



ATTITUDE ERA EDITION



REVISTING
THE
ATTITUDE
ERA: WAS IT
ALL THAT WE
REMEMBER?

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Attitude Era Saw A Rise In Popularity But A Decrease In Everything Else

Yeah, I'm saying it...I'd rather watch WWF/WCW/ECW Invasion era matches more than anything from the Attitude Era. Being alive in the late 90's meant you had to deal with a few inescapable pop culture moments. One of them would be South Park and the other one would be Monday Night Raw. WWE, then WWF, was finally becoming a household name again. Their shows were drawing in big crowds and even bigger ratings. All this was because of the raunchy and controversial Attitude Era! So with high numbers across the board, why do I say the Attitude Era is the worst in wrestling history? Below, I will dive into the reasons on why I think this beloved time in WWE isn't that great.

HISTORY

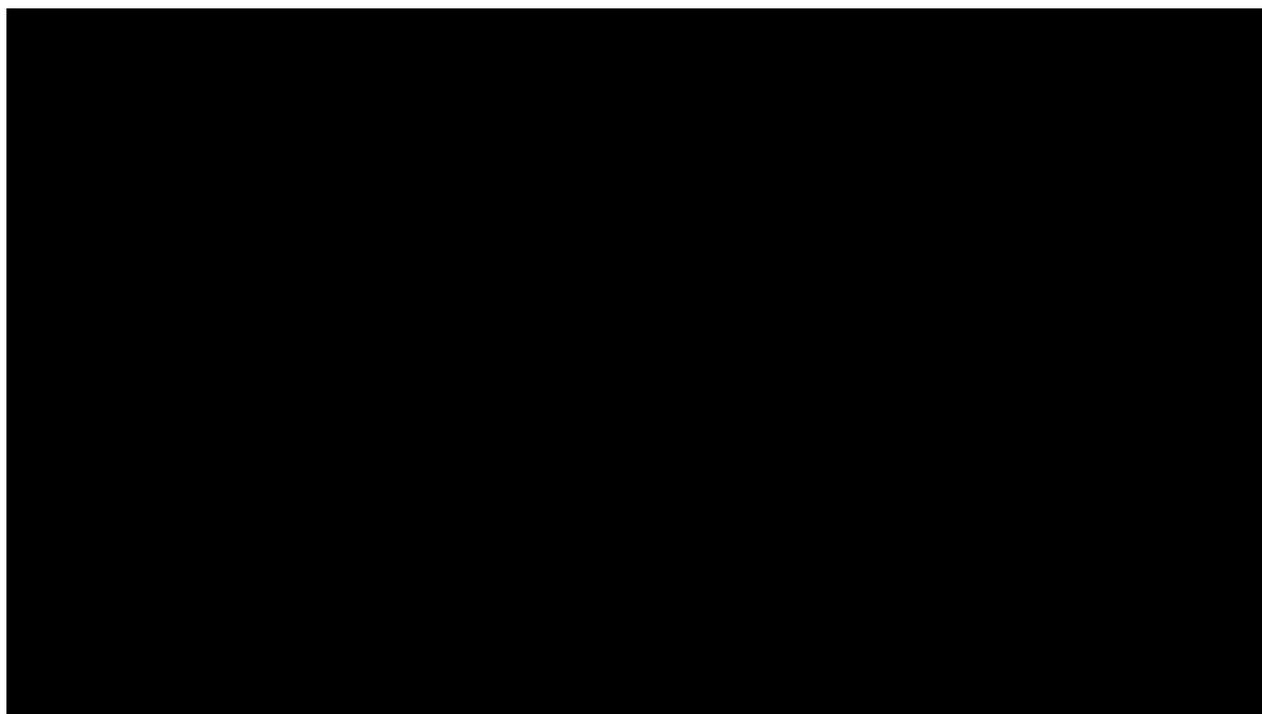


A little history about the Attitude Era will better step up this article for anyone new or needing a refresher. Following the major 80's rise in popularity for wrestling and then a lackluster cartoony early 90's, WWE was in desperate need for something new. This is when Vince McMahon and his team took a step back and looked at their competition. WCW was dominating in the ratings with the insane NWO storyline while ECW

didn't draw much but had a rabid fanbase. WWE needed both of those things. When was the moment that WWE kicked off "The Attitude Era"? Many believe it's when Mike Tyson was introduced for Wrestlemania XIV and teamed with DX. Others think it's the birth of Stone Cold Steve Austin at King Of The Ring 1996. But for me, it's Survivor Series 1997! The night of the infamous Montreal Screwjob is the exact moment WWE found a

"VINCE MCMAHON CHANGED HIS BRAND FROM THE ONCE CARTOONY WRESTLING PROGRAM TO A JERRY SPRINGER-ESQUE TV SHOW."

niche and ran with it. Slowly, Vince McMahon changed his brand from the once cartoony wrestling program to a Jerry Springer-esque TV show. From there, the business was never the same.



CHEAP IMITATION

It's come out now that Vince McMahon was paying Paul Heyman to use ECW talent during this time but McMahon should have also paid him for gimmick infringement. Not even just stealing the general tone but lazily doing it. Everything the Attitude Era wanted to be was actually happening in ECW. The wild matches with insane gimmicks, controversial stories, overt sexuality, and a youth-driven culture were things that made ECW

special. WWE wanted it so badly that they began to mimic the "hardcore" style.

ECW wasn't the only company that WWE was borrowing from. The Attitude Era was known for the breaking of "kayfabe" and introducing more real elements. This is what WCW started as early as 1995 when Madusa dumped the WWF Women's Title in the trash on live WCW TV. Then came the formation of the NWO in 1996 and that pushed the line even harder.

WWE needed to play catchup so they began the "wrestler vs authority figure" storyline with Steve Austin and Vince McMahon. The stolen concepts of WWE go on. One of the most notable has to be the fact WWE decided to go live in 1999, years after WCW took Monday Nitro live. WWE also introduced a second show named Smackdown after WCW introduced their second show Thunder. Can't forget the inclusion of the Light Heavyweights after WCW launched a successful

Cruiserweight division. WWE took many things from other companies and rarely improved on them. Just lazily stealing so the bigger brand can take credit for the ideas.

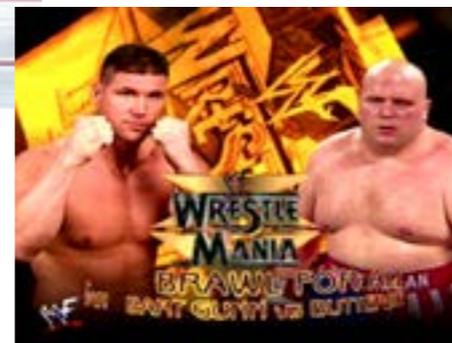
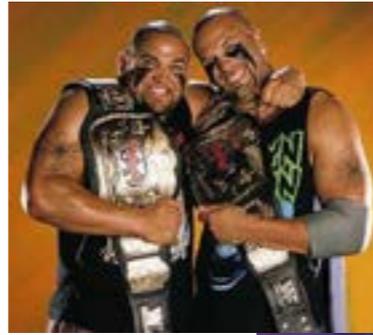
LACKLUSTER MATCHES

For many “wrestling purist”, the Attitude Era isn’t really the best for them. Mat technicians weren’t the focus and more gimmicky matches were put on. You can name Mick Foley being thrown off a cage or Stone Cold stunning McMahon as iconic moments but those “highlight reel” moments were far and few between.

Basically from late 1997 to 2001 has some of the most forgettable matches of all time. There’s so many standout “moments” but the wrestling in-between the spots wasn’t up to par. How many X-Pac or Terri Runnels matches can you actually sit through?

There was also a complete disregard for any sensible booking. People complain about Sasha Banks and Charlotte tossing the Women’s Championship back and forth but imagine their reaction to the Hardcore Championship changing 10 times in a night!

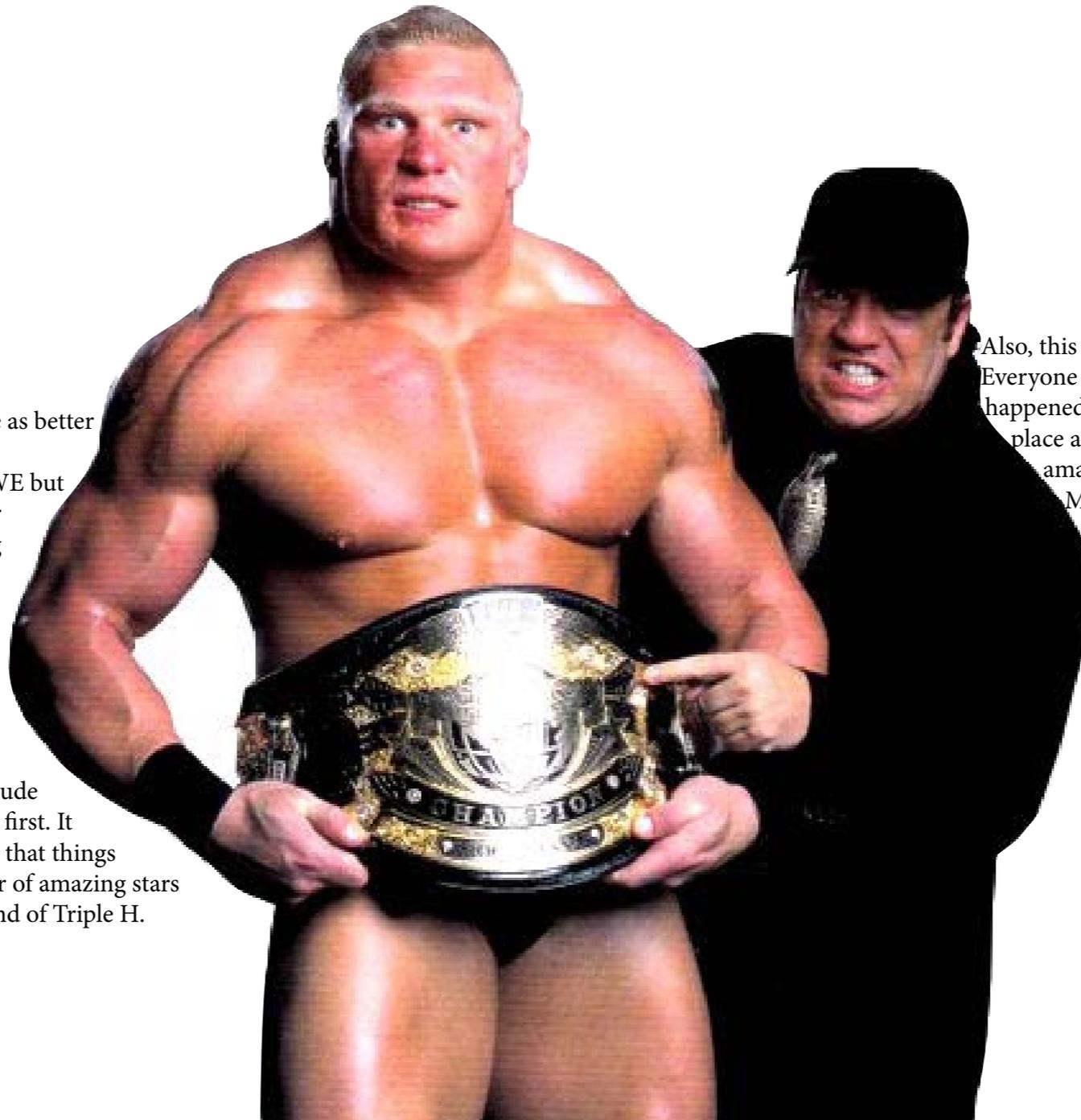
Nothing mattered during this era. There was swerves during every match, wrestlers turning on each other randomly, and just no thoughtful booking. Storylines seemed to only last a month at most with rarely any longtime plans. This led to so many unfinished angles and less-than-stellar feuds.



THE BETTER ERA

The era in WWE history that stands out to me as better than 90's Attitude was the early 00's Ruthless Aggression. Still more adult than modern WWE but with less juvenile humor, this era had superior wrestling and the ratings to back it up. During this period, a lot of technical wrestling was being showcased. There was no lack of insane gimmicks but some focus was brought onto wrestlers like Kurt Angle, Eddie Guerrero, Brock Lesnar, Rey Mysterio, and Edge.

After getting an influx of talent from different companies WWE bought out during The Attitude Era, they didn't know what to do with them at first. It wasn't until the infamous WWE Draft in 2002 that things started to make sense. Smackdown got a roster of amazing stars needing a place to shine while Raw was the land of Triple H.



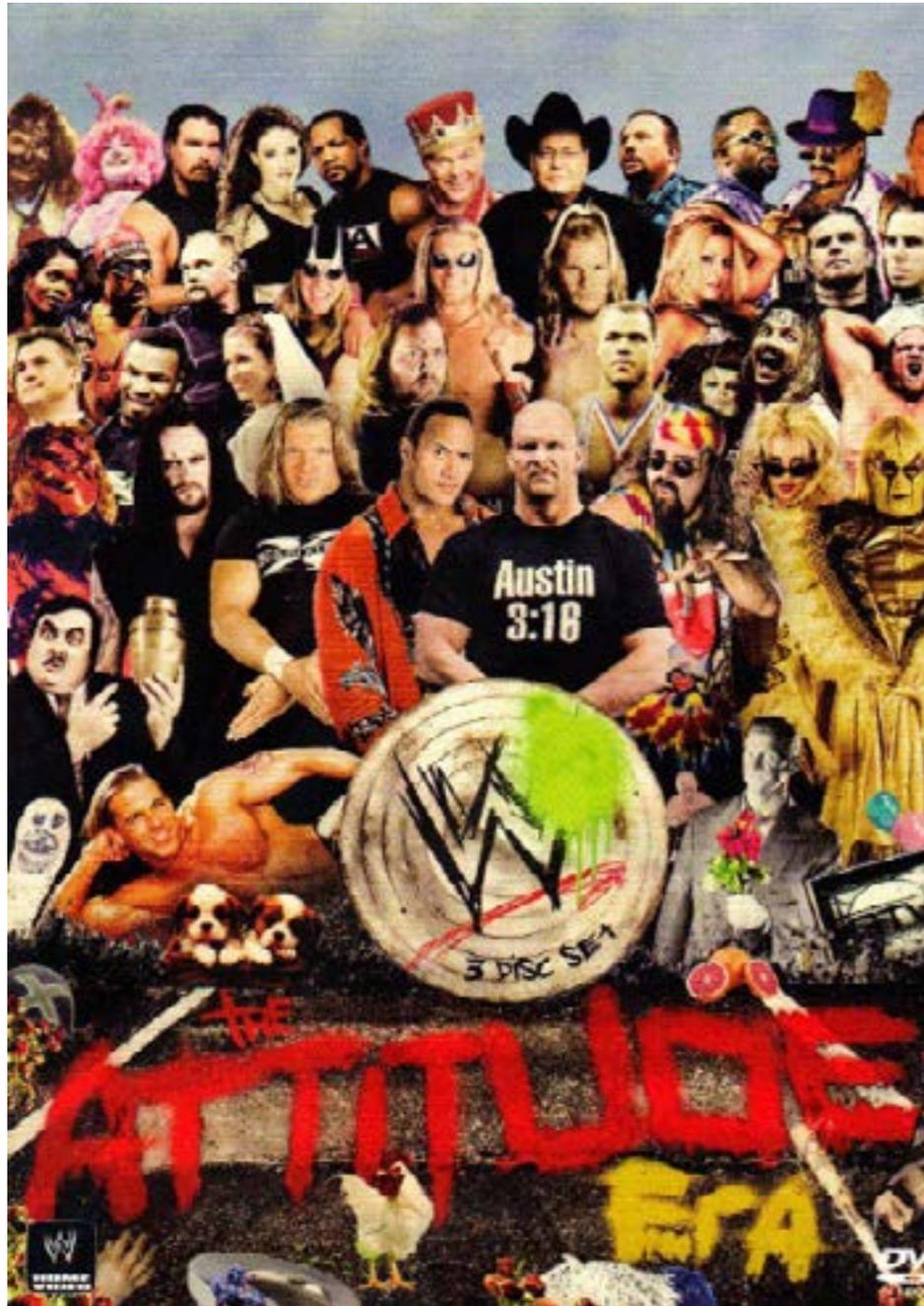
Also, this is the perfect end of the story of WWE vs Everyone Else. After the Invasion Angle of 2001 happened, we had so many wrestlers from all over the place as well as the men who ran the companies. It's amazing to think there was a time where Vince McMahon, Eric Bischoff, and Paul Heyman all worked in the same place.



THE POSITIVES

I'm not saying it was all doom and gloom. This era created quite a few icons in the business like The Rock, Stone Cold Steve Austin, Triple H, and The Undertaker. Those were the faces of this time in WWF/WWE and perfectly encapsulate the Attitude Era.

Merchandise is probably the biggest highlight from this time. So many Austin 3:16 shirts were sold. Kids all over the world were doing the DX crotch chop. And you can't forget The Rock and his millions of catchphrases. Everything said and done during this time was thrown on a T-shirt. But merch and memories doesn't make an Era amazing.



FINAL THOUGHTS

Do you agree with
my views on WWE's
Attitude Era?

I do respect that this time in WWE brought wrestling to the forefront and did create some stars. Besides that, there's not much else to enjoy. Now that it's been all said and done, I think the Attitude Era was far more harmful than helpful to the future of wrestling.

