

Projected Mania Card

We pretty much have a good idea of what the upper half of Mania looks like at this point.

Raw World Title: Jericho vs. Punk

Smackdown World Title: Sheamus vs. Bryan

Undertaker vs. HHH III

Cena vs. Rock

My take:

I'm worried about this year's show. Other than Jericho vs. Punk and maybe Rock vs. Cena, is there any real drama in most of those matches? The Streak will not end, Sheamus looks pretty much like a lock to win the title, and I'd be pretty surprised if Rock didn't tap to Cena to end the show.

What do you think of these so far? What do you thing the rest of the card is going to look like?

Who Should Sheamus Choose?

Assuming that the titles stay on the current champions, who do you want him to pick? Bryan if I had to choose. Sheamus vs. Punk doesn't sound like much, but Bryan's selling could be great.

Your picks/thoughts?

I Want To Talk A Little Bit About Rock vs. Cena's Buildup

I'm a huge Star Wars fan. I love the characters, I love the stories, I love the themes, I love everything about it. When I was a kid I went to my uncle's house one day and he was watching Empire Strikes Back. This was my first introduction to the series and I was immediately wanting more. It turned out that the reason the movie was on TV that day was because the films were being re-released into theaters. I was very lucky because the first time I saw the original three movies was on the big screen.

Then a few years passed and I heard about the Star Wars prequels. These would be three movies set before the original trilogy that told how we reached the events of the first three movies. My friends that were Star Wars fans were so excited they could barely contain themselves. My immediate reaction: why would I want to see a bunch of movies when I already know what happens after them?

That's the problem I have with any prequel movie: we know that Anakin Skywalker goes to the Dark Side and becomes Darth Vader. We know that he's the father of Luke and Leia. We know that Yoda goes into hiding. We know that eventually Vader turns back to good. In other words, we know the endings, so why in the world am I supposed to get interested in what else happens? At the end of the third prequel there's a huge duel between Obi-Wan Kenobi and Anakin. I know neither of them is going to die, because they're in the next movies. Yeah the scene is really cool and it's a great fight, but I'm not going to be on the edge of my seat, because I know no one dies.

Now what does this have to do with John Cena vs. The Rock at Wrestlemania 28? The answer is simple: why should I care about what happens to John Cena from the night the match is made until the bell rings at Wrestlemania 28? His ending is already set in stone. We know where his road leads and no matter what happens to him, he's going to be in the main event in Miami on April 1, 2012. Why should I as a fan care about all these lesser matches and feuds that he's in?

Now don't get me wrong: his feud with Punk was very entertaining and I got into it big time. But at the end of the day, it's really just giving Cena stuff to fill his time for the next year. This matches his matches really uninteresting unless you get something special like his feud with Punk. Cena could lose every match he's in and he's still going to be in the main event. There's no way that's going to change barring Cena having every bone ripped out of his body, burning the flesh and muscle that remains, and feeding the charred pieces to a little boy in Idaho.

There are other ramifications to this as well and we'll start with CM Punk. Ignoring the fact that ratings haven't done jack with Punk on top (it's reality. Get over it internet fanboys), what incentive does Punk have to work hard this year? He's not going to be in the main event of Wrestlemania, which is the point of any wrestler lacing up a pair of boots. There's no point to having a big angle wasted on him, because he's going to be playing probably fourth fiddle to Rock, Taker, and whatever Orton is doing. Want proof this is reality?

Back in the 80s and 90s WCW held their TV tapings about three months in advance. You would have shows taped passed the next PPV in the can on a regular basis. There were at least two instances that I know of where a title change was already booked before the champions that were taped losing the titles won them in the first place. Let's say you're one of those teams. What incentive is there for you to put on good matches and work on your craft if you're destined to lose the titles

on so and so date no matter what happens?

Another possible outcome of doing things this far in advance: what if something major happens that you have no control over? Again, look to the WCW tapings. The main event of Starrcade 93 was to be Sid vs. Vader for the title with Sid winning the belt. They taped weeks of stuff in advance of Sid with the title (yes they gave away the ending to the biggest show of the year months in advance. And people wonder why they went out of business), but a funny thing happened on the way to Charlotte: Sid never won the title.

Instead he took a pair of scissors and stabbed Arn Anderson with them, getting himself fired and basically thrown out of any major company for about two and a half years. That's why Flair was thrown into the main event at the last minute. All of the material shot with Sid as champion was officially worthless so they had to just throw it away and start over, eating all of the costs. See how this could become a problem?

Imagine if the unthinkable happens and Cena or Rock is injured. After we pull Vince off every rooftop in the country, they would have to call in order, Austin, Shawn and HHH to come in and fill in the spot. All of those would be huge, but they wouldn't be in the same league as Rock vs. Cena. That match has been built up for over a year by the time Mania rolls around and while it would be big, it would feel like a letdown. That brings me to my next point: guys like Austin.

People keep wanting to see Austin have one more match and they want it to be at Mania 28 against Punk or whomever. People that say this can keep dreaming, because there's no way that he's going to have his one last (yeah right) match on the same night that Rock makes his big epic return to face the biggest star of this generation in a showdown almost 15 months in the making. Austin is a smart man, and he's too smart to try something like that.

The same goes for HHH. Do you think he's going to have a big marquee match at Mania? Do you think it was a coincidence that he was gone for almost the entire build to Survivor Series? HHH is still viewed as a special attraction and he's not going to go out there and waste one of the handful of big matches he has left when Rock is going to get 10,000% of the attention? Again, HHH is a smart man and he's too smart to try something like that.

In summation, I'd think it was a bad idea to build up Rock vs. Cena for a year in advance. It's going to draw a huge buyrate for Mania, but it would have done that anyway. It's not like Rock has been around every week for the buildup or anything like that, so I really think that all the negatives I listed above outweigh the good things that a build like this brings with it.

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