

The Rock vs. John Cena II... .Anybody?

This seems to be the general consensus about the match that is about as obvious as you could ask it to be. So at the Rumble, Cena won the right to fight for a world title at Wrestlemania. As luck would have it, Rock won the WWE Title and will likely be defending it at Wrestlemania. If you're too dense to figure it out at this point, it's pretty clear that Rock vs. Cena II is happening in New York at Wrestlemania 29. However, every opinion I've read of it since then seems to be the same: people aren't that thrilled with the prospect.

That's about where I am on it too. Now don't get me wrong: the match is going to be solid as these two can, no joke intended, bring it. The problem isn't having the match be good. It's having the match feel huge. Rock and Cena had a year to set up the previous match and by the end of it, I had to see it. I didn't care what happened or how good it was but I needed to see the match. With two and a half months to go and nothing new other than the title being on the line, I don't see how this is going to come off as something nearly as huge as last year.

Do I want to see it? Eh...yeah I guess. If nothing else the promo work will be amazing as always. However, that comes back to the same problem: we heard these two talk about each other over the course of 14 months already. Basically this coming Wrestlemania feels like reheating the feast we had last year: it's still good but it doesn't taste like it did straight out of the oven.

Is anyone fired up at this idea?

Royal Rumble 2013: By The Book And Still Awesome

Royal Rumble 2013

Date: January 27, 2013

Location: US Airways Center, Phoenix, Arizona

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, John Bradshaw Layfield

As the tag line for the show says, FINALLY we're here. The main events tonight are Punk defending against The Rock and of course the Rumble itself. The shows have been rather awesome lately so hopefully they can keep things going tonight. Hopefully things don't change that much between tonight and Wrestlemania but odds are they will. Let's get to it.

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

Cesaro is defending and this is mainly happening because of Ric Flair, as Flair was on Miz's talk show and Cesaro interrupted. Flair "gave" Miz the Figure Four and apparently that's Miz's big weapon here tonight. A fast rollup gets one for Miz but Cesaro grabs a headlock to slow things down. Miz comes back with a back elbow for two and hooks a headlock on his own on the mat.

Miz hits the rope and charges into a kind of tilt-a-whirl powerslam to shift momentum again. Off to a bow and arrow hold by the champion which doesn't last long. A sitout slam gets two for Cesaro and a European uppercut keeps Miz down. There's the gutwrench suplex for two and Cesaro pounds away in the corner. Miz charges into a kind of Irish Curse for two and a jumping double stomp keeps him in trouble.

Cesaro hooks a double arm lock which is quickly broken, allowing Miz to

hit the Reality Check for no cover. Miz pounds away in the corner and hits the running clothesline but the ax handle misses. He may have injured his knee on the landing. They trade rollups for two each and Miz goes after the knee. The Figure Four is easily blocked so Miz kicks him to the floor instead. Cesaro lures Miz in and sends him into a piece of metal under the ring, setting up the Neutralizer to retain at 7:40.

Rating: C-. This was your basic Raw match which is to say nothing special. Miz is floundering right now and this stupid Figure Four stuff is making it even worse. He needs a big moment to really hammer in the change but more than that he's still the same guy he's been for years. I actually like his in ring stuff, but he needs to stick with the Finale and be a bit nicer about things. It would help a lot.

On with the show!

Smackdown World Title: Big Show vs. Alberto Del Rio

Last man standing with Del Rio defending. After Big Show's entrance, we cut to the back where Alberto and Ricardo are getting ready. Bret Hart of all people pops up and says that he's proud of Alberto. Hart sees Del Rio as a Mexican Bret Hart while Del Rio sees Hart as a Canadian Del Rio. Ricardo says he's a big fan so Bret gives him some sunglasses. I have no idea what the point of this cameo was but it wasn't bad.

Show chops him into the corner to start and gets seven off a series of shows to the chest. He loads up that reverse powerbomb of his but gets caught in a hurricanrana to put him down. A top rope seated senton takes Big Show down again but the armbreaker is easily countered into something resembling a one armed Angle Slam.

Show heads to the floor to grab a chair but Alberto dropkicks the knee out and cracks the chair over Show's back a few times. Then he pounds it into the ribs even more but another huge show is deflected and Show hits a chokeslam for an eight. Del Rio rolls to the floor where Show slams him down onto the floor. Alberto kicks him low and superkicks him to get a nine count.

The Big Bald kind of swats Alberto into the floor before throwing him

into a piece of the set. Show misses a superkick into said piece of the set so he whacks Del Rio in the back with a light bulb that doesn't break. Instead Big Show loads up a table in front of that piece of the set. Show climbs onto the set and pulls Del Rio up onto it with him with one arm. A hip toss/chokeslam through the table (it wasn't a huge fall) gets nine and Show is ticked off. They head back to the ring but Del Rio heads to the floor to hide from the KO punch. Show follows him out and loads up the steps but can't hit the champion.

Ricardo tries to jump Big Show but gets thrown into the barricade for his efforts. Show misses a spear and crashes through the barricade for a close nine count. Alberto hits a bunch of chair shots to the back and hits a kind of Conchairto on the shoulder using the steps. Then he sprays Show with a fire extinguisher as Show staggers back inside. Is that really going to keep him down? Back in and the cross armbreaker goes on as Ricardo uses duct tape to tie Show's legs to the ropes ala Cena vs. Batista. Alberto lets go of the hold and wins the match at 17:00.

Rating: B. Good match here but not as fun or special as their first match. I don't think most people thought Show was getting the title back here so they had a big mountain to get over. Still though, they did a good job of beating each other up here to set up a kind of goofy ending. I'm not wild on Del Rio having to use something clever to beat Show when he had already beaten him using force before. Still though, solid stuff here.

Striker is with Ziggler, AJ and Langston in the back. Ziggler is going to enter at #1 because he can. Matt says that's hard to do (remember that Ziggler had to pick #1 or #2, and there's such a HUGE difference between 1 and 2) so AJ gets in his face. Langston then cracks me up by going into an impersonation of a stereotypical nerdy news reporter asking Ziggler on his thoughts on his chances. Ziggler says he'll win both titles at Mania. That was awesome by Langston. The others, not so much.

We get a medley of promos from people in the Rumble ala the old days.

Cesaro says he'll win because he's foreign.

Young and Titus do their thing.

Orton says he's winning because he's awesome.

Cena says what you would expect him to say.

Barrett says he'll be the first Intercontinental Champion to win the Rumble.

Sheamus says he can win his second in a row because of the Brogue Kick.

Ryback says he isn't a predator and he doesn't eat Fruity Pebbles. Just feed him more. He might not be so hungry if he ate Fruity Pebbles.

Tag Titles: Rhodes Scholars vs. HELL NO

The Scholars are getting what is probably their 95th title shot in a few weeks. Bryan and Rhodes start things off with Cody having a leap frog countered into a surfboard. Off to Kane as JBL goes into a mini rant on Dr. Shelby. Kane fights out of the heel corner and slams the now legal Sandow. Bryan comes back in to fire off the kicks as JBL goes off about the hugging on Raw.

Kane kicks Sandow through the ropes and Cody is thrown on top of him. Bryan hits a suicide dive (JBL: "THE FLYING GOAT VEGAN!") to take out both challengers and the fans seem fired up. Back in and Cody gets in a few shots to take over with a half Boston crab as the announcers talk about 1980s TV. Sandow comes in for the Wind-Up Elbow and some stomping for two. Cody comes back in and gets kicked in the face to take him down. Sandow blocks the hot tag though and brings Cody right back in.

Rhodes hooks an over the shoulder backbreaker for a bit but once the hold is released, Bryan hits a running DDT to take Cody down. Kane finally gets the tag (no reaction) and house is cleaned with Sandow taking a side slam for two. Kane loads up the top rope clothesline (JBL: "That's a flying taker.") but Sandow breaks it up. A kind of running swinging neckbreaker gets two for Damien but Cody comes in for a double suplex. Bryan makes a blind tag at the same time though and it's a chokeslam for Cody and the NO Lock for Sandow for the tap out at 9:30.

Rating: C. Average tag match here, but the booking was pretty dull. To

clarify, the Scholars lost every match leading up to the title match, then lost the title match? Well you can't say one thing doesn't lead to another I guess. Then again, I would have avoided having the Scholars lose EVERY SINGLE TIME they fought the champions but why would you want to add drama?

Rumble by the Numbers.

Vickie gives HELL NO their numbers for the Rumble. Kane sees Bryan's and says interesting. Bryan wants to see Kane's and jokes ensue. Ron Simmons unfortunately doesn't show up.

We recap Fan Fest which had the NXT tournament.

Royal Rumble

This is earlier than I was expecting. 90 second intervals and Ziggler is #1. He says he's going to be here at the beginning and at the end. Ziggler doesn't care who #2 is so he doesn't mind when.....CHRIS JERICO is #2??? Jericho has a big tattoo on his left arm now and if you remember correctly, Ziggler got Jericho fired last year. Ziggy throws him to the apron but Jericho comes back with a top rope forearm to the head. Jericho clotheslines him to the apron but Ziggler gets right back in. Cody Rhodes is #3 and the double teaming begins.

Ziggler gets knocked down and Cody is put in the Walls, only to be quickly broken up (or down?) by Dolph. Kofi is #4 and Dolph has to duck Trouble in Paradise. Cody and Jericho both try to dump Kofi to no avail and we enter into the lame brawling section. Santino is #5 and throws Cody and Jericho to the apron but no further. The Cobra takes Kofi down but Ziggler superkicks Santino out. The heels double team Kofi but can't put him out.

Drew McIntyre is #6 and more heel alliances form. Jericho BARELY survives being thrown out by dangling until Titus O'Neal is #7. He picks up Kofi and does the Millions of Dollars dance before hitting him with a backbreaker. McIntyre is sent to the apron and kicked out by Jericho. Ziggler is sent upside down on the ropes but hangs on at the last second. The fans chant for Jericho as Goldust returns at #8.

Goldie goes right for Cody to a big pop and there's the kneeling uppercut. Cody hangs on to avoid elimination as the fans cheer for Goldust. Otunga is #9 as the ring is getting too full. JBL goes into a weird series of insults to Lawler about how Cole kept beating him which goes nowhere. Heath Slater is #10 as we need someone to come in here and clean some people out. Jericho puts Ziggler onto the apron again but can't get him out.

Sheamus is #11 and after a bunch of forearms he dumps Titus and Otunga. Slater tries to jump Sheamus resulting in a big heel beatdown. Tensai is #12, giving us Ziggler, Jericho, Rhodes, Slater, Goldust, Kofi, Sheamus and Tensai. Cole talks about Jake Roberts being the first person to eliminate someone in 1998 (you read that right) as people keep fighting by the ropes. Brodus Clay is #13 complete with the Funkadactyls who are rocking some shorts.

There are way too many guys in there at the moment as Goldust sends Rhodes to the apron. Cody pulls his brother to the apron and slides back in where he whips Goldust into the post to eliminate him. Cool sequence there. Rey Mysterio returns (kind of) at #14 in a weird looking low cut singlet. He hits a few 619s and the top rope splash on Jericho but has to fight off Rhodes.

Darren Young is #15 and joins a group of guys to eliminate Brodus. Kofi low bridges Tensai for an elimination. Ziggler knocks Kofi off the apron where he lands on Tensai's back and is dropped onto the announce table. Kofi teases jumping off the announce table to the ring as the camera stops focusing on the match at all. He asks for JBL's chair as Bo Dallas is #16. Kofi hops with the chair to get back to the apron and gets back in. Ok, last year it was a cool idea but this took like a minute to work which makes it WAY too much.

Kofi dumps Darren (who looked to injure his knee on the landing) but gets Disaster Kicked out by Cody. Godfather returns at #17 and is dropkicked out in two seconds by Ziggler. Gee I'm so glad they wasted this spot on him. We've got Ziggler, Jericho, Rhodes, Sheamus, Dallas, Mysterio, Slater and now Barrett at #18. Barrett and Jericho try to put Sheamus out but Mysterio breaks it up for no apparent reason.

Cody and Barrett are the only ones on their feet as Cena is #19. All of the heels stare him down and it's a dog pile as he gets into the ring. There goes Slater (immediately checked on by referees) and Rhodes as well but Jericho blocks an AA attempt. Dallas goes after Cena so points to him for trying. Sandow is #20 and Rey tries to rana Barrett to the floor, only to get kicked to the floor. Sheamus goes after Barrett because that's the law anymore.

Jericho busts out the Walls on Cena but can't quite hook them. Now he gets them on as Daniel Bryan is #21. There are the kicks for Ziggler and some for Barrett as well. Daniel is the only one on his feet at the moment but he and Sheamus can't put Jericho out. We get dueling Cena chants as Cesaro is #22. Nothing of note happens so Khali is #23. This is his 7th Rumble which is really surprising. WAY too many people in there again.

Ziggler hits a kind of stunner on Cena as Cesaro tries to put Sheamus out. Kane is #24 and sends Ziggler to the apron for about the 17th time. More people lay around until Zack Ryder is #25. There's a Rough Ryder for Dolph and Kane dumps Khali. Bryan dumps Kane but Cesaro knocks Bryan right into Kane's arms. Kane isn't sure what to do but eventually he drops Bryan to the floor, more or less turning him heel for one night only.

Orton is #26 and fires off a bunch of clotheslines and a powerslam for Ziggler. Bo Dallas manages to stay in, only to be caught in a double Elevated DDT at the same time as Ziggler. Ryder eats and RK0 and is gone. Jinder Mahal gets lucky #27 as we now have ten guys in there at once. Cena dumps Cesaro and slingshots Ziggler to the apron but can't put him out. The Miz is #28 and gets in a fight with Cesaro in the aisle. Apparently Miz has a bad ankle from the pre show match and is limping a bit.

Sheamus knocks Mahal out and Miz hits the Reality Check on Cena. Sin Cara gets #29 and totally misses a kick to Ziggler's head as he comes in. Sheamus puts Cena on the apron as Bo Dallas pulls Wade Barrett out in a big surprise. Miz and Jericho fight on the apron as Barrett pulls Dallas

out of the match. There's Dallas' first feud I guess. The Bull Hammer lays Dallas out as well. Ryback gets #30, giving us WAY too many people for me to list at the moment.

Ryback dumps Sandow and Sin Cara and glares at Miz for trying to toss him. There goes Miz and we're down to six: Jericho, Ziggler, Cena, Sheamus, Orton and Ryback. Jericho fires things up and dropkicks Sheamus to the apron but poses too much and gets superkicked out by Dolph. Orton and Sheamus go at it which is probably a title match at Mania. Ryback goes shoulder first into the post and walks into an RKO as does Cena. RKO to Sheamus and an Elevated DDT to Ryback but there's no one on their feet to eliminate.

Ryback counters an RKO and clotheslines Orton out. The Brogue Kick knocks out Ziggler at roughly 50 minutes and we're down to three. It's Cena, Sheamus and Ryback left and Ryback gets double teamed. Now the two superheroes look at the sign and slug it out. Cena fires off his finishing sequence by Ryback breaks up the Shuffle with a Meathook. Sheamus escapes Shell Shock and hits White Noise on Ryback. The pale one loads up the Brogue Kick but gets dumped out by Ryback.

So we're down to Cena vs. Ryback and after a catchphrase battle, Cena walks into a spinebuster. There's the STF to Ryback and the bald one passes out. Cena tries to pick him up but Ryback is dead weight. Cena is fine with that though and sits Ryback on the top, only to get caught in a kind of Thesz Press off the top. Ryback puts him in a kind of powerslam position but Cena escapes and throws him out to win at 54:50.

Rating: C+. I've seen worse but this wasn't the best Rumble or even close to it. The first part was pretty dull stuff after Jericho returned and after that it didn't pick up for a good while. Cena winning was kind of predictable but that doesn't mean it's the wrong choice. I'm really not wild on him facing either Rock or Punk, but maybe he'll go after the World Heavyweight Championship. Well not likely as that title doesn't exist at Mania time but it was worth a try.

We recap Rock vs. Punk which means the Divas Title match got scrapped. That's likely a good idea. Anyway you should know this by now: Punk

doesn't like Rock because he thinks Rock has too much handed to him while Rock got this shot because he won a match nine months ago. The main idea here is that Shield might interfere against Punk's wishes but if they do, Rock gets the title.

Rock goes on a rant about not getting drafted into the NFL which turns into a longer rant about adversity and his mom having cancer. Oh she's here tonight. That's a relief. Anyway, Rock talks about Punk saying the fans don't count but insists they do. He reaches out his hand ala Dusty Rhodes in Hard Times (look it up) and says tonight he and the fans are one. Good ending to an oddly started promo.

Raw World Title: The Rock vs. CM Punk

Shield attacked Rock on Monday so he has some bad ribs. Rock wins a fast slugout but can't hit the Rock Bottom. Punk gets knocked to the floor but gets in a shot to Rocky to slow him up. The champ (Punk) loads up the Spanish announce table...and then puts it right back where he found it. Well at least Mama Punk taught him well. Rock sends Punk into the barricade so Heyman hits him in the back. Heyman: "MOMMY!" CM comes back and messes with the table again before we head back inside.

Punk hooks a bodyscissors to slow things down and knees Rock in the stomach for two. Off to something like the cousin of the Anaconda Vice before Rock comes back with some right hands. Punk will have none of that as he leg lariats Rock right back down. Rock gets draped over the top rope as we get a dueling catchphrase chant (Knees 2 Faces and Rock's version of the same line).

Punk fires off a kick to send Rock to the floor but he might have hurt his knee in the process. He goes up top and hits a forearm to the head but hurts his knee again in the process. The suicide dive keeps Rock down as they seem to be in second gear or so here. Back in and Punk misses the springboard clothesline so Rock goes after the bad knee for the first time. Both finishers are blocked as is the Sharpshooter but Punk counters into the Vice.

In a smart move, Rock rolls over into a cover so Punk has to leg go to escape. A DDT puts Punk down for no cover but Punk rolls through the Rock

Bottom. Now the Sharpshooter is hooked but Punk finally makes a rope. Rock loads up the announce table but doesn't set it back like Punk did. If nothing else, Punk wins the manners battle. Punk gets placed on the table but escapes with a kick to the face. A GTS is countered into the Rock Bottom but the table collapses underneath them. Rock is holding his knee but pulls off a Rock Bottom on the floor, presumably to buy some time.

That gets two back inside and Rock's knee seems ok. That's a good sign. Rock picks Punk up but gets caught by the high kick to put both guys down. A slugout goes to the Great One and there's the flying clothesline to set up the spinebuster. Rock loads up the People's Elbow...and there go the lights.

We can hear something happening at the announce table and flashes of light show the Shield. Rock is put through the announce table but the referee didn't see it so the match doesn't end. DOES VINCE NOT WATCH THESE SHOWS??? Punk is all like "oh dear what an unfortunate turn of events." He insists he has nothing to do with the Shield and rolls Rock back in...for the pin at 21:30.

Rating: B. Good stuff here but they didn't hit their stride until the middle of the match. The Shield stuff is pretty stupid if it stands as Vince isn't stupid enough (kayfabe of course) to let it go. Rock looked like his usual self but this was nowhere near as good as Cena vs. Rock at Wrestlemania. It's good, but it's not great.

Thankfully Vince comes out and says not so fast my friend. He says that he saw the Shield so as Chairman he has to...be cut off by Rock. Rock says Vince doesn't take the title from Punk because that's what Rock is here for. He wants the match restarted and Vince says do it. Punk immediately stomps Rock down in the corner and hits the running knee. There's the Macho Elbow for two more as the fans are getting into this. The GTS is escaped and there's the People's Elbow for the pin and the title at 26:47. There was only about two minutes of extra stuff so the old rating stays, but MAN that was a fast ending for Punk's reign.

Overall Rating: A-. This was a pretty awesome show but the ending was

kind of sketchy. Anyway, Rock vs. Cena II is set up, presumably with Punk getting his rematch next month. I'm not wild on the way Punk lost the title as it wasn't even to the Rock Bottom. I mean, if he can spinebust Punk can't he hit the Rock Bottom? Either way, good stuff here and I can't say I'm complaining about Rock winning the title again. Very good but not excellent show here.

Results

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

HELL NO b. Rhodes Scholars – NO Lock

John Cena won the Royal Rumble last eliminating Ryback

The Rock b. CM Punk – People's Elbow

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He's Going to Wrestlemania

In a terrible joke, just like the name before the fold, you can't see him. Cena won, last tossing out Ryback.

Chris Jericho Returns In Royal Rumble

He's starting with Ziggler. Now THAT is a surprise.

Oh and no, this isn't a spoiler because it already happened so spare me your complaints.

Royal Rumble 2013 Preview

It's the first PPV of the year and we've got four matches confirmed so far. That's not unprecedented so I'm not really shocked. Let's get to it. Starting with the preshow, I think they'll hold off on Miz taking the title just yet. They'll likely save that for Wrestlemania so Flair can have a BIG tribute. After all it's been a few weeks since anyone sucked up to him and told him he's the best ever so we can't wait much longer.

I think the Scholars finally get the belts. They've been losing every time they fight lately so they have to get them soon. Interesting note: if they do win, they'll only be the second team ever to win the belts at the Rumble.

Del Rio retains and as usual I'll predict a cash in and expect to be wrong.

Rock wins the title. You know he's getting it before Wrestlemania so it's either here or in the Chamber.

I'll take Cena to win the Rumble. I can't imagine they would give it to Ziggler and the only other option is Sheamus. I

don't think they'll do that twice in a row though.

If Kaitlyn (I had to think to remember who the champion was) defends the title, she'll keep it.

Overall the show looks pretty solid with only one potentially uninteresting match in the tag titles. Other than that though, everything looks to be a solid option. Punk vs. Rock finally got me hooked with their segment on Smackdown last night and I need to see this match. I'm fired up for the Rumble but then again it's one of my favorite shows of the year.

Thoughts/predictions?

Bo Dallas To Be In Royal Rumble

He won the tournament today and gets the spot. I can't tell you how THRILLED I am by this.

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.

Cool Royal Rumble Graphic

I posted another of these for I think the year 2012. There isn't a ton of new information but it's pretty cool to see. No I didn't make this.

Monday Night Raw – January 21, 2013: Why I Love Rumble Season and They Got Rock!!!

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 21, 2013

Location: HP Pavilion, San Jose, California

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

It's the go home show for the Rumble and most of the card is set. My guess is that the Rock will be in the building tonight to further the feud with Punk. Other than that you can expect to see the big deal at the end of the show where everyone is thrown to the floor with one person left standing. Other than that there isn't likely to be anything new tonight. Let's get to it.

The Martin Luther King Day video opens things up. Vince never misses this one.

Here are Heyman and Vickie to open the show. Vickie says that it's her job to make sure everyone has the best time they can at her show. That means she has to do things that are unpopular at times, which includes when it involves The Rock. Heyman says last week Rock insulted him as well as Vickie, who he sucks up to.

We get a clip from the Rock Concert last week with Rock making fun of both of them and Vickie says that if Rock tries to get in here tonight, he'll be arrested. We're told that Rock is being stopped from getting in by cops so we cut to the back where Rock cuts a promo on the three cops.

Rock says that instead of arresting him, one should arrest Punk for impersonating a champion, because unlike Manti Te'o who had an imaginary girlfriend, Punk has an imaginary nutsack. Heyman should be arrested for

going out without a bra and Vickie should be asked what her insides look like, because her own head is buried inside of her. Rock tries to talk his way into the arena but Vickie says he's not getting in, if you smell what the Vick is cooking.

Tonight there's a Beat the Clock Challenge and whoever wins gets to pick their number in the Rumble. The idea is that there will be three matches: whoever wins his fastest gets to pick their Rumble spot.

Beat The Clock Challenge: Randy Orton vs. Antonio Cesaro

Both guys try quick rollups with Cesaro grabbing a headlock to take it to the mat instead. Antonio has the American flag trunks on now as he continues to embrace America. Orton comes back with a Thesz Press but shifts to another cover instead of using the cover that the Press is by definition. Orton punches him down for two and we take a break. Back with Cesaro putting Randy on the top turnbuckle but Orton blocks a superplex and knocks Antonio to the outside.

Orton gets pulled down as well as the clock continues to tick. The gutwrench suplex gets a pair of two's and we hit a chinlock in a match that is designed to be won as quickly as possible. A slam gets two more for Cesaro as does a double stomp as we hit nine minutes. Back to the chinlock for a bit until Orton fights up and does all of his usual stuff. Cesaro counters the Elevated DDT into a jackknife cover for two and the European uppercut gets the same. Orton is sent shoulder first into the post and falls to the floor as we're past eleven minutes now. Cesaro comes back in and walks into the RK0 for the pin at 11:36.

Rating: C-. The lack of psychology in this match made my head hurt. In a match based around speed, why in the world would you keep going to the floor or putting on chinlocks? The clock idea can get a bit annoying after while but it'll get even worse later on in the night. The match here wasn't bad but the psychology was plain stupid at times.

Foley Hall of Fame video.

Shield video/promo talking about how they've taken out a lot of people and they're just getting started.

Big Show vs. Zack Ryder

Brad Maddox jumps in on commentary to further annoy us. WMD ends this in 46 seconds.

Show talks about his second Last Man Standing match with Del Rio at the Rumble. He stands on Ryder's chest and counts to ten.

Post break Maddox goes to see Heyman again and Heyman actually agrees to help make him famous. Ok then.

Ryback vs. Heath Slater

Back to basics for Ryback here as he mauls Heath and beats up the cohorts before finishing with Shell Shock at 1:11.

Ryback says his job is fun and on Sunday he's in his first Royal Rumble. He's made for this kind of match and it's going to lead him to the main event of Wrestlemania.

Rock is still trying to talk his way around the cops. He says the cops are here to serve the people, not to protect Vickie Guerrero. Rock talks about what an experience it is to see Rock's entrance and the fans start chanting his name. One of the cop says he had tickets for tonight and his wife and kid are in the crowd. Rock sees an opening and Vickie comes in to say arrest him.

The cops say Rock isn't breaking any laws but apparently Vickie has the power to have them suspended from the police force. Punk is up next so Vickie offers Rock a chance to get in if he'll apologize and make it good. Rock says he's getting in but on his terms, not hers. The other problem is that Vickie still looks horrible tonight. Vickie shoves the cops away and leaves. Rock tells the cops he has an idea.

Here are Punk and Heyman for their weekly talk session. Punk says that he's been champion 428 days and he's going to be champion this time next week. He's looked into the eyes of the Rock and knows that Rock isn't a champion inside his heart. A long time ago Punk chose honest arrogance while Rock picked all of the people. Rock may be the Brahma Bull and the Great One but he can't call himself champion. Punk is the man and in six

days, Rock is on a collision course with him.

Beat The Clock Challenge: The Miz vs. Dolph Ziggler

AJ is looking GREAT tonight. The clock is set at 11:36 so Miz tries for two fast pins but can only get two. They trade pinfall reversals until Ziggler hits a decent dropkick for two. A neckbreaker gets another two on Miz and it's chinlock time. Miz takes Ziggler down and pounds away as we're under nine minutes. A kick/knee to the face takes Ziggler down and there's a chop block to set up the Figure Four. That gets countered because Miz isn't Flair and Miz is sent to the floor. Langston sends him into the apron which gets two for Ziggler back inside.

We take a break and come back with four minutes left on the clock and Ziggler holding a chinlock. Miz fights up and hits a sunset flip and big boot for two each. Miz goes off on Ziggler in the corner and pounds away before hitting the running clothesline and the top rope ax handle for two. 2:30 left. The Finale is countered into a rollup by Ziggler which is countered into a rollup with trunks for two for Miz.

Ziggler hits the jumping DDT for two and we're under 2:00. Miz picks the leg and COMPLETELY screws up the Figure Four but an AJ distraction lets Langston pull them to the ropes. Under a minute left and Miz has to avoid a Langston distraction, allowing Ziggler to hit the Zig Zag for the pin at 10:56.

Rating: D+. PLEASE let this be the end of the Figure Four idea for Miz. It doesn't fit him whatsoever and this whole face push continues to be a disaster for him. Channeling Flair, as in a guy who is a jerk just like Miz, isn't going to do him any favors either. This didn't work that well at all and a lot of that is due to Miz. Let him be himself, not Flair.

It's time for HELL NO's anger management graduation. Dr. Shelby is running things and apparently his first name is Marion. Apparently they're his first graduates. This comes complete with caps and gowns, Pomp and Circumstance, and diplomas. Bryan has his hair slicked back and they put their hats on in the ring. They officially graduate and as a final exercise, they have to pick who is valedictorian. Kane says Bryan and Bryan says NO.

Kane says Bryan has never had a problem with shutting his mouth before and an argument breaks out. Shelby snaps and asks them if a hug would make them feel better. The Dr. has an idea: what if EVERYONE hugged at the same time? Kane asks about Lawler and Cole and Shelby says yes them too. Lawler finally does it and now Bryan wants the physician and Justin Roberts to hug. Kane wants three fans to hug. They both tell random fans to hug and then everyone has to hug at once. A jumping group hug ends this.

Kaitlyn vs. Alicia Fox

Kaitlyn takes it to the floor quickly and pounds away as Tamina is looking on in the back. They head inside again and Alicia grabs a quick chinlock. That's the extent of her offense as Kaitlyn spears her down for the pin at 2:05.

Heyman has secured a sky box for Punk to watch the next segment from. He calls it a Paul Bomb for the Rock.

Here's Heyman to the ring to act as an interpreter for Punk since most of what he said likely went over the heads of most of the fans. The people seem to think that it's a foregone conclusion that Punk is losing the title on Sunday because Vince is desperate for someone to defeat Punk for the title. Rock is the flavor of the month this time because Rock should be focusing on Punk but instead he's singing songs about Heyman and Vickie. This means that Rock is stupid...and he's also apparently coming to the arena.

He holds up the ticket that presumably the cop had for himself and Heyman bails. Rock thanks the cop for the ticket so Heyman correctly points out that the ticket doesn't allow Rock to get in the ring. "Shut your mouth Twinkie T***." Rock looks up at Punk in the box and says that on Sunday he's winning the title. What it all boils down to is that Rock is going to rip Punk's face off and there's nothing Punk can do about it.

Rock invokes Martin Luther King and says that Rock is going to whip Punk all over the place. Next Monday, everyone from Bangkok to Brazil and all the way back around to San Jose is going to say free at last free at last, thank God almighty we are free at last from CM Punk as WWE

Champion. Rock finishes it up and there go the lights. They come back up and SHIELD IS ON THE ROCK! They hit the Triple Bomb and leave Rock laying. Punk says that Rock may have a dream, but at some point you have to wake up. Rock is bleeding from the mouth.

We get a video on Martin Luther King. Dang they're really proud of him tonight aren't they?

Beat The Clock Challenge: Wade Barrett vs. Sheamus

The time to beat is 10:56. They slug it out to start and Sheamus gets two off a Regal Roll. Ziggler is watching in the back. Barrett rolls to the apron where he guillotines Sheamus to slow him up. Back inside and Barrett clotheslines Sheamus to the floor as we take a break. Back with five minutes left and Barrett kicking Sheamus in the ribs. Off to an armbar on Sheamus before Sheamus comes back with running ax handles and a knee lift.

We're under 4:00 to go and Barrett is dumped to the apron for the ten forearms. A suplex back in gets two on Barrett and we've got 3:00 left. Wade escapes White Noise and sends Sheamus' shoulder into the buckle. A pumphandle slam is escaped but Sheamus misses the Brogue Kick. A kick to the ribs and one to the jaw get a VERY close two. Barrett hits a middle rope elbow for two and we've got two minutes to go.

Sheamus escapes Wasteland and hits White Noise for no cover. He loads up the Brogue Kick but here are AJ/Dolph/Langston for a distraction. Winds of Change gets another near fall on Sheamus but we've only got 18 seconds left. Barrett loads up the forearm but charges into the Brogue Kick. The clock runs out though at 10:56 just as Sheamus covers giving Ziggler the win.

Rating: C. We were pretty much waiting for Ziggler to come out at the end and the question was could Ziggler survive the clock. Ziggler getting to pick his spot is interesting but there's no reason for him to pick anything other than #30, unless he wants to show off. This was your usual match between these two in a pairing we've seen WAY too many times now.

Ziggler and company celebrate in front of Vickie and she says Dolph gets

to pick a number, but not any number. It's either #1 or #2. Ziggler is stunned.

We recap the Shield stuff again and cut to Heyman and Punk smiling in the back. They run into Vince who accuses them of sending Shield out to jump Rock. Vince says that if Shield gets involved on Sunday, there will be consequences. Heyman and Punk protest and point out how many other people Shield has attacked. Vince doesn't care and says that if Shield interfered, Punk is stripped. Of the title you sick freaks.

Alberto Del Rio vs. Tensai

Tensai takes the champion (non-title here of course) down to start and hits a pair of Vader Bombs before Del Rio comes back with a rana out of the corner and a German suplex. The enziguri in the corner sets up a mostly missed middle rope moonsault for the pin at 1:31.

We get the second inductee into the WWE Hall of Fame: BOB BACKLUND! Awesome choice there and his speech should be interesting to say the least.

Here's Cena to close the show. He talks about Sunday coming up and usually being a day of rest. Cena talks about people enjoying Sundays and talks to a kid in the crowd who probably plays video games on Sundays. He asks the kid to stop blocking him from getting to the next level on Black Ops 2. Cena mentions a goofy sounding user name before moving on to some chick who apparently enjoys a calm Sunday but winds up with a guy's phone number in the pocket. The guy happens to be over in the front row and sex jokes are made.

The point to all this rambling is that everyone does different stuff on Sunday and this particular Sunday is about the Royal Rumble where the winner goes to Wrestlemania. The Rumble is going to be a war and Cena says he'll win the Rumble. His music hits but it's only 10:58 so here's Sheamus to offer a rebuttal. He says he'll repeat what he did last year, but here are the Prime Time Players to say THEY'LL win. Before they can get that far though, Orton makes an appearance and says he's feeling deja vu.

Before he gets into that, Miz comes out to say his catchphrase but HELL NO comes out to say something as well. You know the real money in this company is making microphones. With them arguing, here's Cesaro to say HE is winning the Rumble. He dedicates his win to the USA but here are 3MB to say their usual stuff. The rest of the locker room comes out for the required huge brawl before the Rumble. Sheamus throws out about five people and the show ends in chaos.

Overall Rating: B-. I liked tonight's show. They hyped up the Rumble as well as talking about other things going on in the show. That's a good go home show and I'm intrigued to see the Rumble on Sunday. Rock vs. Punk will be awesome and while I think I know who is going to win on Sunday (no hints yet as I'm in a predictions contest and I don't want to give away my brilliance), it's always a fun show. Good stuff tonight.

Results

Randy Orton b. Antonio Cesar – RK0

Big Show b. Zack Ryder – WMD

Ryback b. Heath Slater – Shell Shock

Dolph Ziggler b. The Miz – Zig Zag

Kaitlyn b. Alicia Fox – Spear

Wade Barrett vs. Sheamus went to a no contest

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Dolph Ziggler's Rumble Entry

Number Announced

Kind of at least. Ziggler won a Beat the Clock challenge tonight but since he made out with AJ in front of Vickie, he has to pick either #1 or #2. Odds are he'll be in there either about two minutes or close to forty five.