

# Smackdown – April 26, 2013: More Stacked Than A Fat Guy's Buffet Plate

## Smackdown

Date: April 26, 2013

Location: O2 Arena, London, England

Commentators: Michael Cole, Josh Matthews, John Bradshaw Layfield

We're still in London and still in the O2 Arena for the blue WWE show. The main event tonight is a rare singles match on free TV for the Undertaker as he faces Dean Ambrose of the Shield. Other than that we've got Swagger vs. Del Rio in a No DQ match which should be good if it's anything like last week's match. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the six man tag from Raw where Shield beat Undertaker and HELL NO. We also hear a bit about the No DQ match tonight.

### Alberto Del Rio vs. Jack Swagger

No DQ as mentioned twice already. Del Rio starts fast and clotheslines Swagger out to the floor. A suicide dive takes Swagger down and Del Rio's seems to be fine. Alberto pulls out a kendo stick but gets whacked in the now injured knee with it. Del Rio blocks a shot to the chest but gets sent to the floor, down onto the knee. They slug it out in the aisle and Del Rio suplexes him onto the ramp.

Del Rio pulls out a ladder and launches a charging Swagger face first into it as we take a break. Back with Swagger holding a front facelock on Del Rio after gaining control with kendo stick shots during the break. A belly to belly suplex gets two for Jack and he gets a chair from ringside. Since he's a heel though, Swagger talks a lot of trash and gets caught by an enziguiri on the apron. Del Rio pounds away but Jack takes

out the knee to slow him down again.

Swagger wedges a chair between the top and middle rope, only to walk into the Codebreaker to the arm. Some clotheslines to Swagger set up the tilt-a-whirl backbreaker, followed by some kendo stick shots to the back. For someone who uses an arm submission, Del Rio certainly works on the back a lot. A Backstabber gets two on Swagger but the armbreaker is countered. Del Rio settles for a low superkick for two but Swagger grabs the ankle lock from the mat. Del Rio rolls through into the armbreaker but Jack escapes and sends Alberto face first into the chair for two.

Jack knocks the chair to the floor and opts for the ladder instead, only to have Del Rio see-saw it into Jack's chin. Colter tries a cheap shot and the distraction is enough to let Swagger get a running ladder shot to Del Rio's face. The Vader Bomb hits knees and Del Rio puts on the armbreaker again. Colter slides in the kendo stick though and Swagger pounds away to break the hold. Jack beats on Alberto with the stick to escape, drops the ladder on his body and gets the pin off the gutwrench powerbomb at 11:00 shown of 13:30.

**Rating:** B-. Good match here but not as good as last week. It seems that the more time these two get the better matches they can have. This was designed to even things up going into the triple threat, but as usual it just makes both guys look the same while crippling the momentum that either guy has. But hey, wins and losses mean nothing in WWE right?

### Layla vs. Aksana

Layla is her usual bubbly self again, so I guess the heel tease from a few weeks ago is added to the list of dropped angles. Aksana is sent to the apron where she poses, only to charge back in for some near falls. Layla gets caught by a running knee to the head for two before she starts working on Layla's hand. Aksana bends Layla's arm around the ropes and easily stops some martial arts from Layla. The British chick gets a running start and hooks a side roll after a bunch of flips for the pin on

Aksana at 3:04.

**Rating:** D+. Dang it why did it have to break three minutes? This was just a way to have the home country girl get a win and look good in British flag shorts. As usual, the Divas continue to be nothing of note and a mere time filler on most of the shows. Aksana wasn't as terrible as she usually is here though.

Apparently the spinning side roll is called Infinity. They're naming glorified rollups now?

Video on the Divas show coming to E!

Video on Shield being awesome.

We get most of the six man tag match from Raw, as in over ten minutes of it.

Shield says justice prevailed on Monday when they broke the unbreakable. It's an injustice that HELL NO still has the tag belts but they won't be doing so for long. Ambrose wants to finish the job tonight against Undertaker. After tonight, Shield is going to be immortal instead of Undertaker.

### Fandango vs. Justin Gabriel

Gabriel dances a bit to start and Fandango lunges at him. An armdrag and legsweep put Fandango down and the fans are singing the Fandango theme song. The fans keep getting louder as Fandango ties Gabriel up in the ropes for some forearm to the back of the head. Justin fires off some kicks including a nice spinning one to take Fandango down. He goes up top and dives into a knee to the ribs though, allowing Fandango to hit the spinning downward spiral and guillotine legdrop for the pin at 3:03.

**Rating:** C-. Not bad here and this is the kind of win that Fandango should have gotten last week. Gabriel is a good choice for a jobber as he's not going anywhere but is still good enough in the ring to believe there's a chance of a big upset. They seem stalled with Fandango though as there's nowhere to go with him from here. Hopefully he doesn't fall into the midcard abyss though as that would be horrible for him.

### Big Show vs. Sheamus

Before the match we recap Sheamus' issues with Mark Henry. Show shoves him down to start but Sheamus pounds away in the corner. Big Show will have none of that and fires off chops to Sheamus' chest while the Irishman is tied up in the ropes. They head to the floor with Show in control, but as they come back in Sheamus hits a shoulder to the ribs, followed by the forearms to the chest.

Back in and Sheamus charges into a side slam followed by a big elbow drop for two. Final Cut gets the same and Sheamus is having trouble breathing. Sheamus fires off some right hands but Show falls on him during a slam attempt for two. Big Show keeps him on the mat as the pace slows down a lot. A hard slap to Sheamus' chest sounds like it's ripping skin off as we take a break.

Back with Sheamus being sent shoulder first into the post and out to the floor. Show sends him into the steps as this is still one sided for the most part. Sheamus makes it back in at 8 so Show sends him into the buckle. Off to a top wristlock but Sheamus fights up and hits a DDT to get himself a breather. They slug it out from their knees with Sheamus taking over and hitting some shoulder blocks.

The top rope shoulder puts Show down but Sheamus can't hit White Noise. Scratch that actually as he escapes the chokeslam and connects with White Noise before loading up the Brogue Kick. Show bails to the floor so Sheamus dives off the steps to take him out. Back in again and Sheamus loads up the top rope shoulder, but here's Henry to distract him,

allowing Big Show to knock Sheamus out with the WMD for the pin at 10:52 shown of 13:52.

**Rating:** B-. As usual these two have good chemistry together and they had the slow build going here. I've always liked seeing these two have their battles of the titans with both guys hitting each other with harder and harder shots until one of them can't get up. They did that here and it worked quite well, as always.

#### William Regal vs. Wade Barrett

Non-title here. Before the match, Barrett says there must be something to the idea of grave robberies in London since it's standing right there in the ring. Barrett pounds away to start but gets sent into the corner where Regal pounds away as well. The knee trembler misses though and it's the Bull Hammer from Barrett for the pin at 56 seconds.

We get the HHH/Heyman segment from Raw.

#### Randy Orton vs. Mark Henry

The World's Strongest Slam is attempted less than twenty seconds into the match but Orton slips over the back and pounds away with right hands. We head to the floor with Henry getting in some hard shots, only to head back inside and get stomped down. Henry runs Orton over again and beats him down in the corner but Randy comes back with clotheslines of his own. Orton covers but Henry kicks him out hard enough to have Randy land on his feet. The Elevated DDT puts Henry down but he rolls to the floor to avoid an RK0. Mark gets back in and walks into a Brogue Kick from an interfering Sheamus for the DQ at 4:19.

**Rating:** C-. No time to go anywhere here but the match wasn't bad or anything. This is where the WWE style of booking gets annoying as you knew the ending to this as soon as Sheamus vs. Big Show ended. Sheamus

vs. Henry should be good and hopefully the match doesn't have some stupid gimmick that limits what they can do in the ring against each other.

Orton gives Henry an RKO post match and doesn't seem mad at Sheamus at all.

We look at the end of Raw with Foley, Ryback and Cena.

### Undertaker vs. Dean Ambrose

This is quite the rub for Ambrose. Apparently HELL NO isn't here tonight so Undertaker is on his own. Ambrose takes it to the corner to start which is about the dumbest thing you can do against undertaker. As expected, Taker launches Dean into the corner and pounds away before hitting the apron legdrop. Back in and Taker misses a big boot in the corner, crotching himself in the process.

Ambrose sends him to the floor and goes off on the big man before sending him into the apron. Back in and Dean pounds away even more with that cocky/psycho look on his face. After a quick two count, Dean pounds on Taker's jaw and yells about justice. He shouts a bit too much though and gets grabbed around the throat. Taker tries to run the ropes but gets caught with a running knee to the ribs. That gets him nowhere though as Taker snaps off a chokeslam but he has to fight off Shield. Ambrose grabs a DDT for a VERY close two but walks into the Hell's Gate for the tap out at 4:40.

**Rating:** C+. You want to talk about a rub, look at what you just saw here. The Shield debuted just six months ago and now one of them is fighting the Undertaker in the main event of Smackdown. Ambrose had Taker in trouble too and never once looked like he was in over his head. This is one of the best initial pushes I've ever seen and is showing no signs of slowing down at all.

Post match the Shield attacks but Taker actually fights them off since Ambrose is down. He loads up a chokeslam on Rollins on the floor but Reigns hits the big spear through the barricade. Ambrose hits him with a chair and shouts that Taker didn't beat him. Shield TripleBombs Taker through the table, presumably writing him off TV for the a long time.

**Overall Rating:** B. This was a STACKED show with a Wrestlemania rematch, two matches which could headline the Smackdown half of a PPV, and a big rub to Shield. The matches were almost all decent to good and nothing on here was really bad. This is what Smackdown is known for and it worked quite well here. Very entertaining and big time show.

### Results

Jack Swagger b. Alberto Del Rio – Gutwrench powerbomb

Layla b. Aksana – Infinity

Fandango b. Justin Gabriel – Guillotine legdrop

Big Show b. Sheamus – WMD

Wade Barrett b. William Regal – Bull Hammer

Mark Henry b. Randy Orton via DQ when Sheamus interfered

Undertaker b. Dean Ambrose – Hell's Gate

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# Thought of the Day: Shield's Push

I've been thinking about this lately and their initial push is the strongest I've seen since... The NWO. Think about it. Who else has debuted, been this dominant, and risen to being one of the biggest deals in the company in just six months? They've been a big deal the entire time too, debuting in a major PPV main event, then running over everyone. Tonight one of their members is facing Undertaker on Smackdown. This is reaching legendary levels and it's amazing to watch.

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## Smackdown – April 19, 2013: The Match We Should Have Gotten At Wrestlemania

### Smackdown

Date: April 19, 2013

Location: Thompson-Boling Arena, Knoxville, Tennessee

Commentators: Michael Cole, Josh Matthews, John Bradshaw Layfield

Back to the blue team again as we're starting to set up Extreme Rules. The main stories around here are Ziggler vs. Del Rio vs. Swagger and Henry vs. Sheamus which were both furthered on Raw. We're still in that limbo period between the aftermath of Wrestlemania and the build to Extreme Rules so it's kind of hard to guess what's coming tonight. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Swagger breaking up Alberto's rematch and then



beating the champion on Raw, only to be beaten up by Del Rio seconds later, thereby making everyone look weak at the same time.

Here's Fandango to open the show. Cole tells us how Fandangoing is taking over the world, continuing to bury the idea into the ground. Fandango hits on Lillian who doesn't seem repulsed by him. He asks if she's ever Fandangoed before and that's too much for her.....until he spins her around and dips her back. Apparently she's terrible though so Fandango drops her to the mat. Fandango asks Lillian to pronounce his name but is interrupted by Santino.

Marella says that Fandango can dance but he's a very rude person. He liked watching the cheerleaders on Youtube Fandangoing a lot better than he likes watching the real thing. Santino offers to Fandango for us here but introduces us to his dance partner the Cobra. The dance discombobulates Fandango and he gets sent to the floor. The match is after a break.

### Santino Marella vs. Fandango

Fandango pounds him down as the announcers tell us about all of the Fandangoing around the world. The fans think Fandango can't wrestle as he stomps on Santino. Santino tries to nip up but can't do it so Fandango pounds on him even more. Off to a quick cravate but Santino comes back and gets the nipup this time. The Cobra is countered into a downward spiral for the pin for Fandango at 3:10. Yes make sure to take away the one good looking move he has and replace it with one of the most overused finishers in wrestling.

**Rating:** D. It really is pitiful how WWE has screwed up ANOTHER hot start for a character. Fandango got hot for a single week, so WWE's move is for him to not have a match on Raw and then squash a jobber to open Smackdown. That's fine for most people, but when your first match is against Jericho at Wrestlemania and now you're doing this two weeks later, it's a big step down. They should have given him the US Title on

Raw or something like that, as it would at least show they're doing SOMETHING with him, other than telling us how awesome Fandangoing is and killing the concept right out of the gate.

Booker yells at Teddy for making Swagger vs. Ziggler on Monday when Big Show comes in. He thanks Teddy for giving him a partner tonight, unlike Booker who gave him a handicap match. Booker glares at Teddy so he leaves with Big Show.

### Kofi Kingston vs. Wade Barrett

Non-title all around. Barrett pounds Kofi down to start but gets caught in a standing rana for two. A dropkick gets the same for Kingston and it's off to an armbar. Believe it or not, Barrett actually uses his punching background for a few seconds here but Kofi easily fights him off with a kick to the head. Back to the arm for a bit but Barrett knocks him off the top rope.

Wade takes Kofi to the floor and rams Kofi's face into the announce table. That's only good for two on Kingston so Wade pounds on the ribs to keep Kofi down. Barrett pulls him off the top again for two and it's back to the chinlock. That goes nowhere so Wade hits a kind of Samoan Drop, but he covers arrogantly and gets rolled up for the pin at 5:32.

**Rating:** C. Not bad here but was there NO ONE else that Kofi could have pinned other than the Intercontinental Champion? Were the Prime Time Players off getting dance lessons? Were the 3MB guys trying to get Rhythm and Blues to open for them? Apparently so because we just had to have a champion get pinned here to make KOFI FREAKING KINGSTON look strong as a midcard champion.

We recap Sheamus being attacked by Mark Henry.

Henry says he attacked Sheamus because he can and that's what he does.

Sheamus jumps him for a change.

We recap the world title situation with Del Rio and Swagger both wanting title shots. Del Rio was jumped by Swagger as he tried to get his rematch, so Swagger got the match and pinned Ziggler. It's a good thing he did too because Ziggler was starting to look credible for a few moments there. A triple threat match has officially been announced for Extreme Rules.

### Alberto Del Rio vs. Jack Swagger

Swagger goes for the bad leg to start but Del Rio goes to Jack's bad arm to escape. Del Rio stays on the arm and it's another standoff. Jack takes him down with a quick headlock before going after the bad leg. Swagger tries to wrap it around the post but Del Rio punches his way out of danger. Alberto rams the bad arm into the steps and we head back inside for a hard kick to Swagger's back for two.

Del Rio misses a charge into the corner though and is backdropped onto the ropes, hurting his leg again in the process. Colter talks trash as Del Rio falls to the floor and we take a break. Back with Alberto fighting out of a leg lock and kicking away at the arm again. Swagger goes right back to the knee for two more and hooks a leg lock on the mat. A crucifix gets two for Del Rio but Swagger kicks him in the face to put both guys down again.

Swagger takes it to the corner again and wraps the leg around the ropes before taking the bandage off the bad knee. Alberto fights up again but misses the running enziguri in the corner. Swagger puts him on the apron but as he goes for Del Rio, Alberto grabs a quick armbar over the ropes. The bad knee saves Swagger again though and it's time to shout WE THE PEOPLE a lot. Alberto ducks a big boot and comes back with the backbreaker but hurts his own knee in the process.

There are the forearms to the back and a Backstabber for two on Swagger.

The armbreaker is broken up once and a second attempt is countered into the Patriot Lock in a nice counter. Alberto gets to the ropes so Swagger immediately hits the Vader Bomb for a close two. Del Rio comes back with the Codebreaker to the arm but the armbreaker is countered with Swagger sending him out to the floor.

They head back inside and a HARD superkick to Swagger gets two as Jack grabs the rope. The Patriot Lock goes on again but Del Rio counters into the armbreaker. Swagger counters into a rollup but Alberto counters THAT into a small package for the pin at 14:32 shown of 18:02. Really good finish.

**Rating:** A-. That's likely a bit high but I was WAY into this at the end. If they had done this match at Wrestlemania it would be a match of the night candidate with ease. The arm vs. leg stuff here was great and the submissions both played into the finish. Stupid booking aside, this was really good stuff and I had a great time with it.

We get an abbreviated version of Ryback's reasoning for attacking Cena and their confrontation and the Shield beating down Cena to end Raw.

Shield says Monday was a moment that Cena won't forget anytime soon. They claim that Ryback has learned to not mess with the Shield anymore and saw a look on his face. They say the same look on Undertaker's face a few weeks ago and Undertaker is afraid. Ambrose promises to prove that Undertaker is mortal on Raw.

#### Great Khali/Natalya/Hornswoggle vs. Epico/Primo/Rosa Mendes

We actually get a reason for this match: Epico/Primo/Rosa stole Horny's parking spot earlier and there's video to prove it. I've heard worse. I can't think of anything off the top of my head but I've heard worse. Nattie takes Rosa down to start but can't hook the Sharpshooter. Rosa comes back with a kick to the back and a chinlock but Natalya fights back with a clothesline. Off to Epico and Khali with the giant hitting some

hard chops in the corner. Primo tries to help but gets sent into the same corner as Epico for simultaneous chops. Horny annoys Rosa into a chase and Khali hits the Punjabi Plunge to pin Epico at 3:18.

**Rating:** D. Rosa was basically in half of a swimsuit and a vest so it doesn't fail based on that alone. That's about the extent of the good parts of the match though as none of these are people I care to see. At the end of the day they're fighting over a parking lot, but how many people can't get on television? Remarkable.

We get most of Punk's promo from Raw where he walked out.

We get Heyman challenging HHH to fight Brock in a cage match at Extreme Rules.

#### Mark Henry/Big Show vs. Randy Orton/Sheamus

Henry and Sheamus start and immediately talk trash, but Henry brings in Big Show before there's any contact. They immediately start brawling and Big Show sends him to the apron for chops to the chest like Sheamus would hit forearms. Sheamus comes back and hits the forearms to take over. Sheamus goes up top for the shoulder but has to jump over Show instead, allowing the giant to hit a superkick to take him down. An elbow drop misses and it's off to Orton.

The side slam puts Orton down and here's Henry to continue slowly pounding on Orton. A bearhug has Orton in trouble and it's back to Big Show to stay on the ribs. The chokeslam is countered into a DDT and both guys are down. Hot tag brings in Sheamus for his running forearms and the top rope shoulder for no cover. White Noise connects but a Henry distraction lets Show spear Sheamus down as we take a break.

Back with Show kneeling Sheamus in the head and getting two off the Final Cut. Henry comes in for a nerve hold before Big Show comes in for the

same thing. Sheamus tries to fight up and finally manages a chop block to put Big Show down. Hot tag brings in Orton to pound on Henry and some clotheslines drop the smaller of the two monsters. A DDT gets two but Henry powers out. Show tries to come in but gets caught in the Elevated DDT. Everything breaks down and Show chokeslams Orton for the pin at 13:32 shown of 17:02.

**Rating:** B. This was the tag team formula to the letter and that's all you need a lot of the time. I'm a big fan of combining two feuds into one match like this as you can get those stories advanced while also adding in something different. Henry vs. Sheamus is going to be good stuff when we get to it and Orton vs. Big Show might not be bad either. Good main event here.

**Overall Rating:** B+. This is exactly what Smackdown should be: a wrestling heavy show with long matches and angle advancement. Tonight was incredibly entertaining and blew by which is a good sign. Swagger vs. Del Rio is well worth seeing and the main event is solid stuff too. The rest of the stuff is very hit or miss but when you have an hour and a half of actual TV and about 40 minutes of that is top shelf stuff, you can't complain that much at all. Very good show.

## Results

Fandango b. Santino Marella – Downward Spiral

Kofi Kingston b. Wade Barret – Crucifix

Alberto Del Rio b. Jack Swagger – Small Package

Great Khali/Natalya/Hornswoggle b. Epico/Primo/Rosa Mendes – Punjabi Plunge to Epico

Mark Henry/Big Show b. Randy Orton/Sheamus – Chokeslam to Orton

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just \$5 at:

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# Smackdown – April 12, 2013: To Fandango Or Not To Fandango

## Smackdown

Date: April 12, 2013

Location: TD Banknorth Garden Arena, Boston, Massachusetts

Commentators: Josh Matthews, John Bradshaw Layfield, Michael Cole

It's the first show after Wrestlemania but more importantly it's the first show after Raw where Dolph Ziggler FINALLY cashed in the MITB case and won the world title from Del Rio. Therefore tonight is likely going to be dealing with the fallout from both that and Wrestlemania, which includes an appearance from HHH. Also, given the insanity of the crowd last Monday on Raw, it should be interesting to see how the crowd to night reacts to the show. Let's get to it.

The opening video is like a movie trailer with the focus on HHH returning to Smackdown to discuss the match with Lesnar at Wrestlemania. We'll also be talking about Ziggler cashing in the briefcase for the title of course.

Big E. Langston (with no music) opens the show by introducing us to the new World Heavyweight Champion, Dolph Ziggler. Langston can hold a note about as well as Ricardo can. Dolph talks about how he's the most physically gifted athlete anyone has ever seen and that's an understatement. He's been called the future and this championship proves

that the future is now. Dolph heard 80,000 people at Wrestlemania cheering his name in a match he wasn't even in. His voice sounds really hoarse here. He didn't win the title because of the fans but rather in spite of them.

Cue Swagger and Colter with the latter congratulating Ziggler for being born in Ohio and living in Florida. However, since Swagger is the one who did the damage to Alberto which allowed Del Rio to take the title. Dolph points out the obvious: Swagger blew his chance at the title at Wrestlemania so go to the back of the line. Jack goes to the ring, looks at Langston, and steps down. Colter says Swagger deserves a title shot and they go to leave, but Dolph cuts the music and keeps talking about how awesome he is.

This brings out Del Rio with a bad limp so Dolph invites him to the ring for his rematch right now. Alberto instead congratulates Ziggler on winning the title because he did the same thing in 2011. When his ankle heals and he gets his rematch, he'll be getting the title back but until then, hasta la vista baby. Ziggler once again says cut the music because this is STILL his interview time. He's tired of being interrupted so the next person who comes out here will find out why he's the best in the world.

Cue Jericho to a big ovation with a big grin on his face. He asks Dolph to shut up because apparently Ziggler is crazy. Oh wait it's AJ that's crazy, which sends her into a bit of a fit. Jericho says he's the original showoff and says that he just came from Booker T's office. He talks about the Jerichoholics and the Dolphins (apparently Ziggler's fans) getting to see Ziggler's first match as champion against Y2J himself.

### HELL NO vs. Prime Time Players

Non-title of course. Titus and Kane get things going with O'Neil taking him into the corner for an early advantage. Kane slugs him down and hits



the top rope clothesline to take over. Young comes in but runs into the kicks of Bryan as everything breaks down. The NO Lock ends Titus at 1:39.

Shield pops up on screen and congratulates the champions on another win. Ambrose says they didn't back down on Raw but rather weren't ready to strike. Believe in the Shield.

#### Santino Marella vs. Wade Barrett

Another non-title match. Barrett runs him over with a shoulder so Santino tries to nip up, only to crash down to the mat instead of landing on his feet. Barrett kicks him in the ribs and Marella fails another nip up. Off to a chinlock by Barrett followed by a good looking Winds of Change for two. Barrett loads up the Bull Hammer but Santino finally nips up and hits his usual finishing sequence, only to get kicked in the face when he tries the Cobra. Bull Hammer ends this at 2:24.

We look at the Wrestlemania Week video from Raw.

Sheamus comes in to see Booker and is mad about everything Booker did on Raw. They get in an argument when Orton pops in. He wants to know why they were put together in a match but Teddy says calm down and don't yell at him. Booker makes Orton/Sheamus vs. Big Show in a handicap match.

#### Funkadactyls/Kaitlyn vs. Tamina Snuka/Bella Twins

Kaitlyn and Tamina start things off and Kaitlyn spears down both Tamina and I think Brie within the first thirty seconds. Off to Naomi for a cross body on Nikki and a mostly botched headscissors. The Rear View slows Nikki down but Brie trips Naomi off the top. Everything breaks down and Nikki slams the back of Naomi's head onto the mat for the pin at 1:30.

Here's HHH for his first speech since beating Lesnar. He's in sunglasses

here and says he told us he'd be back. HHH had told Lesnar they weren't going to fight but rather to war...and here's 3MB. Slater tells HHH to shut up because 3MB wants to get noticed, so they're here to jump on HHH. Before they can get in the ring here's Shield of all people. They pull 3MB off the apron and destroy the Band before starting to swarm HHH themselves. Before they can do anything though, here's HELL NO for the save. No contact made just like on Raw.

Big Show comes in to yell at Teddy and Booker so Teddy ducks out. Show accuses Booker of being biased against him and threatens to walk out because he doesn't have to do what Booker says. Booker says go ahead and walk if you want, because Booker is tired of hearing about this contract.

#### Randy Orton/Sheamus vs. Big Show

Orton's ribs are taped up. During the entrances we get a video on Sheamus vs. Orton from Raw which edits out all of the chants. Orton and Sheamus have an argument about who starts the match until it's finally Orton. Randy pounds away in the corner to start but walks into a side slam to change momentum.

Show stands on Orton's ribs and slams him down for good measure, only to miss a middle rope elbow. The hot tag brings in Sheamus to take Show down with some ax handles to the head. Show comes right back with a spear and a right hand to Orton's ribs. Orton comes back out of nowhere with an RKO and the Brogue Kick puts Show on the floor for the countout at 4:02.

**Rating:** D+. This is the first match of the night that I can rate and that's the best they can do? This was more about story development than the match, even though I'm not sure what this exactly advances. Orton vs. Sheamus would be an interesting feud and the winner would likely be the next challenger to Zigler, assuming Orton doesn't turn heel in the process.

Sheamus and Orton are in the back after a break and seem to be fine.

Orton goes to get his ribs looked at while Sheamus says that he doesn't mind that it took two people to get revenge on Big Show. He says size doesn't matter in the WWE, so here's Mark Henry to run him over and say yeah it does matter. So much for Orton vs. Sheamus I guess.

### Antonio Cesaro vs. Kofi Kingston

Non-title yet again. Cesaro overpowers him to start and fires off some forearms, only to get caught in a sunset flip for two. Cesaro hits the gutwrench suplex and the Yodeling Uppercut in the corner for two of his own. Off to a quick reverse chinlock but Kofi fights up and hits some fast chops to take over. Antonio throws Kofi into the air for the European Uppercut to change momentum again but Kofi hits the pendulum kick in the corner. A top rope cross body is caught in a powerslam, only for Kofi to slip down the back and hit Trouble in Paradise for the pin at 3:05. Antonio looked sleepy instead of out cold.

**Rating:** C-. Wrestlemania has passed, Kofi is still Kofi and Cesaro is still Cesaro. I wouldn't care for Kingston being champion again as he's been down that road about five times before, but at least it would protect the title a bit better than Cesaro has been able to do. When did he last get a pin anyway?

We see the end of Raw with Ryback turning on Cena. I'm still not sure if that was a heel turn or not. The video seems to treat it like one.

We hear about Rock being badly injured in the main event of Wrestlemania.

Fandango comes out for the main event. Some fans sing the song but it's nowhere near Monday.

### Chris Jericho vs. Dolph Ziggler

It's non-title again. Ziggler wears the belt backwards for a bit for his

entrance and even JBL thinks that's disrespectful. Jericho hiptosses him down to start and the fans start singing Fandango's song. Ziggler sends Jericho into the corner and pounds away before charging into a boot from Jericho. Chris chokes away on the ropes but has to chase AJ off, allowing Dolph to hit a Fameasser for two.

We take a break and come back with Ziggler driving an elbow into Jericho's face. A neckbreaker gets two for the champion and we hit the chinlock. Jericho fights up and hits some shoulder blocks followed by a top rope shot to the head. Ziggler comes right back with a jumping DDT for two and both guys are down. Chris is up first and takes out Langston before getting two off a top rope cross body.

Dolph comes back with a great dropkick for two but the Zig Zag is blocked. The Walls don't work either but Jericho bulldogs Dolph down and gets two off the Lionsault. Fandango gets on the apron but gets caught by the springboard dropkick. Jericho blocks another Fameasser attempt but is sent into Langston who blasts him a rollup by Dolph for the pin at 7:37 shown of 11:07.

**Rating:** B-. This was about what you would expect from Jericho vs. Ziggler. Dolph getting a win, even by interference, is fine as he had to get a win after winning the title on Monday. It doesn't erase nearly a year of being destroyed by everyone in sight but you have to start somewhere I guess. Anyway, fine match for Ziggler to debut with as champion.

Post match Jericho goes after Dolph but Langston lays him out.

Fandango hits the top rope legdrop on the back of Jericho's neck and poss to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B-. This was ok, although I'm torn on the ending. Yeah Ziggler is the new world champion, but this Fandango thing has actual mainstream status at the moment. It's not going to last long though, so

I'd find some way to strike while they can. At the same time it would be nice to see Dolph get the spotlight, but he did win and he won because of his enforcer and not Fandango, so at least he's got that. The crowd wasn't as interesting tonight but the show was better overall, so Smackdown is ahead of raw after Wrestlemania so far.

### Results

HELL NO b. Prime Time Players – NO Lock to O'Neal

Wade Barrett b. Santino Marella – Bull Hammer

Tamina Snuka/Bella Twins b. Funkadactyls/Kaitlyn – Mat slam to Naomi

Sheamus/Randy Orton b. Big Show via countout

Kofi Kingston b. Antonio Cesaro – Trouble in Paradise

Dolph Ziggler b. Chris Jericho – Rollup

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# **Smackdown – April 11, 2002: Save Us Brand Split!**

### **Smackdown**

Date: April 11, 2002

Location: Tucson Convention Center, Tucson, Arizona

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

This is a request I got months ago and I'm able to get at it here. This would be just after Wrestlemania 18 and HHH is world champion. He has a match tonight against Angle which is the only thing I can see on this card worth watching. Actually scratch that as we have Edge vs. Jericho too. Let's get to it.

Here's Angle to open the show. He complains about Hogan getting the title shot at Backlash because no one wants to see it. Taz agrees with Kurt but the rest of the people don't seem to think so. Angle talks about being in the Olympics and beating Russians and Iranians tougher than Nikolai Volkoff and the Iron Sheik. On top of THAT, Angle was left out of the #1 contender's match on Raw, so there's no shot for Angle for a long time.

Kurt says he's better than anyone on Raw or Smackdown and he's going to prove that tonight in his non-title match against HHH. Angle gets annoyed at the WHAT chants (oh, he has no idea what's coming does he) and thinks the fans are just rude. Back when he was in Atlanta, the people had respect for him, unlike here in Tucson. Angle says that instead of saying WHAT, the fans should say IT'S TRUE. Guess what they chant every time he says this?

Edge finally pops up to calm Angle down because he's "fun-loving" now. Apparently Angle busted him open with a chair last week. I miss the vertical name graphics this show used to have. Edge says that Angle winning a gold medal was inspiring, it was breath taking, and it was SIX YEARS AGO. However, since Angle doesn't have a title match anytime soon, how about they have a match at Backlash? Angle is cool with that and the deal is made. Edge says it's a date (and that Angle doesn't hear that very often). He has an idea too: how about instead of chanting WHAT, they should chant YOU SUCK.

Post break Angle is in the back when Jericho comes in. They talk some trash about Edge with Angle saying there's nothing he hates more than a loud mouthed blonde haired Canadian who dresses like a rock star. "Well except for you. You're cool." They agree to form a pact against Hogan and Edge.

Hurricane vs. Tajiri

Tajiri is very evil here and has his girlfriend Torrie Wilson in a very discreet kimono. Hurricane blocks a wheelbarrow suplex and armdrags Tajiri out to the floor for a BIG flip dive to take over. Back in and Tajiri rolls through a sunset flip and kicks the green out of Hurricane's hair before dropping a knee for two.

The handspring elbow misses and Hurricane heads to the floor, only to be taken down by a quick rana from the apron. Back in again and Hurricane hits one of his own, only to miss a charge in the corner. The Tarantula doesn't work so there's the Eye of the Hurricane for two. Not that it matters as Hurricane gets his head kicked off for the pin.

**Rating:** C+. This is what Smackdown was known for back in the day: fast paced and exciting matches. Tajiri and Hurricane were two guys you could throw out there for something like this and have an entertaining match because both guys were young and talented. That's something you almost NEVER get today because you don't have quick matches which don't mean much like this anymore. Now everything has some bigger purpose and it's kind of tiring.

Post match Tajiri yells at Torrie for no apparent reason until Billy Kidman runs out for the save.

Stacy goes to look for Vince but finds an empty office and a couch. Apparently Vince is hiring an assistant or something tonight.

#### Albert vs. Scotty 2 Hotty

I believe this is the debut of Albert's (Tensai) small black trunks which don't work that well on a monster. This is also Albert's re-debut as a heel after he turned on Scotty last week. Albert goes right for him to start and pounds on Scotty in the corner. I don't see this lasting long. The slingshot into the bottom ropes gets two but Albert misses a charge into the corner. After a token dropkick and WORM attempt later, it's the bicycle kick (Brogue Kick) and chokebomb to complete the squash for Albert.

Post match Rikishi makes a save, setting up a match which never happened on Smackdown.

Vince finds Stacy and we get the innuendo you've known to come and tolerate from the boss. The auditions for the assistant's position are in the ring later tonight.

In the back, fashion consultant Rico makes fun of Maven until Al Snow, Maven's trainer, makes the save. Billy and Chuck pop in to tease a brawl.

Hogan says he wants one more run but HHH is very awesome. Trips is a tough dude for coming back from such a bad injury and beating Jericho at Wrestlemania. Since you can't say someone's name in wrestling without them appearing, here's Jericho to say Hogan has nothing to lose, but HHH has everything to lose. Hulk starts a-ponderin'.

### Edge vs. Chris Jericho

Edge is on the brink of something huge at this point so the solution was to put him against guys like Jericho and Angle who could make him look awesome while making him look WAY better in the ring than he was capable of on his own. It's a tested philosophy and it's worked nearly every time. The pop for Edge is great here as the girls and the young adults go NUTS. I was a big Edgehead back in the day before he became the more famous version of himself.

Jericho takes over with some chops against the ropes to start but Edge comes back with a spinwheel kick and a faceplant to take over. Chris is sent to the floor and onto the announce table with Edge pounding away. He's much more aggressive than he used to be, but somehow he's fun-loving now. Back in and a top rope crossbody gets two for Edge but Jericho comes back with a clothesline to take over.

After choking on the ropes and the running crotch attack in 619 position, Jericho gets two off a suplex. This is a weird period for Jericho as he was still a former world champion but he was crushed so badly at Wrestlemania that it basically knocked him down into the upper midcard. This put him in a no man's land between the main event style and midcard style and it didn't work well at all. Edge comes back with a whip into the corner and both guys are down.

Edge starts his comeback with some clotheslines but a middle rope sunset



flip is countered into a Walls attempt which is countered into a rollup for two. Edge hits his half nelson facebuster but here's Angle for unseen interference. A spear puts him down but Jericho hits the bulldog, only to have the Lionsault hit knees.

Edge hits a catapult to send Jericho into the referee, meaning there's no one to see Jericho tap to the Edgecator (kneeling Sharpshooter). For reasons I'll never understand, Edge lets it go instead of cranking on it until the referee wakes up. Jericho goes to the floor for a chair but gets speared down for two. Angle snaps Edge's neck over the top rope, allowing Jericho to get a rollup with tights for the pin.

**Rating:** C. This wasn't bad but Jericho didn't do much for me at this point. He was still smooth in the ring but this period of his career is always pretty lame for me. It would turn around in a big way in 2004, but that would be nearly two years away. Edge looked good and it's definitely not a bad match, but it never got that far off the ground.

Post break, Angle and Jericho beat up Edge in the back until Hogan makes the save to set up a tag match.

Time for Vince's job interviews. He sends a stereotypical secretary and a man away before getting a somewhat decent looking blonde. There's a desk in the ring and all that jazz. The fans have no tolerance for this and wants puppies. Vince says this chick can have the job unless someone has an offer he can't refuse. Cue Stacy (in Ms. Hancock attire) and one table dance later she gets the job.

Post break we meet Reverend D-Von who asks Vince to be his benefactor to save the world from its sins. Vince agrees, oddly enough. D-Von as a preacher went nowhere but it did accomplish one major thing: he debuted a helper a few weeks later. The helper's name: Batista.

We go to the parking lot where Mark Henry is going to try to hold back a limo with his legs only for thirty seconds. Wrestlers take bets on it because they're not important enough to be on the show otherwise. Test is going to be behind the wheel of the limo which is about the extent of his talents. Henry holds it back but after thirty seconds, Test keeps on the accelerator, making everyone mad at him. Test? Being a jerk? Really?

## Al Snow vs. Chuck

Let's get this over with. Snow gets stomped into the corner but comes back with a cross body for two. Rico gets involved quickly to let Chuck take over with a clothesline and a pair of suplexes for two. Snow makes a quick comeback and loads up the Snowplow (scoop brainbuster) but Billy trips him up. Maven chases Billy away as Chuck gets two off the Jungle (super) kick. Snow pops up and Snowplows him for the pin.

**Rating:** D. Next. No seriously, get me to the next thing on the show. There's nothing to talk about here.

Hogan comes up to HHH in the back and offers to have his back in the main event if Jericho interferes. HHH reminds Hogan that they're fighting in ten days so he wants nothing to do with Hogan. The champ (HHH) rambles on for a bit about what it means to be champion and turns heel for the sake of this feud. They have zero chemistry together but whatever.

## Kurt Angle vs. HHH

Non-title. They trade headlocks to start with no one going anywhere at all. A quick Pedigree is loaded up but Angle reverses into a sunset flip, with the trunks being pulled to the side in the process. We head to the floor with Angle sending HHH into the steps to take over again. Kurt rolls some Germans back inside and adds a belly to belly for two more. Angle tries a sleeper for a bit but gets suplexed down and DDTed for two.

The high knee puts Angle down but Trips charges into an elbow in the corner. This isn't exactly riveting stuff. The spinebuster hits for two on Angle as Jericho pulls the referee out. Angle gets caught in a Pedigree but Jericho breaks it up by hitting a Lionsault on HHH, which presumably would hurt Angle as well but whatever. Hogan comes out for the save and after a beatdown he takes out both villains. A Pedigree is enough to finish Angle.

**Rating:** D+. This was another slow and not very good match. They had already had their big showdown at No Way Out and HHH was an even bigger star now than he was then, so what were we supposed to think was going to happen here? The match wasn't terrible but it was pretty lackluster

stuff.

HHH glares at Hogan for coming out but gets knocked into Hulk, triggering a brawl. Hogan lays out HHH (shocking no?) but gets beaten down by Angle and Jericho to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C-. I've seen worse, but thank goodness the Brand Split would kick in full soon after this. At the end of the day, Hogan vs. HHH was a very uninteresting feud and it was backed up by feuds such as Albert vs. Rikishi and Snow/Maven vs. Billy and Chuck. We eventually traded that in for Guerrero, Benoit, Chavo, Mysterio, the rookie monster Brock Lesnar, and this kid named Cena who would debut soon. See why Smackdown in 2002 was so revered?

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## Thought of the Day: Mix It Up A Bit

This occurred to me during Raw and while I was watching an old Nitro. As opposed to the new Nitros that is. Raw and Smackdown could use some random matches between guys they don't often feature. Look at the roster they've got. With as many talented guys as they've got, they can't manage to ever get them on one of the bigger shows. I know they're on Superstars and other such C-shows, but instead of having the same matches over and over again, let some of these guys be jobbers on the main shows. I mean, do we need to see Cesaro fight Kofi fifteen times or Sheamus vs. Barrett so often? Look at the six man tag from Raw. Those were six guys you

could throw on TV at any time and get a decent match out of them, so why not use them?

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# On This Day: April 8, 2011 – Smackdown 2011: Edge's Last Show As Champion

## Smackdown

Date: April 8, 2011

Location: Times Union Center, Charlotte, North Carolina

Commentators: Michael Cole, Booker T, Josh Matthews

We're kind of in the new year here on Fridays as Edge is still World Champion. Tonight we'll probably start the build to Extreme Rules. Since we've kind of passed go here, it's rather hard to tell what else is going to go on. It should be interesting as things usually are on this show. Let's get to it.

The theme song opens us up. I guess the enemy this week is wrestling as this isn't a wrestling company anymore. The fact that Vince thinks this will get them more accepted by the mainstream is absolutely hysterical and head shaking at the same time.

Cue Alberto minus his car. Is there a reason why he doesn't have one as he apparently has like 50 of them? He says that destiny can be delayed as it was at Wrestlemania. He blames Edge and Christian for delaying his destiny and destroying his car. It's not about the money though, but

those cars are like his children. He starts to talk about revenge but is cut off by Edge.

Edge comes out in a tow truck which is pulling the Rolls Royce. Nice bit there. He says that if this car is like his child, Del Rio needs to love it unconditionally. With a little tender loving care it can be fine again. Edge pulls out some spray paint and writes something that I think was just scribbles. Del Rio says he almost got him to tap out at Mania but Edge points out that he didn't do it. Alberto wants a rematch and Edge says no because there are people more deserving of title shots.

The driver of the tow truck honks the horn and it's Christian. Edge says Christian has beaten Del Rio multiple times so obviously Christian is ahead of Del Rio in line. Here's Teddy who makes Del Rio vs. Christian for the shot at Extreme Rules. The match at the PPV will be a ladder match.

We'll get to see Cena and Rock again tonight. By that I mean the same thing from Raw. They say highlights though which helps a bit.

There's a rematch of the 8 man tag from Mania next that Josh says has a twist tonight that they'll explain when we come back. Now I'm no genius, but given that the graphic of the match says "2 out of 3 falls", I'm thinking it's in a cage. I could be wrong though.

#### Corre vs. Big Show/Kane/Kofi Kingston/Santino Marella

We get a clip from the PPV of Show knocking out Slater and that looked AWESOME. Kofi's tights are lime green tonight. It looked like there was a

small edit during Kofi's entrance but I could be wrong. The video and song seemed to jump forward a bit. Gabriel vs. Santino to start us off. Slater comes in quickly and Corre takes over. Remember that this is 2/3 falls.

Santino reverses a right hand into a throw and it's off to Kane. Show beats on him for a bit also and we get the Andre/Snuka splash with Kofi on top of Slater for two. He sets for Trouble in Paradise but Gabriel and Barrett make the save as we go to a break. Back with Kane working over the Intercontinental Champion in the corner. Booker sounds out of breath for some reason.

Off to Jackson to face Kane. Jackson gets Kane into the corner and Corre alternates in and out very quickly to hammer away on him. Finally it's off to Gabriel who gets a missile dropkick on Kane for two. Kane finally remembers he's fighting a cruiserweight and launches Gabriel to the mat. Off to Kofi who cleans house and gets the first fall off a top rope cross body at 5:30 shown of 9:00. Kofi looks shocked that he actually got a pin.

We take another break and come back with Slater vs. Santino. Booker keeps going on and on about being ahead on points or something like that. Santino escapes a sleeper but is taken down by a forearm for two. Santino speeds things up and loads up the Cobra (I still can't believe a move that Jon Lovitz taught him caught on like it did) but gets his head kicked off by Barrett. Wasteland ties us up at 7:23 shown of 14:23.

Why doesn't Barrett just cover him again? There was no mention of a rest period or anything like that. Barrett hammers away and it's off to Slater again. Jackson comes in and this should be a slaughter. Clothesline in the corner gets two as Big Show DIVES to make the save. Off to Gabriel

and we hit the chinlock. Show starts a weak Santino chant.

Gabriel misses a cannonball kind of move and it's off to Kane. Big side slam to Barrett gets two as does the top rope clothesline. Everything breaks down as Corre takes over. Kane sets for a chokeslam but all of Corre comes in to take him out for the DQ in the third fall at 11:10 shown of 18:10 (assuming 3:30 for commercials. I watch a preairing from Australia so it's hard to say for sure).

**Rating:** B-. Nice long match here to treat this like a match that deserved to be on Wrestlemania. I like that they allowed this to play out so that Corre doesn't look completely inept. Also, when's the last time you remember getting a nearly 20 minute match on free TV after getting a 15 minute one on Raw? This worked rather well and was better than I expected.

The winners beat up Corre post match, including a triple (Santino helped) chokeslam to Jackson.

Sin Cara is still coming, even though he's already been on Raw.

### Cody Rhodes vs. Trent Barreta

I love Cody's character right now. At the forums I post on someone made a great point: Cody's reaction to this is all the more psychological because everyone can see he looks exactly the same but in his mind he's hideous now. That's very interesting. Cody takes him down quickly and hammers away. Trent gets a springboard dropkick to get two though so maybe this won't be a total squash. Russian leg sweep gets two for Cody.

This is the aggressive Rhodes as he sends Trent into the post shoulder first and Cross Rhodes ends this at 1:30. Ok so maybe it was a squash. Too short to rate.

Post match Cody beats on Trent some more until Rey makes the save.

We get the Rock vs. Cena confrontation from Raw again. Eats up almost 15 minutes. I get that it's a major moment, but you could easily trim it down by at least half. There's no real need to use 1/8 of your total show and about 1/5 of your TV time to just show a segment from the more watched show. I get that it's huge, but they do this every week. I'm curious about Corre if nothing else.

Edge says he hopes Christian wins because he'd love to have a ladder match with Christian. Christian implies he'd win in the ladder match and says Edge can cheer for Alberto if he likes. The camera stays on Christian after Edge leaves and he looks at the belt which Edge forgot. Edge comes back and Christian says keep an eye on that, referring to the belt. No sign of tension or anything here.

#### Laycool vs. Kelly Kelly/Beth Phoenix

Is Natalya injured or something? I haven't seen her in months. Apparently she's been on Superstars. Ok then. Josh asks Cole why he's not in his singlet tonight. Cole almost says he's not wrestling tonight but cuts himself off to say entertaining. The level of idiocy of this continues to astound me. So remember people: this is an entertainment feature, not a match. So in other words we have girls in small outfits performing choreographed moves while coming out to hip hop/R&B music while on a platform above the guests and gyrating around with other women. Sound



familiar to anyone else?

Beth vs. Michelle to start us off with Beth destroying her. Michelle is knocked into Layla so Layla is yelled at. Backbreaker gets two for Beth. Layla is tagged in as Laycool argues. After a scary press slam, Kelly is brought in and does her Tarantula kind of move to Layla. X Factor gets two. Layla reaches for a tag and McCool falls to the floor like Layla did, allowing Kelly to roll Layla up for the pin at 2:50. Far more story advancement than match and that's fine.

Laycool argues in the aisle.

We get a clip from Raw of Cole spraying barbecue sauce on Lawler. In the arena Cole asks who shot JR. HE DID! Cole brings out Swagger who says training Cole was easy because Cole is smart and talented. Swagger declares Cole the new Mr. Wrestlemania. They take a victory lap but some music hits. It's Sin Cara who does his trampoline jump into the ring and takes Swagger down using a variety of speed moves including a corkscrew plancha to the floor.

We get the end of the Miz/Austin clip from Raw which was good.

Layla comes up to Michelle in the back and hands her a paper. They're going to have couples counseling. Michelle says they're not a couple. Layla says just show up.

Decent length video recapping the Hall of Fame inductions.

## Christian vs. Alberto Del Rio

Lot of time for this one. We take a break before Christian's entrance which is a nice perk because it means there will be some more time before the first break in the match. Edge comes out to be on commentary. Edge isn't sure who he prefers to face as Christian is good with the ladders also. Edge has been in 19 ladder matches. That's insane.

Christian takes Del Rio down with a headlock to start us off. Both are sent to the floor at different times with Christian being the last one in the ring. Big dropkick sends Del Rio crashing onto the floor again. We take a break and come back with Christian being slammed into the steps. Del Rio takes over and chokes him on the ropes back in the ring.

Time to start on the arm now as is Del Rio's custom. Christian fires off a bit right hand and goes up which gets him nowhere. Well he went up but it didn't advance him in the match anywhere. Maybe I should just move on. Superplex puts both guys down and Christian plays possum to get a cradle for two. Edge is ripping into Cole here and it's rather funny stuff.

Back to the floor again with both guys via a Cactus Clothesline from Christian. Better than up their noses with a rubber hose I guess. Christian fights back and gets an elbow off the middle rope for two. Top rope cross body gets two. Ricky Steamboat he is not. Killswitch is reversed into an attempt at the armbreaker but that is broken up also. Del Rio sends him into the corner and grabs the armbreaker but Christian gets a rope. Christian sets for something but Brodus stops him. Edge spears Brodus but the distraction allows Del Rio to hit the enziguiri off the top for the pin at 10:30 shown of 14:00.

**Rating:** C+. Surprisingly enough this wasn't very good. It's not bad but I couldn't get into this one at all. They were trying but at the same time nothing ever really got going. Del Rio winning is probably the best choice as Edge vs. Christian is a potentially big match that needs to be on a big stage. That being said I think we can pencil it in for Over the Limit. Not bad, but I wasn't huge on this one.

**Overall Rating:** B. Good show this week as it was very wrestling heavy and we had multiple storylines advanced at the same time. Things seem to be staying the same after Mania but that's ok I guess as it tends to be the custom after Mania. Good show here but then again that's par for the course here. They've gotten very good at the use of squashes to advance stories which is incredibly hard to do in today's product. Solid show overall here though.

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## **ZIGGLER CASHES IN MITB!!!**

The place went nuts when his music hit. Del Rio has just finished a handicap match against Swagger and Colter. Ziggler..... WON THE TITLE with the Zig Zag. New Champion!

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# Smackdown – April 5, 2013: The Annual Wrestlemania Commercial

## Smackdown

Date: April 5, 2013

Location: Verizon Center, Washington D.C.

Commentators: Josh Matthews, Jerry Lawler

This is the very final show before Wrestlemania and therefore there isn't likely to be much going on in the ring. Expect to see a lot of buildup for Sunday which makes sense given that the whole show is already set in stone unless they add in a battle royal or something. This isn't likely going to be much but it's the price you pay to get to Wrestlemania. Let's get to it.

## Ryback vs. Primo/Epico

The cousins have new music. We cut to Cole and JBL at Axxess to talk about how awesome things are there. Primo starts and is quickly powerslammed. Ryback pulls Epico in and throws him into the corner before hitting a gorilla press slam. Back to Primo for a nice springboard dropkick. Epico comes in for a chinlock but gets caught in the Over the Shoulder Boulder Holder (that's the real name) and it's back to Primo. A double spear puts the cousins down and the double Shell Shock gets the pin at 3:15.

**Rating:** D+. What do you want here? This was exactly what it was supposed to be: a quick squash to make Ryback look strong going into the showdown on Sunday. Ryback needs the win on Sunday a lot more than Henry does as he hasn't won a big match since before the Cell loss in the fall.

We look at some more Axxess stuff like Mr. McMahon's office before

looking at the Wrestlemania auction for Hurricane Sandy relief.

Video on Lesnar vs. HHH.

We get a video on Hall of Fame inductee Bruno Sammartino.

Video on Fandango and the pronunciation of his name. This transitions into a recap of Fandango attacking Jericho on Raw.

Video on this history of the Shield. This transitions into the end of last week's show with Shield being beaten down.

Here are Tons of Funk and the Funkadactyls, tonight as played by the Bellas (complete with some extra padding in the shorts and the Rhodes Scholars dancing while eating some cookies. Daniem Sandow in a Brodus hat and dancing is too much. Cody has a bald wig with the Japanese characters thrown in. The dog and pony show ends on Sunday. This brings out the real Tons of Funk and the Funkadactyls for the ring clearing brawl.

Video on the Wrestlemania press conference.

Video on Punk vs. Undertaker.

JBL and Cole talk about the exhibit where you can climb a ladder to get the MITB case. JBL to Cole: "You have the athletic ability of an Oklahoma chimpanzee."

Donald Trump Hall of Fame video.

We get a main event preview, which means we see both Rock and Cena's promos from Raw.

Del Rio says it's a good thing that he's at Axxess and not at Smackdown

tonight, because Swagger would be suffering. He'll be suffering on Sunday as well and America is made up of a bunch of cultures coming together.

### Jack Swagger vs. Kofi Kingston

Feeling out process to start with Swagger grabbing a top wristlock and Kofi unsuccessfully trying to flip out of it. Kofi comes back with his double leapfrogs and a back elbow before knocking Swagger to the floor. We take a break and come back with Swagger putting on a double chickenwing. Kofi fights up but a sunset flip attempt is blocked.

Instead Kofi takes Jack down with a monkey flip, only to be awkwardly sent into the corner for the Vader Bomb. Kofi gets the feet up though and hits a top rope cross body for two. An attempt at a second is caught in mid air but Kofi escapes the gutwrench powerbomb. Kofi's SOS gets two but a Colter distraction lets Swagger hook the Patriot Lock for the submission at 9:40.

**Rating:** C. This was fine but with less than ten minutes and about three of those spent on a commercial, there was only so much they were going to be able to do. That being said, this is the highest profile exposure Swagger and the title match have had since the title match was announced for Wrestlemania. Not bad here but it was just there.

**Overall Rating:** D+. That rating could be pretty much anything tonight because it's basically just grading a two hour infomercial. This is one of those shows you have to sit through once a year and while it's unpleasant, it's just one time and it means there's nothing left to sit through before Wrestlemania. The matches were just there to say we had wrestling tonight and again, that's what you have to expect.

### Results

Ryback b. Epico/Primo – Double Shell Shock

Jack Swagger b. Kofi Kingston – Patriot Lock

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# 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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