

= WrestleMania XI =

WrestleMania XI was the eleventh annual WrestleMania pay @-@ per @-@ view event held by the World Wrestling Federation (WWF) at the Hartford Civic Center in Hartford , Connecticut on April 2 , 1995 .

The main event was a match between NFL linebacker Lawrence Taylor , who faced Bam Bam Bigelow as the result of an argument that took place between the two at the 1995 Royal Rumble . Taylor won the match , which led to Bigelow being kicked out of Ted DiBiase 's Million Dollar Corporation . Shawn Michaels faced WWF World Heavyweight Champion Diesel in a title match but was unable to win the championship . Jeff Jarrett retained his WWF Intercontinental Championship against Razor Ramon . Owen Hart and his mystery partner , Yokozuna , challenged The Smoking Gunns for the WWF Tag Team Championship and won the title belts .

The match between Taylor and Bigelow brought the WWF mainstream press coverage . The reactions to the match were mixed ; some people thought that Taylor performed surprisingly well for a non @-@ wrestler . Others thought that the WWF pushing a football player to defeat a wrestler made professional wrestling look bad . Reviews of the event as a whole have also been mixed , and the event has been called both the worst WrestleMania of all time and the event that saved the WWF .

= = Production = =

Special Olympian Kathy Huey sang a rendition of " America the Beautiful " during the event , replacing the advertised Fishbone band . Prior to Lawrence Taylor 's match against Bam Bam Bigelow , Salt @-@ n @-@ Pepa sang Whatta Man . Several other celebrities also had roles at WrestleMania . Nicholas Turturro , one of the stars of NYPD Blue , conducted interviews and served as a guest ring announcer . Jonathan Taylor Thomas of Home Improvement was a guest timekeeper for the match between Diesel and Shawn Michaels .

On September 30 , 1995 , a one @-@ hour special including the Diesel vs. Shawn Michaels match and the Lawrence Taylor vs. Bam Bam Bigelow match was broadcast on the FOX Network . At the WrestleMania weekend , the WWF also held its Fan Fest , a promotional event during which wrestlers interacted with fans and signed autographs .

The WWF released the event on VHS in North America in 1995 . The VHS version was then re @-@ released on March 2 , 1999 . The event was also released on DVD in North America as part of the WrestleMania Complete Anthology boxed set on November 1 , 2005 . In the United Kingdom , the event was released on VHS on July 10 , 1995 . Packaged together with WrestleMania XII , it was then released on DVD in the United Kingdom as part of the WWE Tagged Classics line on August 7 , 2006 .

= = Background = =

The most heavily promoted feud going into the event was between Bam Bam Bigelow and Lawrence Taylor . At Royal Rumble 1995 , Bigelow teamed with Tatanka in the final round of a tournament for the WWF Tag Team Championship . Bigelow was pinned at the end of the match , which led to the crowd heckling him . He responded by pushing NFL player Lawrence Taylor , who was sitting at ringside . Bigelow refused to apologize and instead challenged Taylor to a wrestling match . Taylor agreed and trained with WWF World Heavyweight Champion Diesel to prepare for the match . The storyline between Bigelow and Taylor brought the WWF much mainstream exposure , as the match was discussed by several news outlets .

The other main event at WrestleMania was a match for the WWF World Heavyweight Championship between Diesel and Shawn Michaels . Diesel had originally entered the WWF as Michaels 's bodyguard but later began wrestling and forming a tag team with Michaels . The pair held the WWF Tag Team Championship together in 1994 . At Survivor Series 1994 , however , Michaels accidentally kicked Diesel in the face . This led to an argument during which Diesel

dissolved the tag team and vacated the championship . Three days later , Diesel defeated Bob Backlund to become the new WWF Champion . At Royal Rumble 1995 , Michaels won the battle royal main event , which earned him a match against Diesel for the title belt at WrestleMania .

The WWF Intercontinental Championship was also defended at WrestleMania . Jeff Jarrett , the champion , had been feuding with Razor Ramon , the challenger , for several months . At Royal Rumble 1995 , Jarrett was accompanied by The Roadie , who interfered on Jarrett 's behalf and helped Jarrett win the championship . To even the sides in the rematch at WrestleMania , Ramon was accompanied by his friend , the 1 ? 2 ? 3 Kid .

In a match for the WWF Tag Team Championship , The Smoking Gunns defended their title . Their opponents were Owen Hart and a mystery partner . Hart refused to tell anyone the name of his partner , which left the Gunns uncertain who they would be facing and led to much speculation about the identity of the mystery partner .

Bret Hart faced Bob Backlund in an " I Quit " match at WrestleMania . The feud began the previous summer , when Hart defended the WWF World Heavyweight Championship against Backlund . Backlund mistakenly thought he won the match and began celebrating , but Hart pinned him to retain the title . After the match , Backlund turned heel by attacking Hart . This led to a title match at Survivor Series 1994 , in which Backlund won the title from Hart . Although Backlund soon lost the belt , the feud continued and Backlund attacked Hart during Hart 's match at Royal Rumble 1995 .

Also at Royal Rumble 1995 , The Undertaker faced Irwin R. Schyster as part of The Undertaker 's feud with Ted DiBiase 's Million Dollar Corporation . During the match , King Kong Bundy , another Corporation member , interfered and enabled the Corporation to steal The Undertaker 's urn , which was said to be the source of his power .

= = Event = =

In the opening match , The Allied Powers (Davey Boy Smith and Lex Luger) faced the Blu Brothers (Eli and Jacob) . Smith started out on the offensive , but Jacob gained control with a running bulldog throw . The Blus capitalized on the fact that they are identical twins by switching places while the referee was not looking . Luger came into the match near the end and performed a running forearm smash on Eli . Jacob tried to throw Luger with a powerbomb , but Luger tagged in Smith , who performed a sunset flip to pin Jacob and win the match .

The second match pitted Razor Ramon , with the 1 ? 2 ? 3 Kid in his corner , against WWF Intercontinental Champion Jeff Jarrett , who had The Roadie in his corner . Ramon took control at the beginning of the match by using power moves against Jarrett . Jarrett tried to leave the match , but the 1 ? 2 ? 3 Kid forced him back into the ring . Jarrett took advantage of one of Ramon 's mistakes to gain the advantage . He applied a sleeper hold on Ramon , who used his strength advantage to escape the move . After Ramon threw Jarrett , the Kid attempted to interfere but was kicked by Jarrett . Ramon jumped off the ropes to attack Jarrett , but Jarrett avoided the move and applied a figure four leglock on Ramon . Ramon reversed the move to place the pressure on Jarrett 's legs . He then threw Jarrett to the mat with a suplex from the second rope and prepared to execute the Razor 's Edge , his finishing move . The Roadie entered the ring and attacked Ramon , prompting the referee to disqualify Jarrett ; because titles cannot change hands on a disqualification , Jarrett retained his championship .

In the next match , The Undertaker faced King Kong Bundy . Ted DiBiase was at ringside holding the urn that his wrestlers had stolen from The Undertaker . Larry Young , a legit American League umpire , was the special referee for the match . Young 's storyline was as an out @-@ of @-@ work sports official because of the recently ended MLB Players Association strike and a lockout of the Major League Umpires Association umpires (which led to the eventual dissolution of the MLUA in 2000 ; prior to the new union , umpires were split by league) . The Undertaker took control at the beginning of the match by jumping off the top rope and hitting Bundy . He then performed several clothesline attacks on Bundy . Bundy responded with a clothesline that knocked The Undertaker out of the ring . Seeing DiBiase close , The Undertaker took back his urn . After The Undertaker returned to the ring , DiBiase called Kama , another Corporation member , to the ring . Kama stole

the urn , and Bundy attacked The Undertaker in order to let Kama escape backstage . Bundy picked The Undertaker up and powerslammed him to the mat . He then performed an Avalanche splash to squish The Undertaker against the corner of the ring . The Undertaker was unharmed , however , and performed a powerslam and a clothesline on Bundy before pinning him to win the match .

The Smoking Gunns defended their WWF Tag Team Championship in the next match against Owen Hart and his mystery partner , who was revealed to be Yokozuna . The Gunns worked together to control the match at the beginning , but Yokozuna gained control by performing a leg drop on Billy Gunn . Hart attempted to perform a dropkick from the top rope but accidentally hit Yokozuna . The Gunns briefly took control until Yokozuna performed a belly to belly suplex and landed on Billy . He then performed a Banzai Drop , jumping from the second rope and sitting on Billy 's chest . Hart tagged in and considered performing the Sharpshooter submission hold ; instead , he pinned Billy Gunn to win the title belts for his team .

The next match , an " I Quit " match , took place between Bret Hart and Bob Backlund , with Roddy Piper as the guest referee . It was explained that , in order to win the match , a wrestler must force his opponent to say " I quit " into a microphone held by Piper . Hart attempted to perform the Sharpshooter early in the match ; when Backlund blocked it , Hart executed a figure four leglock instead . Backlund escaped the hold and began trying to injure Hart 's arm with an armbar hold . Hart then tried to attack Backlund in the corner of the ring , but Backlund moved and Hart hit his shoulder against the ring post . Backlund tried to perform the crossface chickenwing , his signature submission hold . Hart blocked him and performed the same hold on Backlund instead . Backlund made an unintelligible sound into the microphone , and Piper determined that he had submitted . As a result , the win was awarded to Bret Hart .

In the next match , which was for the WWF World Heavyweight Championship , challenger Shawn Michaels was accompanied to the ring by Jenny McCarthy and Diesel , the champion , was escorted by Pamela Anderson . Michaels relied on his quickness in the opening stages , while Diesel used his strength advantage against Michaels . Diesel threw Michaels out of the ring and onto the arena floor , but Michaels later performed a clothesline that knocked Diesel out of the ring . Michaels capitalized on his advantage by performing several aerial moves , including a flying crossbody , flying bulldog throw , and a diving elbow drop . He was unable to pin Diesel , however , so he performed a sleeper hold to wear Diesel down . They brawled outside the ring , after which Michaels performed a superkick , his finishing move , but Sid , Michaels 's bodyguard , had the referee distracted and unable to count the pinfall . Diesel recovered and controlled the remainder of the match with power moves before throwing Michaels to the mat with a Jackknife powerbomb and getting the pinfall victory .

The final bout of the event was the main event match between Bam Bam Bigelow and Lawrence Taylor . Bigelow was accompanied by the members of DiBiase 's Million Dollar Corporation : King Kong Bundy , Tatanka , Irwin R. Schyster , Kama , and Nikolai Volkoff . To prevent the Corporation members from interfering , Taylor brought several football players : Ken Norton Jr . , Chris Spielman , Rickey Jackson , Carl Banks , Reggie White , and Steve McMichael . Taylor gained the advantage early and performed a clothesline that knocked Bigelow out of the ring . Once he returned to the ring , Bigelow took control of the match by kicking Taylor repeatedly and performing a Boston crab submission hold to hurt Taylor 's back . Taylor got out of the hold and threw Bigelow with a suplex . Bigelow recovered and performed several headbutts on Taylor before executing a moonsault flip to knock Taylor down to the mat . Taylor began to take control of the match again , but Bigelow kicked him in the back of the head and then performed a headbutt from the top rope . Bigelow was unable to pin Taylor , however . Taylor climbed to the second rope , jumped off , and used his forearm to hit Bigelow . He then covered Bigelow to win the match .

= = Reception = =

The event was attended by 15 @, @ 000 fans , who paid a total of \$ 750 @, @ 000 in admission fees . This was down from the previous year 's attendance of 18 @, @ 065 , but the decline could be attributed to the smaller size of the venue for WrestleMania XI . The attendance figure was also

lower than the following year 's figure of 18 @, @ 852 fans at WrestleMania XII . The pay @-@ per @-@ view buyrate for WrestleMania XI was 1 @. @ 3 , which was lower than the 1 @. @ 68 buyrate for WrestleMania X but higher than the 1 @. @ 2 buyrate for WrestleMania XII .

Writing for 411mania , columnist Dustin James rated the event as the seventeenth best of the first twenty @-@ three WrestleManias . He stated that the event did not have any truly amazing matches but that Lawrence Taylor put on a solid performance . John Powell of SLAM ! Wrestling rated the event as the worst WrestleMania of all time . The specific concerns he mentioned in his review are Diesel 's championship reign and WWF allowing a football player to defeat a wrestler in what he describes as a " sham of a match " . In contrast , Pro Wrestling Illustrated columnist Dave Rosenbaum stated that WrestleMania " saved " the WWF in its feud with rival World Championship Wrestling . He argued that Taylor " looked like a pro " and contributed to an " incredible " match . He also observed that the tag team matches helped rejuvenate an area of wrestling that had been suffering in the WWF and that the match between Michaels and Diesel was a candidate for match of the year .

= = Aftermath = =

Shortly after WrestleMania , Diesel offered Shawn Michaels a rematch . Michaels blamed Sid for the loss and informed him that he would not be needed during the match . Sid got angry and attacked Michaels until Diesel saved him . Diesel and Michaels became allies once again , and they teamed up to win the WWF Tag Team Championship later that year . Diesel feuded with Sid and defeated him at the In Your House 1 and In Your House 2 pay @-@ per @-@ view events . The animosity lingered between Michaels and Sid , but they did not face each other to settle the feud until the September 11 , 1995 episode of Monday Night Raw .

Bam Bam Bigelow was embarrassed after losing to Lawrence Taylor . To redeem himself , he challenged Diesel to a match for the WWF Championship . During the match , Tatanka turned on Bigelow and caused him to get pinned . Bigelow was kicked out of the Million Dollar Corporation and attacked by DiBiase 's wrestlers . Diesel saved Bigelow from the attack , which led to a friendship being formed between the two . Bigelow defeated Tatanka in a dark match at In Your House 2 . At King of the Ring 1995 , Sid , DiBiase 's latest addition to the Corporation , teamed with Tatanka in a loss to the team of Diesel and Bigelow .

Razor Ramon and the 1 ? 2 ? 3 Kid were scheduled to face Jeff Jarrett and The Roadie at In Your House 1 the month after WrestleMania . The Kid sustained a legit injury , however , and was unable to compete . As a result , Ramon wrestled a two @-@ on @-@ one handicap match against Jarrett and The Roadie instead . Ramon won the bout , but the feud continued . At In Your House 2 , The Roadie faced the 1 ? 2 ? 3 Kid and defeated him . Ramon and Jarrett wrestled several times , and Ramon regained the Intercontinental Championship on May 19 , 1995 . He held the belt for three days before dropping it back to Jarrett .

After WrestleMania , Kama melted down The Undertaker 's urn and made it into a necklace . The Undertaker defeated Kama in dark matches at both In Your House 1 and In Your House 2 . He then won a casket match against Kama at SummerSlam 1995 to end the feud .

The Smoking Gunns were given a rematch for the WWF Tag Team Championship at In Your House 1 . Hart pinned Bart Gunn to retain the championship for his team . Hart and Yokozuna then moved on to face other competition , and the Gunns did not become serious contenders for the title again until late in 1995 , when they defeated Hart and Yokozuna to regain the championship .

= = Results = =