



■ WRESTLING ■

THE (LAST) TIME IS NOW

Bidding farewell to John Cena

AAQIB HASIB

On July 7, 2024, during WWE's Money in the Bank premium live event (PLE), John Cena, actor and one of the most popular professional wrestlers, made a surprise appearance to an incredible reception. And then, the wrestling world stood still in silence as Cena announced his retirement.

Cena would later explain during the press conference that he was not retiring immediately. Rather, 2025 would be his last year as an in-ring talent. Come December 2025, his time as a wrestler would end.

Retirement in the wrestling industry is usually not where things end. Wrestlers go away, and eventually come back for a match here and there. Cena, however, clarified that his retirement is absolute. Come 2026, WWE fans will no longer see him in the ring.

Even though a lot of us did not like Cena, there were many who absolutely loved him.

In particular, his "Doctor of Thuganomics" character has inspired a whole generation of kids to fall in love with wrestling and with his core values of "Hustle, Loyalty, and Respect". And whenever he faced adversity, whether it was an injury or a creative setback, he always barrelled through such obstacles with his "Never Give Up" attitude.

Often, when you are the top guy for as long as Cena was, people can end up hating you. In most cases, those wrestlers are loved during their initial run, but people eventually get fed up with seeing them come back over and over, while also holding down new talent. Cena has been an exception to that rule.

When he ventured into Hollywood and became a part-timer in the ring, he made sure to push the new generation of wrestlers, taking loss after loss to the likes of other pro wrestlers. Even in his final year, Cena

has taken multiple losses and showcased upcoming talent like Dominic Mysterio. And the fans have cheered him throughout, even when he turned heel – a wrestler who portrays a villain.

When you watch Cena explain his retirement and his deep admiration for the fans and the wrestling business, it is clear to see why Cena is finally getting his flowers. The man could easily have secured himself a big WWE paycheck, mostly with his success in Hollywood, for at least ten more years. Yet, Cena willingly chose to end it at the age of just 48, because he does not want the fans to see him as a shadow of his former self in the ring.

The "end of an era" is often an overused phrase, particularly by wrestling fans. However, when Cena retires on December 13, it truly will be the end of an era. And it will be on Cena's terms.

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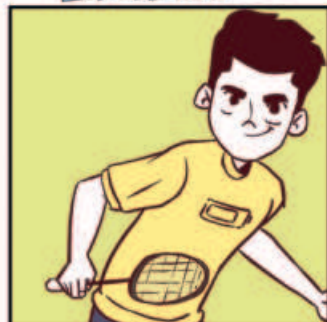
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