

Royal Rumble Count-Up – 2013 (2014 Redo): You Knew What You Were Getting

Royal Rumble 2013

Date: January 27, 2013

Location: US Airways Center, Phoenix, Arizona

Attendance: 13,000

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Jerry Lawler

This show was only a year ago and I can barely remember anything about it. Aside from the Rumble the big matches are the Rock challenging CM Punk for the WWE Title in the most obvious ending ever and Alberto Del Rio defending his newly won World Heavyweight Championship against Big Show in a last man standing match. Other than that we've only got HELL NO vs. the Rhodes Scholars to complete the card. Let's get to it.

Pre-Show: US Title: The Miz vs. Antonio Cesaro

Cesaro is defending. This is just after Flair passed the Figure Four to Miz, starting the worst period of his career. Miz grabs a headlock to start and gets two off an elbow to the jaw. The headlock takes Cesaro down to the mat but he fights up and grabs one of his own. Back up and Miz tries a leapfrog but gets caught in midair with a tikt-a-whirl backbreaker for two. The champion takes over and cranks on both of Miz's arms before getting two off a Michinoku Driver.

A hard European uppercut sets up the gutwrench suplex for two and it's back to the double arm. Back up again and Miz slips out of a slam and hooks the Reality Check for two. There's the running clothesline in the corner and Miz goes up but hurts his knee on the top rope ax handle. Cesaro gets caught with his feet on the ropes, allowing Miz to get two off a rollup. Antonio misses a running knee in the corner but is still able to roll away from the Figure Four. Cesar takes him to the floor and rams Miz into the metal underneath the ring. Miz is out cold so Cesaro Neutralizes him for the pin to retain.

Rating: D+. Miz just doesn't work in a lot of these matches and the Figure Four doesn't work in the slightest. Thankfully he wouldn't be featured very prominently for awhile as there was just nothing to him for the most part. Cesaro still needs to get a push as he's more talented and marketable than half the roster but instead we get people like Miz.

The opening video is about time passing and how no one has enough. This ties into Punk's time as champion with Rock saying the reign ends tonight.

Smackdown World Title: Big Show vs. Alberto Del Rio

Last man standing match, which is a rematch with the same stipulations from when Alberto won the title a few weeks ago. Del Rio turned the announce table on top of Big Show so Big Show turned it on top of him a few weeks later. Alberto is shown in the back and he runs into Bret Hart for no apparent reason whatsoever. Bret says Alberto reminds him of a Mexican version of himself. Alberto calls Bret a Canadian Del Rio and Ricardo gushes, earning him Bret's sunglasses. What a bizarre cameo.

Some hard chops have Del Rio in early trouble and a slam gets a five count. Alberto chops away but jumps off the middle rope right into a chop to change control right back. The champion dropkicks the giant's knee out but the low superkick actually knocks Big Show up from his knees to his feet. A hurricanrana and a seated senton put Big Show down and Alberto gets a breather. It's amazing how much more interesting Del Rio is by doing this lucha stuff instead of his arm work. The arm stuff is good but this is such a nice change of pace.

Big Show blocks the armbreaker with one arm and slams Del Rio down, sending him outside. Del Rio gets back in as Big Show gets a chair but the champion dropkicks him in the ribs to knock it out of his hands. A series of chair shots (crowd: "SI! SI! SI!") has Big Show down but Alberto dives into a chokeslam for an eight count. We head outside again with Del Rio getting chopped to the floor with ease. This is a very slow paced match so far.

A pair of low blows puts Big Show down in the aisle but he's up at nine. Show hits something resembling a DDT on the floor before sending Del Rio

into the set. He rips a piece of the set, resembling a light tube, and blasts Del Rio over the back. Since this is WWE there's a table readily available and Big Show takes the champion on top of the set for a chokeslam through the table. The bump looked awesome but he's again on his feet at nine.

The beating takes Del Rio back to the ring and Show loads up the WMD. Alberto sees it coming and rolls outside, only to have Big Show throw Ricardo around for fun. Big Show misses a charge through the barricade (clearly heavily padded) for five but a long series of chair shots has him down again. Del Rio crushes the arm between the steps and a chair, but Alberto follows up with a fire extinguisher blast to the face for no apparent reason. Back in and the armbreaker goes on, but Ricardo ups the ante by duct taping Big Show's legs to the ropes. The giant can't get up and Alberto retains the title.

Rating: C-. This wasn't the worst match in the world but it was very slowly paced and the ending made Del Rio look more clever than tough. It also doesn't help that the match was the same gimmick they did less than a month ago. Face Alberto was a nice guy but they cut the cord just six months after this. Not bad, but Del Rio winning the title here would have been much better.

Send Slim Jims to the military!

Ziggler isn't worried about being in the Rumble and AJ threatens Matt Striker with Big E. Langston for implying Ziggler can't win. Langston does one of the most mind blowing imitations of an annoying reporter while asking Ziggler for his thoughts on the main event. Dolph has little of note to say but no one was hearing him after Big E.'s bit anyway.

Cesaro says he'll continue the streak of non-Americans winning the Rumble.

The Prime Time Players.....WE'RE GETTING RUMBLE PROMOS!!!! Anyway they say anyone that thinks they'll eliminate either of them is getting a penalty flag.

Orton says he's perfect for the Rumble because it's every man for

himself.

Cena is ready for the Rumble because it means he can be champion again.

Intercontinental Champion Wade Barrett says he'll restore credibility to the Rumble.

Sheamus says he won the Rumble last year and he'll do it again tonight.

Ryback isn't any catchphrase and he doesn't eat Fruity Pebbles, but he'll see food every 90 seconds. Feed him more.

We recap Miz vs. Cesaro on the pre-show.

Tag Titles: HELL NO vs. Rhodes Scholars

The Scholars are challenging. Cody kicks Bryan in the ribs as Cole references Queen lyrics. Bryan spins out of a wristlock and the fans chant for Cody's mustache. Cody's leapfrog is countered into a surfboard and it's off to Kane for a low dropkick and a two count. Rhodes scores with a dropkick of his own and drives Kane into the corner for the tag off to Sandow. Kane easily powers Sandow into the corner because, you know, he's Damien Sandow and it's off to Bryan for the YES Kicks.

JBL rants about Cole and Lawler hugging as Kane kicks Sandow in the face, knocking him out to the floor. The FLYING GOAT takes out the challengers but Cody low bridges Bryan to the floor to take over. Back in and a half crab has Daniel in trouble but he reverses into a small package to escape. Damien comes in again and drops an elbow for two before dropping the Wind-Up Elbow.

After some knees to the back it's Cody in again but he charges into a boot in the corner. Sandow breaks up a hot tag attempt and Cody puts Bryan in an over the shoulder backbreaker. Daniel slides down to escape and makes the tag to Kane. Sandow is tossed around like a rag doll but a Cody distraction prevents the top rope clothesline. Kane grabs both guys by the throat and Bryan tags himself in. The Scholars double suplex Kane but Bryan shoves Cody into a chokeslam and Daniel YES Locks Sandow to retain.

Rating: C. Nothing you wouldn't see on Raw around this time which means it was fine. The Scholars were a nice idea for a team but it was clear that they had no chance at this point given how low their individual stocks were. Kane and Bryan gelled perfectly well as a team and Bryan would get far bigger very soon.

Rumble By The Numbers which I've typed many times already.

HELL NO celebrates in the back when Vickie Guerrero comes up and gives them their Rumble numbers. Daniel shows Kane his but Kane won't show Bryan.

We look at the Royal Rumble Fan Fest which is another name for Axxess. This included a tournament of NXT wrestlers for a spot in the Rumble, won by Bo Dallas.

Royal Rumble

Ziggler is #1 which he picked (the other option was #2) after winning a Beat the Clock Challenge on Raw. Dolph says he'll win and doesn't care who he faces first, bringing out a returning Chris Jericho at #2. This was a complete shock and the roof is blown off the building. Also remember that Ziggler beat Jericho to send him out of the company to give us some history. The clock is at 90 seconds between entrants this year.

Jericho is quickly sent to the apron but comes back with a top rope ax handle. Now it's Dolph on the apron as the fans tell Jericho he still has it. When did Jericho ever come close to losing it? A superplex brings Ziggler back into the ring and Cody Rhodes is in at #3. Jericho hammers away on him but Ziggler gets in a cheap shot as the double teaming begins. Chris knocks Ziggler down and puts Cody in the Walls but Dolph makes the save.

Dolph catapults Jericho throat first into the bottom rope as Kofi Kingston is in at #4. Kofi immediately speeds things up and pounds away on Cody but can't hit Ziggy with Trouble in Paradise. Ziggler is thrown to the apron and all four guys try to eliminate each other at the same time in the same spot. Santino Marella is #5 and he sends all four to the apron before loading up the Cobra. Everybody is back in and even though

Santino takes Kofi down with the sock, it's Cody backdropping Marella out.

Drew McIntyre of 3MB is #6 and gets to fight Kofi as everyone else takes a breather. Back up and it's time to lay on the ropes while trying to eliminate people. Jericho is sent over the ropes but he keeps his feet off the ground and gets back in. Titus O'Neil is in at #7 to add some power, including taking Cody and Kofi down with a double clothesline. Cole finally tells us that the bark is a shout out to his fraternity from Florida. Thank you for explaining that to us after two years.

Jericho throws out McIntyre but can't do the same to Ziggler as Goldust is #8. Cody gets ready for the showdown and the fans are WAY into this. They trade the kneeling uppercuts and Goldie stomps on Cody for a bit. The fans chant for Goldust and it's David Otunga (remember him?) is in at #9. The announcers ignore the match to talk about the commentators being in the Rumble last year as people start to pair off.

Nothing much happens until Heath Slater is in at #10. That gives us Ziggler, Jericho, Rhodes, Kingston, O'Neil, Goldust, Otunga and Slater at the moment. Slater fires off right hands to Kofi as Jericho calls spots to Ziggler. Dolph gets stuck on the apron again and Sheamus is #11 to clear out some bodies. He destroys everyone with his usual stuff before sending Titus to the apron for the ten forearms. Otunga is thrown onto Titus to get rid of O'Neil before ten forearms and a Brogue Kick get rid of the lawyer. Tensai, still the Japanese lunthead, is #12.

Everybody goes after Tensai to make a big cluster in the corner. That goes nowhere at all so Brodus Clay comes in at #13. We get a Tons of Funk preview before Goldust backdrops Cody to the apron, only to get pulled to the apron as well. Cody gets back in and sends Goldust into the post for the elimination and a lot of booing. Rey Mysterio is #14 to make the crowd happy again. Ziggler and Jericho get quick 619s and the top rope splash crushes Jericho. Things slow down a bit until we reach the halfway point with Darren Young at #15.

A bunch of guys join forces to dump Brodus and Kofi puts out Tensai a few seconds later. Now we get to the part that everybody was waiting on as

Kofi is knocked off the apron, only to land on Tensai's back. He jumps onto the announcers' table as he tries to figure this out. Why he doesn't just jump two feet to get onto the steps is beyond me. Bo Dallas is #16 as this is going on. Instead of the steps, Kofi gets JBL's office chair and pogos his way back to the ring. Kingston pulls Darren out of the ring but gets caught with the Disaster Kick for the elimination before he can get back inside.

Godfather gives us the nostalgia pop at #17 and is dropkicked out by Ziggler four seconds later. He seems ok with that and leaves with his women. The whole point was the entrance anyway so I have no issue with that. Wade Barrett is in at #18 as the ring is getting too full. Everything slows down again and John Cena is #19 to clear out some tired people. Everybody gets ready for him so Cena comes a charging. John fights them all off and throws out Slater and Cody but can't dump Jericho.

Damien Sandow is #20, giving us Ziggler, Jericho, Sheamus, Mysterio, Dallas, Barrett, Cena and Sandow. Mysterio and Barrett fight to the apron and a big forearm puts Rey out. Sheamus goes right after Wade as Jericho tries to put Cena in the Walls. Daniel Bryan is #21 and fires off kicks to Sandow. Now it's Barrett getting the kicks as everyone else is down. Sheamus and Bryan try to put Jericho out but he slides back in under the ropes.

Antonio Cesaro is in at #22 and gets in a fight with Sheamus as the fans start the dueling Cena chants. Everybody is back up now and Great Khali is #23. It's chops all around until things calm a bit. Kane comes in at #24 to fire things up again (get it?) but the ring is too full. It gets even worse with Zach Ryder coming in at #25 but HELL NO dumps Khali. Bryan dumps Kane but Cesaro dumps Bryan into Kane's arms. Daniel: YES! Kane shouts no and drops Bryan for the elimination in a funny bit.

Randy Orton is #26 and it's powerslams all around. Ziggler and Dallas get a double Elevated DDT and it's an RK0 for Ryder, followed by the elimination. Jinder Mahal gets lucky #27 as Cesaro lifts Cena up, only to be eliminated himself. Ziggler gets launched to the ropes but slides back in as Miz is #28. He gets in a fight with Cesaro in the aisle and limps

into the ring to sell the ankle injury from earlier. Sheamus dumps Mahal and Sin Cara is #29.

Cara tries an enziguri on Ziggler which misses by four inches but Ziggler sells it anyway. Bo Dallas pulls Barrett out in an elimination that should have led further than it did. Miz sends Jericho to the apron as Barrett pulls Dallas out from the floor. Ryback is #30 to give us a final grouping of Ryback, Ziggler, Jericho, Sheamus, Cena, Sandow, Orton, Miz and Sin Cara. Damien is out first and Sin Cara quickly follows. Miz tries to power Ryback out and is tossed as well to get us down to six. Jericho is somehow still alive and hits a Lionsault on Cena but the springboard dropkick doesn't eliminate Sheamus.

Ziggler backdrops Jericho to the apron and superkicks him out (missed as well but he's spent at this point) but walks into an RKO. There's one for Cena as well and Sheamus gets the third. That leaves Ryback to fight Orton but the monster gets taken down with an Elevated DDT. Ryback fights off the RKO and clotheslines Randy out to get us down to four. Ziggler DDTs Cena down but a Brogue Kick puts Dolph on the floor.

It's Sheamus, Ryback and Cena with Ryback getting double suplexed down. Cena and Sheamus make things serious by LOOKING AT THE SIGN. John takes over but Ryback runs him over with a clothesline. Sheamus escapes the Shell Shock, looks at the sign, and hits White Noise on Ryback. The Brogue Kick is countered with a backdrop to eliminate Sheamus and we're down to two.

They LOOK AT THE SIGN and do their signature taunts before Ryback spinebusters Cena down. The Meathook is countered into the STF and Ryback passes out, leaving him as dead weight. Ryback fights out of the corner and Cena's head into the mat. He loads up a powerslam but Cena slips out the back and shoves Ryback out for the win and title shot at Wrestlemania.

Rating: B. It's a good but not great Rumble. That being said, there was almost no other option to win here, even though it set up the rematch that no one wanted to see. There's certainly some good stuff in it and there were no down spots, but you would expect more big moments than we

got here.

Coming Home ad for Wrestlemania. That still should have been Wrestlemania XXX.

We recap CM Punk vs. The Rock. It's a basic story: Punk has been champion for 434 days and Rock is getting a title shot because he's the Rock, which was kind of a lame reason, especially when the shot was announced six months ago. That began a countdown that made everything Punk did meaningless, because there was no way it would be anyone but Rock taking the belt from him here. Yeah Punk got in some shots on Rock before the match, but this was as much of a layup as you could get. Also if Shield or anyone interferes, Punk is stripped of the title.

Rock, after waiting for them to chant his name, says he isn't worried about Shield, even though they busted up his lung recently. He goes on a rant about how many hard things he's been through, but redeems himself a bit by talking about his mom getting cancer but beating it to be here tonight. Punk has said that the people don't count but Rock says every single one of them count to him. He reaches his hand out to everyone that believes in the Rock so he can get their power, if you smell what he's cooking.

Raw World Title: The Rock vs. CM Punk

Punk of course has Heyman with him. He charges right into the brawl and actually pounds Rock down into the corner. A quick Rock Bottom is countered but Punk is sent outside. Rock follows him outside and sends the champion into the barricade before loading up the announce table. Punk comes back with a shot to the ribs and puts the table back together in a great bit. Back in and Rock scores with more right hands to knock Punk to the floor again.

Punk is whipped into the barricade one more time but he gets a boot up to stop a charging Bull. He finishes fixing the announce table instead of following up on Rock before dropping Rock ribs first on the barricade. They head inside again for a body vice from CM followed by a knee to the ribs for two. Off to a freaky looking hold where Punk pins Rock's shoulders down but pulls back on his head to crank on the shoulders and

back.

More choking follows and a knee to the back has Rock on the apron, followed by a springboard dropkick to send him outside. Punk tries a top rope ax handle to take Rock down but injures his knee in the process. Rock scores with some kicks to the knee but the champion easily sends him out to the floor to stop the comeback. Back in and Punk misses the springboard clothesline and reinjures the knee, giving Rock his opening.

A DDT gets one on Punk but he fights out of the Rock Bottom. The GTS is countered into a Sharpshooter attempt but Punk counters into the Anaconda Vice in a nice sequence. Rock rolls over into a cradle, forcing Punk to let go of the hold. Back up and tries the Rock Bottom but Punk counters into a rollup for two, only to be countered into a low seated Sharpshooter. Punk is next to the rope so naturally he takes thirty seconds to get the break.

Rock takes him to the floor and loads up the announce table again. They fight on top but Rock counters a GTS attempt into what was supposed to be a Rock Bottom but was really more like the table collapsing with Rock's arm around Punk's chest. Rock comes up holding his knee and both guys make it back in at an eight count. Punk scores with a high kick but both guys are down.

Back up and Rock wins a slugout before scoring with the spinebuster. He loads up the People's Elbow and there go the lights. Cole can see Shield pulling Rock to the floor and powerbombing him through the table. The lights come back up and Rock is laid out as the referee has no idea what's going on. The announcers try to tell Mike Chioda what happened and Punk feigns innocence.

He throws Rock back in for the pin and celebrates but here's Vince to say Punk is stripped of the title for the interference. Rock says no and to restart the match. The bell rings again and Punk stomps away as JBL threatens to put Cole through a table for playing cheerleader. The Macho Elbow gets two but the GTS is countered into a spinebuster, setting up the People's Elbow to end Punk's reign.

Rating: B. It's another good match but it felt like they were dancing

around for twenty three minutes before we got to the obvious ending. The Shield stuff was a decent fake out but it really didn't need to be there. Rock winning was obvious though and that really put a ceiling on how high this was going to get.

Rock celebrates for about three minutes to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. Yeah it's a good show overall, but the major problem is obvious: there was no other possibly ending other than Rock vs. Cena at Wrestlemania 29 and almost everyone knew it. The show is definitely entertaining and actually really good at times, but it was so telegraphed up and down the card that it offers almost no excitement at all, even on the initial viewing. Still though, worth checking out if you have nothing else to do.

Ratings Comparison

Antonio Cesaro vs. The Miz

Original: C-

Redo: D+

Alberto Del Rio vs. Big Show

Original: B

Redo: C-

HELL NO vs. Rhodes Scholars

Original: C

Redo: C

Royal Rumble

Original: C+

Redo: B

The Rock vs. CM Punk

Original: B

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Overall Rating

Original: A-

Redo: B

That original overall rating is too high for what I gave everything else. Also I think the original last man standing match rating is closer to the accurate one. It just didn't hold up as well on a second viewing, but it was good.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2013/01/27/royal-rumble-2013-by-the-book-and-still-awesome/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of on the History of Summerslam at Amazon for just \$4 at:

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A hard European uppercut sets up the gutwrench suplex for two and it's back to the double arm. Back up again and Miz slips out of a slam and hooks the Reality Check for two. There's the running clothesline in the corner and Miz goes up but hurts his knee on the top rope ax handle. Cesaro gets caught with his feet on the ropes, allowing Miz to get two off a rollup. Antonio misses a running knee in the corner but is still able to roll away from the Figure Four. Cesar takes him to the floor and rams Miz into the metal underneath the ring. Miz is out cold so Cesaro Neutralizes him for the pin to retain.

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Drew McIntyre of 3MB is #6 and gets to fight Kofi as everyone else takes a breather. Back up and it's time to lay on the ropes while trying to eliminate people. Jericho is sent over the ropes but he keeps his feet off the ground and gets back in. Titus O'Neil is in at #7 to add some power, including taking Cody and Kofi down with a double clothesline. Cole finally tells us that the bark is a shout out to his fraternity from Florida. Thank you for explaining that to us after two years.

Jericho throws out McIntyre but can't do the same to Ziggler as Goldust

is #8. Cody gets ready for the showdown and the fans are WAY into this. They trade the kneeling uppercuts and Goldie stomps on Cody for a bit. The fans chant for Goldust and it's David Otunga (remember him?) is in at #9. The announcers ignore the match to talk about the commentators being in the Rumble last year as people start to pair off.

Nothing much happens until Heath Slater is in at #10. That gives us Ziggler, Jericho, Rhodes, Kingston, O'Neil, Goldust, Otunga and Slater at the moment. Slater fires off right hands to Kofi as Jericho calls spots to Ziggler. Dolph gets stuck on the apron again and Sheamus is #11 to clear out some bodies. He destroys everyone with his usual stuff before sending Titus to the apron for the ten forearms. Otunga is thrown onto Titus to get rid of O'Neil before ten forearms and a Brogue Kick get rid of the lawyer. Tensai, still the Japanese lunthead, is #12.

Everybody goes after Tensai to make a big cluster in the corner. That goes nowhere at all so Brodus Clay comes in at #13. We get a Tons of Funk preview before Goldust backdrops Cody to the apron, only to get pulled to the apron as well. Cody gets back in and sends Goldust into the post for the elimination and a lot of booing. Rey Mysterio is #14 to make the crowd happy again. Ziggler and Jericho get quick 619s and the top rope splash crushes Jericho. Things slow down a bit until we reach the halfway point with Darren Young at #15.

A bunch of guys join forces to dump Brodus and Kofi puts out Tensai a few seconds later. Now we get to the part that everybody was waiting on as Kofi is knocked off the apron, only to land on Tensai's back. He jumps onto the announcers' table as he tries to figure this out. Why he doesn't just jump two feet to get onto the steps is beyond me. Bo Dallas is #16 as this is going on. Instead of the steps, Kofi gets JBL's office chair and pogos his way back to the ring. Kingston pulls Darren out of the ring but gets caught with the Disaster Kick for the elimination before he can get back inside.

Godfather gives us the nostalgia pop at #17 and is dropkicked out by Ziggler four seconds later. He seems ok with that and leaves with his women. The whole point was the entrance anyway so I have no issue with that. Wade Barrett is in at #18 as the ring is getting too full.

Everything slows down again and John Cena is #19 to clear out some tired people. Everybody gets ready for him so Cena comes charging. John fights them all off and throws out Slater and Cody but can't dump Jericho.

Damien Sandow is #20, giving us Ziggler, Jericho, Sheamus, Mysterio, Dallas, Barrett, Cena and Sandow. Mysterio and Barrett fight to the apron and a big forearm puts Rey out. Sheamus goes right after Wade as Jericho tries to put Cena in the Walls. Daniel Bryan is #21 and fires off kicks to Sandow. Now it's Barrett getting the kicks as everyone else is down. Sheamus and Bryan try to put Jericho out but he slides back in under the ropes.

Antonio Cesaro is in at #22 and gets in a fight with Sheamus as the fans start the dueling Cena chants. Everybody is back up now and Great Khali is #23. It's chops all around until things calm a bit. Kane comes in at #24 to fire things up again (get it?) but the ring is too full. It gets even worse with Zach Ryder coming in at #25 but HELL NO dumps Khali. Bryan dumps Kane but Cesaro dumps Bryan into Kane's arms. Daniel: YES! Kane shouts no and drops Bryan for the elimination in a funny bit.

Randy Orton is #26 and it's powerslams all around. Ziggler and Dallas get a double Elevated DDT and it's an RKO for Ryder, followed by the elimination. Jinder Mahal gets lucky #27 as Cesaro lifts Cena up, only to be eliminated himself. Ziggler gets launched to the ropes but slides back in as Miz is #28. He gets in a fight with Cesaro in the aisle and limps into the ring to sell the ankle injury from earlier. Sheamus dumps Mahal and Sin Cara is #29.

Cara tries an enziguri on Ziggler which misses by four inches but Ziggler sells it anyway. Bo Dallas pulls Barrett out in an elimination that should have led further than it did. Miz sends Jericho to the apron as Barrett pulls Dallas out from the floor. Ryback is #30 to give us a final grouping of Ryback, Ziggler, Jericho, Sheamus, Cena, Sandow, Orton, Miz and Sin Cara. Damien is out first and Sin Cara quickly follows. Miz tries to power Ryback out and is tossed as well to get us down to six. Jericho is somehow still alive and hits a Lionsault on Cena but the springboard dropkick doesn't eliminate Sheamus.

Ziggler backdrops Jericho to the apron and superkicks him out (missed as well but he's spent at this point) but walks into an RKO. There's one for Cena as well and Sheamus gets the third. That leaves Ryback to fight Orton but the monster gets taken down with an Elevated DDT. Ryback fights off the RKO and clotheslines Randy out to get us down to four. Ziggler DDTs Cena down but a Brogue Kick puts Dolph on the floor.

It's Sheamus, Ryback and Cena with Ryback getting double suplexed down. Cena and Sheamus make things serious by LOOKING AT THE SIGN. John takes over but Ryback runs him over with a clothesline. Sheamus escapes the Shell Shock, looks at the sign, and hits White Noise on Ryback. The Brogue Kick is countered with a backdrop to eliminate Sheamus and we're down to two.

They LOOK AT THE SIGN and do their signature taunts before Ryback spinebusters Cena down. The Meathook is countered into the STF and Ryback passes out, leaving him as dead weight. Ryback fights out of the corner and Cena's head into the mat. He loads up a powerslam but Cena slips out the back and shoves Ryback out for the win and title shot at Wrestlemania.

Rating: B. It's a good but not great Rumble. That being said, there was almost no other option to win here, even though it set up the rematch that no one wanted to see. There's certainly some good stuff in it and there were no down spots, but you would expect more big moments than we got here.

Coming Home ad for Wrestlemania. That still should have been Wrestlemania XXX.

We recap CM Punk vs. The Rock. It's a basic story: Punk has been champion for 434 days and Rock is getting a title shot because he's the Rock, which was kind of a lame reason, especially when the shot was announced six months ago. That began a countdown that made everything Punk did meaningless, because there was no way it would be anyone but Rock taking the belt from him here. Yeah Punk got in some shots on Rock before the match, but this was as much of a layup as you could get. Also if Shield or anyone interferes, Punk is stripped of the title.

Rock, after waiting for them to chant his name, says he isn't worried about Shield, even though they busted up his lung recently. He goes on a rant about how many hard things he's been through, but redeems himself a bit by talking about his mom getting cancer but beating it to be here tonight. Punk has said that the people don't count but Rock says every single one of them count to him. He reaches his hand out to everyone that believes in the Rock so he can get their power, if you smell what he's cooking.

Raw World Title: The Rock vs. CM Punk

Punk of course has Heyman with him. He charges right into the brawl and actually pounds Rock down into the corner. A quick Rock Bottom is countered but Punk is sent outside. Rock follows him outside and sends the champion into the barricade before loading up the announce table. Punk comes back with a shot to the ribs and puts the table back together in a great bit. Back in and Rock scores with more right hands to knock Punk to the floor again.

Punk is whipped into the barricade one more time but he gets a boot up to stop a charging Bull. He finishes fixing the announce table instead of following up on Rock before dropping Rock ribs first on the barricade. They head inside again for a body vice from CM followed by a knee to the ribs for two. Off to a freaky looking hold where Punk pins Rock's shoulders down but pulls back on his head to crank on the shoulders and back.

More choking follows and a knee to the back has Rock on the apron, followed by a springboard dropkick to send him outside. Punk tries a top rope ax handle to take Rock down but injures his knee in the process. Rock scores with some kicks to the knee but the champion easily sends him out to the floor to stop the comeback. Back in and Punk misses the springboard clothesline and reinjures the knee, giving Rock his opening.

A DDT gets one on Punk but he fights out of the Rock Bottom. The GTS is countered into a Sharpshooter attempt but Punk counters into the Anaconda Vice in a nice sequence. Rock rolls over into a cradle, forcing Punk to let go of the hold. Back up and tries the Rock Bottom but Punk counters

into a rollup for two, only to be countered into a low seated Sharpshooter. Punk is next to the rope so naturally he takes thirty seconds to get the break.

Rock takes him to the floor and loads up the announce table again. They fight on top but Rock counters a GTS attempt into what was supposed to be a Rock Bottom but was really more like the table collapsing with Rock's arm around Punk's chest. Rock comes up holding his knee and both guys make it back in at an eight count. Punk scores with a high kick but both guys are down.

Back up and Rock wins a slugout before scoring with the spinebuster. He loads up the People's Elbow and there go the lights. Cole can see Shield pulling Rock to the floor and powerbombing him through the table. The lights come back up and Rock is laid out as the referee has no idea what's going on. The announcers try to tell Mike Chioda what happened and Punk feigns innocence.

He throws Rock back in for the pin and celebrates but here's Vince to say Punk is stripped of the title for the interference. Rock says no and to restart the match. The bell rings again and Punk stomps away as JBL threatens to put Cole through a table for playing cheerleader. The Macho Elbow gets two but the GTS is countered into a spinebuster, setting up the People's Elbow to end Punk's reign.

Rating: B. It's another good match but it felt like they were dancing around for twenty three minutes before we got to the obvious ending. The Shield stuff was a decent fake out but it really didn't need to be there. Rock winning was obvious though and that really put a ceiling on how high this was going to get.

Rock celebrates for about three minutes to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. Yeah it's a good show overall, but the major problem is obvious: there was no other possibly ending other than Rock vs. Cena at Wrestlemania 29 and almost everyone knew it. The show is definitely entertaining and actually really good at times, but it was so telegraphed up and down the card that it offers almost no excitement at all, even on the initial viewing. Still though, worth checking out if you have nothing

else to do.

Ratings Comparison

Antonio Cesaro vs. The Miz

Original: C-

Redo: D+

Alberto Del Rio vs. Big Show

Original: B

Redo: C-

HELL NO vs. Rhodes Scholars

Original: C

Redo: C

Royal Rumble

Original: C+

Redo: B

The Rock vs. CM Punk

Original: B

Redo: B

Overall Rating

Original: A-

Redo: B

That original overall rating is too high for what I gave everything else. Also I think the original last man standing match rating is closer to the accurate one. It just didn't hold up as well on a second viewing, but it

was good.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2013/01/27/royal-rumble-2013-by-the-book-and-still-awesome/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of the History of Wrestlemania at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B0188BJRGU>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

Wrestlemania 29 Preview: Tons of Funk/Funkadactyls vs. Rhodes Scholars/Bellas

I wouldn't be surprised to see this get bumped to the pre-show as well. This is the big return of the Bellas in what is supposed to be part of the resurgence of the Divas division by giving the Funkadactyls a rub. The problem with that theory is that no one is going to care about any Diva if they're treated like schmucks like Kaitlyn. As for the male counterparts....eh. Tons of Funk are a glorified comedy team with the dancing stuff but the kids like them a lot in the

same vein of Rikishi and Too Cool back in the day. The Scholars on the other hand are back together and still losing almost every time they're out there. I'm hoping the team is done for good after this so we can get them doing something worthwhile. Given that the tag division reboot is dead, having them as singles guys is the only thing left for them.

As for the match, I think it goes to the dancing team, presumably with Naomi getting the win. It's clear that WWE sees them as the next big thing in the Divas division. She got a spot in a PPV title match late last year and was showcased in the tag match on Monday. She's much better in the ring than Cameron, but Cameron is better in the looks department which tends to be the bigger deal anymore. This isn't going to be much of a match and it might get eight minutes at most. I'd bet on the dancers to win though, if nothing else for the big dance party post match.

Smackdown – March 29, 2013: An Electrifying Piece Of Chocolate

Smackdown

Date: March 29, 2013

Location: Giant Center, Hershey, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Michael Cole, Josh Matthews, John Bradshaw Layfield

This is the last real Smackdown we'll have before we go on to Wrestlemania. Next week's show is likely going to be the Wrestlemania Axxess show which is a glorified commercial for the PPV. Therefore tonight we're likely to hear more about the PPV and not much else.

There's also a weightlifting contest between Henry and Ryback. Let's get to it.

After the opening preview, we open with The Rock. Well that's a good way to kick things off. During Rock's entrance we see the physical part of the showdown with Cena on Raw. Bret not moving at all during the Rock Bottom is amusing. Rock holds up a Hershey bar before saying it's time for another Storytime with the Rock. He talks about moving with his family to about an hour away from her in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania when he was fifteen.

We get a picture of Rock at age fifteen in white shorts and "looking like a white bouncer for Menudo." Rock talks about coming to Hershey Park here in Pennsylvania with his friends and eating a ton of chocolate. Now as an adult, FINALLY he has come back to Hershey. Rock talks about going around looking for a Whatchamacallit (it's a Hershey product) but after going to seven stores he FINALLY found one. As he was reaching for it though, someone stole it. However, that person was the inspiration for Rock's Candy catchphrase. Apparently it was an old lady but who cares?

The point of the story is that you might go to great lengths to get what you want, including beating John Cena at Wrestlemania. On Monday Cena got in his face and got beaten up for it, but Cena is going to be back at Wrestlemania. Rock talks about doing this in front of the millions and millions but is interrupted by....Johnny freaking Ace. After a break Rock wants to know who Ace is. In case you don't remember, he's John Laurinitis, as in the former Vice President of Talent Relations and GM of both Raw and Smackdown.

Rock isn't impressed but Ace says he isn't going to talk too long and wind up getting a Rock Bottom. Ace says that he and Rock are a lot alike because Rock is People's Champion and Ace created People Power. Apparently Cena was the reason that Ace was fired but is also the reason he's back. Johnny offers to be in Rock's corner at Wrestlemania because it's a guaranteed win. Ace rips off the "and the Rock says" catchphrase

before saying he and Rock are like the Reese's Peanut Butter Cup.

Rock thinks we should ask the people if they want the stale peanut butter to team up with the most electrifying piece of chocolate the world has ever seen. Instead of a Rock Bottom, Rock offers to team up to send a message to Cena. The first part is a handshake and I think you can figure it out from here. There's the Rock Bottom (JBL: "What does Rock have against peanut butter?") and the People's Elbow for good measure before Rock says Cena goes down again at Wrestlemania. Classic Rock here.

Chris Jericho vs. Wade Barrett

Non-title here and Miz is on commentary. Barrett takes him down to start but Jericho clotheslines him out to the floor to get himself a breather. A baseball slide puts Barrett down and we head back inside with the champion taking over again. Barrett kicks Jericho off the apron and we take a break. Back with Jericho hitting some shoulder blocks and a top rope fist to the face.

The Lionsault has to be aborted with Jericho landing on his feet, allowing Wade to come back with the Winds of Change. Jericho comes back with a cross body for two but has to escape Wasteland. Barrett punches his way out of the Walls but misses a charge and falls to the floor. Jericho's springboard cross body misses and Barrett throws him back in, but the champion stops to argue with Miz. Back in and the distraction allows Jericho to hit the Codebreaker for the win at 4:43 shown of 7:43.

Rating: C. It was nice while it lasted and I can live with the idea of Barrett losing here for the sake of advancing his feud with Miz. The problem here is that Barrett hasn't won a match in weeks that I remember, which is a bad sign for a champion going into Wrestlemania. Nothing of note here but they were setting up a chess match for awhile there.

Post match Jericho says that he's happy about winning the match but since he can see Fandango's entrance, apparently something is about to happen.

Jericho does the bit where he can't remember Fandango's name and here's the dancer himself. Chris holds the ropes open for him but Fandango backs off.

We get the same preview for HHH vs. Lesnar from Raw to eat up a few minutes.

Earlier today Josh Matthews sat down with Heyman to talk about the potential end of HHH's career. After Brock ends HHH's in ring career, it means the end of HHH's office career because not being able to get in the ring when he wants to will cripple HHH. Then the locker room will crumble with no leadership, and it's all because HHH loses to Brock at Wrestlemania.

Here are Booker T and Teddy Long to introduce the Bench Press Challenge. Booker introduces Ryback but Teddy cuts him off and introduces Henry himself. If there's physical contact between these two they're both banned from Wrestlemania. Henry won a coin toss and gets to go first. He does 53 reps which is allegedly a new world record. Ryback does 53 and goes for 54 but Henry chokes him ala Barbarian and the Road Warriors from back in the 80s. Ryback has the bar shoved onto his throat and can barely breathe.

Dolph Ziggler/AJ Lee vs. Kaitlyn/Daniel Bryan

The guys start things off here and they fight over arm control to get us going. Off to the girls with AJ hitting some rolling neckbreakers for two. Kaitlyn runs her over though and it's back to the guys. Bryan tries a top rope rana but Ziggler rolls through into a sunset flip for two. Langston interferes but Kane takes him out as the girls come in. AJ jumps on Bryan's back on the floor as JBL tries to keep track of AJ's love life. AJ goes back in and walks into the spear by Kaitlyn for the pin at 3:15.

Rating: C-. This was too short to mean anything but there's nothing wrong

with taking two feuds and throwing them together into a single match. Kaitlyn does nothing for the title so having her lose soon wouldn't be a problem at all. Nothing to see here due to the time but it's nice to see them taking out two birds with one stone.

Shield talks about the big moment coming up on the grandest stage of them all. Ambrose thinks a viper, a giant and a Celtic warrior don't mix and that they're going to implode. That is if Shield doesn't destroy them first. Believe in the Shield.

Great Khali vs. Jack Swagger

On their way to the ring, Colter and Swagger talk about breaking Ricardo's ankle to strengthen America. Swagger pounds away in the corner to start but gets chopped in the head to put him back down. Khali hits the overhand chop in the corner but Swagger comes back with some knees to the ribs.

The giant comes back with clotheslines but Jack bails to the floor to avoid the big overhead chop. Khali goes after him but gets his own leg wrapped around the post, giving Swagger an opening. They head to the floor again with Swagger putting on the Patriot Lock long enough for the double countout at 2:58. This was short and did no favors for Swagger whatsoever.

Colter and Swagger go after Hornswoggle but here's Ricardo for a distraction. Alberto runs in but Colter stops the armbreaker. Del Rio swings Ricardo's crutch at Swagger but Jack bails to the floor.

We recap Punk vs. Undertaker from Raw.

The new backstage chick Renee Young is with Orton, Sheamus and Big Show and we see a video of the three of them on Raw teaming up to fight Shield. They say they've put their differences aside to fight Shield but

Sheamus and Big Show almost fight over who put their differences aside first.

Arnold Schwarzenegger is inducting Bruno Sammartino into the Hall of Fame.

Sheamus/Big Show/Randy Orton vs. Rhodes Scholars/Antonio Cesaro

Sandow talks about his opponents having nothing in common and how the Scholars have a disdain for ignorance. Cesaro yodels a bit. JBL: "Every time he yodels Daniel Bryan comes running out of the locker room." Orton and Cesaro get things going and it's Randy taking over with some elbows and shoulders. Off to Sheamus to pound away on Cesaro in the corner before cranking on the arm a bit.

Off to Big Show which sends Cesaro running off to Cody. Show offers Rhodes a free shot before chopping the skin off Rhodes' chest in the corner. Sandow runs away from Big Show as we take a break. Back with Sheamus holding Sandow by the beard so Orton can come in and pummel Damien in the corner. Sandow finally shoves Orton into the heel corner for some triple teaming.

Cesaro comes back in for his gutwrench suplex for two. Cody cranks on the arm for a bit before Sandow hooks the Russian legsweep and drops the Wind-Up Elbow for two. A chinlock is quickly broken by Randy and there's the over the back backbreaker to give Orton a breather. Cesaro tries to interfere but Big Show makes the save, allowing for the double tag to Sheamus and Rhodes. There are the ten forearms to Cody's chest and ten for Sandow as well. Cody tries to jump Sheamus and is caught in White Noise. The WMD takes out Cesaro and it's an RKO for Sandow. Brogue Kick ends Cody at 8:14 shown of 11:14.

Rating: B-. Now THIS is what you do to test Orton/Sheamus/Big Show. It doesn't prove anything to have them beat up guys like 3MB, and while these three weren't much better, they at least gave the super best

friends a challenge. Not a good match or anything but it was the basic tag formula and that's going to work all the time.

Shield's music hits but this time Orton/Sheamus/Big Show go after them. Why has no one thought to do that before? Shield gets beaten up in a box of some kind to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. This wasn't the best show in the world but as mentioned, what else are they supposed to do with Wrestlemania this close? The best thing they need to do is push the World Championship match, as that has fizzled terribly, going from one of the more interesting matches on the card to nothing at all. Rock was fun as expected, but at the end of the day Wrestlemania isn't coming in all that well.

Results

Chris Jericho b. Wade Barrett – Codebreaker

Daniel Bryan/Kaitlyn b. Dolph Ziggler/AJ Lee – Spear to Lee

Jack Swagger vs. Great Khali went to a double countout

Big Show/Sheamus/Randy Orton b. Rhodes Scholars/Antonio Cesaro – Brogue Kick to Rhodes

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Smackdown – January 25, 2013:

For The First Time, I Really Want To See Punk vs. Rock

Smackdown

Date: January 25, 2013

Location: Sleep Train Arena, Sacramento, California

Commentators: Josh Matthews, John Bradshaw Layfield

It's the final show before the Rumble and most of what we're getting on Sunday is set in stone. Tonight is likely going to be the final push towards the Rumble which probably means a big brawl at the end of the show with people being thrown over the top rope a lot. Other than that I wouldn't expect much more other than the weekly tag team main event. Let's get to it.

Rock is going to be here again tonight to address his attack by the Shield.

Here's HELL NO to open the show. Before they say anything though we get a recap of the hugging celebration from Raw. JBL: "I even heard a report that a lion was hugging an antelope on the Serengeti." Kane says the champions have plenty of anger in them still (Bryan: "YES!") and they'll prove that on Sunday when they retain the titles (Bryan: "YES!") and then he's going to win the Royal Rumble (Bryan: "YE...").

Kane talks about how many Rumbles he's been in and his eleven eliminations, but Bryan chops his legs off by saying "Yeah, but you've never won the match." That sums up the argument against Kane for Mr. Royal Rumble in one sentence. Bryan says that he'll win and an argument breaks out, which draws Big Show to the ring. Show says HELL NO has a 1/30 chance of winning the Rumble while Show has a 100% chance of getting his title back.

Bryan points out that he beat Show for the title last year (it was the year before that) but Show yells him down. He says that he'll beat both of the champions which makes Kane stand up to the Big Show. This brings out the Rhodes Scholars with Sandow talking about how Kane and Big Show

are underestimating others in the Rumble like Goliath underestimated David.

Sandow proposes an alliance with Big Show to take out HELL NO. Cue Del Rio but before the brawling can start, Booker makes a six man tag main event. Oh and it's elimination rules. Show charges at Del Rio but gets his leg kicked out and the Scholars run, sending Show to the floor as well.

Sheamus vs. Wade Barrett

Why does WWE insist on giving us the same match six or seven times in as many weeks sometimes? They slug it out to start with Sheamus getting two off a clothesline. Wade comes back with a dropkick of all things for the same result and we head to the floor for a bit. As they come back in Sheamus loads up the forearms in the ropes but Wade comes back with a guillotine on the ropes and a big boot to send Sheamus to the floor.

We take a break and come back with Sheamus getting clotheslined to the outside again. As Barrett pounds away on him as he comes back in, Sheamus comes flying back in with the slingshot shoulder. Now the ten forearms hit and a Regal Roll gets two on Wade. The Irish Curse gets two but Barrett blocks White Noise. Sheamus goes up top only to get slammed down to the mat and superkicked down for two. Barrett goes to the middle rope and jumps into Sheamus' boot but he blocks himself before he connects. Sheamus trips him down though and hits White Noise for no cover. The Brogue Kick finishes clean at 7:48 shown of 11:18.

Rating: C+. The usual hard hitting match here from these two but how many times can we see these two do the same stuff over and over again? Also nice job of having your IC Champion job clean yet again. I know it's a worthless point anymore but for goodness' sake can you go a little while between their losses?

Video on Rock being attacked by the Shield on Monday.

Heyman and Punk are here.

Natalya vs. Rosa Mendes

Epico, Primo, Horny and Khali are all on commentary here. Rosa takes Nattie down to the mat with a headscissors as JBL makes short people jokes. A hair pull puts Natalya down again and it's off to a modified bow and arrow hold. Primo asks if we can focus on the match instead of JBL's WWE.com show as Rosa gets to the rope to avoid the Sharpshooter. Rosa dances in the ring so Horny dances on the table. The distraction is enough for Natalya to hook the Sharpshooter for the submission at 2:46. I think this was supposed to be funny.

Here are Punk and Heyman with something to say. The champion talks about how everything that's coming up is just the surface that he's about to scratch. However, one thing can make 432 days go up in smoke, and that's....not The Rock. Actually it's the Shield that Punk is worried about because of the stipulation that Vince put into place on Raw. Heyman pulls out a letter that states if the Shield interferes, Punk loses the title. Punk talks about how The Shield is a threat to his title reign because he has no control over them.

The champion calls The Shield to the ring and says he's not leaving until they come to the ring. Cue The Shield who Punk preaches to as usual. He talks about how he's going to beat Rock on Sunday in the biggest match of his reign. He's never asked for or needed Shield's help because he's the best in the world. The Shield surrounds the ring so Punk picks up the chair he was standing in, causing the trio to back down and head through the crowd.

Punk says that's how the champ takes care of business and on Sunday you're going to see him take care of The Rock. On Sunday Punk is going to prove that he's the best in the world and the greatest of all time. He says it again and here's Rock to a huge ovation. Rock says that he doesn't care about the Shield because his boot is going inside Punk on Sunday. There's clearly an audio edit as Rock says this so maybe he flubbed the line.

On Sunday Rock is going to wrap his arm around Punk's chest, lift him in the air, and then time will stand still. At that point the thought in Punk's head won't be about how he's the WWE Champion or the best in the world, but only that it's over. The Rock has promised that he's going to

end Punk's reign and on Sunday, it's over, if you smell what The Rock is cooking. This was AWESOME and has me really wanting to see the match for the first time.

Drew McIntyre vs. Randy Orton

Drew pounds him into the corner to start but Orton hits a bit harder to take over. There's the powerslam followed by the backbreaker, but as Orton loads up the Elevated DDT, Mahal runs in for the DQ at 1:06. He didn't touch anyone but it's a DQ anyway. All three 3MB members get RKO's. Was there really a need to protect Drew McIntyre there?

The Miz vs. Darren Young

Cesaro is on commentary here. Young pounds away to start and gets two off a fast clothesline. We hit the chinlock in about twenty seconds as Cesaro talks about Albert Einstein. Young pounds away in the corner but Miz comes back with left hands in the same corner. There's the running clothesline as Titus keeps blowing the whistle. Miz gets sick of it and kicks him in the head before hitting the top rope ax handle. The Finale is countered and the Figure Four ends this at 1:54. The Figure Four was at least passable this time but Miz still doesn't need to be using it.

Rumble By The Numbers. I love this.

30 superstars

1 winner

36 Hall of Famers who have competed in the Rumble

25 main events of Wrestlemania those HOF'ers have competed in

754 losing entrants

39 eliminations by Shawn Michaels, a record

35 eliminations by Kane, good for second place

13 consecutive Rumbles for Kane

11 eliminations by Kane in 2001

201,497lbs that has competed in the Rumble, or over 100 tons or 457 Big Shows

440,004 people that have attended the Rumble

62:12 that Rey Mysterio stayed in the 2006 Rumble, another record

3 wins for Austin, the most ever

2 seconds that Warlord lasted in 1989

1 second that Santino lasted in 2009

2 is the number of wins for both #1 and #30

4 is the number of wins for entrant #27, the most ever

58% of winners that win a world title at Wrestlemania

HELL NO/Alberto Del Rio vs. Big Show/Rhodes Scholars

This is elimination rules ala Survivor Series. Rhodes and Alberto start things off with the champion flipping out of a wristlock and hitting a headscissors out of the corner. A BIG kick to Cody's head gets two and it's back to the armbar. Off to Sandow vs. Bryan with the latter firing off a bunch of kicks before it's off to Kane for a chokeslam to eliminate Sandow at 2:19.

Big Show comes in and is immediately pounded into the corner by Kane. A running DDT gets two and there's the top rope clothesline followed by a regular clothesline to put both giants on the floor. Kane charges into the knockout punch and is eliminated by countout at 3:40. Big Show counting along with the referee is a nice touch. We take a break and come back with Bryan fighting out of some hold by Cody as Big Show offers encouragement to Rhodes. Didn't they use to hate each other?

Cody hooks a bow and arrow hold but Bryan escapes pretty quickly. Simultaneous cross bodies put both guys down but Big Show gets the tag before Daniel can make one. Bryan fires off kicks to escape a chokeslam

and takes out Big Show's leg. He goes up top but jumps into a chop before being sent over the top. Bryan skins the cat but walks into the KO punch to send him to floor for another countout (and count from Big Show) at approximately 10:00.

It's Alberto alone vs. Big Show and the giant knocks him out to the floor for a nine count. Del Rio gets back in but slides back to the floor to get himself a breather. Show throws him back in so Alberto kicks him to the outside for the third countout of the match at approximately 12:00. So it's down to Cody vs. Del Rio with Rhodes jumping Alberto from behind. Alberto comes back with a bunch of clotheslines and a superkick for two. The corner enziguri is enough for the pin though at 10:02 shown of 13:32.

Rating: C+. The countouts were a nice idea but having three of them was probably too much. It is good to have the guys in the title match square off before the title match though and having Del Rio get a countout win is probably the best thing they could have done. This was a pretty good idea although more of the tag teams interacting would have been nice.

Post match Big Show lays out Alberto and covers him with the announce table just like Alberto did to him. Show counts to ten in both English and Spanish for good measure to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. This show was all about setting up the Rumble and I can't fault them there. The world title matches were well pushed and we covered the Rumble itself back on Monday. The wrestling here was the weakest part of the show and even that wasn't all that bad. The show show didn't add anything new but it did a good job of reenforcing what was already there. Pretty solid but not great show here.

Results

Sheamus b. Wade Barrett – Brogue Kick

Natalya b. Rosa Mendes – Sharpshooter

Randy Orton b. Drew McIntyre via DQ when Jinder Mahal interfered

The Miz b. Darren Young – Figure Four Leg Lock

HELL NO/Alberto Del Rio b. Rhodes Scholars/Big Show – Enziguri to Rhodes

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Royal Rumble Pre-Show Match Set

It's not a spoiler but since people insist on whining about reading news when they come to a site where news is posted, I'll put it after the break. I'll even go one up on that and throw in some fake tags. Is THAT enough to make you lunkheads happy? Cesaro is defending against Miz. You knew that was going to be added to the card in some sort.

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

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

Smackdown – January 11, 2013: Rock Is Back And NEW CHAMPION!

Smackdown

Date: January 11, 2013

Location: American Airlines Arena, Miami, Florida

Commentators: Josh Matthews, John Bradshaw Layfield

We'll begin with a little history here: twenty years ago today, a show called Monday Night Raw premiered. To celebrate, tonight the main event is a last man standing match with Big Show facing Alberto Del Rio as his major face push continues, near Santa killing aside. Also, for the first time in longer than I can remember, Rock is on Smackdown tonight. Let's get to it.

The opening video is all about the Rock which is the right decision. Oh and we're in his hometown too. Show vs. Del Rio gets a bit of time at the end.

Here's Booker to open the show. He doesn't like being one upped by Raw with Zigler vs. Cena, so tonight it's Orton vs. Cesaro. Rock is here too, and we go to a screen shot of Del Rio vs. Show as Booker does what is clearly a voiceover saying it'll be a last man standing match for the title. I wonder what they changed there.

Anyway Big Show comes out sans music to yell at Booker for his decision. He goes to the floor to get a mic (Show to the guys at ringside: "Somebody get me a mic. There are ten of you over there. What do you all do?" That's a really good question actually.) and accuses Booker of

playing up to the Latino population here in Miami.

Show says Del Rio is beneath him and people like the ones here in Miami don't deserve heroes. Show: "There are no Latino heroes." I'm not touching that one. He says an Irishman couldn't stop him, a Latino can't stop him and a viper can't stop him. Show gets back in the ring and grabs Booker by the throat but here's Del Rio for the save. He dropkicks Show into the corner and hits the running enziguri to send Show to the floor.

We get a classic Rock on Smackdown moment from the post 9/11 Smackdown with Rock hitting Stasiak with a Rock Bottom to beat him in three seconds.

Randy Orton vs. Antonio Cesaro

Not bad for an opener. As he comes to the ring, Cesaro says in an inset interview that he'll be in the Rumble. Cesaro pounds away to start and hits some European uppercuts before being sent to the floor. Orton clotheslines him down on the floor and we take a break. Back with Cesaro holding Randy in a chinlock before getting two off a clothesline. There's the gutwrench suplex for two more and Cesaro punches away in the corner.

We get another quick chinlock but Orton fights out and gets two off his rollup out of the corner. A Michinoku Driver of all things gets two for Antonio as JBL gets on Josh's case for mentioning the word complacent when talking about Cesaro. Orton snaps off his powerslam but gets tossed into the air for the uppercut for two. Randy escapes a whip into the corner and hits his backbreaker followed by the Elevated DDT. He loads up the RK0 and here's the Shield for the DQ at 5:48 shown of 9:18.

Rating: C. I like both of these guys and it's a good sign to see Cesaro kept strong again. It seems like we're heading for Sheamus/Orton/Ryback vs. Shield at the Rumble which would work out fine. If nothing else, Shield getting to rub elbows with these guys makes them look like big deals. The match here was fine and I wouldn't object to seeing a longer

version of this.

The TripleBomb takes Orton down and the Shield stands tall.

3MB talks about being in the Rumble. Slater called his mom and was told that they have a ten percent chance of winning. Apparently they're dealing with Sheamus tonight.

Punk and Heyman are at Sun Life Stadium, home of Wrestlemania 28 and the Miami Hurricanes football team. Punk talks about how big a fan he is of Rock and his football career. He pulls out a Johnson jersey #94 (Rock's old jersey) and says he's a big college football aficionado.

He wanted to come to where Rock played back in the day, but that was in the Orange Bowl which is demolished and gone. That's like WWE now, because this isn't Rock's WWE anymore. It's Punk's WWE now and Rock has no place in it. Punk says Rock can come back to Miami, but he can never go home again. Good stuff here and it's always nice to see them outside of the arena.

Del Rio says Big Show has no idea what the Latino people are like and says he'll win the title tonight.

Dolph Ziggler/AJ vs. Natalya/Great Khali

The guys start things off with Ziggler quickly getting chopped a few times. Off to the girls and AJ jumps on Khali's back. Natalya takes her down and rams AJ's head into the mat a few times. Nattie loads up the Sharpshooter but AJ bites her finger. They head to the corner where AJ bites Natalya's ear before hitting a Sliced Bread #2 for the pin at 2:43. Nothing here but AJ craziness.

Post match Langston runs over Khali and hits the Big Ending on Hornswoggle. Freaking sweet.

Punk is still at the stadium and talks about how Rock sounds like a superhero returning to save the people. The people don't deserve to be saved though. Rather they deserve to rot, because Punk is better than the people. Heyman says that's Rock's vision, but in CM Punk's WWE, it doesn't matter what Rock's vision is. Punk takes off the jersey and drops it on the ground before walking away. Still awesome stuff here.

Another classic Rock moment shows us Rock N Sock Connection hijinks.

Here's Rocky to an eruption. He shows us his arm and the goosebumps on it before saying FINALLY. Rock says Flo Rida is here and says this is a very special show. He talks about Raw and hitting the Rock Bottom on Punk but tonight the champ isn't here. Rock talks about being in school in Miami and football practice at a field that the local fans recognize the name of. Rock says that it feels good to be home, but the real home he's going to is the Royal Rumble where he'll win the title again.

He asks the people if they want to have fun tonight and here are the Rhodes Scholars to interrupt. Sandow introduces himself and Cody to the crowd and Cody says they they don't think Rock should be here. They're the ones that are going to be champions soon, so it should be their time. Rock talks about how the Scholars came down here (WHAT) to the People's ring (WHAT) on the Rock's show (WHAT) dressed like that (you get the drill) with a dead caterpillar on Cody's lip. Rock goes to say something but has to ask what in the name of sweet tap dancing Jesus is on Cody's face.

Sandow wants to ask Rock three questions, and if Rock gets them right, he can stay. If he gets them wrong, he has to leave. Rock says bring those questions but Cody says there's no point since Rock went to Miami (one of the best academic schools in the country). The first question is who was the 19th President of the United States, which Rock correctly identifies as Rutherford B. Hayes. Sandow: "That is correct." Rock: "The Rock knows his 19th century."

Cody asks what movie won Best Picture in 1993. Rock says it wasn't Tooth Fairy but rather Schindler's List. Sandow is about to ask the third question but Rock has one for Damien instead. If Sandow gets it right, he gets a prize from Rock and Miami. The question is what happens when you combine a geological aggregate of minerals with its lowest form. That would be a Rock Bottom says Damien. Rock says exactly, and there's his Rock Bottom. Cody and Rock have a staredown and Cody is ready to fight, so here's a spinebuster and the People's Elbow for him. Incredibly entertaining segment here with Rock giving two guys a rub.

Sheamus vs. 3MB

Good old fashioned handicap match here. The Band does have to tag though. Slater starts but immediately bails to the floor where his teammates join him. They try to charge in at once but only Slater goes in, catching a Brogue Kick for the pin at 45 seconds.

HELL NO vs. Prime Time Players

Darren and Daniel start things off and slug it out in the corner. Off to Titus for a release slam but he charges into a pair of boots from Bryan in the corner. Kane comes in and cleans house, getting two off a sidewalk slam. The Players break up a double chokeslam attempt but a single one gets the pin on Darren at 2:22. Just a squash.

Eve vs. Kaitlyn is confirmed for Raw. Again.

We recap the opening segment.

Smackdown World Title: Big Show vs. Alberto Del Rio

Last man standing and Show is defending. Show starts with a hard chop and a slam to put Del Rio down for a short count. Del Rio comes back with a superkick to the stomach but gets chopped right back down again. Show

pulls out a table but sets it up between the announcers' table and the ring instead of putting it inside. Rather than saving it for later Show pulls Del Rio to the floor and casually slams him through the table for a six count.

Back in and Del Rio kicks Show in the ribs to knock a chair out of his hands. Del Rio GOES OFF on Show with some chair shots, showing more emotion in a ten second stretch than he's shown in the last two years combined. He goes for the cross armbreaker but Show picks him up and carries him to the ropes. Show tries to throw him to the floor but Del Rio hooks the armbreaker over the ropes for a few moments before finally dropping him.

The fall from the apron gets a seven count on Del Rio as Show rests his arm. We take a break and come back with Alberto hitting a running kick to Show's arm on the floor. Show gets in a shot to break the momentum and slides in another table. Del Rio fires off more kicks to the ribs and dropkicks Show through the table to a big reaction. I'll give Alberto this: he isn't backing down.

That only gets a seven as well so Del Rio jumps on Show's back. After about thirty seconds Show flips Del Rio over but Alberto fires off whatever strikes he can get off to stagger the big man, including a pair of boots in the corner. Del Rio charges into a chokeslam though, drawing an eight count. A headbutt puts Del Rio on the floor and there's the spear through the barricade as Show is known to do.

Alberto gets up AGAIN at nine this time so Show sends him into the ring again. The WMD connects clean....but Del Rio gets up at eight AGAIN. The crowd is losing it in a hurry. Del Rio is down at nine but he was up enough to stop the count. Show picks up the steps but misses a charge into the post and drives the steps into his own head.

Alberto blasts Show with the steps and then hits him with them again in the bad shoulder. A THIRD shot finally puts Show down behind the announce

table and in a brilliant move, Del Rio turns the announce table over on top of Show. Show can't escape and Del Rio wins the title at 14:08 shown of 17:38. Ricardo can barely even make the announcement from being so excited.

Rating: B. This wasn't much of a match, but man alive did they put Del Rio over STRONG here. I don't think he'll make it to Mania or even through Elimination Chamber with the title, but this was a great moment and the place legitimately seemed thrilled that Del Rio won the title. To say they're pushing him as a big deal is an understatement. One thing though: JBL said Alberto survived two KO punches and I read the same in a spoiler, but I only saw one here. Not that it matters much but that was curious.

Overall Rating: B. Smackdown is BACK. You can always tell when WWE is trying and when they're just killing time until the next major show and this was an episode where they were trying. We had Rocky out there doing his thing, matches being set up, angle advancement, and a big time main event with a surprise ending. Enjoy it while it lasts though, because the summer will be here before you know it. Really good show here.

Results

Randy Orton b. Antonio Cesaro via DQ when Shield interfered

AJ/Dolph Ziggler b. Natalya/Great Khali – Sliced Bread #2 to Natalya

Sheamus b. 3MB – Brogue Kick to Slater

HELL NO b. Prime Time Players – Chokeslam to Young

Alberto Del Rio b. Big Show – Big Show couldn't answer the ten count

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Monday Night Raw – January 7, 2013: Rock vs. Punk Begins.

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 7, 2013

Location: Tampa Bay Times Forum, Tampa Bay, Florida

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

It's the first show of the year and the card is stacked. We've got Punk vs. Ryback in a TLC match for the world title plus the return of the Rock. Ok so maybe it's not stacked but it has a big match and something else big going on. It's hard to imagine Ryback winning the title tonight as we're less than three weeks away from the Rumble and Punk vs. Rock. Things should really get going towards the Rumble tonight though so let's get to it.

Here's Cena to open the show. He talks about how awesome everything will be tonight and wants to get to the Rumble. Cue Ziggler in a hurry who says that he'll be the thing people remember tonight instead of the Rock. I'm really thinking no on that one Ziggy. AJ (GOOD FREAKING NIGHT is she looking great tonight) says she can't believe she spent so much time with Cena as she's now with a real man.

AJ says Cena is a small man, causing Cena to go into a HUGE overly done bit, (complete with starting the Wave in the crowd) about how that's a joke. They go back and forth for a bit until Ziggler says he's in the Rumble as well. Cena says this is going to be his year and it starts tonight against Ziggler. Langston cuts a shaky promo saying Cena has someone else to worry about tonight. Apparently it's Cena vs. Ziggler post break.

John Cena vs. Dolph Ziggler

Dang they're going all out with this "DON'T WATCH THE BALL GAME" push.

Just show AJ for that long and you'll have my attention. Ziggler grabs a headlock to start but Cena takes him to the mat with an armbar. Dolph sends Cena into the corner to take him down and does his situps. Cena rolls over into a front facelock followed by a delayed vertical suplex for two as we keep going back and forth. Langston guillotines Cena on the top and we take a break. Not much to see so far.

Back with Ziggler holding a chinlock, complete with headstands to show off. It's still not much of a gimmick people. Cena slams him down again as AJ gets on the apron. Ziggler pops up and SMACKS Cena with a dropkick for two, followed by all those elbow drops. AJ slaps Cena in the face, earning an ejection for herself and Langston. Cena fires up his finishing sequence but Ziggler avoids the Shuffle and rolls Cena up for two.

The second attempt hits but the AA is countered into the Zig Zag for two. The jumping DDT gets two for Dolph so he goes up, only to jump into the AA. Ziggler flips out of that too and hits a close range superkick for two. There's the sleeper but as Cena throws Ziggler off, the referee gets bumped. The STF goes on and Langston runs in to lay out Cena. The Big Ending (that stupid falling slam) only gets two as a second referee runs out. Cena loses his shoe and hits the AA for the pin at 17:04.

Rating: B. And at the end of the day, Ziggler loses AGAIN. This is why no one is taking him seriously: he loses EVERY major match he has where he doesn't have a gimmick to help him. When he wins the title, no one is going to buy it and that's the #1 reason why. As for the match, it was slow to start but got WAY better at the end. That being said, no one is going to see the ending because the national title game kicked off about three minutes ago.

Divas Title: Eve Torres vs. Kaitlyn

Eve takes her to the mat to start and works on the leg. We get a crawler with TWEETS from fans regarding Rock being back. The referee tells Kaitlyn to tie her boot but Eve jumps her during the distraction. Eve hooks a neck stretch (picture a neckbreaker position but instead of just, you know, doing a neckbreaker, Eve bends Kaitlyn's neck over her own shoulder) but gets caught in a side slam for two. Kaitlyn loads up her

gutbuster, but Eve escapes, grabs the title, and runs through the crowd for the countout at 4:40.

Rating: D. CHANGE THE FREAKING TITLE ALREADY! They've dragged this stupid story (why do they even hate each other at this point? Does ANYONE remember why this started in the first place, and better yet, does anyone care?) on for months now and while I get that they're waiting for the Rumble, do they really think people are going to get fired up for the freaking DIVAS TITLE?

Up next: Rhodes Scholars vs. HELL NO! ANOTHER fresh match! It's clearly they're just holding out for halftime of the game at this point.

Santino is in the back with Steamboat when Barrett comes in. He insults both guys and says he's the one bringing prestige back to the title. Steamboat is going to be in Santino's corner for his title shot tonight.

Orton is in the back to talk about the Rumble when 3MB comes up, setting up Orton vs. Slater tonight. Man they're REALLY punting on the matches after the opener aren't they?

HELL NO vs. Rhodes Scholars

For all the talk about how the tag division has been reborn, these two teams really do seem to fight each other a lot. Cody and Kane start with Rhodes running away to tag in Sandow. Bryan comes in with a dropkick in the corner so it's back to Rhodes to get kicked by Daniel. The Scholars finally get in some shots to take over on Bryan with Cody shouting about the goat face. The Wind-Up Elbow gets two as we hear about Sandow's family being advisers to the President since the early 1800s. Well you can't say they're not trying.

Hot tag brings in Kane who stumbles going up top, only to come off with the clothesline on Sandow, followed by a big boot for two. Damien bails to the floor to avoid a chokeslam, before coming back in to face Bryan. Daniel moonsaults out of the corner and injures his ankle, giving us a reason to extend the match even further. Everything breaks down and Cody hits Cross Rhodes for the pin at 7:16.

Rating: C. So the ankle stuff wound up meaning nothing at all. Good to know. Anyway, this sets up like the third title shot for the Scholars which still doesn't make me care about the match. This idea of "challengers lose, challengers lose, challengers win a non-title match, challengers win titles" doesn't make for an interesting series of matches. It makes for a series that I don't care for because it takes five matches to get through to the end counting a rematch.

Randy Orton vs. Heath Slater

They punch each other a lot to start until Orton gets clotheslined to the floor and stomped on by Mahal and McIntyre. Back in and Slater gets two off a neckbreaker but goes up and gets caught in a superplex. Here are Orton's clotheslines and the powerslam followed by the Elevated DDT. RKO ends this clean at 4:26.

Rating: D. Yep, it's clear they're just letting the football game kill them here and I can't say I blame them. Nothing on the planet is going to be able to stop that tonight, so why not just put on a weaker show until the game isn't on and then put up your best then? It's a strategy they've done before, so why not do it here?

Intercontinental Title: Santino Marella vs. Wade Barrett

Wade doesn't even get an entrance. Steamboat is in Santino's corner for no apparent reason. The champ takes Santino to the mat and pounds away in the corner before hitting a chinlock. The pumphandle slam is escaped and a superkick to the face gets two for Marella. Santino does his usual stuff and puts on the Cobra, sending Barrett running to the floor. Back in and the Bull Hammer ends this at 2:21.

Barrett stares at Steamboat but runs as the Dragon takes his jacket off.

Sheamus is in the back to talk about the Rumble when 3MB comes up. Wow they're not even hiding this anymore? Tonight it's Sheamus vs. one of them later on. Sheamus sings a bit first.

Great Khali vs. Antonio Cesaro

Non-title here and Miz is on commentary. Apparently he had an issue with

Cesaro lately which I barely remember. Khali pounds away to start but Cesaro goes after the knee. We get what might be the worst big boot ever (you can see the referee between the boot and Cesaro's head) before Cesaro makes his comeback, hitting a spinning springboard European Uppercut. Neutralizer ends this at 3:19.

Rating: C-. Points to Cesaro for both the uppercut (that looked SWEET) and the Neutralizer which is rather impressive. This was another match we've seen before but it fills in five minutes on this show tonight, which is the right idea. Cesaro continues to impress, which is a good sign for him.

Brad Maddox annoys Heyman again. He offers to referee the TLC match but Heyman wants nothing to do with him.

Jinder Mahal vs. Sheamus

Sheamus toys with Mahal to start and kicks him into the ropes. Mahal grabs Sheamus' trunks in a weird spot that Sheamus seems bewildered by. A hard slap to Mahal's face doesn't do anything but an attempt at a second one sends him to the mat. There are the ten forearms in the ropes for Mahal, and there are ten for McIntyre as well. Jinder hits a jumping knee to send Sheamus to the floor where the band mates get in some shots. Sheamus slugs him down and pulls Slater in as well. A double clothesline puts the jobbers on the floor and Slater takes the Brogue Kick. White Noise and Brogue Kick end Mahal at 4:43.

Rating: D+. This was just a comedy match and I guess a way to compare Orton and Sheamus if that's what they were going for. Nothing special here of course, but then again what are you expecting from this show at this point? I get why they're doing things this way, but that doesn't make the show any easier to sit through.

Video on Punk wanting respect.

Raw World Title: CM Punk vs. Ryback

TLC match which was supposed to happen last month but had to be changed due to Punk's knee injury. The fans don't seem impressed by Ryback at all

here. Ryback shoves Punk around to start until we head to the floor where Punk kicks him in the head. Punk slides in a ladder but Ryback hammers on him before anything can be done. Back in and Ryback hits a delayed spinning suplex onto the ladder, sending the champion to the floor.

Punk almost gets crushed by the steps before using them as a launching pad to knee Ryback in the face. Punk chairs Ryback down a few times and we take a break. Back with both guys down in the ring and Ryback getting up first. Ryback loads up a table on the floor but Punk blasts him in the ribs with a chair and sets up a table of his own. Ryback shoves Punk onto the announce table but another chair shot slows him down.

Back in and Punk works over Ryback's leg with a chair but can't Pillmanize it. The jump off the ropes might have hurt the champion's knee again. Ryback pounds away and hits the Meat Hook but Punk escapes the Shell Shock. They head to the floor and Ryback launches himself through a table by mistake. Punk climbs up the ladder but Ryback goes up to stop him, knocking the champ to the mat.

CM shoves the ladder over but Ryback lands on his feet. He picks Punk up and drops him onto the ladder, bending it to the point where it can't be used anymore. Punk kicks Ryback in the head again to slow him down but can't use the ladder to climb anymore. A knee in the corner slows Ryback down but when Punk tries the bulldog, Ryback LAUNCHES him to the floor through the table Punk set up.

Ryback finds another ladder and goes up but there go the lights. The lights come back up and the Shield is on the ladder. Ryback punches two of them down but has to get down to stop the third one. The numbers catch up with Ryback and he gets destroyed by chair shots and the Triple Bomb through a table onto the steps. The Shield leaves and Punk slowly climbs up to retain the title at 18:50.

Rating: B-. This was exactly what people expected, right down to the interference. Ryback continues to look like someone that can't win the big one, which is why that pop he got at the beginning of the match might as well have been a group of mice cheering. We get it: Shield goes after Ryback. They've done that for months now and Ryback has lost to them

every time. There were some good bumps in this but it was exactly the match you expected to happen.

Post break Punk denies being associated with the Shield and says he's going to drop a pipe bomb on Rock.

Bryan and Kane argue over whose fault the loss was. Vickie pops up and says next week they have a follow up with Dr. Shelby. Another argument ensues as we enter Daffy Duck/Bugs Bunny territory over whether Shelby is a nerd or a monster.

We recap Big Show vs. Ricardo from last week, which sets up Show vs. Alberto on Friday.

Big Show vs. Kofi Kingston

WMD, 15 seconds, pin. That's some way to treat a guy who was a champion a week ago.

We recap Punk's heel turn at Raw 1000 where he attacked Rock.

Here's Punk before Rock can get out here. He talks about how it's time for the Pipe Bomb, but wants to clarify what the Pipe Bomb is. It's basically a dose of the truth. Well except for the ice cream, because no one here needs more ice cream. Punk meant everything he said in Vegas, but he became someone for the fans to cheer for. It doesn't matter if you're the best in the world in the WWE because there's a glass ceiling that no one is allowed to break.

Punk goes into another rant about how the fans will cheer for anyone while guys like Bryan have to become catchphrase machines and guys like Brodus Clay have to dance with stupid kids and workhorses like Tyson Kidd have to take back seats to invisible children. The fans cheer and Punk says that's exactly what he's talking about.

Everyone in the past has gotten over because of the kind of business they do, except for him. He says if he was in Sammartino's era, he would have been champion for 20 years. You didn't see Hogan defending the title in TLC matches against Ryback. Punk says he's successful because of himself, but rather in spite of them. He talks about how he doesn't care about the

fans and everyone who says they do is either weak or dishonest. Punk is neither though, because he's an honest man and the best in the world.

He talks about how there are winners and losers in the world and it's clear which one he is. For Punk, it's never been about the fans but rather just about the money. A production guy gets up on the apron and says we have to go to a break. Punk says no because he doesn't want to go to a break. He tells the fans they don't matter at all and we go to a break.

Back from a break and Punk says that he's going to be back here in a year as world champion again on the first Raw of 2014. He lists off the people he's beaten in the last year and every single one of them has been beating the fans too. The fans don't get to win with Rock either, because Punk is keeping the title at the Rumble.

Rock FINALLY interrupts him and the pop actually made me jump. Rock says that he wanted to hear everything Punk had to say so he knew what he was dealing with at the Rumble. Now it's clear to the Rock that Punk is straight up delusional. Punk being champion for 414 days is incredible, but the important number is 20, because in 20 days Punk is defending the title against the Rock and then time is up.

Punk wanted a revolution and turned his back on the people, but that's not what happened. The people turned their backs on Punk. Punk couldn't even deliver the ice cream bars that he promised. Rock talks about how there's no such thing as voiceless people here in the WWE because they're going to call Punk Cookie Puss (it's an old cake/dessert company from the 80s I believe). Punk says the people are puppets because Rock got the people chanting just like he did a year ago.

Rock says the people have already won the minute Rock woke up this morning. Rock woke up, sent out a Tweet, ate pancakes, went to the gym, got in his truck and drove here so he could stand face to face with Punk and say that FINALLY, he has come back to Tampa. He's back to stop Punk and win the title for the first time in ten years. Rock has been watching to see someone say they respect Punk so he'll shut up. He says Punk looks like Popeye on crack which draws a Cookie Puss chant.

Rock praises Punk's mind but says Punk is delusional. It's not the people that don't matter but Punk. Punk starts into his speech but Rock says it doesn't matter. At the Rumble, there's nothing stopping the Rock from becoming WWE Champion. Punk lays the title down in the middle of the ring and says it doesn't matter how often Rock comes back because Punk is going to take him out. He goes on a big rant about how Rock has never faced anyone like him again and says that at the Rumble, Rock's arms are too short to box with God.

Rock says in 20 days, Punk's time is up, so go home and look in the mirror and strip. Don't look at your cookie puss but turn around so you can find a place for two more tattoos. One on one cheek put a bunch of candy ("You can't have Almond Joy because they actually have nuts) and on the other put Rock's shoe. There's a Rock Bottom and we're done.

Overall Rating: B. All things considered, this wasn't a terrible show. For one thing, there was almost NOTHING stupid backstage other than a few moments that set up matches later on. They didn't have anything huge going on other than Rock and the title match, which is the right move given what this show was up against. There was a ton of wrestling on this show and that's what's been missing on Raw lately, so few complaints there after a slow start.

Results

John Cena b. Dolph Ziggler – Attitude Adjustment

Kaitlyn b. Eve Torres via countout

Rhodes Scholars b. HELL NO – Cross Rhodes to Bryan

Randy Orton b. Heath Slater – RKO

Wade Barrett b. Santino Marella – Bull Hammer

Antonio Cesaro b. Great Khali – Neutralizer

Sheamus b. Jinder Mahal – Brogue Kick

CM Punk b. Ryback – Punk pulled down the title

Big Show b. Kofi Kingston – WMD

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Smackdown – October 26, 2012: This Is How Go Home Shows Work

Smackdown

Date: October 26, 2012

Location: Dunkin' Donuts Center, Providence, Rhode Island

Commentators: Josh Matthews, John Bradshaw Layfield

It's the final show before the PPV and I think everything major is set. We finally know the tag title match so you can probably expect to see some more about that. After the disaster of a Raw this week, maybe Smackdown can redeem things a bit. If nothing else, Sheamus vs. Big Show is probably the best feud going in the WWE right now. Let that sink in for a minute. Let's get to it.

Here's Orton to open the show. As he comes to the ring, we get a history of Orton vs. Del Rio, including the graphic for their match on Sunday. Does anyone else find it stupid looking when they have the video game graphics in the background? It takes away how serious the feud is supposed to be. Orton says he doesn't hate Del Rio for attacking him last week, but rather why the attack happened. If it was because Del Rio was embarrassed for losing to Sheamus over and over, that's one thing. But doing it and pretending to be a tough guy was a mistake.

Orton says he'll be honest with Del Rio: on Sunday, Alberto is getting the most brutal beating of his life. Alberto cuts Randy off and says they're doing this on Del Rio's terms. Randy isn't a viper but rather a

garden snake. Orton says no one here knows what Del Rio just said. Apparently Del Rio is all talk and is a spineless bottom feeder with no cajones. Randy's words, not mine. Del Rio starts to come to the ring with Orton saying bring it on, but here's Barrett from behind to jump Orton.

Post break Del Rio is in the back when Teddy comes up. Before anything can be said, Barrett comes up and asks if that was what Del Rio was looking for. It's Barrett vs. Orton tonight.

Kane vs. Cody Rhodes

Bryan and Sandow are on commentary. Kane takes him into the corner to start as Bryan and Sandow argue back and forth. There's the top rope clothesline followed by an uppercut to put Cody down. Cody escapes a side slam and hits a running knee to the face of Kane. A Disaster Kick winds up being a dropkick for two and Cody goes for the knee. Sandow and Bryan argue over whose beard is better. Josh: "Damien what is your IQ approaching?" Sandow: "It's approaching infinity. I become smarter merely by sitting here." Cody tries that uppercut from the mat of his but Kane grabs him for the chokeslam and pin at 3:15.

Rating: D+. This didn't have time to get anywhere but the champions dominated for the first time in this feud that I remember. This is an interesting feud as the champions completely dominate on an individual basis but when they combine it's not so one sided. That makes for an interesting match on Sunday if nothing else.

Booker comes in to see Show, who is face to face with Sheamus tonight. Booker requests professionalism tonight but Show cuts him off. Show won't cause any trouble because he's got nothing left to prove until Sunday. I keep forgetting how tall Booker is.

The Miz vs. Yoshi Tatsu

There's a name I haven't seen in awhile. Feeling out process to start with Miz taking him down via a shoulder. They head to the floor with Tatsu having his back rammed into the barricade. A boot to the side of Yoshi's head puts him down and Miz puts on a reverse chinlock with a hand full of face. Another running boot to the face takes Tatsu down. A belly

to back suplex is countered into a cross body for two for Yoshi. Miz's short DDT puts Yoshi right back down and it's the Skull Crushing Finale for the pin at 4:02.

Rating: D+. Another squash here but even less competitive. Like I've said for a few weeks now though, WWE is finally starting to use its army of wrestlers in spots like this instead of someone that's currently being used in a story. Yoshi losing here doesn't mean anything and doesn't hurt him at all while giving Miz a boost before the PPV. It's not hard.

Video on the Egyptian tour.

Raw ReBout is Ryback destroying Punk on Monday.

We also get a video from Main Event with Heyman talking (on the monitor) about how Ryback isn't in Punk's league. Now when Miz (who is in the ring at this point. On Main Event that is) faced Ryback, he took his beating like a man. Zigler losing to Ryback has no correlation with Punk because Punk is a much better strategist than Ryback.

It's ANOTHER recap about the Divas situation with Kaitlyn saying she has proof of Eve being behind the attack at Night of Champions.

In Booker's office, Aksana says it was a text from Eve and not an e-mail. Teddy tries to make sense of this whole story, which boils down to Eve is behind everything. Booker says if this is true, then Eve is off his staff. Eve says she's too trustworthy and leaves her iPad and iPhone out with no pass code on it. More yelling ensues between all four girls in the office until it's announced as Eve vs. Layla vs. Kaitlyn for the title. Tonight it's a tag match though.

Randy Orton vs. Wade Barrett

Barrett is sent to the floor very quickly with Orton following and in full control. Back in and Orton does his circle stomp before hooking a chinlock. Barrett comes back and sends Randy into the buckle but Orton clotheslines him down and drops a knee. They head to the floor with Orton being rammed face first into the apron a few times. As they come back in, Orton's Elevated DDT is countered and Barrett sends him back to the

floor.

Randy gets sent into the table and we take a break. Back with Barrett holding a chinlock, only for Orton to elbow out of it. Scratch that comeback as Orton gets taken right back down by Wade. Barrett puts Orton in the ropes and hits that running big boot to the face that looks awesome. A backbreaker gets two for Barrett and it's off to a reverse chinlock. Barrett fires off knees to the ribs of Orton followed by a clothesline for two.

Barrett tries going up top but gets crotched and eventually superplexed down for two. Randy starts his finishing sequence with the clotheslines and a powerslam. The place freaks out over the RKO coming up but Barrett comes back with the Winds of Change for two. Barrett misses the Souvenir and gets caught in Orton's over the back backbreaker. Now the Elevated DDT hits and Orton loads up the RKO, but here's Del Rio. The distraction lets Barrett hit the Souvenir for the pin at 9:12 shown of 12:42.

Rating: C+. The more I see of Barrett the more I like him. He's got a good physical style and looks like he could take down anyone in any given match. Orton losing here is fine as it advances his feud with Del Rio before the payoff on Sunday. I'm already digging this feud WAY more than the Sheamus one, mainly because there's a chance Alberto could win.

Post match Del Rio attacks but neither the cross armbreaker or the RKO can hit.

Aksana/Eve Torres vs. Kaitlyn/Layla

Layla and Aksana get things going but it's off to Kaitlyn. Aksana continues to be the current worst worker on the roster so thankfully it's off to Eve. She pounds on Kaitly a bit but a backsplash hits knees. Eve blocks the tag to Layla so we get more Kaitlyn. Kaitlyn runs over both heel girls and Layla kicks Aksana in the ribs. Layla misses a high kick and knocks Kaitlyn out, giving Eve the pin on Kaitlyn at 3:43.

Rating: D+. To be fair, the girls aren't as terrible as they used to be as Kaitlyn is at least passable in the ring. Layla and Kaitlyn...eh not so much. Aksana continues to be there for looks only but someone has to do

that I suppose. Not horrible here, but the NXT Divas matches are much more entertaining lately.

Raw ReBounce sums up the Vickie/AJ/Cena stuff.

Sheamus doesn't believe Show will be calm tonight.

Kane tells Bryan that he won his match so if Bryan loses, it's clear that Bryan is the weak link.

Daniel Bryan vs. Damien Sandow

Sandow offers the audience some better words than YES to use, such as undoubtedly his beard is better than Bryans and absolutely the Rhodes Scholars will win the titles on Sunday. Kane and Bryan are in on commentary now. They start on the floor before Bryan takes over with kicks in the corner back inside. Bryan works on the arm as we take a break. Back with Sandow on the floor and Bryan firing off kicks.

Back in and Sandow hits the Russian legsweep and the windup elbow for two. Off to a chinlock before Sandow fires away right hands to the head. Kane won't say a thing. Bryan starts firing off the YES Kicks and backdrops Damien to the floor. There's a suicide dive and Cody gets in Bryan's face. Kane goes after Sandow but no DQ has been called yet. Cody posts Bryan and Sandow slides in for the Terminus and the pin at 5:00 shown of 8:30.

Rating: C. Sandow getting a pin on Bryan is a big win for him and splitting up the wins tonight is a good move for the tag match. Nothing great here but seeing Damien hang in there with a guy like Bryan is a great sign. The guy could be a big deal for years to come, and having him get wins like this is a good idea.

Here are Sheamus and Big Show for their face to face time. There's a ton of security here just in case. Show lists off a lot of famous finishers that the KO Punch is stronger than, including the Brogue Kick which they've proven scientifically. Sheamus says the KO Punch has to connect to work, so Show gives us some footage from a few weeks ago where he blocked the Brogue Kick.

Show says the Kick can't get high enough and it's a matter of physics that says Sheamus can't beat him. If Sheamus thinks he can win, he's either stupid or delusional. Sheamus there there are two things he loves: cold ale on a hot day and a good fight. The idea of fighting Show has his mouth watering. Sheamus again says that the title he holds today is the same as the WCW Title.

The champ is looking forward to fighting Show because he's the ultimate fight. Show says Sheamus is scared but Sheamus says he doesn't care how many Brogue Kicks it takes. Sheamus shouts that the time for fighting is now and it's on. The security all gets tossed out but Show leaves before fighting Sheamus. Good hard sell for the title match here which you don't get enough of anymore.

Overall Rating: C+. This was a solid go home show as the main matches all got a focus. The show isn't going to be great but they've done enough here to make me interested in seeing it, which is exactly what they were shooting for here. I'm pleased by how Big Show vs. Sheamus is looking, as they've done a great job of building up the idea of can Sheamus beat him. I'm not at all saying it's a great feud or that the match is going to be awesome, but they've done well with what they've got. Good show tonight.

Results

Kane b. Cody Rhodes – Chokeslam

The Miz b. Yoshi Tatsu – Skull Crushing Finale

Wade Barrett b. Randy Orton – Souvenir

Eve Torres/Aksana b. Layla/Kaitlyn – Torres pinned Kaitlyn after a high kick from Layla

Damien Sandown b. Daniel Bryan – Terminus

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