

History of Summerslam Count-Up – 1993: The Lex Express Crashes

Summerslam 1993

Date: August 30, 1993

Location: Palace of Auburn Hills, Auburn Hills, Michigan

Attendance: 23,954

Commentators: Bobby Heenan, Vince McMahon

Well, it's a different time for the WWF now, as there's no Warrior, no Hogan and Savage is commentating. This presents a big problem: there's no one to lead the company as the top face. After Hogan bailed and never put Bret over which is something that I know isn't for sure as to whom to blame, but something still isn't sitting right with me about it, Bret was the top face by default. However, the top heel was Yokozuna, who beat Bret already.

Due to his size and allegedly (nonsense) the fact that Bret couldn't have a good match with him, Lex freaking Luger of all people is turned face to try to slay the giant. This all happens on the Fourth of July weekend on the USS Intrepid where there was a body slam contest. No one can manage to slam Zuna, and the contest allegedly ends.

OR DOES IT?

A helicopter lands on the boat and the fans chant for Hogan. Nope, not him. Macho Man? Already made an attempt. Ultimate Warrior? One last guess. ...Andre the Giant? He's already dead, so no one knows. It's....Lex freaking Luger? Yes, it's Flexy Lexy, the guy that had been a pompous jerk of a heel since the day he got there. Apparently he's now very proud to be an American and he wants to stand up for America and slam the

AMERICAN Samoan.

Of course he does it to a huge pop and an instant mega face push. However, Yoko doesn't want to give him a title match. So what's a newly top face to do? Rent a bus and drive around the country of course! Yes, Luger comes up with the Lex Express and drives around the country meeting fans like he's trying to win the 1872 Presidential election. It's somehow dumber than it sounds as Luger even has a theme song called I'll Be Your Hero.

This may in fact be the most obnoxious thing that has even been attempted by Vince McMahon. There's pushing someone down our throats, and then there's this. The one problem: Luger never won the belt. He never even pinned Yoko that I recall. He was supposed to get the epic win at Mania 10, but he got drunk at a bar the night before and blabbed the plans to everyone, so there was a last second change and Bret got the title to close Mania 10, leading to his real reign with the belt.

Luger was gone in about a year, running back to WCW where people got closer to caring anything about him. This is the first encounter with him and Yoko. Other than that, there's really nothing going on at all. Bret and Lawler are finally starting their two year feud so that's kind of the second big match on the card I guess. Let's get to this.

Our opening is...a music video of Lex Luger and his trip around America. He wears stars and stripes shirts and sleeps with a folded up American flag in his arms. This actually could have been an epic victory for him, had he you know, WON THE BELT! That's what makes this look so bad in hindsight: he never won the title. Had he done that, it's the payoff for all the over the top nature of this angle.

Ted DiBiase vs. Razor Ramon

The Million Dollar Man was done on PPV after this, injuring

his neck early in 1994 and being forced to immediately retire. Razor here is mad over as he's getting that big push that he's most known for. Coming soon: the IC Title feud with Shawn that got Shawn his jump up the ladder and yes that was intentional. This is over DiBiase offering Razor a job as a servant and Razor having that pesky pride of his.

It's cool because I reviewed the go home show of Raw a few weeks ago so I actually know some of the buildup for these matches, or at least what there is of it. Anyway, this is probably Razor's biggest match to date. DiBiase is looking a bit chubby here. This match is really just kind of boring. DiBiase dominates for the majority of the match, which isn't saying much as it runs about seven and a half minutes total.

It's mainly just slow paced and standard DiBiase stuff which is fine as he's always very solid, but the fans are just dead for this. Now near the end of the match, Ted takes the cover off of the buckle and gets slammed into it, leading to the Razor's Edge. The crowd is losing it for this as I hardly ever remember seeing a crowd go from dead to insane that fast. Naturally this is the end of the match, and the end of DiBiase's time in the ring.

While he was certainly far from his prime, he was hardly falling apart out there. His stuff was solid, but it might be good that he got out when he did, given the new direction the company was going in. I'm not saying he wouldn't have had a place, but his style is slower and more thought out than what was wanted in the new era. It's sad to see one of the greats have to go, especially when two days ago he rocked with his time as GM of Raw.

Rating: C-. It was a bit boring and that hurts it a lot. DiBiase was there to put Razor over and that's exactly what he did, so points for that. Razor was on the rise and this was another match that put him over even more.

Todd Pettingill (the man that replaced Sean Mooney) is with the family of the Steiners, which is cool I think. He's interrupted by Jim Cornette in the ring.

Tag Titles: Steiner Brothers vs. Heavenly Bodies

Steiners are the home town boys so their pop is of course epic. Now the Heavenly Bodies are an interesting subject. They were the Dudleys of Cornette's Smokey Mountain Wrestling, meaning that they were the undisputed biggest thing there, but unlike the Dudleys, that didn't translate in the big companies. As for SMW, that place rocked. All kinds of guys were there and a lot of them got over because of their work there.

Guys like Lance Storm, Kane, Jericho and Foley mixed with some veterans, some local guys and Cornette calling the shots, and how can you go wrong? The problem was the business as a whole was in deep trouble at that point and Cornette, while being successful to an extent, only lasted about four years. However, in those four years he co-promoted with Vince, which was a pretty big deal at the time. SMW could have worked very well, if the timing and business as a whole had been better.

Even still, it did quite well all things considered. Big brawl starts as the heels take over early but the Steiners start owning as Scott takes over and dominates which is always fun to watch. He was the prototype for what the modern day athlete was supposed to be but due to what has to be steroid abuse, he's now a shell of his former self. Cornette has a neck brace on for no reason at all.

Eventually the heels take over on Scott and you can put the rest together from there. We go to the melee with Rick taking over to fight off the forces of evil as the fans are freaking out for the hometown boys. After Rick gets his with the tennis racket and Scott saves him the Frankensteiner ends it.

Rating: B-. This was fine. It's nothing special and was just a

token defense but is that really a bad thing for the hometown boys? I certainly don't think so. It's about 10 minutes and the faces were in a bit of trouble, so what more can you ask for out of this? Solid little match that did its job well.

We go to some guy named Joe Fowler who is a new interviewer that I don't ever remember again. He's with Shawn and Diesel and asks about how Shawn can't hold onto the belt and that Diesel got it back for him from Perfect. Fowler actually wasn't that bad at this and while he was a bit too perky, he wasn't awful.

IC Title: Mr. Perfect vs. Shawn Michaels

This is the blowoff of the feud that had been built up.....4 months ago. The buildup for this match was nothing short of a masterpiece but by the time they got to the match the interest was pretty much long gone. I've never figured out why they waited but I'd assume an injury or something like that. Either way it was a bad idea for waiting so long as it could have been the hottest feud in the business at the time.

Anyway, this is your main midcard match of the show. Perfect, even probably past his prime, still just rocks on all levels. We get a plug for Radio WWF out of nowhere which was one of the oddest ideas I've ever heard of. Ross and Monsoon would call the show on the radio. Heenan apparently gets hit in the eye by something and isn't happy about it. Very fast sequence to start and it of course ends in a botch as I have no idea who did what or what they were going for but it looked absolutely horrid.

Anyway, they go into a standard sequence as they jockey for position and Heenan talks about how Diesel will be the big factor here. This referee counts WAY too fast. If he had worked for WCW they would have won the wars. After they go to the floor, Shawn lands a stiff thrust kick to Perfect's chin. That kick was so sweet that it was almost like music. Shawn

continues his perfect streak of being too loud about calling spots which gets annoying after awhile but is part of the business.

I'm kind of skipping over a lot but a good match makes me do that. There's little to complain about here which makes it hard to come up with jokes. Perfect hits a move that I always thought would be insanely hard to pull off: a running dropkick. That just looks hard to do and makes Perfect look even better. The ending to this is just flat out bad. Perfect gets the Perfectplex but Diesel pulls him outside and they start fighting in what could have been a very interesting feud.

Anyway, Shawn jumps at Perfect but he gets punched for his efforts. Shawn rolls in and lands on the referee, breaking up the count, but after Diesel rams Perfect's shoulder/head area into the post, the referee continues his count and we get a count out. That was either a botch or running out of time, either way it didn't work.

If you want to do the screwjob finish then let Diesel interfere and let Shawn get the pin but don't just go with the count out. Post match Perfect gets the double beatdown and Shawn says he's the greatest IC Champion.

Rating: B-. This was a very fun albeit short match. This really could have been something good with more time and a finish. That being said it was far from bad with one pretty bad botch that was at least in the beginning of the match. It just was too short and I hated the ending though.

Fowler is with the 1-2-3 Kid who says he's nervous but ready. Again, Fowler is too perky but he seems solid enough.

IRS vs. 1-2-3 Kid

This is the other feud that comes from DiBiase vs. Razor. Kid was the indy darling at the time and when he got signed what

would become the IWC exploded in excitement. What the heck happened to this guy? He became so completely worthless later in his career. Kid was Colin Delaney of his day, but unlike Colin, Kid actually had some skill and would win some matches. He was also far less annoying.

This is really short and not that interesting as even the commentators don't want to talk about it as you can hear. The big deal about it is that the fans make fun of IRS' name. Eventually he hits a clothesline of all things to get the pin. That's really the best they can come up with? Heenan makes some dumb jokes to end this.

Rating: F. No one cared, it wasn't interesting, and it sucked. What kind of grade did you expect here?

Todd is with Bret's family, namely Owen, who is rocking one of the worst mullets ever, and Bruce. Stu had knee surgery and can't be there tonight. They talk about the Hart/Lawler feud, which leads us to this.

Bret Hart vs. Jerry Lawler

This is for the title (more like name) of undisputed king of the ring. There's no real title or anything which is good. Bret is one of 12. Dang Stu was tearing it up yo. Lawler is on crutches as he comes out. Todd asks him what's going on. Apparently he's injured. Gee you think? Never would have been able to figure that out without the crutches, the ice pack on the knee or the limp. The heel heat that he gets is so basic and so good that it's uncanny.

Lawler blames his injury on his car as he talks forever. Apparently he's not allowed to wrestle here tonight. Vince is ticked off over this. Imagine, a guy changing the match at the last second, especially one over a knee injury in a Bret Hart match. Yep, Vince has every right to be upset. Instead, he's going to let his court jester fight Bret instead. This leads to...

Bret Hart vs. Doink the Clown

This was SO random. Doink had been just beating up jobbers and all of a sudden he's fighting a former world champion at Summerslam? This made no sense and I'm still not sure why they picked him. He does his confetti/water trick, which leads to one of the dumbest things I've ever seen at a wrestling show. He throws water on Bruce Hart, so Owen easily opens the railing up and walks through to ringside.

That's a GREAT lesson to teach people: how to get past the guardrail. Anyway of course Bret is ticked off and beating on Doink early. The clown was such a great gimmick that it's unreal. Think of the Joker from Batman and make him a wrestler. There's Doink. This incarnation of him was someone that was a great wrestler that hid behind clown makeup because he was so mentally disturbed. How great of an idea is that?

He dominates most of the match which is Bret at his best: getting beaten up. Doink even puts an STFU on Bret as the young John Cena eats a sausage. He puts the Stump Puller on Bret and grabs the top rope for "additional leverage". I get home sometimes that would help, but how in this case would that help?

Maybe I'm just missing something but I don't see it at all. Here's Bret's comeback and you can connect the dots yourself here. Sharpshooter goes on, but GASP, Lawler comes in and hits Bret with the crutch! WHO THOUGHT THAT WOULD HAPPEN? Vince's commentary here is hilarious as he's panicking over this, thinking that such a thing could never happen.

Rating: B. This was actually pretty good. The in ring work with both guys was solid as Doink really was good in the ring, or at least until he turned face just after this match. Bret of course was great and Lawler made himself look evil here, continuing the feud that wouldn't end until Summerslam 1995.

The heels head to the back but WAIT! JACK TUNNEY is here to

stop them! That leads us to this.

Bret Hart vs. Jerry Lawler

This is going to be quick. What are you expecting here? It's maybe 5 minutes long and it's Bret beating the tar out of him, a short heel dominance and a Sharpshooter for the tap out. The main thing here though is that Bret leaves the hold on for OVER THREE MINUTES as apparently he wants Lawler's grandkids to have knee problems. A small army of suits and referees get rid of him but naturally the decision is reversed to give it to Lawler. Owen's cowboy boots are making me crack up with laughter.

Rating: B+. It was Bret beating up his enemy which is always fun to see. That's just not something you can't beat as Lawler is such a great cowardly heel that working with Bret was perfect. The post match thing made you believe Lawler's career was over, but this feud would go on for two years, on and off.

We see a promo from Borga, talking about how Luger is stupid for wanting to save America when it has slums like the one he's in. This was I guess on location in inner Detroit.

Bret and co. says it's not over with Lawler.

Ludvig Borga vs. Marty Jannetty

Oh dear this is going to be bad isn't it? Borga is just a beast that was only there about 8 months before being let go for no apparent reason. It was rumored that he would take the title from Taker (not sure where he would have gotten it, maybe at the Rumble?) and then lose it to Luger at Mania 10. I've never heard any concrete plans on that but I've heard rumors similar to that too many times to not think there's at least some credibility to them.

Marty of course has his head handed to him here as the Finn is a boxer and just punches Marty's ribs into oblivion. This is a

pure squash here and Marty lands a couple of super kicks that meant nothing at all. Borga's finisher was the torture rack, which I would have nearly died of laughter from if he'd beaten Luger with.

Rating: D+. It's a squash and a long, drawn out one. Marty was ok in the ring I guess, but this was better suited for a Raw or something I think. Ludvig would dominate jobbers for a few months before being placed in a real feud, but the ankle injury was too much for him and for some reason he got let go. It was one injury. I've never gotten why he never came back.

Undertaker vs. Giant Gonzalez

This is a Rest In Peace match which means street fight. This is the blow off match that no one really wanted to see. The Giant had run in at the Rumble to beat up Taker on behalf of Harvey Whipleman, who I still need clarification on whether or not he's a human being. They had the worst Taker Mania match ever (not Taker's fault) and they waited 4 months to have the rematch....for no apparent reason.

No transition at all as Borga's music is still playing as Fink is announcing. Was there really a point to the caveman look? I never got that. Oh, for the 100th time someone has stolen the urn. The pop for Taker is epic of course. I'm starting to get the reason why Taker got so big so fast, among the obvious reasons: Bobby Heenan. The things Heenan would say about Taker made him just awesome sounding.

As soon as the gong strikes, Bobby says: "See ya!" That's such a tiny thing but it works so well. He'd always do that and it would always work. No Paul Bearer for no apparent reason. We've clearly seen that Gonzalez is taller and that Taker is walking normally, yet Vince says Taker is towering above all and gliding to the ring. Vince, pay attention please. Heenan: I bet Johnny Cash has a picture of him in his pocket. Norcal will love that line.

Apparently Bearer being gone has been the case for awhile now. This is a lot better than at Mania, mainly because Gonzalez has figured out a bit more of his own style and isn't as horrible as he was before. Also the lack of rules suit them both better in a match like this. Taker looks tiny which is saying a lot. It's mainly back and forth with Taker continuously reaching for the urn "like it's a tag partner." Eventually Bearer returns with a black wreath.

Whippleman and Bearer "fight", resulting in Bearer getting the urn back. Heenan says NO NO NO, Bearer says 0000000000000000HHHHHHHHHHHHH YEEEEEEEEESSSSSSSSSSSS! Taker sits up of course and it's on. Taker hits about 5 clotheslines before hitting one from the top to get the pin. Gonzalez I guess turns face after the match by beating up Harvey. That went nowhere.

Rating: C+. This was FAR better than what they did back in April. The rule changes saved this along with the shorter match. It just flowed much better and looked more like something these two would do, as it was a brawl and not a match. Not great, but compared to what they had done before, this was Savage vs. Steamboat.

Fowler is with Yoko, Fuji and Cornette. Cornette says his typical great heel stuff here and puts over Yoko.

Smoking Guns/Tatanka vs. Bam Bam Bigelow/Headshrinkers

Yeah to put it mildly this is filler. The Guns were pretty new at this point. It's great to see the cowboys and Indian getting along so well here. Ross and Monsoon are on radio here. Ah it's for the Armed Forces Network. I can live with that. SHAWN MICHAELS HAS LEFT THE BUILDING! Samu and Tatanka start us off. Heenan makes fun of the Cleveland Indians and Dallas Cowboys, which makes me be irritated.

Both Tatanka and Bigelow go for cross bodies at the same time which is a weird looking visual but it worked rather well.

Billy punches Rikishi and gets kicked in the face as a result. Why couldn't he have been kicked out of the company instead? Vince insists they are REAL cowboys. Oh dear. Samu kicks him into the corner to get a tag to Bart.

Crowd is DEAD of course. Bigelow hits a dropkick to take him down for two. Not quick Jim Nediheart's but close enough. This is just boring beyond belief. It's like a long Superstars match rather than a long TV match which is REALLY bad for 93 standards. Bigelow rams Bart's head into Fatu's which is rather funny.

Bart dodges and Bigelow hits the post so that Tatanka can come in and hopefully end this nonsense. Slam to Bigelow which is kind of impressive. Top rope cross body gets two. Tatanka starts up his racial stereotypes and Bigelow just hits him to stop such idiocy. A triple headbutt hits but a triple splash misses so Tatanka can roll up Fatu for the pin.

Rating: F+. That triple splash was cool looking but this was AWFUL. Like I said, total Superstars match here and nothing more. Horribly boring match and no one cared at all.

We interview Luger's bus driver. Let me repeat that. We interview Luger's bus driver. He has a monitor and is watching Summerslam from inside the bus. That...might be the funniest thing I've seen since Summerslam began. Yeah, it is. He's driven Lex around the country for 2 months and he can't get a bleacher seat to the show? He talks about how great Luger is in what might not have been scripted. He's talking like this is a real thing, so either he's not scripted or he needs a job in WWF.

Fowler does something that I like here: he says he's going to ask a stupid question. Can I get a Hallelujah chorus? We have an interviewer that knows he asks stupid questions. WHY DID THIS GUY LEAVE???

Todd interviews some of the fans.

To further shove the red white and blue down our throats, there are American flags sitting on top of the commentators.

In something else that makes me laugh. Fink asks for the fans to please rise. He gets booed. He then asks if the people will show some respect. When did Fink become a heel manager? The Japanese national anthem is sung. We have a master of ceremonies for the main event, and for no reason at all, it's Randy Savage. He brings out some guy to sing the National Anthem. Savage looks like the Incredible Hulk meets the Uncle Sam poster.

WWF Title: Lex Luger vs. Yokozuna

And here we go. Yoko's entrance takes FOREVER. Luger of course gets the pop of pops as he enters to Stars and Stripes Forever. This is easily one of Yoko's best matches ever. Luger wasn't much, but he could fight big guys with the best of them. His power game worked perfectly against Yoko, and when it's USA vs. the evil foreigner, it's hard to mess it up. WWF managed to screw up the ending, but not the match.

I can sum up this whole match with ease: Bobby Heenan praises Lex Luger. Heenan, perhaps the greatest heel manager of all time, is praising a face. Luger kicks out of everything but never quite hulks up. The crowd is red hot the whole match, which runs nearly 18 minutes for easily one of Yoko's longest. He's moving really well here as he hadn't ballooned to his massive girth yet. The idea is that Yoko simply can't put him away no matter how close he gets but he can't hit the Drop either.

They beat on each other with Luger making comeback after comeback but never being able to slam Yoko. After Heenan is losing his voice, Luger makes his final comeback and "slams" Yoko. Heenan screams that it was a hip block, which is actually more impressive as you're slamming someone using one arm instead of two, but who am I to poke at the Brain? Now, we

get to the ending, which for the life of me might be the stupidest thing I've ever seen.

Luger hits the steel forearm and knocks Yoko out of the ring and out cold, drawing the count out. Why? What in the world was the point of not giving Luger the belt here? The tag line of the show was "Someone has to stop him" with a picture of Yoko Banzai Dropping the American flag. Dude, this was a layup and they blew it. Seriously, why would you not give Luger the belt in this case?

He was wildly over, he had a whole storyline that lasted all summer, and the buildup was perfect for that Hogan/Andre moment. However, they waited 8 months to give Luger another shot and in between Luger feuded with Yoko and Fuji's team still. Why not give him the belt here? For the life of me I do not understand this booking.

Luger may not be a great worker but the fans were WAY into him and the storyline would have been perfect. Anyway, of course we have balloons and confetti falling as Luger and Savage celebrate winning nothing to go off the air.

Rating: B-. This is a fine example of a match that needs two ratings, one for the match and one for the ending. The match was actually pretty good but the ending makes no sense at all. I've ranted on it already so I'll spare you another one here. Yoko looked excellent here and far better than usual.

Luger was feeling it out there as this was one of his better matches, despite using his old stuff. In this case it worked and the crowd was hyped. Very good match that if it had a legitimate finish could have saved the show.

Overall Rating: D+. This show just sucks. Nothing of note happens, the matches are just head scratchers, and the ending is AWFUL. The show just has nothing huge happening at all as Bret's matches were a combination of solid but random and short but intense. Taker was a feud that I though ended half a

year ago. Shawn's match was good but forgettable, and I've ranted on the main event already. Just a bad show overall which is reflective of the company as a whole at this point. Avoid this.

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