

WWE Poaching TNA's Territory

This is an interesting story that I only see one side to for the most part. As you've likely heard (at least you have if you follow this site, which you should), TNA is taking their TV tapings national, meaning they'll be going around the country. WWE has started going to mid-sized areas around the same areas for house shows to try to sabotage TNA. Some TNA fans are crying foul over this, but I have absolutely no problem with TNA doing this.

TNA is the company that tried to start the second Monday Night Wars (remember that pitiful attempt?). Now they're trying to go national to compete with WWE. Look at what WWE has done both times: they've fought back. How can TNA fans claim that this is unfair? It's like picking on someone and then getting annoyed when they punch you in the jaw.

TNA is the company trying to move up the ladder. If the people at the top of the ladder don't want them there, they can fight back. You can't try to move up and then complain that a larger company is playing unfair. In the words of Scott Hall, TNA wanted a war and now they've got one. The problem is WWE has a lot more bullets and much bigger tanks.

I really don't see how WWE has done anything wrong here or why TNA and/or its fans have any reason to complain. If WWE is viewing them as an annoyance (saying WWE views them as a threat at this point is laughable at best) and wants to crush them, I'd think of that more of a good sign for TNA than anything else.

Smackdown – February 8, 2013: Open For Business Again

Smackdown

Date: February 8, 2013

Location: Jacksonville Memorial Coliseum, Jacksonville, Florida

Commentators: Josh Matthews, John Bradshaw Layfield

We're getting close to the Elimination Chamber now with most of the field being filled in. The main story is that Mark Henry returned on Monday and treated Mysterio and Sin Cara like villagers in a badly dubbed Japanese monster movie. Other than that we've got the continuing saga of Big Show vs. Del Rio which is continuing despite two straight wins over the giant. Let's get to it.

We open with the voiceover talking about the Chamber. Apparently Bryan, Orton and Mysterio are locked in already. We also look at the hotel stuff with Del Rio vs. Big Show from Raw on Monday.

Big Show's bus arrives to start but he's scared to come out. Show finally gets out and sneaks into the arena.

For the first time in months, we actually get a theme song for Smackdown.

Here's Big Show to the ring. You know if he's scared of Del Rio, isn't it a bad idea to come to a place where everyone can see him? He calls the current situation unacceptable and doesn't care that the fans are booing him. Show talks about Del Rio acting like a criminal and getting cheered by the fans anyway. Apparently you can do whatever you want when you're popular. Show talks about signing a contract for a title match so at the PPV, he's getting the title back Del Rio is suspended tonight, so I'm

SURE we won't see him until Monday.

Show yells about Booker T causing the double standards around here, claiming that Booker is jealous of Show's money and success and status as an active wrestler. This brings out the GM who talks about how Big Show has gotten everything he wanted but Big Show keeps bullying Ricardo. Big Show demands to know if Booker gave Alberto his hotel information but Booker sidesteps the question. It's Show vs. Kane tonight.

Kofi Kingston vs. Cody Rhodes

Cody says that he and Sandow have split but another door has opened for him. Rhodes grabs the arm to start but Kofi sends him to the floor. Back in and the mustached one hits a middle rope elbow to Kingston's back. The second attempt doesn't work as well though and Kofi speeds things up a bit. The Boom Drop hits at an awkward angle but Trouble in Paradise misses. Kofi immediately comes back with a spinning cross body out of the corner for two. Both finishers are avoided but Cody hits the Disaster Kick to lay out Kingston. Cross Rhodes finishes this at 3:31.

Rating: C-. As usual, this was hurt by how little time they had. This is what Kofi is good for anymore: making someone look good in defeat. He still has enough credibility to make this work and a loss isn't going to hurt him at all. It's good to see Cody making a singles comeback, but not losing on Monday would have helped even more.

We recap the troubles HELL NO has been having lately.

Bryan comes in to see Kane and says he forgives them. Kane doesn't even have to apologize. Bryan offers to be in Kane's corner tonight against Big Show so that they can mess with Show's mind. Also it will help Kane's image to be seen with someone already in the Elimination Chamber. Kane shushes Bryan with threats of annihilation.

We get a video of Lesnar attacking Vince from last week's Raw.

We get another video from this past week's Raw of Heyman denying knowing anything about Lesnar because Vickie brought him back in.

Bruno Sammartino's HOF video.

Great Khali vs. Titus O'Neal

Josh calls Khali a Hall of Famer, sending JBL into a huge rant about how we follow Bruno Sammartino with this guy. Khali chops him into the corner as Teddy and Booker are watching in the back. Titus pounds Khali down and hits a big boot to the head for two. Off to a front facelock but Khali shrugs it off and the big chop ends Titus at 1:34.

As soon as the bell rings, Mark Henry comes out and sends Titus into the barricade. With him out of the way, Henry goes into the ring and lays out Khali as well with the World's Strongest Slam.

Post break Henry says the Hall of Pain is now open again. We get a clip of the beatdown of Cara and Rey from Monday which Henry blames on Booker. Henry says Booker put together an elite group of people to be in the Chamber, but there was one mistake: Mark Henry was left out. He wants Booker out here now or else he'll destroy the entire Smackdown roster. Booker comes out and gives his usual response of "that's not how we do it on Smackdown." Henry says if there isn't room in the Chamber for him, he'll make room himself. Booker says if Henry can beat Orton tonight, he can be in the Chamber too.

Big Show yells at the guy that takes care of his bus and his steaks for screwing up. Oh and the toilet is clogged up again. Big Show is heading to the ring and Del Rio is lurking behind his bus.

Big Show vs. Kane

We see the Del Rio/Show segment from Raw again during the entrances. Show immediately takes it to the floor and sends Kane into the barricade before we head back inside. The guy with his face showing works on the leg as we take a break. Back with Show hitting the Vader Bomb for two but a second one misses. They slug it out and both guys load up chokeslams but it's Kane hitting the running DDT to take over. There's the top rope clothesline but Kane tweaks his knee, allowing for the WMD to end Kane at 3:35 shown of 7:05.

Rating: C. They actually took a break for a match that ran seven minutes? Nothing to see here but they probably had the right idea to keep this short given the history of matches these two have had. You would think they would eventually have a decent match just out of memory with each other but it hasn't happened yet.

Post match Del Rio pops up on screen with the employee Show yelled at. He tells Big Show to come back and see the changes Del Rio has made. Show comes back and sees the bus up on blocks with the tires taken off. Del Rio covers Show in orange paint for good measure.

Jack Swagger vs. Justin Gabriel

Swagger is apparently the REAL AMERICAN now. Gabriel is sent to the apron to start and Jack takes his head off with a clothesline back inside. There's a big beal across the ring and the Vader Bomb gets no cover. Justin blocks a charge with two feet in the face and a springboard cross body gets no cover. Jack heads to the floor but manages to break up the Asai moonsault. Back inside and it's chop block, gutwrench bomb and Patriot Act (ankle lock) for the tap out at 2:37. Just a squash.

Fandango is still coming. Oh joy.

Drew McIntyre vs. Tensai

They're turning the bald guy face aren't they. We get a clip from Raw Roulette of Tensai in lingerie breaking into a dance off with Brodus. Drew hits a big boot for two but Tensai comes back with a splash in the corner. There's the Baldo Bomb but Slater and Mahal run in at 1:09.

Brodus runs out for the save and the band is cleared out. The big men and the Funkadactyls dance a bit. Yep they're turning him and I can't say I'm arguing with it. It's not like he was doing ANYTHING as a heel anymore.

Sin Cara vs. Antonio Cesaro

The stupid mood lighting is back and this is non-title. Cara speeds things up to start but Cesaro avoids a charge in the corner. The power stuff begins and Cara is in trouble early. JBL questions if Cara is actually a Mexican or not. Josh talks about how if Cara was from Bermuda, he would be the most followed man in the country. Good to know. Anyway Cara comes out of the corner with a running sunset flip for two. The champion heads to the floor and Cara hits a suicide dive to take him out. That's the extent of his offense though as back inside it's the European uppercut and the Neutralizer for the pin at 2:20.

Orton says Henry has to earn his spot in the Chamber by going through him.

Miz says he's never been against anything like Lesnar but Cesaro comes in to complain about Miz's whining. Geez this thing is still going? They brawl and Cesaro gets the better of it until referees break it up.

The Raw ReBound is Shield being chased off.

Randy Orton vs. Mark Henry

If Henry wins, he's in the Chamber. I don't think Orton is out for losing. Henry shoves him into the corner but Orton fights out with right

hands. Randy gets shoved to the floor and but escapes off Henry's shoulder before posting Mark. Back in and Orton heads to the top, only to get DRILLED in the head and knocked out to the floor.

That gets two for Mark so he stands on Randy's chest for awhile. Off to the nerve hold for a bit but Orton starts speeding things up. Mark misses a charge in the corner and Orton knocks him onto the apron. The Elevated DDT looks to set up the RK0 but it's easily blocked. A splash in the corner sets up the World's Strongest Slam for the pin at 4:35.

Rating: C-. Just like before, there wasn't time for this to go anywhere. Henry looked decent as the monster continues to be the perfect character for him. Actually keeping this short was probably the right idea because a guy who hasn't been in the ring in ten months just crushed Randy Orton. That's certainly a good way to get him over again in the fans' eyes.

Overall Rating: C+. This is one of those shows where the individual parts don't tell the whole story of the show. This was about pushing some new guys and reintroducing Henry to the Smackdown roster. The show went by pretty fast and it made for some entertaining TV. That's a good sign with not a lot of time before the Chamber and then Wrestlemania. Another good although different kind of show tonight.

Results

Cody Rhodes b. Kofi Kingston – Cross Rhodes

Great Khali b. Titus O'Neal – Chop to the head

Big Show b. Kane – WMD

Jack Swagger b. Justin Gabriel – Patriot Act

Tensai b. Drew McIntyre via DQ when 3MB interfered

Antonio Cesaro b. Sin Cara – Neutralizer

Mark Henry b. Randy Orton – World's Strongest Slam

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Bret Hart vs. HHH

I'm a bit late to this one but it's a major story from earlier in the week. Basically Bret Hart said that HHH has never had a great match and isn't even in the top 1000 wrestlers of all time. Now there are a few possible explanations to this. First and foremost, Bret is incorrect. I greatly respect Bret Hart, but I don't know if I could come up with 1000 wrestlers if I tried all day. To say all of them are better than HHH is impossible to believe. Now of course Bret doesn't mean that literally, but the idea still makes sense.

The second possibility is that Bret has incredibly high standards. There is definitely something to this as I've heard of Bret watching his own matches and being disgusted by his lack of psychology because the three moves he used should have set up an armbar and he used a wristlock instead. That's stuff probably 95% of pro wrestlers aren't going to pick up on but to Bret it's terrible.

Now for the theory that makes the most sense: HHH knew about Montreal in advance and allegedly was the guy who said go ahead and do it. Since Shawn and Bret have made amends and Bret has talked about how great Shawn is, who else is he supposed to go after with his latest Montreal rage?

It's not like Bret is in need of publicity as he could probably be on Raw or Smackdown a few times a month with one phone call. My money would be on Montreal, but maybe Bret just isn't a fan of HHH. I may have watched a lot of wrestling, but I certainly don't know a fraction of what Bret knows. It was a very odd statement though.

NXT – February 6, 2013: Tournament Fever Has Hit NXT

NXT

Date: February 6, 2013

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tony Dawson, William Regal

We're on I think the semi-finals of the tag title tournament this week as well as Conor vs. Langston if I remember correctly. Other than that there isn't much going on here, as most of the show is based around the tag titles at this point. The show has been pretty awesome lately though so I can't say I'm complaining. Let's get to it.

I was right about the semi-finals being tonight. Both matches go down on this show.

Welcome Home.

NXT Tag Team Title Tournament Semi-Finals: Kassius Ohno/Leo Kruger vs. Oliver Grey/Adrian Neville

The winner of this gets the winner of the Wyatt Family vs. McGillicutty/Dallas. Grey vs. Kassius get things going and nothing happens there so here's Kruger instead. Grey takes him down to the mat

via a headlock as we're in a very slow stage still. Kruger fights up and is immediately taken down again via the headlock. The British guys hit a double elbow on Kruger for two and Neville hooks a chinlock.

Off to Kassius and Adrian fires off some kicks to the legs to slow him down immediately. Back to Grey for some arm work and Adrian does the same. Grey hooks an armbar and Ohno is in trouble again. Kruger gets the tag and pounds away on Oliver as we take a break. Back with Ohno holding Grey in a chinlock and a backbreaker from Kruger for two. We go old school with an abdominal stretch from both heels and then a second from both guys.

Ohno stays in and works over the ribs with a backsplash for two. There's a reverse chinlock by Kassius but Oliver fights out of it and decks both heels with forearms. Kruger breaks up the tag attempt though and pounds Grey down for two. Off to a cravate which continues to be very popular in WWE anymore. Grey comes back with a few rollups for two and there's the hot tag to Adrian.

Things speed up and Neville starts flipping around a lot. Kassius kicks Adrian's head off to send him to the outside but stops to yell at Regal. Adrian hits a flip dive to the floor to take Ohno's head off and it's the corkscrew shooting star press to send the British guys to the finals at 14:02 shown of 17:32.

Rating: C+. This was good stuff for most part with the tag team formula being played quite well. At this point you can figure out the ending to the other final pretty easily but that's par for the course for a tournament. Ohno continues to not be anything of note and unfortunately Kruger didn't get to do anything here either, which is a shame.

Summer Rae complains about being pretty and never getting praised while Paige is ugly and is treated huge. Apparently Summer School is always in session.

Conor O'Brien vs. Mike Dalton

Dalton fires off kicks to start but Conor easily powers him down. A one man flapjack puts Dalton down and a legdrop ends this in 1:06.

O'Brien demands a five count which brings out Langston for a Big Ending on Dalton.

Paige says she'll take care of Summer herself despite Dusty's wishes otherwise. Sasha Banks comes in and talks about her secret admirer.

Video on the NXT Tournament for a spot in the Rumble. Here are the brackets (I think):

Corey Graves

Adrian Neville

Leo Kruger

Xavier Woods

Bo Dallas

Luke Harper

Oliver Grey

Conor O'Brien

The semis were Kruger over Neville and Dallas over O'Brien with Dallas beating Kruger to win the tournament and the spot in the Rumble.

Bray Wyatt comes in to see Bo Dallas and says his fifteen minutes of fame are up. Dallas says time might be up on the Wyatt Family. It's so hard to believe that these two are brothers.

NXT Tag Team Title Tourmanet Semi-Finals: Michael McGillicutty/Bo Dallas vs. Wyatt Family

It's Rowan/Harper here again. Harper and McGillicutty start things off and Michael fighting off the big man as well as possible. Dallas comes in and gets taken down by pure Wyatt power. We take a break and come back with the monsters continuing to work over Dallas in the corner. Dallas manages to slip away to Michaels for the hot tag and things speed up again. He throws Rowan around with suplexes but Bray Wyatt distracts him.

That earns the leader an ejection but the referee misses McGillicutty rolling up Rowan. Harper kicks him in the face for the pin and the spot in the finals at 4:08 shown of 7:38.

Rating: D+. This didn't have the time to go anywhere. McGillicutty needs to get away from tag teams along with getting away from that stupid name. He has the look, he has the timing and he has the skill, but he's stuck in a stupid tag team that isn't even winning the minor league title. Nothing to see here and the winners were obvious after the earlier match.

Bray offers Dallas a spot in the Family but when Bo declines, Bray beats him down. He says this is only the beginning to end the show. The look on Wyatt's face was great.

Overall Rating: B. This was a theme show in a way but it was a very fun one. You had the tournament set up as well as the other title match set up, which makes this more like a go home show for the NXT equivalent of a PPV. That's a rather cool thing to see as NXT is a completely independent promotion right now that works on its own schedule. Good stuff here, as usual.

Results

Adrian Neville/Oliver Grey b. Kassius Ohno/Leo Kruger – Corkscrew Shooting Star Press to Ohno

Conor O'Brien b. Mike Dalton – Legdrop

Wyatt Family b. Bo Dallas/Michael McGillicutty – Big boot to McGillicutty

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On This Day: February 7, 2005 – Monday Night Raw: Now This Is Puro I Could Get Into

Monday Night Raw

Date: February 7, 2005

Location: Super Arena, Saitama, Japan

Attendance: 16,657

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

Yes, we're actually in Japan for this. I was going to do Great American Bash 2000 but that turns out to be kind of hard to find so while I'm downloading it you get this requested show. I barely remember 2005 WWE to be honest but we're approaching Mania 21 which wasn't too bad. Cena and Batista would be on the rise at this point so there's Big Dave to look forward to. Let's get to it.

Union Underground brings us into this. I love that song.

Obviously this isn't live but it was taped on Friday before the show.

This is listed from Tokyo so I'll assume it's a suburb or something.

Here's Bischoff who is GM at the moment. He has a translator and the fans aren't thrilled with him in the slightest. The translation is booed far louder than the English. Yes, the English that they didn't understand at all is booed out of the building. HBK vs. Flair tonight so that'll be good. Also Edge vs. HHH for the world title. But for an opener, here's Jericho vs. Benoit in a submission match.

Chris Jericho vs. Chris Benoit

Yeah this works. No idea if there's a story here but does it

really matter? Apparently they had a tag title shot last week but lost and argued post match. They lock up and go to the floor with it as this is very intense right off the bat. They keep ramming heads together for a hard staredown and lock up again. Benoit works on the arm but Jericho grabs a Walls attempt which fails. Sharpshooter attempt has the same result and it's a standoff.

Springboard dropkick by Jericho isn't launched and they fight on the bottom rope but both crash to the floor as we take a break. Back with Benoit running over Jericho and adding a snap suplex. Jericho is bleeding from below the eye. Rolling Germans by the Canadian in Japan to the American (Jericho was born in New York remember) but Jericho busts out the Octopus of all things.

More Rolling Germans are countered into a half crab as Benoit is in trouble. Benoit gets the rope and tries the suplexes again but Jericho fights him off. Benoit is like oh son you done made me mad and BLASTS him in the back a few times and hits the Germans to set up the swan dive to the back. He dives in for a Crossface but Jericho escapes and takes him down with a clothesline. Lionsault misses but Jericho intentionally misses and grabs the Walls.

Benoit gets a shot in to block that but it's a slingshot into the corner. Benoit fights out of that and there's the Crossface but it's more of a chinlock than the regular grip. Still not enough to end it though as the other Chris manages to get to the rope so we're not done yet. Walls don't work because of the arm and Benoit kicking him in the face and there's the Crossface again, still with the chinlock but a lot more torque, this time enough for the tap.

Rating: B. Oh come on it's Benoit vs. Jericho on a stage where they intentionally want to look awesome. What were you expecting them to do? Sleepwalk through it? Naturally very good match between these two as they wrestled each other so

much that they could have a great match in their sleep, which always makes their great ones more impressive. Great opener to keep the crowd how.

The Divas are having a fashion show later.

Clips of the plane ride which must have taken forever.

Flair and HHH are getting ready and Flair says he's awesome. Batista gets....Maven later. Oh joy. The first Raw from this year I've watched in a long time and I get Big Dave vs. Maven. HHH is worried about what Batista is going to do as far as Mania goes. Flair talks some sense into him as HHH is going to talk him into going to Smackdown so Evolution will have both titles.

Christian is giving an interview as to how he got the name Captain Charisma when they run into Stacy. The interviewer wants to talk to Orton and Christian isn't that happy with it. Christian makes fun of him which is amusing since they're feuding now. Christian is rather amusing here. He challenges Orton for later and Tomko is skeptical. Tomko shouldn't worry though because the match is with Tomko, not Christian.

Ad for Wrestlemania, in this case HHH as Braveheart. I loved this campaign. Flair WOOing at a donkey is funny.

Maven vs. Batista

Maven is a cocky heel at this point and doesn't get an entrance. What do you think is going to happen here? He's mad he wasn't in the Rumble and calls conspiracy. Cue Big Dave and this is exactly what you would expect. The run time is 32 seconds if you're curious. These fans are losing their minds over a total squash. He really needs I Walk Alone which he would get soon after winning the title.

Big Show pops up on the screen and says he's not worried about facing Batista at Mania. No real point to this as apparently

it's a running theme.

Batista yells at Bischoff in the back about it. He's getting tired of Smackdown talking about him so Bischoff gives him a sales pitch about staying on Raw. The fans pop at the mention of Batista vs. HHH.

Raw Tag Titles: William Regal/Tajiri vs. La Resistance

Gee I wonder what's going to happen here. Conway and Grenier here. The place ERUPTS for Tajiri who is all fired up here. Regal and Eugene were champions but Eugene is injured so Regal picked Tajiri as his new partner. Massive Tajiri chant starts up so Regal starts off with Conway. Regal Stretch goes on but it's off to Tajiri who adds the low dropkick as the offense is on.

Regal plays Ricky Morton for a bit here despite getting some shots in to try to break the momentum. The fans chant something but it's in Japanese. Grenier punches Tajiri so when Regal takes him down there's no one to tag. STF is broken up quickly and there's the hot tag to Tajiri who cleans house. Let the kicks begin! Enziguri hits Grenier for two as everything breaks down. Double handspring elbow takes out the French dudes and it's Tarantula time. Regal takes Conway down and there's the Green Mist and a Buzzsaw kick gives us new champions.

Rating: C+. The match totally doesn't matter and is rated too high, but this is about giving the fans something to erupt for and that's exactly what they did here. Tajiri and Regal would hold the belts about three months so this wasn't just a fluke title reign. No problem at all with this and while it's not great or anything, it was perfectly done as it made Tajiri look like a star.

Regal and Tajiri go into the crowd to celebrate.

We go over the HOF class for 2005 which was the second year

that this was revived. Going in this year are Orndorff, Iron Sheik, Nikolai Volkoff, Bob Orton Jr. and Jimmy Hart. They say others will be named, which would include Piper and Hogan.

Ric Flair vs. Shawn Michaels

Can't say they're not giving them a big card tonight. Pretty much just a showcase match. Shawn's pop is bigger. Flair elbows Shawn on a break in the corner to take over. They hit the floor and Shawn chops away. Backdrop has Flair moaning in agony. Back in and Flair begs off which gets a big reaction for some reason. They slug it out some more and it's Flair Flop time. Shawn actually gets two off that and it's time to work on the knee. Basic leg work follows and Flair loads up the Figure Four.

Shawn fights it for a bit and then reverses as this is about as basic of a match between these two as you could ask for. It's fine and all but they're going through the motions here. Rollup gets two for Shawn and the knee gives out again. Small package gets two as does a backslide. There's an enziguri by Shawn and you know what's next. Nip up but Flair tries to go up. Even the Japanese fans know that joke. Backdrop sets up the elbow which sets up Sweet Chin Music (with questionable selling by Shawn) for the clean pin. You can tell they weren't going with much if it's a clean pin like that.

Rating: C. It's Flair vs. Michaels so it's going to be solid at least. Very weak match from these two but the point was to allow the fans to see a pair of legends go out there and do their thing for an historic match. That's what they did here and there's really no reason to complain about it. Not exactly Mania 24, but still fine for what it was.

Time for an All-American Diva Fashion Show. Lawler of course hosts and I'm a bit surprised by this getting a big pop. Up first is Maria who is dressed as a western chick apparently. Victoria is a biker, meaning more or less a bikini and a

leather jacket. Christy represents the beaches and is just in a bikini. Not complaining but is there a point to this?

Ah here it is as Simon Dean comes out to protest. He wants to use the time to pitch his Simon System of products to an international audience. An American sumo wrestler protests the jokes and then sits down. Simon says the girls are all fat and I think we can see where this is going rather quickly. Jerry defends the Divas and Simon busts out the Burger King line. The girls beat him up anyway and Lawler gets a group hug.

Evolution has a meeting where HHH tries to convince Dave to go to Smackdown. Dave says he'll think about it and Flair/HHH aren't thrilled with that idea but go along with it anyway. They have to focus Edge tonight though so they go to get ready for it.

Edge says he's ready but is tired of being overlooked because of Evolution all the time. He's a heel here but not a very good one yet.

Another video about the fans loving WWE. I'll give them this: Japanese fans are passionate about their wrestling at a level American fans have never hoped of approaching.

Randy Orton vs. Tyson Tomko

Orton is still a face at this point but his heel turn to fight Undertake at Mania was coming incredibly soon. Orton doesn't look like he had ringside seats to a nuclear explosion here and you can actually see his arms. Basic stuff to start until Christian drags Stacy, Orton's current kind-of-girlfriend, down the aisle. Orton is also suffering from a concussion from the Rumble which was 8 days ago.

The distraction from Stacy being dragged out there allows Tomko to start hammering away. He pounds on Orton's head as they're playing up the head injury here. It's not a bad one where he's going insane or anything, but if it did that would

explain a lot about his character from a few years ago. Orton fights back with the backbreaker but he's stumbling a bit. He wants the RK0 but gets dizzy when trying it. He settles for a rollup instead, which is a good ending since he got his concussion trying the RK0 on HHH.

Rating: C-. Just a quick match here and there's nothing wrong with that. They had to protect Orton's head for the storyline so the ending was a good way of going about doing that. This was really just to advance Christian vs. Orton and again that's just fine. Not a bad match or anything but pretty unremarkable.

Christian gives Orton the Unprettier (Killswitch) post match.

Orton was taken out during the break.

We recap the rest of the show so far, namely the title change.

Raw World Title: Edge vs. HHH

Edge tried to spear Shawn last week but speared the Game instead so there's actually a point to this. They trade some technical stuff to start and it's a standoff. We actually get a pinfall reversal sequence into a backslide which gets a LOUD gasp. HHH is showing off athleticism here which is rather shocking but if he can do it rock on dude. Edge's shoulder goes into the post and then does it again.

Make it three times as who says HHH isn't repetitive? We take a break and come back with Edge hitting a backbreaker for two. During the break HHH got sent up and over the corner and hurt his back so Edge hit a suplex on top of that. Facebuster stops Edge's mini-comeback for two. Edge manages to get a missile dropkick for two. He gets a bit going but walks into a spinebuster.

Pedigree doesn't work as the fans are definitely staying with this. Edge sets for the spear but remember he has a bad

shoulder. Not that it matters as HHH gets a knee in for a close two also. Edgecator (kneeling Sharpshooter) goes on and HHH is in trouble. Rather back and forth match here. There's a rope though as Flair plays cheerleader. Edge tries the hold again but HHH kicks him off.

Out of nowhere Edge misses the spear, taking out the referee. Neckbreaker puts HHH down but there's no referee. Cue Flair with a chair but he gets speared also. Edge misses a chair shot to HHH and a suplex takes both guys down. They both crawl for the chair but Batista comes down and pulls it out of the ring, which HHH isn't pleased with. HHH knocks Edge into Batista with unclear motives and a Pedigree is countered into the Edgecution. Edge wants the spear again but Batista kills him with a spinebuster. Pedigree finally ends this.

Rating: B-. This was pretty good actually as they had time and it advanced the story with Batista and HHH. I don't think anyone thought the title was changing but at times having a guy like Edge go out there and have a long title match with the champion is a good thing. It spawned a PPV series called In Your House so it's not that much of a stretch. Pretty good main event.

Batista and HHH celebrate but Batista looks at the title and HHH sees him so a staredown ends the show.

Overall Rating: B+. This was a very good show overall with a white hot crowd all night. Very interesting that for their own product they're silent most of the time yet here they were barely quiet all night. Anyway this was an awesome show as they had a spectacle in Flair vs. Shawn, a good main event and a title change, plus Benoit vs. Jericho. I had a good time with this show and it goes to show you what they can do when they let good wrestlers have time. Shame that didn't happen often in 2005.

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Wrestlemania 30 To Be In New Orleans

Apparently a radio show host mentioned this on the air today. This has been rumored lately so I'm pretty sure this is accurate. Either way, I plan on being there live for it.

Thoughts on the selection?

Pick The First DVD Review

It can be any WWE DVD ever. These are going to take a bit longer to get through so it won't be airing for awhile. It can be anything and first to three votes wins.

On This Day: February 5, 1988 – Main Event #1: The Biggest

Wrestling Broadcast Ever

The Main Event I

Date: February 5, 1988

Location: Market Square Arena, Indianapolis, Indiana

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Jesse Ventura

So this is by far and away the most famous of these shows with one of the most famous endings in company history. This is live and as usual there was a full card before this part started. That being said, the two or three matches we get here are to put it mildly pretty bad.

The main focus here is Hogan vs. Andre the rematch. The main idea here is that Hogan might have gotten pinned at Mania and there might have been a slow count. This is still the highest rated wrestling program in the history of televised wrestling, drawing a 15.2 rating and 33 MILLION viewers on national television on a Friday night. In other words, over 10% of the entire country was watching this. Let that sink in for a bit. It was only an hour long but this was epic. Let's get to it.

Jesse has some leopard skin crown on or something like that. He's here from Hollywood or something apparently. He predicts Hogan loses, which is what he's predicted about a thousand times. He also says Honky and the Harts will win. Jesse's rant about Hogan is funny stuff as always.

We get a training montage of Hogan set to what would become Jake Roberts' music. He looks extra roidy here.

Honky says this isn't about fighting but romance as Liz wants him apparently. Elvis lyrics are added.

Intercontinental Title: Randy Savage vs. Honky Tonk Man

This was supposed to be the big other match at Mania but instead Savage got the world title due to Honky being a jerk.

Savage cuts Liz off and says he'll win. DAng I love late 80s WWF. Massive pop for Savage as it's clear he's going to be a huge deal. This is an old stomping ground for Savage's indy company so he's a huge fan favorite. Honky dances for Liz while Randy has his attention on Jimmy.

Basically Honky has been the biggest jerk in the world to Savage and Liz lately so Randy wants to kill him, literally. Jimmy's interference gives Honky the early advantage but Savage remembers he's Randy Savage and it's 1988 so he takes over for a bit. He misses a charge though and Savage might be in trouble now.

Jimmy chokes Randy while Honky shakes his hips for Liz. Savage makes the superhero comeback but can't keep anything going for more than a few seconds at a time. The evildoers go after Liz while he's down but he wakes up and isn't very happy about this. He gets the double axe to Honky from the top to the outside and Honky is in trouble.

Another hits in the ring and it's all Savage now. Hart is brought in the hard way as Gorilla would say and Honky accidentally drills him so Savage can get...a sleeper hold? Peggy Sue goes after Liz for no apparent reason and Honky still can't get anything when Savage goes to save her. And Honky just takes the count out loss like a true heel.

Rating: C. Weak match here but the atmosphere and crowd were off the charts. This was a big feud and everyone wanted nothing more than to see Savage take Honky apart. This wasn't a great match and it's a shame that we never got a big blowoff match from these two as it would have drawn serious money on PPV as it did on house shows. The atmosphere carried this though.

Honky goes after Savage with the guitar after the match. I don't see why Savage doesn't charge as he could get there in time to avoid the shot. Jimmy hits him with the Megaphone and

yet he avoids the shot anyway. Kind of odd but he clears the heels away and breaks the guitar.

We get a recap of Hogan vs. Andre which helps a lot as a lot of things I've read says that the three count was really confusing as was them saying the controversial count as we didn't know which they were talking about. We also see Andre attacking Hogan and the contract signing at the first Royal Rumble. Oh and DiBiase owns Andre's contract now.

DiBiase says money works for everything and that the Hulkamaniacs are nickels and dimes. Andre says he'll never stop once he gets his hands on Hogan. The idea is simple: Andre gets the title from Hogan and DiBiase buys it from Andre for a ton of money.

WWF Title: Andre the Giant vs. Hulk Hogan

So yeah, this is the biggest match ever on television and still is to this day. Again: it got a FIFTEEN in ratings. To put that in perspective, Jay Leno gets about a three. Hogan says there was no controversy in the count and that he's beaten Andre once and can again. He also says that he's invested into his fans. Good promo as you can tell Hogan thrives in this kind of environment. Now if only they had noticed something: Hogan has the OLD design for the title in the interview but as he walks out you see the famous winged eagle title debut. Nice job guys. That interview was probably taped in late 87.

The pop for Hogan is just absurd as he's almost at the height of his powers here. Ok so 87 was bigger but close enough. Hogan wants to start immediately but Hebner stops him. I've seen this match multiple times and this has me fired up very well. Andre stalls forever on the apron as Hogan is all kinds of fired up. Hogan gives the sign for slamming him and Andre's face says nothing but "Boy please."

The crowd is electric as they do a masterful job of letting

the tension build. Hogan has finally waited long enough and drills into the heels and cleans house. He hammers away early as you can definitely see a faster pace here than they had last time. Granted that might be due to Hogan needing to do more here as Andre is getting very bad very fast.

ALL Hogan here but Hogan can't do much here other than strike. DiBiase is counting money so Hogan stomps on his hand for the fun of it. Big wind up punch and Andre WILL NOT GO DOWN. Hogan like an idiot tries to go up and gets the Flair treatment for his luck. Andre tries a diving headbutt and just misses completely. He chokes away and other than that and basic strikes he has nothing.

The idea here is that Andre's offense is very limited but his size and power plus great selling by Hogan makes him seem like a killer. Andre gets a big boot to Hogan's chest and falls down too. He chokes with the strap on his singlet and Hogan is in trouble. Hogan breaks a choke and it's on all over again. A middle rope clothesline finally drops the Giant.

Hogan gets the legdrop but Virgil grabs the referee. Andre gets up and drills some headbutts and hits a suplex kind of move which was his finisher. Hogan clearly gets his shoulder well off the mat at about one and a half and the referee keeps counting anyway, getting to three and declaring Andre as the winner. And let the controversy begin.

Rating: C-. The match itself was just ok but obviously the biggest angle of all time happening here is the real story. The 9 minute match was a backdrop for that as Andre couldn't do a thing but choke for the most part which is fine given his physical condition at the time. Not bad at all, all things considered.

The referee says it was three and Hogan says he got his shoulder up which is absolutely true. Hebner gets the belt and hands it to Andre. This is the end of Hogan's over four year

title reign. Gene is at ringside and talks to Andre who calls it the world tag title for some reason and then surrenders it to DiBiase. The image of DiBiase with the belt around his waist is downright terrifying.

Hogan turns his attention to Hebner and here comes...Dave Hebner. There are TWO Dave Hebners as the fans are STUNNED. Hogan figures out what is going on as the guy that refereed the match was an impostor and we actually have an evil twin storyline. The evil one beats up the good one but Hogan gets his hands on him anyway to throw him to DiBiase and Andre.

We come back to the start of the tag title match but throw it to Hogan and Gene in the back and wonders how much the plastic surgery cost. He rants and raves about getting ripped off which for once is absolutely true. We see a replay of the count and Hogan's arm is clearly up before two.

We see literally 25 seconds of the tag title match and go off the air before it ends. It was Strike Force defending against the Hart Foundation. Strike Force got a pin to retain.

Overall Rating: A+. A show that draws over ten percent of the entire country can be described as nothing else but a massive success. The ending is iconic and one of the most brilliant ideas of all time. This show worked like a charm and set up the tournament at Mania.

DiBiase would appear at some house shows over the weekend as champion and would defend against Bigelow as well as having some tag matches with Andre against Hogan and Bigelow. Great match and the biggest ratings draw in American wrestling history. Just an insane rating and some incredibly dramatic television makes this an undeniable success.

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DVD Reviews

Is this something you all would be interested in? I would review the match selections on a WWE DVD and talk about the documentary a bit as well. Reviewing a documentary isn't exactly easy to do but it's possible I guess.

Thoughts?

Monday Night Raw – February 4, 2013: The Best WWE TV Match In Years

Monday Night Raw

Date: February 4, 2013

Location: Phillips Arena, Atlanta, Georgia

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

We're getting closer to the Elimination Chamber which has nothing to do with Raw but it's WWE in general so there you go. As for tonight the main story is what happened at the end of last week's show with Lesnar and Vince. Vince needs real hip surgery so that was the story they came up with to get McMahon off TV. We're also going to get some more between Rock and Punk. Let's get to it.

After a LONG recap of the main stuff from last week, here's Punk to open the show. He makes the announcer call him the REAL People's Champion.

Punk talks about how he's had a week to reflect on having his championship stolen from him and yeah it affects him. He doesn't think anyone here in the arena has ever accomplished anything in his life.

Punk goes on a rant about how he wasn't in the video and there's no proof he had anything to do with Shield or Maddox. Why would you believe Vince? Knowing Vince, he might have hired an actor that sounds like Heyman. Punk talks about how Vince had hip surgery today and that's karma. Vince probably set this up because he doesn't want Punk to be champion. In two weeks he will get back the physical belt back because this is day number four hundred and....here's Booker T?

Booker stumbles over his lines and says that since Vickie is in charge tonight, the people are going to pick who he faces. It's going to be one of Punk's previous Wrestlemania opponents: Mysterio, Orton or Jericho. Just download the WWE App and vote!

Here's how to vote on the App because if you have a smart phone, clearly you have no idea how to download an app!

Orton, on the App, pitches why he should face Punk.

Ryback vs. Antonio Cesaro

I knew it would be Cesaro before the music hit through common sense and process of elimination. That doesn't speak well for WWE. They shove each other around to start and Cesaro gets slammed around a few times. Ryback puts him in the Tree of Woe and hits some "feed me more" stomps. Back in and Cesaro pounds away as well, only to be caught by the Thesz Press. Antonio hits a clothesline to the back of Ryback's head to take him down and we go to a break.

Back with Ryback being slammed into the steps for a close count. This would be after the exclusive footage from the WWE App, which isn't exclusive if they're showing it elsewhere, as well as being overkill of the whole thing at all. The Meat Hook puts Cesaro on the floor and the match continues. After a European Uppercut hits in the ring, it's another Meat Hook and the Shell Shock for the pin at 9:50.

Rating: C-. Cesaro loses to Ryback. Again. Like I said, it's not a good sign that it was obvious who was facing Ryback as there was no one else that could be facing him at his level. Also since Cesaro and Ryback fight a lot, they were likely to be fighting again here. That's WWE in a nutshell for you anymore. Nothing special in the match either.

MORE WWE APP STUFF!!! DID WE MENTION THIS ALREADY???

We look at the Shield taking out Sheamus, Ryback and Cena last week.

Mysterio talks on the App.

We get a long video on the history of the Shield.

Cena is watching the video and has his serious face on. Apparently he's going to call out Shield on his own tonight so Vickie makes fun of him a bit.

Trish Stratus Hall of Fame video.

Jericho completes the trio of shilling for the App.

Santino Marella vs. Jack Swagger

Booker is on commentary for no apparent reason. Swagger's hair is a bit more down than it was on Smackdown. He shoves Santino around to start as Booker talks about how Swagger is ratings. The Vader Bomb hits and it's the ankle lock for the tap at 1:27. Apparently it's called the Patriot Act now.

Swagger yells at Booker post match.

You can now vote on the WWE APP!!!

Apparently since so many people are on the WWE App, you can now vote on WWE.com. Yep, after ALL THAT TALKING, you can just vote without the App. Egads this company gets annoying at times.

Alberto Del Rio vs. Cody Rhodes

Del Rio gets slapped in the face and here comes the champion. The

enziguri in the corner isn't an enziguri as it hits the shoulder, but Cody pounds away anyway. He goes after the leg but Alberto makes the quick comeback with a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker and a low superkick for two. Cody comes back with the Disaster Kick for the same but he walks into the cross armbreaker at 2:45. Well at least he lasted longer than he did against Cena last week.

Del Rio talks about how he's a changed man and how much he respects the people that work every day to put food on the table. Big Show pops up on screen and talks about how he's better than Del Rio. He's at a hotel because if he was there, he would kill Alberto. Apparently Show ran from the parking lot because he wants this in a real match, not in a parking lot. The rematch is made for the PPV, you know the drill.

Jericho gets to face Punk.

Bryan and Kane argue over getting into the Chamber. Isn't Bryan already in?

Rey Mysterio vs. Daniel Bryan

Apparently Orton and Mysterio are already in the Chamber but Bryan has to make it in. Didn't they already say who was in the Chamber on Smackdown on Friday? Bryan takes him to the mat to start but Mysterio comes back with some knees to the face. A modified gutbuster puts Rey down for two and Mysterio heads to the apron. Rey goes up but gets caught in the Tree of Woe for some NO Kicks. Bryan goes shoulder first into the post and we take a break.

Back with Mysterio firing off some forearms but getting suplexed down so Daniel can stomp on the arm a bit. He throws Mysterio out to the floor and hits a baseball slide to keep Rey on the floor. Bryan loads up the suicide dive but Rey gets a forearm up. The top rope seated senton starts to pick things up and Rey hits a rana into the kick to the head for two. The 619 is countered into a No Lock attempt but Rey rolls him up for two. Mysterio hits a rana into the 619 but the top rope splash misses. NO Lock finishes at 8:35.

Rating: C+. Pretty decent match here as you would expect from these guys.

Rey is already in the Chamber so nice job of having him lose here. Bryan is in the Chamber now I guess, but given the way things have been going on Smackdown, who knows where they're going with the Chamber. Granted I know what's coming next.

MARK HENRY returns to power walk towards Bryan. Daniel goes at him and is immediately sent into the barricade. Henry takes out Rey and the running in Cara as well.

Bryan yells at Kane for not helping him. Kane: "You told me to stay back here." Bryan: "SINCE WHEN DO YOU LISTEN TO ME???" Kane teases Bryan about hurting his feelings but he's only playing.

We recap (I've said that a lot tonight) Vince and Heyman from last week followed by Lesnar attacking Vince and breaking his hip.

Big Show is on the phone with Booker when there's a knock at the door. It's room service but Big Show doesn't tip. And that's that apparently.

Sheamus vs. Kane

This should be good. Bryan is officially in the Chamber due to his win earlier. I don't think either of these guys have qualified yet though. Kane powers Sheamus into the corner to start, Sheamus powers him right back, Kane gets caught in the Irish Curse, we've killed 90 seconds. A clothesline sends Kane to the floor but he breaks up the ten forearms to the chest. The Brogue Kick, chokeslam, White Noise and the tombstone are all countered so Kane hits his running DDT for no cover. Cue Bryan to yell at Kane, allowing Sheamus to Brogue Kick the big man for the pin at 3:48.

Rating: D+. This didn't have any time to get anywhere. I'd assume they both make the Chamber but since Friday I've lost all idea of who is in and who isn't. The match was nothing of note but keeping it short might have been the better idea given who was in there. The clash of styles would have really hurt them here in the end more than likely.

Here's MizTV with Paul Heyman as guest. After looking at what happened last week, Paul offers Vince his best wishes. Miz doesn't buy it but

Heyman guarantees that he wasn't behind Brock last week. He was even begging Brock to not do it. Miz still doesn't buy it so Heyman goes on a rant about everything he can think of not related to last week. Paul gets in Miz's face but here's Vickie to interrupt.

She says that Heyman is telling the truth because it was her that brought Brock back. Vickie recognized him as an elite free agent so she rehired him to impress Vince. She offers her condolences so Heyman wants a moment of silence. Vickie says we should pray but Miz says really. Miz talks about how Vickie is always wanting more power and Heyman hates Vince for crushing ECW. Vickie yells but Miz says Vince will fire Heyman and Vickie as soon as he's back. Cue Lesnar who destroys the MizTV set and hits the F5 on Miz onto the couch.

Wade Barrett vs. Randy Orton

Are these two contractually obligated to fight every other week or something? It's a brawl to start with Orton heading to the floor quickly. Barrett rams him into a few things before heading back inside for a quick chinlock. Orton fights up with a clothesline and the Elevated DDT but Wade rolls to the outside. That lasts a few seconds but Orton charges back into the Winds of Change for two. Wasteland and the RKO are both countered but Barrett misses a big boot in the corner and it's the RKO for the pin at 4:51.

Rating: C. Does this mean anything anymore for Orton? He beats Barrett so often anymore that it's hard to care whatsoever when it happens anymore. Nothing to see here at all either as it didn't have time to build to anything. It continues to amaze me how they have so much time but they can't give a match five minutes.

Chris Jericho vs. CM Punk

The fans are completely split between the two guys. They chop it out to start and Punk takes him down with some knees. We hit the armbar by Punk who yells at the referee to ASK HIM. Nice touch. Jericho fights up and escapes a tornado DDT to send Punk to the floor. A baseball slide puts Punk down but he blocks the springboard dropkick as we take a break.

Back with Punk slamming Jericho down and dropping a leg to the back of Jericho's head. Off to the cravate but Punk misses a splash to give Jericho control. The Lionsault hits knees but Jericho counters into a Walls attempt almost immediately. Punk goes for the knee in the corner but Jericho avoids the shot and hits a top rope rana for a delayed two. The GTS is countered but Jericho can't hook the Walls. They fight over a small package but Punk hooks a spinning neckbreaker for two. The running knee in the face hits this time but the Macho Elbow misses.

The Lionsault gets two as does Punk's High Kick. This is starting to get awesome. There's the Anaconda Vice but Jericho FINALLY makes the rope. Jericho goes up but gets crotched, only to get caught in the GTS. Chris counters AGAIN and this time he hooks the Walls. Punk barely makes the rope but he can't hook the GTS because of his back. The Walls are countered by sending Jericho into the buckle. Punk sends him into the post and the GTS finally ends Jericho at 15:03.

Rating: A-. GREAT match here and one of the best TV matches I've seen in a very long time. This was a long series of counters with Punk using everything he could to set up the GTS until he finally got it on to end the thing. Jericho constantly countering into the Walls showed off how great he was in the ring on top of on the mic. Great great match here.

In a huge surprise, Bruno Sammartino is officially announced for the WWE Hall of Fame. This is a BIG pick up because Bruno has spent years saying he wouldn't do anything with WWE at all. George Steele talks about how awesome Bruno was which is freaking weird to hear.

Punk says he's here and Rock isn't.

Video on the media hyping up Rock's title win. You know Vince is loving this.

Cena says he's serious tonight and is pushing back against the Shield.

Show is eating dinner and is on the phone saying he can't wait anymore. Someone knocks on the door and it's a messenger. He hands Show the EC contract when the messenger has something to tell him. Show tells him to be quiet and signs the contract. Big Show opens the door where Del Rio is

waiting. They fight in the hallway with Show beating the champion down but Del Rio comes back with a fire extinguisher. He blasts Show in the head with it and knocks Show out cold before explaining to some people in an elevator that it was bad Mexican food.

Here's Brad Maddox who says that he's innocent and was wronged by Heyman last week. He gave Vince the footage last week so he's the hero of the story. Maddox calls out Shield who actually talk on their way down. They say Maddox (who apparently took money from Heyman too) doesn't understand justice, because justice is them giving Maddox the beating he deserves. Maddox actually tries to fight and is immediately beaten down.

This goes on for awhile and here's Cena. Through the crowd that is and here's Ryback through the same crowd. Sheamus joins in too and the Shield runs....right into the rest of the roster they've beaten up before. Shield is trapped in the ring and the brawl is on, only to be chased off to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. This was a pretty solid show tonight. The two midcard champions losing are a big problem but at least we got some major developments tonight on top of a great match. This show also is proof that you don't need Rock around every week to carry the show, which is a really good sign. I'm fired up for Elimination Chamber which should be awesome.

Results

Ryback b. Antonio Cesaro – Shell Shock

Jack Swagger b. Santino Marella – Patriot Act

Alberto Del Rio b. Cody Rhodes – Cross Armbreaker

Daniel Bryan b. Rey Mysterio – NO Lock

Sheamus b. Kane – Brogue Kick

Randy Orton b. Wade Barrett – RKO

CM Punk b. Chris Jericho – GTS

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