans who booed him couldn't see the ending. Mr. Kennedy isn't happy and it might be time to deal with things. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

We open with a recap of William Regal going all scooters last week.

Here is Vince McMahon to say Regal pulled the plug in the end of a title match. This has led to a variety of protests from the fans, with many of them demanding that Vince appear tonight. However, McMahon finds Regal's actions to be visionary, so Regal reminds Vince of himself! He is all for Regal's actions and no punishment is coming.

Here is Regal for a chat. Regal doesn't like the fans disrespecting him again here...so turn out the lights again. He has the lights turned back on but says he won't be disrespected. Cue Mr. Kennedy to interrupt, saying all Regal has to do is agree to face him. Instead, Regal puts him in the main event against...the entire ECW roster (or about six members). This is part of a deal with Armando Alejandro Estrada to promote tomorrow's 100th ECW, but here is HHH to interrupt.

Just like Mr. Kennedy Kennedy here, HHH means no disrespect and tells Regal to not make mistakes. Last week, Regal cutting the lights off during HHH's match and disrespecting him would be mistakes. HHH says Regal doesn't want a war with him, but Regal says HHH already has to defend the title against Randy Orton in a cage at Judgment Day. As for tonight, HHH can join Mr. Kennedy in the main event against ECW. Regal is absolutely nailing it here and Kennedy is feeling like quite the rebel.

Women's Title: Beth Phoenix vs. Mickie James

James is defending in a lumberjack match. Beth easily powers her around to start and gets two off a running shoulder. With James on the floor, the evil lumberjacks get in their required cheap shots but James is right back with a neckbreaker. The lumberjacks get into their big fight (at least they didn't waste time here) and we take an early break. Back with Beth cranking on both arms until Mickie fights up and dropkicks her

way to freedom. The top rope Thesz press gets two and Beth is sent outside for a beating. In the melee, Melina goes for Mickie but hits Beth by mistake, allowing Mickie to grab a small package to retain.

Rating: C. This was all about the insanity going on around the ring while Mickie and Beth were just kind of in the middle. There are a lot of women in the division but there aren't many who are ready to go after the title. That is going to have to change, but for now it's likely going to be Mickie/Beth/Melina.

Chris Jericho comes up to see William Regal, who asks about Shawn Michaels' knee. Jericho is sure that Shawn is faking, which doesn't go well for him because tonight it's Jericho/Shawn vs. Miz/John Morrison.

Trevor Murdoch is singing when Trish Stratus comes in to look confused. Ron Simmons shows up for his cameo line.

Randy Orton doesn't agree with the idea that HHH had him beaten last week but that's not the point. As for tonight, he has CM Punk, who might cash in Money In The Bank on him when Orton gets the title back in two weeks.

Katie Lea Burchill/Paul Burchill vs. John Cutler

Hold on though as William Regal pops up to say Jim Ross isn't going to call this match. Instead, here is Mike Adamle to take the spot, leaving Ross looking rather annoyed. Paul chops him up against the ropes as Katie seems rather pleased. A knee drop lets Katie stomp away and we hit the chinlock. Back up and Cutler tries to roll Katie up, earning a stomping from Paul. The top rope double stomp from Katie sets up the single version from Paul, giving Katie the pin.

Rating: D+. There's something to be said about Katie being the focal point here as she has the charisma to get noticed, but I'm not sure where this is going to go. The bigger focus being

on the commentary didn't help either, but the Burchills are at least different. Paul still has the intensity to make something like this work, though it hasn't exactly gotten there yet.

Chris Jericho comes up to Shawn Michaels in the back. Shawn says he's really hurt but he'll do his best, as always. Jericho doesn't seem to buy it.

Chris Jericho/Shawn Michaels vs. Miz/John Morrison

Non-title, JR is back on commentary and Shawn is badly limping on the way to the ring. Jericho and Miz start things off with Jericho hitting a quick suplex. Morrison comes in to kick away in the corner, setting up the springboard spinning kick to the face. It's right back to Miz, who is quickly pulled into the Walls. Morrison makes the save so Shawn comes in with Sweet Chin Music, leaving him writhing in pain. A quick Lionsault gives Jericho the pin.

Rating: C. This was more storyline advancement than anything else as Michaels is either telling the truth or milking the heck out of faking the injury. It's an interesting story as it could go either way, which is something you don't get very often. If nothing else, Jericho being all smug and knowing that Shawn is faking it is making for good TV. Now just stop pinning the champs and it's that much better.

Shawn needs help getting to the back and Jericho is confused.

CM Punk vs. Randy Orton

Orton starts fast by sending him to the apron and then down to the floor in a crash. Back in and Orton starts the circle stomp but misses the knee drop. Punk kicks away but misses a springboard spinning crossbody. Back up and Punk kicks away, setting up the knee into the corner and the bulldog right back out of it. Cue William Regal though and let's turn out the lights because this match is over.

Rating: C. Well that's certainly a different way to go and this Regal stuff is getting more interesting. It's not often that you see someone actually shaking things up like this and it's making things feel different. Sometimes that is the way you need to go and making Orton mad is going to be an upgrade as well. The match was energetic while it lasted but it didn't exactly have time to go anywhere before the storyline ending.

Post break Orton is livid and goes to find Regal for some answers.

It's time for Carlito's Cabana. We look at Roddy Piper making a surprise appearance last week and slapping Santino Marella in the face. Therefore, here is Piper as this week's guest. Carlito says he gets that Santino can be annoying but Piper took it too far. Piper: "Listen Buckwheat."

We hear about Piper taking it too far every time, including when he beat cancer. He's not going to apologize for anything, including not wanting to sit and talk about what he did. Carlito says he would have slapped Piper back but Piper says Carlito should be glad that Piper didn't bring a seagull to make a nest in Carlito's hair.

Cue Santino Marella to mock Piper for taking so long to become Intercontinental Champion. Piper brings up Santino's recent DUI, but here is Cody Rhodes to interrupt. Now it's Cryme Tyme (Piper: "HOLY COW!") and the villains (oddly enough not including Piper) bail. The good guys dance. This was there to get Piper on the show and for the dancing at the end, but the seemingly endless Carlito/Marella Tag Team Title chase is dragging things down.

Post break Cryme Tyme is still in the ring and thinks they have a lot of stuff to sell around here. They have a hammock and coconuts! Selling ensues and a lot of money changes hands (with a fan getting the hammock).

Judgment Day rundown.

JBL is standing next to his limo and offers to share his lifestyle. We go inside the limo for a ride into the arena, with JBL talking about all of the features in the limo (full bar, high speed internet). This was a very JBL thing to do and it worked.

John Bradshaw Layfield vs. DH Smith

Before the match, JBL talks about Smith's father but says the British Bulldog can't help him. The beating is on fast and the Clothesline From JBL finishes in about a minute.

Post match the big beating is on until referees break it up.

William Regal tells the ECW roster to get it together tonight because they have a big mission. The team goes to the ring, with Kane glaring at Regal as he leaves.

Smackdown Rebound.

HHH/Mr. Kennedy vs. ECW Roster

One fall to a finish. Kennedy and Elijah Burke start things off with Kennedy grabbing a front facelock and handing it off to HHH. The jumping knee drops Matt Striker so it's quickly off to Mike Knox. The villains (mostly at least) take over on HHH, who shrugs it off and brings Kennedy back in. Tommy Dreamer grabs a snap suplex and brings in Kofi Kingston, only to have Shelton Benjamin tag himself in. The distraction lets HHH come back in and everything breaks down. Kane chokeslams Kennedy but Bam Neeley jumps Kane, allowing Chavo Guerrero to hit a frog splash for the pin.

Rating: C. These things are always weird as there is only so much you can do with two vs. more than a dozen wrestlers. ECW was more or less rotating wrestlers in and out and the real focus here was on the visual of having that many people out there. I'm not sure how much of a punishment it was, but at least it wasn't the same stuff we see every week.

Post match the big brawl is on with HHH cleaning house but the lights go out. They come back up and it's Randy Orton with an RK0 to HHH to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. The Regal stuff is interesting and that is what the show needed given how weak the wrestling was this week. There is only so much you can get out of a bunch of weak matches and a kind of strange Roddy Piper segment and this show proved it. Hopefully this was just a one off weak show, as there are pieces, like Jericho vs. Shawn, there that could help carry the weak portions.

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Monday Night Raw – April 28, 2008: He Does Good Crazy

Monday Night Raw

Date: April 28, 2008

Location: IZOD Center, East Rutherford, New Jersey

Attendance: 17,166

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

We're done with Backlash and the big story is that HHH won the Raw World Title from Randy Orton in the four way main event. That alone should be enough to make things interesting tonight but we also have Shawn Michaels defeating Batista after taking advantage of his own knee injury. That sounds like it could go somewhere, so let's get to it.

[Here is Backlash if you need a recap.](#)

We open with a recap of HHH winning the Raw World Title in last night's four way elimination match.

Here is HHH to get things going, complete with big shiny belt. HHH declares The Age Of Orton officially dead and now we pause because they are chanting his name. Eight months ago, he wasn't sure if he was ever going to return to the ring and now he knows that The Game is back. Cue Randy Orton to interrupt and he isn't overly pleased. Orton talks about how the odds were stacked against him last night but HHH brings up Orton being all confident before the match. Now he's the victim? Orton: "The victim of my own success. I was so dominant they wouldn't put me against anyone one on one."

HHH thinks Orton liked the idea of hiding behind these multiman matches but Orton has already got the rematch set for Judgment Day in less than three weeks. HHH says he bragged too, but in his case, it was the truth. Orton gets in his face and is knocked out with a single shot, sending Orton to the floor. He'll just have his rematch clause tonight instead. They got to the point pretty fast here.

Post break, the title match is on.

Mickie James/Maria/Ashley/Michelle McCool/Cherry/Kelly Kelly vs. Beth Phoenix/Melina/Jillian Hall/Natalya/Victoria/Layla

Backlash rematch and it's a big brawl before the bell rings. We settle down for the opening bell and Beth decking Kelly from behind. Beth powers her straight into the corner and hands it off to Victoria. The spinning side slam is countered into a headscissors but Victoria takes her straight into the corner. Melina's running/screaming hip attack in the corner gets two and Jillian comes in, only to miss her handspring elbow. Mickie comes in to clean house and gets a bridging rollup to pin Jillian.

Rating: D+. Well they made good time, but a twelve woman match where half of them don't get in isn't exactly a rampaging success. They didn't have time to do anything here and this would have been better off as a two on two tag match instead. There is some talent in the division, but with only the Raw title to fight over, it leaves a lot of them without much to do save for appearances like this one.

John Bradshaw Layfield vs. Robbie McCallister

Rory is here with Robbie and the beating is on quickly. The Clothesline from JBL finishes at around a minute, which has me wondering if this was punishment for Robbie popping up in the crowd at Impact around Wrestlemania the previous month.

Post match JBL grabs a headset and blames John Cena for not winning the title last night. He wants the winner of tonight's title match.

Paul London/Brian Kendrick vs. Trevor Murdoch/Lance Cade

Cade and London start things off with Cade hitting a high backdrop for an early two. Murdoch comes in to hammer away as the fans are dubbing this boring. London slips away and brings in Kendrick to pick up the pace, with Murdoch screaming at Cade. Murdoch comes in and is promptly rolled up for the pin.

Post match Murdoch grabs the mic, gets on the announcers' table, and since I Got Friends In Low Places. Cade is

adequately confused by the whole thing.

We look at Shawn Michaels tweaking his knee last night against Batista but rolling him up for the pin anyway.

Paul Burchill/Katie Lea Burchill vs. Super Crazy

Before the match, Katie thanks William Regal for making this a handicap match. Paul wastes no time in taking Crazy down, allowing Katie to hit a running boot to the face. Crazy avoids a charge in the corner though and kicks Paul down. The moonsault misses though and Katie's missile dropkick sets up the curb stomp to give Paul the face pin. Short and to the point here.

Randy Orton is asked if he has second thoughts about using his rematch clause tonight. Orton: "No."

And now, the official coronation of William Regal (thank goodness it isn't one of those knockoffs). Regal, on the throne in the ring, says (in between some hardcore WHATing) he will now be General Manager AND King because he has earned both titles. You will have no choice but to respect and fear him, because he is your ruler, better and....here's Mr. Kennedy to interrupt.

Kennedy can't congratulate Regal for the win because he wasn't even in the tournament in the first place. He hits the catchphrase but Regal cuts him off and says get an appointment/make an apology. Kennedy teases an apology before switching to his catchphrase instead. Regal punches him down and referees have to make it up. Kennedy felt more like a star here and I was feeling the hype that he has had for so long here. This worked, and that's kind of a rare thing for Kennedy these days.

Cody Rhodes vs. Santino Marella

Hardcore Holly and Carlito are here too. Before the match,

Santino says he DOES NOT like the fake Italians on the Sopranos, which is set right here in New Jersey. Santino actually knocks him down and hammers away a bit to start before dodging a high crossbody. We hit the chinlock for a bit before a hard hiptoss (yes a hiptoss) of all things gets two. Rhodes fights up and hits a quick DDT for the pin.

Rating: C-. Not much to this one, but the bigger problem continues to be how long these teams have been feuding. There are other teams around, but for some reason these two have to feud for the better part of ever. Rhodes and Holly have already beaten them, so why are we still stuck on this feud?

Post match Cody mocks Santino's accent and gets taken down with the Backstabber.

It's time for the Highlight Reel and Chris Jericho is in a tuxedo. Jericho is here to present an award for the Best Actor in Sports Entertainment. The nominees are:

Mr. Fuji and the Magnificent Muraco in Fuji General
Michael Cole in Deliverance Part II (as in the infamous Heidenreich segment, complete with banjo music)
Shawn Michaels pretending to have a knee injury at Backlash

Why yes, Shawn does win, so here he is to accept, limping all the way down the ramp. Jericho wants an acceptance speech, but Shawn insists that he is really hurt. That doesn't go well with Jericho, who thinks Shawn goes from good to bad faster than anyone. Shawn would even try superkicking him with the bad leg if there was no podium between them. That doesn't get anything from Shawn, so Jericho has Shawn's music play before leaving. I think we might be coming back to this one.

Santino Marella bumps into a woman he finds attractive...but it's really Roddy Piper. Santino brings up the Goonies music video but Piper has no time for this. There's your bizarre cameo of the week.

We recap HHH winning the Raw World Title last night.

Raw World Title: HHH vs. Randy Orton

HHH is defending and we even get a weapons check to make it feel special. They fight over a lockup to start and go straight to the staredown. A shoulder puts HHH down and Orton grabs a headlock to grind away a bit. HHH is right back with a headlock of his own, followed by some aggressive arm cranking. Orton misses a charge into the post and the arm is suddenly in bad shape. The arm is sent into the barricade but Orton's legs are fine enough to score with a kick on the way back in.

We take a break and come back with Orton hammering away (with the good arm) in the corner. A dropkick gives Orton two and we hit the chinlock. Orton grabs a suplex and gets in the circle stomp to keep things slow. The big knee drop gets two as JR says Orton isn't looking to make a mistake. How does one exactly "look to make a mistake"?

Anyway they head outside with HHH being sent into the steps for two, meaning we're right back to the chinlock. HHH fights up but charges into a boot, allowing Orton to load up a blocked RK0. The facebuster and a clothesline put Orton down but he's right back with a powerslam for two of his own.

The backbreaker gives Orton two more, only to have HHH crotch him on top. There's the superplex for a delayed HHH two but the Pedigree and RK0 are both countered. HHH grabs the crossface....and we go to the back, where William Regal says he isn't having this disrespect. The fans who booed him earlier don't deserve to see this match so the feed is cut. JR and King keep doing commentary as the black screen takes us out.

Rating: B-. That was certainly a unique ending but the match itself wasn't that great on the way there. HHH and Orton have some chemistry together, but I've yet to see them really get to that epic match. The good thing is that this should get rid of the rematch clause for now, but you can almost guarantee

another match at the pay per view. Some people just can't get to that next level and save for maybe once before, that would apply to these two as well.

Overall Rating: C. This was a weird show as the Regal stuff and main event were both good, along with what feels like the start of Shawn vs. Jericho, but everything else was fast or bad. Regal going insane works rather well though, and we could be in for quite the run from him going forward. That makes for quite the different stretch of two hours, though it feels like we're getting something of a sequel to Backlash at Judgment Day. That's an odd way to go, but Backlash was rather good so it might work out very well.

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Backlash 2008 (2023 Redo) :

The Power Of The Followup Show

Backlash 2008

Date: April 27, 2008

Location: 1st Mariner Arena, Baltimore, Maryland

Attendance: 11,277

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole, Mick Foley, Tazz, Mike Adamle

We are at the official Wrestlemania followup pay per view and the top of the card is rather stacked. First up we have a Wrestlemania rematch for the Smackdown World Title, though this time Edge is challenging Undertaker. On Raw, it's a similar situation from Wrestlemania, but this time JBL is added to the John Cena/Randy Orton/HHH mix and it's elimination Rules. Let's get to it.

The opening video looks at how this is the Wrestlemania fallout, including the bigger matches.

Mick Foley is replacing Coach on commentary, which has to be a nice upgrade.

US Title: Matt Hardy vs. MVP

MVP is defending in a match almost a year in the making, as they had a big feud going but then health issues slowed both of them down at different times. Feeling out process to start with neither being able to get very far early on. Matt drops the wrestling and hits him in the face, followed by a hiptoss for a quick one.

MVP puts him on top but gets elbowed back down, setting up a moonsault onto MVP's raised knees. The abdominal stretch stays on the banged up ribs and MVP is evil enough to grab the rope. Matt grabs the leg and counters with something like a Samoan

drop but MVP goes right back to the ribs. A big clothesline gets Matt out of trouble but MVP hot shots him ribs first onto the top.

The Playmaker is countered into the Side Effect for two and Matt goes up. This still doesn't go well for him as MVP crotches him down but a super Side Effect gives Matt another near fall. MVP goes a little more basic by kicking him in the head and then does it again for a bonus. The running boot in the corner misses though and the Twist of Fate gives Matt the pin and the title.

Rating: B. The ending was a little flat but what mattered here was giving Matt the big win to FINALLY pay off the feud. Other than that, they had a hard hitting match with Matt having to fight from behind for a good portion but he managed to hang in there enough. The ending was clean too and now Matt can move on to something else, albeit likely after a big rematch with MVP first.

In the back, Matt Hardy talks about how this is the biggest win of his career and emphatically says he is BETTER THAN MVP.

ECW Title: Kane vs. Chavo Guerrero

Guerrero, with Bam Neely, is challenging. Kane sends him into the corner to start and hits a basement dropkick but seems to be limping a bit. A gorilla press plants Chavo but he's right back with some shots to the hip/leg. The still limping Kane sends him outside and gets in a ramp into the apron to work on Chavo's back. The rather wise Chavo goes right back to the leg, sending it into the apron and post.

Neely gets in a cheap shot to validate his presence before Chavo is right back to a leglock. Kane powers up with an electric chair drop and some corner clotheslines. The side slam gets two and the top rope clothesline knocks Chavo to the apron. That's enough for a tornado DDT to get Chavo out of trouble and it's right back to the knee. The frog splash

connects...with Kane's hand, as he grabs Chavo by the throat for the chokeslam to retain.

Rating: C-. The problem with Kane vs. Chavo continues, as there is no reason to believe that Chavo, even with help, is going to be able to beat Kane. Throw in Neely doing almost nothing here and there was no reason to get involved here. Kane limped around a lot and then shrugged it off to take over in the end. There isn't much to get invested in here and it shows worse every week this feud has continued.

Randy Orton isn't worried about defending against three challengers tonight because he's retaining the title.

Great Khali vs. Big Show

The fans seem interested as we get the big staredown to start, followed by the slugout. They trade headbutts and chops until Khali drops him with a clothesline. Show's attempt at a slam doesn't work as Khali knocks him out to the floor with another clothesline. A big boot drops Show back inside and Khali grabs something like a crossface (ok then). Show fights up but Khali falls on him to break up a slam attempt. The nerve hold goes on before the big chop to the head drops Show again. Show fights to his feet again and finally gets the slam, followed by the chokeslam for the pin.

Rating: D+. It wasn't good, it was very slow paced, and I have no idea why anyone would have expected anything else. There is only so much that Khali is going to be able to do in the ring and they didn't deviate from that plan, with a lot of Khali's stuff involving him standing still. Not a good match by any means, but it was exactly how this should have gone and was far from some disaster.

John Cena and Jimmy Wang Yang seem to be talking country music when Randy Orton comes in. Cena and Orton trade threats for the main event.

We recap Batista vs. Shawn Michaels. Batista was unhappy that Shawn Michaels didn't lay down for Ric Flair to keep his career alive. Shawn more or less told Batista to get over it and the match was set. Chris Jericho got involved as the guest referee and seems to be more on the Batista side, despite Batista sounding incredibly whiny in the whole thing.

Batista vs. Shawn Michaels

Chris Jericho is the guest referee. They circle each other a bit to start and both miss their early finisher attempts. Michaels tries to go after the arm by driving in some knees and grabbing the short armscissors. Batista powers up but they fall over the top, cranking the arm even more.

The bad arm is sent into the post and the armbar goes on back inside. Batista finally powers out of it and hits a Samoan drop, followed by a clothesline to turn Shawn inside out (that always looks cool). The good arm is used for some shoulders in the corner but Shawn counters the Batista Bomb into a Crossface. With Batista getting too close to the ropes, Shawn is smart enough to roll it back into the middle to keep cranking.

The rope is finally grabbed but Jericho has to pull Shawn off (rather quickly at that). Batista is back up with a side slam and a spear cuts Shawn in half for two. Shawn is placed up top but shoves Batista down, setting up the top rope elbow. The superkick is countered into a heck of a one armed spinebuster and Batista is shaking the ropes levels of fired up. The Batista Bomb is countered...but Shawn has hurt his knee on the landing. Batista, ever the genius, falls for it and gets superkicked for the pin.

Rating: B. This was a somewhat slower paced match but the psychology worked well. Shawn knew that he couldn't handle Batista in a straight fight but he also knew that Batista was so mad he was going to come right for him. That let Shawn pick

him apart, mainly with the arm, before outsmarting him in the end. That's how the match should have gone and it worked well, with Jericho not being much of a factor whatsoever.

Shawn's knee is banged up enough that he has to be helped to the back. Why do I not quite believe him?

HHH and Randy Orton have their own psych out session, with HHH saying that pride comes before the fall.

Beth Phoenix/Jillian Hall/Layla/Melina/Natalya/Victoria vs. Ashley/Cherry/Kelly Kelly/Maria/Michelle McCool/Mickie James

Beth wants Michelle to start and shoves her down early on. Michelle's kicks to the back don't do much as Phoenix grabs a powerslam to take over. Melina comes in and gets beaten up by Mickie but Victoria comes in to slam her down. The dancing moonsault misses and everything breaks down fast. We actually settle back down to Beth chinlocking Ashley, who slips out of the Glam Slam. Everything breaks down again and we hit the parade of finishers. Beth's release fisherman's suplex finishes Ashley.

Rating: C-. This is one of those matches where there wasn't much else that could have been done. You had twelve women sharing less than seven minutes and that is not going to go well. Maybe they were never given the time to do anything or they were trying to hide some of the limitations, but the Smackdown women really need something to fight over other than bragging rights.

We recap Edge challenging Undertaker for the Smackdown World Title. Undertaker took the title from Edge, but Vickie Guerrero has set up the rematch and put Undertaker through a bunch of opponents on the way. Simple story but Vickie knows how to sell it very well.

Smackdown World Title: Edge vs. Undertaker

Edge is challenging and is shoved outside rather quickly to start. Back in and Undertaker starts working on the arm to keep Edge in trouble and a good bit of cranking ensues. Edge gets smart by raking the eyes and knocking Undertaker outside, where a baseball slide knocks him down again. That doesn't last long as Undertaker runs him over back inside and drops a leg for two.

Edge fights back again and gets in a shot to Undertaker's banged up back, setting up the bodyscissors. A dropkick to the back, followed by a sliding dropkick to the back, has Undertaker in more trouble. Edge's camel clutch goes on twice in a row, with Undertaker having to drop backwards onto him for the break.

They collide in the middle for a double knockdown but it's Undertaker up first with Snake Eyes into the big boot. Undertaker shoves him off the top but misses a top rope legdrop of all things. With that odd visual out of the way, Edge grabs the title, only to have to counter a chokeslam to save himself. Edge goes for the turnbuckle pad, which the referee fixes, allowing Curt Hawkins to run in with a belt shot for two. Undertaker fights up again, takes out Zack Ryder, and grabs the triangle choke to retain the title.

Rating: B. This was a far cry from the Wrestlemania match and felt like a good TV match rather than a pay per view co main event. That being said, there is nothing to suggest that Edge can win a straight match against Undertaker so the ending was what made sense. Odds are this somehow still isn't over though, as Vickie Guerrero dragging it out would not be a surprise. On top of that, who else is there on Smackdown that would make an interesting challenger right now? Anyway, nice match here, but nothing great or memorable.

Post match Undertaker keeps the hold on, with Vickie Guerrero coming out as Edge is bleeding from the nose/mouth. Undertaker leaves him laying and Vickie freaks out as Edge is taken away

on a stretcher.

CM Punk wishes Randy Orton good luck, even as Orton is knocking on JBL's door.

We recap the Raw World Title match. Randy Orton retained over John Cena and HHH at Wrestlemania so let's do it again, with JBL added, and under elimination rules.

Raw World Title: JBL vs. HHH vs. John Cena vs. Randy Orton

Orton is defending under elimination rules. We get the Big Match Intros and Orton goes for the belt, only to get knocked outside by JBL. That leaves Cena to hammer on HHH in the corner but HHH sends him outside. Cena runs Orton over on the floor and hammers away, only to get knocked off the apron and into the announcers' table.

Orton and JBL double team HHH inside, only to have him double clothesline his way to freedom. HHH sends JBL into the steps but it's Cena back in with the top rope Fameasser to Orton. The STFU goes on and JBL...is smart enough to not break it up. HHH crossfaces JBL, who pokes Cena in the eye to save Orton. With the crossface broken up as well, JBL boots Orton in the face for two but he clotheslines JBL right back.

JBL catches Orton on top and let's just turn that into a Tower Of Doom for the big knockdown. Cena is back up to initiate the finishing sequence on HHH, who cuts him off with a spinebuster. A backdrop sends HHH to the floor and Cena STFU's JBL for the tap. Before Cena can get up, Orton Punts him for the pin ten seconds later and we're down to Orton vs. HHH.

Orton gets sent outside and rammed into the announcers' table, only to reverse a whip into the steps. A catapult sends HHH over the barricade but a suplex brings him back to ringside. They get back inside with Orton slowly hammering away, including the backbreaker for two.

HHH fights out of the chinlock (eventually) but Orton knocks him right back down. The RK0 is shoved off though and HHH scores with the jumping knee to the face. Back up and HHH hits a running clothesline to put Orton on the floor again, setting up a toss over the announcers' table. HHH drops him onto the steps to make it even worse but Orton manages to counter the Pedigree back inside. An RK0 out of nowhere gets two but the Punt, the RK0 and the Pedigree all miss, setting up the Pedigree to make HHH champion again.

Rating: B-. This was weird, as the majority of the match was spent on HHH vs. Randy Orton, with Cena and JBL feeling like window dressing. That feels like a big shift over to a new feud and that might be more interesting than the three way or multi person feud. As for the match itself, the first part was quite entertaining but it got pretty dull once it got down to two, which has been the case for HHH vs. Orton over the years. The title change was a surprise though and that is kind of nice to see.

Overall Rating: B. It's a rather unique show as you had good action and stuff did happen with some title changes, but it still didn't exactly feel like a major event. What matters here is moving some things forward though, with the Wrestlemania rematch season wrapping up and hopefully getting us on to something else. It's almost a hidden gem, as the action is worth seeing and nothing is too bad, but I'll be hoping to remember this show in another day or two.

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Monday Night Raw – April 21, 2008 (2023 Redo, King Of The Ring 2008): Dang That's A Lot

Monday Night Raw

Date: April 21, 2008

Location: BiLo Center, Greenville, South Carolina

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

It's a special three hour show as the King Of The Ring is back. The tournament was announced last week and now we get the whole thing wrapped up in one night. Other than that, it is the go home show for Backlash and that means it is time for the final push towards the four way match for the Raw World Title. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

Opening sequence.

King Of The Ring First Round: Chris Jericho vs. MVP

Non-title. MVP slugs away to start but Jericho drapes him ribs first onto the top. Jericho takes it to the floor but MVP hits something like a hanging Nightmare On Helm Street back inside. Something close to a seated abdominal stretch has Jericho in

trouble but he's right back up and hits a running shoulder. A big boot gives MVP two, only to get taken down with a clothesline as the back and forth continues. The Playmaker is broken up though and Jericho gets the Walls for the clean tap.

Rating: C. It was intense while it lasted but they had no other way out besides having the US Champion tap out? Losing to Jericho isn't some huge upset but MVP already has a title match on Sunday so why have him lose here? I've never gotten the thinking behind this, though it doesn't do the loser's title any favors.

King Of The Ring First Round: CM Punk vs. Matt Hardy

They trade forearms to start and Punk blocks the Side Effect with some elbows to the head. Punk knocks him down into a chinlock before putting him on top. What looked to be a superplex is broken up and a middle rope elbow to the back of the head rocks Punk for a change. Back up and Punk's running knee and bulldog get two so Punk loads up the GTS. Hardy reverses into a sunset flip attempt but Punk sits down on it for the pin to advance.

Rating: C+. This was another fast and to the point match, though they kept things going so qquickly that it was entertaining. At the same time, the US Title match at Backlash has taken quite the hit in the first twenty five minutes of the show. This one isn't as bad as the champ losing, but the title match doesn't have quite the shine anymore.

Here's what Barack Obama vs. Hilary Clinton looks like in Smackdown vs. Raw 2008.

We look back at JBL/HHH/Randy Orton attacking each other last week.

The Raw World Title match is now a four way elimination match.

JBL says tonight is about crowning the King Of The Ring but he

will be crowned champion on Sunday. There is even an article about him on the front page of the New York Times!

King Of The Ring First Round: Finlay vs. Great Khali

Hornswoggle is here with Finlay. Some shots to the knee manage to put Finlay down to start but Khali chokes him from the mat. A big boot drops Finlay so Hornswoggle tries to bring in the shillelagh. With that broken up, Khali wraps Finlay's leg around the post and that's a fast DQ.

Post match here is Big Show for the showdown with Khali. That's enough to send Khali bailing to wait for Sunday. With Finlay being helped to the back, here is William Regal for the final first round match.

King Of The Ring First Round: Hornswoggle vs. William Regal

Regal Stretch finishes Hornswoggle in about 20 seconds.

Video on the European tour.

Here is Shawn Michaels for a chat. Shawn didn't think he would be out here dealing with one of Ric Flair's best friends in Batista. He needs to ask Batista something here though, so come on down. Cue Batista, with Shawn bringing up what Chris Jericho said on Smackdown: did Batista want to be the one to retire Flair? Batista asks if it would be easier if the answer was yes. Either way, Batista is ending this at Backlash, but Shawn promises to show Batista why he is the Heartbreak Kid. Shawn is willing to do anything to win, so be ready. Violence is teased but they leave.

In light of the Pennsylvania Presidential Primary, Hilary Clinton joins us and says the election is starting to sound like King of the Ring. This time though, the Last Woman Standing may be a woman. Whoever wins will have a lot of challenges to overcome but she will stay in the political arena and won't come after Randy Orton. She might drop the

People's Elbow though. This was as eye roll inducing as you could have imagined but points for actually showing up.

Hardcore Holly vs. Carlito

Cody Rhodes and Santino Marella are here too. Holly starts fast and hammers him into the corner. An atomic drop hits Carlito but he knees Holly in the ribs and takes over. We hit the chinlock with a knee in the back before an elbow to the face cuts off Holly's comeback. The Alabama Slam is countered into the Backstabber to give Carlito the pin.

Rating: C-. This was as interesting as a Carlito vs. Hardcore Holly match to set up Carlito/Santino Marella vs. Holly/Cody Rhodes Tag Team Title match was going to be. This feud is pretty horrible, but it isn't like the titles have felt important in a good while. Just find some better teams. It really shouldn't be that hard.

Post match Santino promises to win the Tag Team Titles but Cody clears the ring.

HHH promises to win the title at Backlash.

King Of The Ring Semifinals: CM Punk vs. Chris Jericho

Non-title. Jericho grabs a headlock takeover and gets absolutely nowhere. Back up and Punk starts kicking away at the leg but gets dropped ribs first across the top rope. Jericho stays on the ribs until a hammerlock lariat gives Punk two. They go to a pinfall reversal sequence and Punk's snap powerslam gets two more. The Walls have Punk right back down, sending him over to the rope for the break. Jericho goes up but gets kicked in the head, setting up the GTS for the clean pin.

Rating: C+. It was fun while it lasted but they got out of there really fast. Maybe their time was cut short, but the Intercontinental Champion losing in about six and a half

minutes completely clean is a strange thing to see. That being said, Punk is getting a push here and points for trying to make someone new.

Senator Barack Obama says it's a chance to change business as usual and get rid of people trying to become King (of the ring). Do you smell what Barack is cooking? He certainly has charisma.

King Of The Ring Semifinals: William Regal vs. Finlay

This should be fun and Finlay is very banged up coming in. Finlay sends him outside but his band knee is sent into the steps. Back in and Regal goes after the knee like a true villain (or smart wrestler) should. Finlay forearms away and a backslide (which falls apart on the way down) gets two. Regal's running knee knocks Finlay silly though and the Regal Stretch knocks Finlay out to send Regal to the finals.

Rating: C. Another short match here, which continues the issue of a one night tournament needing to be rushed, even if there is an extra hour. Regal and Finlay could have a heck of a fight if given the chance, but three and a half minutes with Finlay being banged up coming in isn't going to allow that. Instead we got Regal being a villain who exploited an injury, which might just be a bit better.

Senator John McCain uses a bunch of wrestling catchphrases and promises to introduce Osama Bin Laden to the Undertaker and tells us to vote. All three of these were pretty bad, but they did take the time to appear.

Backlash rundown.

John Cena is tired of talking and wants to fight. He talks about how he knows he has a chance on Sunday and the other three have to go through him.

WWE has helped with a literacy program. Nothing wrong with

that.

Barack Obama vs. Hilary Clinton

Let's get this over with as I'm sure Vince McMahon finds this hilarious. Clinton comes out to Real American and has a Bill Clinton impersonator. Before the match, Hilary cuts a promo for the Hilamaniacs and there is an eerie silence as she stops to bicker with Bill. Fans: "MONICA! MONICA!"

Obama, with big fake ears, comes out to Rock's theme. His Rock impression isn't well received but Bill cuts him off. Hilary jumps him to start and gets two off a slam into a legdrop. The Rock Bottom connects (Bill: "Honey are you go???) but Bill breaks up the People's Elbow (Bill: "I did not have inappropriate conduct."). Umaga finally comes in and the match is thrown out.

Umaga wrecks both of them, ending one of the dumbest segments that probably had a certain someone howling backstage.

Here are a bunch of the more popular Divas for a chat. Last week, Mickie James won the Women's Title from Beth Phoenix, which they never thought possible. Mickie is brought out for a chat, plus a lot of hugging. Cue the evil Divas, with Beth Phoenix promising to get the title back. McCool slaps Beth and the big brawl is on.

Mr. Kennedy is back next week. He was gone?

King Of The Ring: William Regal vs. CM Punk

Regal takes him into the corner to start and hammers away but Punk sends him into the buckle. A belly to back suplex drops Punk for two and Regal cranks on both arms. Punk finally slips out and kicks him in the head. It's too early for the GTS though as Regal grabs the rope and knees him in the head. The Regal Stretch makes Punk tap and Regal is King.

B: C. So that's the tournament, with the longest match not

even breaking seven minutes. This was another match that just came and went because there wasn't time to do much. Punk's ribs were tied throughout the matches he wasn't even in the ring for fifteen minutes throughout the night. I like Regal winning though, as he is great when given a chance to showcase everything he can do. Just do better with the tournament next time, or stretch it out to a second week.

Post match Regal sits on the throne and we're off to a break rather quickly.

Here is Randy Orton for the main event, but first he says he is tired of everyone talking about taking his title. He has nothing to say except for listing off the shows where he retained.

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

That's a pretty outstanding group of good guys. Edge tries to jump Undertaker to start and gets caught with a quick Old School. We take a break and come back with Edge charging into HHH's spinebuster, allowing the diving tag to Cena. The Shuffle is broken up thanks to a Chavo low bridge though and it's Orton coming in to kick him in the ribs.

JBL gets two off a neckbreaker as the villains start taking turns on Cena. Orton grabs the chinlock with a bodyscissors until Cena powers up for a ram into the corner. The tag brings in Kane and everything breaks down. Kane chokeslams Chavo but Edge comes in off a blind tag and hits a spear for the pin.

Rating: C+. This felt like a house show match where you get your big names in the ring to end the show. It worked for what it was, in that it previewed multiple pay per view title matches at once, though there was no reason to believe it was going to be anything great. Kane taking the fall when Chavo is there is a bit weird, but maybe they feel they have beaten him into the ground enough.

Post match we hit the parade of finishers, with Undertaker chokeslamming Orton and JBL to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. This was a strange show in that they tried to pack in a lot and it was too overcrowded. Between the tournament, the political stuff and the build towards the pay per view, this felt like it needed to be about four hours, or two regular weeks, to make it work. What we got did work and they covered a lot, but it felt like it could have been that much better rather than just doing ok with everything. Cut some of this stuff out and let the show breathe a bit more and it's that much better. Or just get rid of the Obama vs. Hilary match because that was an audience of one deal if I've ever seen one.

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Impact Wrestling – April 13, 2023: Worth Filing Out For

Impact Wrestling

Date: April 13, 2023

Location: St. Clair College, Windsor, Ontario, Canada

Commentators: Tom Hannifan, Matthew Rehwoldt

The road to Rebellion end this week and that means it is time to finish off the build towards the show. In this case it means we are going to be seeing more build towards the new World Title match of Kushida vs. Steve Maclin. This week will also see what happens with Mickie James and the Knockouts Title. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

Opening recap.

Opening sequence.

Kenny King vs. Frankie Kazarian

The winner gets the advantage in the Hardcore War at Rebellion and the other teams are at ringside. They fight over a lockup to start until Kazarian snaps off some chops. King cuts him off though and starts hammering away in the corner to take over. A backbreaker gives King two and we hit the one armed camel clutch. Kazarian breaks it up and makes the clothesline comeback, capped off by a running forearm.

The springboard spinning legdrop gives Kazarian two but King is back with a tiger driver for the same. King sends him to the floor but Kazarian comes back in with a slingshot cutter for two. The brawl on the floor finally breaks out as Kazarian gets the chickenwing. Cue Brian Myers for a distraction, allowing Moose to spear Kazarian down for the pin at 8:18.

Rating: B-. These two were having a good match until the screwy ending, which was quite the twist as Myers and Moose haven't had anything to do with this feud so far. They would be an upgrade over the Good Hands for the match but that might be asking too much. For now though, I'll settle for talented wrestlers having a good match to open the show, as is the norm around here.

Post match the beatdown is on and Team Dreamer is left laying.

Earlier tonight, Steve Maclin interrupted the Canadian National Anthem. Kushida made the save and cleaned house in a brawl.

Lince Dorado vs. Black Taurus vs. Laredo Kid vs. Rich Swann

Crazy Steve handles Taurus' intro. Taurus sends everyone to the floor to start and hits the big dive, only to have a triple superkick send him to the floor. That means the dives can take him out and leave everyone down as we take a break. Back with Taurus launching Dorado onto the top, where he can superplex Kid (while on top of Taurus' shoulders for a crazy visual).

Back up and Kid hits a springboard armdrag to Swann, followed by a double Golden Rewind from Dorado. Taurus is back in to clean house, including a heck of a pop up Samoan drop to Dorado. That's not enough as Taurus powerbombs Kid onto Swann at ringside. Taurus cleans house and goes up, only to have Kid catch him with a super Spanish Fly for the pin at 10:44.

Rating: B-. This might not have broken the mold for a match like this but they did their thing well. Kid has felt like he should be the next breakout star in the division almost every time he is around but nothing has ever really clicked. It seems like they're trying it again and pinning Taurus is certainly a good way to start. Taurus got to show off again here and that power is always worth a look. Fun match, as expected.

Long video on the Bullet Club vs. the Motor City Machine Guns in Ultimate X for the Tag Team Titles.

Jessicka and Rosemary want to go to the Undead Realm to get Taya Valkyrie back but Rosemary says she's going alone because Jessicka doesn't know how to do it. She opens the coffin...but it's just a regular one instead of the portal. The Coven must be behind this!

Jessicka vs. Taylor Wilde

Rosemary and KiLynn King are here too. Hold on as Wilde gives Jessicka a tarot card to start so Jessicka shows it to Rosemary. That lets Wilde jump her from behind so Jessicka says STOP HITTING ME. Jessicka misses a charge and gets choked in the corner before a Backstabber brings Jessicka down again. Back up and some jabs stagger Wilde, setting up a running crossbody for two. Rosemary and King get into it, allowing Wilde to slip out of a Sick Driver and grab a fisherman's neckbreaker for the pin at 4:28.

Rating: C. The more I see of Wilde, the more amazed I am by the fact that she is the same woman who came back to almost no reaction last year. This is a completely different way to go for her and it is working rather well. The Coven has been a nice breath of air for the division and I could go for them holding the titles that much longer.

Jordynne Grace is ready for the Knockouts Title match at Rebellion but she can't control what happens with Mickie James. She can control winning though.

Alisha Edwards is glad to have brought Eddie Edwards back to the right path. Now they want to get rid of the monster blocking his path.

Dirty Dango/Joe Hendry vs. Angels/Callihan

Before the match, Hendry confirms our belief in him. The rest

of the Design is here too because what would it be like without the rest of them. Callihan suplexes Hendry for a fast two so Angels comes in, only to get suplexed as well. Dango comes in for the Dirtbag Shuffle but Angels takes him down. Callihan is whipped into Angels though and it's back to Dango to clean house. Kon grabs the leg though and it's a standing Sliced Bread to drop Hendry. A frog splash gets two, with Hendry making the save. Callihan hits Angels by mistake so Deaner stops to yell, leaving Hendry to hit the Standing Ovation for the pin at 4:39.

Rating: C. Egads I don't know how much more I can take of this story. It feels like it has been going on forever and the Design somehow gets lamer every single week. Just get to someone turning on someone so they can have their big violent match and we can move on. Dango continues to do fine in his role and it's nice to see him getting away from the dancing stuff. Hendry continues to be awesome and that's all he needs to be.

Post match the Design jumps them again, until Santino Marella comes out for the save. This includes the Cobra because...oh my head hurts again.

Video on Steve Maclin vs. Kushida.

PC0 promises to bury Eddie Edwards in a Last Rites match at Rebellion.

Bully Ray introduces Moose and Brian Myers as new members of his now seven person army. They're ready for Rebellion and promise destruction because they're family. Keep in mind that this is all to destroy TOMMY DREAMER.

Gisele Shaw vs. Tasha Steelz

Jai Vidal and Savannah Evans are here with Shaw. Steelz scares her to the floor to start before Steelz slaps her in the face back inside. That sends Shaw back to the floor and we take a

break. Back with Shaw slapping her in the face as the theme continues. Steelz chops away but Shawn knocks her outside, where Evans hits a chokeslam onto the apron.

A snap suplex gives Shaw two more and we hit the reverse chinlock. With that broken up, Shaw hits a double jumping stomp in the corner and we take another break. Back again with Shaw hitting a running jumping uppercut for two more, followed by a swinging suplex for the same.

Steelz fights up and hits an ax handle into an atomic drop into a...completely missed jumping neckbreaker. Shaw's belly to back toss sets up a running shot to the back of the head for two. The annoyed Shaw stomps away in the corner before they head outside for a slugout. Steelz sends her into the steps but misses a running knee, which only hits said steps. Back in and Steelz kicks the knee out for the pin at 21:23.

Rating: C+. Something tells me we didn't miss much between those breaks as I have a hard time believing that these two had a pay per view main event length match out of nowhere. It wouldn't surprise me if this had to be extended due to the Mickie James injury and if that is the case, they did rather well in an area they probably haven't been in before.

Mickie James tells Santino Marella that the doctor has given her a diagnosis of her rib injury.

The fans leave the arena for Mickie's announcement. I'm assuming this is to avoid the announcement getting out, but it comes off like some tragedy.

Rebellion rundown. Apparently Brian Myers and Moose are taking the Good Hands' spots on Team Bully. At least they don't have to find two more people for Team Dreamer.

Video on Mickie James' Last Rodeo and path to winning the Knockouts Title again, plus Jordynne Grace and Deonna Purrazzo waiting for their shots.

Here is Mickie for her big announcement. When she started the Last Rodeo, she wanted to show that she still had it and that is what she did. At some point, every champion has to lose and she can handle some of that, but she can't fight age. There is a difference between her and most of the division, but she feels like she is 20.

The fact that she isn't makes this even worse and she thanks everyone for this Last Rodeo. She just got off the phone with the doctor though and she isn't cleared to compete at Rebellion. She is a woman of her word and it is Deonna and Jordynne's (watching in the back) time now. Mickie leaves the title, and her hat, in the ring and leaves. Grace leaves and Deonna looks on to end the show. This felt a lot like a retirement speech, but retiring over a broken bone feels like quite the stretch. James should be back and probably will, as ending a legendary career over something that will heal in a month or two is nuts.

Overall Rating: B-. The Mickie angle at the end was actually emotional and felt like a huge deal, which should set up the Knockouts Title match that much better. Other than that, the card for Rebellion was already mostly set coming into this show so there only so much that needed to be done. This show did well enough with the little that it had to cover, so nice job on hammering things down on the go home show.

Results

Kenny King b. Frankie Kazarian – Spear from Moose

Laredo Kid b. Black Taurus, Lince Dorado and Rich Swann – Super Spanish Fly to Taurus

Taylor Wilde b. Jessicka – Fisherman's neckbreaker

Dirty Dango/Joe Hendry b. Callihan/Angels – Standing Ovation to Angels

Tasha Steelz b. Gisele Shaw – Kick to the knee

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Impact Wrestling/New Japan Multiverse United: By Their Powers Combined

Multiverse United

Date: March 30, 2023

Location: Globe Theater, Los Angeles, California

Commentators: Matthew Rehwoldt, Tom Hannifan, Ian Riccaboni

This is a special show as we have New Japan vs. Impact Wrestling, quite a bit of which will be built around title matches. The card is pretty stacked but injuries to Josh Alexander and Mickie James are going to slow things down a bit. I'm curious to see where some of these matches go and that is a great feeling. Let's get to it.

Pre-show: Yuya Uemura vs. Gabriel Kidd

They fight over a lockup to start with Kidd grabbing a headlock. Uemura can't get away until Kidd flips him into the ropes for the break. Back up and they fight over wrist control until Uemura pulls him into an armbar. That's broken up too and Kidd shoves him off the top for a crash. Kidd strikes away for two but Uemura bulldogs his way out of trouble. Uemura starts in on the arm until a choke slows him way down. That earns Kidd a shot to the face though, setting up a high crossbody to give Uemura the pin at 7:53.

Rating: C. Not much to see here but this was just a way to get some wrestling in the ring to wake the fans up. It was short and to the point with two guys that have just enough notoriety to have a bit of interest. Uemura has a bigger name though and seems a bit more polished, which is why you'll probably be hearing more from him sooner.

The opening video talks about how the companies are coming together and only the strong survive.

X-Division Title: Rich Swann vs. Kevin Knight vs. Frankie Kazarian vs. Clark Connors vs. Rocky Romero vs. Trey Miguel

Miguel is defending and this is one fall to a finish. Everyone goes after Miguel to start and we get a six way headlock because scramble. A bunch of armdrags ensue and everyone tries a dropkick at the same time. Miguel snaps off some armdrags but gets quadruple dropkicked out to the floor. Swann and Knight clear the ring with Swann taking him down as well.

Now it's Kazarian coming in to take over until Knight dropkicks him out of the air for two. Miguel manages to Tower Of Doom everyone but Swann, who comes in with a top rope splash to Miguel for a bonus. Romero is back up with the Forever Lariats until Connors spears a bunch of people. A middle rope spear knocks Knight out of the air but Miguel steals the pin at 7:12.

Rating: C+. This was all about getting a bunch of people in

there at once, allowing them to do their thing in fast forward. Miguel stealing the pin fits him well and it isn't exactly shocking to have him get beaten up after his heel stuff has gone so well. Connors got to show off a bit here and it wouldn't surprise me to see him become a thing down the line.

Commentary runs down the card.

Eddie Edwards/Tom Lawlor/JR Kratos/Joe Hendry vs. PC0/Fred Rosser/Sami Callihan/Alex Coughlin

Before the match, Hendry says it doesn't matter which language we speak, because WE BELIEVE. Edwards and PC0 slug it out to start before it's off to Lawlor vs. Rosser (a long feud in New Japan Strong). With Lawlor down, Hendry comes in and gets pounded down. Hendry and Coughlin fight over a suplex before Kratos comes in for the strike off.

Coughlin manages a suplex so PC0 comes in to chop away at Kratos. Everything breaks down in a hurry until Callihan is left alone to clothesline Lawlor. PC0's dive is cut off by Kratos, who hits his own dive. That leaves PC0 to hit the big dive off the top onto everyone else at once.

Back in and PC0 clotheslines Hendry before Rosser drives Edwards into the corner. A northern lights suplex sets up a chickenwing but Lawlor makes the save. We hit the parade of finishers until PC0 is left alone with Kratos. They slug it out until a reverse DDT and PC0sault finishes Kratos at 12:27.

Rating: C+. Much like the opener, this was about getting as many people on the show as they could at once with some feuds mixed together in the middle. PC0 as the unstoppable monster makes all the sense in the world, though Rosser got a very nice showcase here too. I'll be surprised if he doesn't get a chance to show up on a bigger stage soon.

We recap Moose vs. Jeff Cobb. They're both big and strong so

it's hoss fight time.

Moose vs. Jeff Cobb

The much taller Moose can't get anywhere with a headlock but Cobb's shoulders don't do much either. Moose shoves him away for a bit and they take turns chopping away in the corner. Cobb takes over and stands on Moose's back to mock the Moose pose. Moose knocks him into the corner for a hesitation dropkick and the corner chokebomb gets two.

That's fine with Cobb, who catches him with an apron superplex for a double knockdown. The slugout sets up a double clothesline into a double nipup before they knock each other to the floor. Back in and Moose catches him on top and jumps up for the superplex. The spear misses so Moose jumps up to the top for a high crossbody. Cobb shrugs that off though and muscles him up for the Tour of the Islands and the pin at 11:52.

Rating: B-. Sometimes you need two big guys to beat on each other for a little while until one of them can't get up. This was exactly what you got here and Moose putting Cobb over is a bit surprising. Cobb is a heck of a monster and it was cool to see him throwing Moose around. Fun match here and it was exactly what was advertised as being.

Deonna Purrazzo vs. Masha Slamovich vs. Gisele Shaw vs. Miyu Yamashita

The winner is in the Knockouts Title match at Rebellion with Mickie James, on commentary, possibly being in as well if her ribs heals in time. They stare at each other to start with Shaw bailing out to the floor. Slamovich goes out with her so it's down to Purrazzo vs. Miyu. The big kick doesn't work for Miyu but Shaw pulls Purrazzo to the floor.

Back in and Shaw loses a strike off with Miyu and Slamovich is there for a dive. Shawn dives onto them as well (Mickie: "I

legit screamed, I am so sorry.") but Slamovich runs her over inside. Miyu is back in to run people over and slug it out with Purrazzo. Everyone is down and goes to a corner before coming out for a pair of slugouts.

Purrazzo's Fujiwara armbar is broken up and Slamovich hits a middle rope Canadian Destroyer to plant Shaw. Purrazzo rolls some German suplexes on Slamovich but the Queen's Gambit is countered into the Skull Kick. Shaw makes a save but the Queen's Gambit gives Purrazzo a title shot at Rebellion.

Rating: B-. This was another match with everyone working well together and Purrazzo, by far the most accomplished regular around here, getting the win. Miyu didn't get to do much in here but Slamovich had the power and Shaw held her own, making for a nice combination here. Now can we please have some more singles matches instead of a bunch of people in the ring at once?

The Bullet Club (Ace Austin/Chris Bey) say they have lost a few matches, but they're a different team now.

Tag Team Titles: TMDK vs. Motor City Machine Guns vs. Aussie Open vs. Chris Bey/Ace Austin

Austin and Bey (of the Bullet Club) are defending, this is one fall to a finish and the Guns' Strong Tag Team Titles aren't on the line. Haste (of TMDK, along with Bad Dude Tito) starts things off with Alex Shelley. The Guns and TMDK all come in and everything breaks down in a hurry. Back in and Haste has to slip out of Skull & Bones and it's Tito stomping on Shelley.

Haste comes back in and kicks/dances before handing it back to Tito for the missed top rope splash. Bey gets the tag and Code Reds Haste for two, only to get chopped down by the Aussies. A suplex drops Bey but he ducks the Aussies' double clothesline, allowing the tag off to Austin.

Sabin comes back in to start striking away at Fletcher and we hit the parade of dives to the floor. Back in and Davis saves Fletcher, setting up an assisted standing Iconoclasm for two. Coriolis is broken up and the Dream Sequence hits Fletcher. Tito plants Bey for two but the Club is back up with 1-2-Sweet to Haste to retain at 13:26.

Rating: B-. The Club gets to retain to prove that they are a different team than they were when they first got together. They are a great example of a team who was put together and then made something of it so well done all around. The Guns are the Guns and the Aussies will have their day, but Tito and Haste showed themselves well here and should have a nice future as well.

Mick Foley wants you to come to Dresselmania III (a charity dress/story show).

Kushida vs. Lio Rush

Rush is replacing an injured Josh Alexander. Kushida goes to the mat and Rush bails into the corner before doing his running and dodging. The handspring kick to the head sends Rush outside and a dropkick through the ropes hits him again. Kushida follows and gets caught in a hurricanrana but a kick to Rush's arm cuts him off again back inside. Said arm is snapped around the bottom rope and cranked on in various ways, setting up a weird standing hammerlock.

Rush manages to send him outside though and that means a suicide dive. Back in and the Final Hour misses, meaning it's a double strike to put both of them down. They get up and Rush has to power out of the Hoverboard Lock before kicking Kushida's head off. A poisonrana into the springboard Stunner gets two on Kushida, who is right back for the Hoverboard Lock for the tap at 12:43.

Rating: B. Kushida has long been my favorite New Japan star and he was able to work well with Rush here. Rush may not have

the best attitude and there will often be drama with everything he does but he can move around the ring like almost no one else. Heck of a match here as Kushida kept slowing him down and reeled him in until he got the tap.

We recap Kenta defending the Strong Openweight Title against Minoru Suzuki. Kenta lost to him in the New Japan Cup and Suzuki wants revenge for being disrespected a few years ago.

Strong Openweight Title: Kenta vs. Minoru Suzuki

Kenta is defending and you can lose the title by DQ (as is normally the rule for the title). Feeling out process to start with Kenta bailing into the ropes. Some kicks stagger Kenta and Suzuki gets in a leg choke on the ropes. They brawl on the floor with Suzuki getting posted a few times and kicked up against the barricade.

Kenta gets the better of things and takes it back inside for the strike off. Suzuki gets knocked down and we hit the chinlock. The comeback earns Suzuki some kicks to the chest but Suzuki starts going after the ankle. Kenta cuts that off with a DDT and they forearm it out again.

They kick it out with Kenta getting the better of things, setting up the hesitation dropkick in the corner. The top rope double stomp gets two on Suzuki but the GTS is countered into a sleeper. With that broken up and nothing else working, Kenta shoves the referee down, goes low, and grabs a rollup with feet on the ropes for the pin to retain the title at 15:27.

Rating: B-. They beat on each other for a good while here but the ending didn't exactly click. It felt like they were told to go home out of nowhere and did the most basic, quick ending that they could. Kenta is a great weasel heel though and it was nice to see Suzuki hit him, but Kenta keeping the title makes more sense.

Post match Suzuki has to be kept away from Kenta again.

We recap the main event, with Mike Bailey challenging Hiroshi Tanahashi because Tanahashi is still the best.

Hiroshi Tanahashi vs. Mike Bailey

They shake hands to start and Tanahashi backs him into the corner for a shot to the ribs. That lets Tanahashi get in the air guitar but Bailey is back up with the bouncing kicks. Tanahashi goes after the knee (I think this might be a waste of time) with a chop block and some kicks to said knee in the corner.

Bailey is fine enough to knock him away and hit a missile dropkick, setting up the running shooting star press for two. Tanahashi is back with a knockdown and a flipping splash for two of his own. A dragon screw legwhip over the ropes slows Bailey down a bit so Tanahashi does it again.

Bailey avoids a charge and hits an Asai moonsault (oh here we go) to knock them both down. They barely beat the count back in and Bailey hits the moonsault knees to the chest. The tornado kick is countered with the Sling Blade but Bailey hits some kicks (including his spinning kick in the corner). The Ultimate Weapon only hits mat so Tanahashi grabs some Twist And Shouts. The High Fly Flow finishes Bailey at 15:17.

Rating: B-. I am completely over Bailey and his horrible lack of selling. It's like someone working over his knee makes him want to sell less and less each time and it gets very annoying. What's the point of Tanahashi doing one of his signature moves if Bailey is going to just pop up, do his big flip or kick and the go "ow my leg" after he got in his spot? Anyway, Tanahashi looked very good here and Bailey continues to be annoying.

Respect is shown to end the show.

Overall Rating: B+. There's nothing close to bad on here and the matches all worked well. While I could have gone with

fewer multi-person matches and had some more regular one on ones, it's hard to argue with a show featuring that much good stuff up and down. Nothing blew the roof off, but I will absolutely take a show where almost everything was above average by a pretty nice margin.

Results

Yuya Uemura b. Gabriel Kidd – High crossbody

Trey Miguel b. Rich Swann, Kevin Knight, Frankie Kazarian, Clark Connors and Rocky Romero – Spear to Knight

PCO/Fred Rosser/Sami Callihan/Alex Coughlin b. Eddie Edwards/Tom Lawlor/JR Kratos/Joe Hendry – PCOsault to Kratos

Deonna Purrazzo b. Masha Slamovich, Miyu Yamashita and Gisele Shaw – Queen's Gambit to Shaw

Chris Bey/Ace Austin b. TMDK, Motor City Machine Guns and Aussie Open – 1-2-Sweet to Haste

Kushida b. Lio Rush – Hoverboard Lock

Kenta b. Minoru Suzuki – Rollup with feet on the ropes

Hiroshi Tanahashi b. Mike Bailey – High Fly Flow

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